OUT-OF-CLASS SPEAKING ANXIETY AMONG INDONESIAN EFL STUDENTS AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH SELF-PERCEIVED SPEAKING SKILLS, VOCABULARY PROFICIENCY, AND GENDER

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Article Info	Abstract
	Speaking anxiety has always been an intriguing topic in the field foreign language education. While a plethora of studies have been conducted on this issue in the Indonesian context, most of them have focused on students' English-speaking anxiety in the EFL classroom, with very few examining anxiety outside of the classroom. To bridge this gap, this study aimed to investigate levels of out-of-class speaking anxiety among Indonesian tertiary EFL students and examine the relationships between their self-perceived speaking skills, self-perceived vocabulary size, and anxiety. Additionally, the study sought to examine whether there was a significant difference in anxiety levels between genders. Using a quantitative approach, a survey was administered to 87 participants from three different institutions of higher education. The results showed that students experienced anxiety in various situations, with most being moderately anxious. A moderate negative correlation was observed between self-perceived speaking skills and anxiety, while a weak negative relationship was found between self-perceived vocabulary size and anxiety. The study also found that females exhibited higher anxiety levels than males. Practical implications for curriculum designers and teachers in the Indonesian context are put forward.

INTRODUCTION

In today's global society, the importance of possessing proficient English oral communication skills has reached unprecedented levels. These skills not only improve one's social standing, but also break down geographical barriers, unlock a wide range of career opportunities (Shrishthy, 2022), and are crucial for effective international communication (Rao, 2019). However, for some individuals, speaking English in front of others can be a daunting task, particularly in situations where English is not their native language. The challenges associated with this process are numorous and complex. Research has identified various barriers to effective communication in English, such as a lack of vocabulary, cultural differences, language interference, and anxiety (Buarqoub, 2019; Horwitz et al., 1986).

Over the last few decades, anxiety has become a topic of interest in the field of foreign language learning, particularly when it comes to speaking English. Anxiety refers to subjective feelings of tension, nervousness, and worry, and by activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system (Spielberger, 1983, p. 1). In language learning, different understandings of anxiety have been linked to different conditions, such as contexts where English is and is not the primary language, settings for learning a foreign language versus a second language, and learning environments that take place inside or outside of a classroom. (Horwitz et al., 1986; Woodrow, 2006). A study by Choubey (2011) highlighted how anxiety can impede students' ability to effectively speak the target language. Interestingly, this anxiety can affect

communication with both native speakers and those with native-like accents. Ebrahimi's (2013) study found that most experienced speaking anxiety, with many experiencing panic when unprepared, feeling unsure of themselves, or very nervous. Suleimenova's (2013) study discovered that speaking anxiety has a negative impact on students, leading to hesitance, discomfort, decreased self-esteem or self-confidence, and feelings of inferiority, which resulted in silence. These results suggest that for non-native speakers of English, anxiety can be a significant barrier to effective communication, impacting language learners' fluency, self-confidence, and ability to understand and interpret verbal cues. Studies indicate that foreign language anxiety is a substantial concern among language learners, with approximately one-third experiencing a moderate level of anxiety (Horwitz, 2001). Several investigations have probed its impact and revealed that it as a significant predictor that affects the performance of EFL learners (e.g., Liu & Huang, 2011; Manipuspika, 2018) and is one of the most prominent obstacles to language achievement among EFL learners (Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997).

The interest in investigating EFL students' speaking anxiety is primarily driven by the aim to gain a deeper understanding of this concept and provide better support to students in their learning (Horwitz, 2001; Phillips, 1992). Through the examination of students' speaking anxiety, researchers can identify the underlying factors that contribute to this issue and devise effective strategies to alleviate it (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Importantly, understanding students' speaking anxiety can also help teachers design more effective instruction that meets the needs of their students. Teachers who are aware of the challenges that students face when speaking can adapt their lesson plans and teaching materials to include more opportunities for speaking practice (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Recently, there has been a plethora of research conducted on the topic of English-speaking anxiety within the Indonesian context (e.g., Abdullah et al., 2022; Erdiana et al., 2020; Fadlan, 2020; Fauzi & Asi, 2023; Fitriah & Muna, 2019; Irawan et al., 2918; Meliyani et al., 2022; Rodriguez, 2022; Sinadia & Ngingi, 2023; Subekti, 2018; Suryadi, 2022). However, most of these studies have focused on exploring students' anxiety levels in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. The studies conducted by Abdullah et al. (2022), Erdiana et al. (2020), Fitriah & Muna (2019), Meliyani et al. (2022), Rodriguez (2022), Subekti (2018), and Suryadi (2022) are just a few examples. However, there is still a lack of knowledge about how Indonesian students experience English-speaking anxiety outside the classroom. This information is essential because students must use English in real-world situations, which can induce different forms of anxiety than those felt in a classroom environment. Consequently, there is a need for further research to explore the impact of external factors on students' English-speaking anxiety. Moreover, the study of English-speaking anxiety outside of the classroom is important to understand the broader issue of communication anxiety, which is a significant obstacle that many students may face when they communicate in English outside the classroom.

Moreover, there has been abundant research on English-speaking anxiety among EFL learners around the world (e.g., Abrar, 2017; Akkakoson, 2016; Çağatay, 2015; Erdiana et al., 2020; Liu, 2006; Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2013; Park & French, 2013; Razak et al., 2017; Tercan & Dikilitaş, 2015, Toubot et al., 2018). However, the findings are inconsistent, particularly concerning gender and proficiency. Some studies suggest that females experience more anxiety than males (Çağatay, 2015; Öztürk, & Gürbüz, 2013; Park & French, 2013), while others show males experienced more anxiety than females (Abrar, 2017) or no significant difference between genders (Razak et al., 2017). Similarly, some studies indicate that speaking anxiety decreases as proficiency increases (Abrar, 2017; Tercan & Dikilitaş, 2015), whereas others reported that anxiety increases as proficiency increases (Debreli & Demirkan, 2016). These inconsistent findings suggest the need for further research to explore the complexity of foreign language speaking anxiety in the EFL context. Thus, the present study sought to contribute by

offering a more nuanced understanding of how gender and proficiency may interact in the context of foreign language speaking anxiety and offers a foundation for interventions and support in EFL learning environments.Therefore, the present research was conducted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of out-of-class speaking anxiety of Indonesian tertiary EFL students?
2. Is there any significant relationship between self-perceived speaking skills and their anxiety levels?
3. Is there any significant relationship between students' self-perceived vocabulary size and their anxiety levels?
4. Is there any significant difference in students' anxiety levels concerning gender?

LITERATURE REVIEW
Conceptualization of Anxiety in Foreign Language Learning

Anxiety is a fundamental concept in psychology that is universally experienced. In the late 1980s, various perspectives on the causes and types of anxiety emerged, leading to the identification of three types of anxiety, namely trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Trait anxiety refers to a persistent individual difference in the likelihood of experiencing anxiety across situations and times (Spielberger & Vagg, 1995). State anxiety is a temporary feeling of worry associated with a particular event or action (Brown, 2007). However, some experts consider this type of anxiety a combination of trait and situation-specific anxiety (e.g., MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Meanwhile, situation-specific anxiety is triggered by specific conditions or stimuli, such as public speaking, exams, or class participation, that often provoke anxiety in educational settings (Ellis, 2008). While some individuals experience more anxiety in these situations than others due to stable individual differences, the anxiety is explicitly linked to the context.

In the field of foreign language learning, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) introduced the term "foreign language anxiety" (FLA) to describe the nervousness and heightened arousal that can be experienced by individuals. Their definition of FLA encompassed a complex combination of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to the unique process of foreign language learning. According to Spielberger and Vagg (1995), although individuals have varying degrees of anxiety across different situations and times, learning a foreign language often triggers anxiety in a wide range of students, regardless of their general anxiety levels. While it might be expected that general anxiety inclination would be correlated with FLA, students with all ranges of trait anxiety can experience FLA. Therefore, FLA is better characterized as situation-specific anxiety rather than trait anxiety.

One approach to conceptualizing anxiety in foreign language learning is to distinguish between different types of anxiety. For example, Young's (1992) model proposes three types of anxiety: communicative anxiety, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communicative anxiety refers to anxiety experienced during actual communication in the target language, while test anxiety is associated with taking language tests. Fear of negative evaluation refers to anxiety about being judged negatively by others, such as peers or instructors. Besides, the conceptualization of anxiety in foreign language learning has been linked to various theoretical frameworks. For instance, the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996) suggests that anxiety can impede language learning by inhibiting interaction and negotiation of meaning with native speakers. The Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) posits that anxiety can raise the 'affective filter', which can hinder language acquisition. In brief, the conceptualization of anxiety in foreign language learning is a complex and multifaceted area of study that has important implications for language teaching and learning. Understanding the different types and sources of anxiety can help language instructors develop strategies to reduce anxiety and improve language learning outcomes.

Factors Affecting Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

Foreign language speaking anxiety is influenced by multiple factors, including among others linguistic, psychological, cultural, and other elements. One of the significant factors is linguistics, such as a lack of proficiency or fluency in the language, which can create anxiety about making errors or not being able to communicate effectively (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). According to Ellis (2015), learners with inadequate knowledge of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary tend to have higher levels of anxiety. In their study, Kayaoglu and Saglamel (2013) found that linguistic complications, such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, increased language anxiety among EFL students. Melouah's (2013) study with EFL university students found that students with moderate levels of speaking anxiety had low language proficiency. Similar results were obtained in Azizifar et al.'s (2015) study, discovering that higher levels of anxiety were linked to lower English-speaking performance among EFL learners.

Psychological factors, such as low self-esteem, perfectionism, and fear of negative evaluation, can also contribute to foreign language speaking anxiety. As noted by Horwitz et al. (1986), fear of negative assessment is one of the factors that contribute to language anxiety. Perfectionists and anxious learners often have higher performance standards and concerns over errors (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002), whereas extroverts tend to be more comfortable communicating with others (Minghe & Yuan, 2013). Liu and Jackson's (2008) study found that fear of evaluation, self-assessment, negative attitudes toward English class, and fear of failure contributed to the speaking anxiety of Chinese EFL university students. Similar findings were obtained by Zhiping and Paramasivam (2013) in their study of eight EFL international postgraduate students studying at a Malaysian university who found that fear of negative evaluation was one of the primary factors contributing to their language anxiety.

Culture can also play a significant role in foreign language speaking anxiety, as suggested in several studies. For example, Kim and Lee (2015) found that Korean EFL learners who preferred indirect communication and were less familiar with turn-taking experienced higher levels of anxiety in speaking tasks that required more direct communication. Ishida's (2017) study also revealed that Japanese EFL learners who placed a higher value on group harmony experienced higher levels of anxiety in tasks that required individual expression, as this was seen as potentially disrupting group harmony in Japanese culture. Similarly, Huang (2018) discovered that Chinese EFL learners who valued social harmony experienced higher levels of anxiety in tasks that required expressing opinions or disagreeing with others. This is because these behaviors were seen as potentially disrupting social harmony in Chinese culture.

Other elements that can contribute to foreign language speaking anxiety include individual differences in learning style, gender, and age (Young, 1991). Learning style refers to the different ways in which individuals prefer to learn and process information. Studies have shown that learners with different learning styles may experience foreign language speaking anxiety differently (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989). For instance, learners who prefer auditory input may feel more anxious when speaking in a foreign language than learners who prefer visual input. Some studies also suggest that female language learners may experience more anxiety than male learners (Çağatay, 2015). Regarding age, studies found that older learners may experience more anxiety than younger learners, as they may feel more pressure to learn quickly and compete with younger learners (Young, 1991). However, research on this topic is mixed, and some studies have found that younger learners may experience more anxiety due to social pressure and fear of negative evaluation (Scovel, 1978).

In brief, foreign language speaking anxiety is a complicated issue that results from several factors, including linguistic, psychological, cultural, and individual differences. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct research on the topic of foreign language speaking anxiety because it is a complex issue that arises from various factors. It is important to understand these factors as

they can have a significant impact on language learning outcomes. The present research is of significance as it attempted to examine the relationships between students' foreign language speaking anxiety and their self-perceived speaking skills, self-perceived vocabulary size, and gender.

RESEARCH METHOD
Research Design

The research design utilized in this study was a quantitative approach and involved a survey design. According to Cohen et al. (2018), a survey design allows for the collection of data at a specific moment in time to describe the current situation, establish benchmarks for comparison, or investigate the relationships between specific events. A survey design was deemed appropriate since it offers a quantitative portrayal of trends, attitudes, and opinions within a population, or examines relationships between variables in a population by analyzing a sample from that population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Research Participants

This study involved a total of 87 participants with diverse personal and academic backgrounds. These participants were chosen using a convenience sampling method, which means that they were selected based on their availability or accessibility rather than through a more structured or randomized process. The participants consisted of students majoring in English at three different institutions of higher education in Jambi Province. The group consisted of 61 females and 26 males aged between 18 and 29, ranging from year 2 to year 5 with various levels of English proficiency.

Research Instruments

To collect the data, a questionnaire adapted from Wilang and Singhasiri's (2017) survey was used. The questionnaire consists of 21 items that assess anxiety-inducing situations that take place outside the classroom, both productive (speaking) and receptive (listening) aspects of lingua franca. The pilot and final studies demonstrated high levels of internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values of .96 and .94, respectively (Wilang & Singhasiri, 2017). The adapted questionnaire maintained the same number of items as the original version, but the response options were simplified to enhance the ease of response for participants. The questionnaire is scored on a 5-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 'not at all anxious' to 'extremely anxious'. The scores on the questionnaire are categorized as not anxious (1.0-1.7), slightly anxious (1.8-2.5), moderately anxious (2.6-3.4), very anxious (3.5-4.2), and extremely anxious (4.3-5.0). Prior to distribution to the participants for data collection, the questionnaire underwent a careful translation into Bahasa Indonesia. To ensure clarityand to assess the time required for completion, the translated version was given to two students to read and complete the questionnaire as a part of validation process.

Data Collection and Analysis

In this research, an online survey was conducted using Google forms to gather data. The choice of this method was based on its advantages, such as ease of contact and accessibility, as highlighted by Cohen et al. (2018). Before administering the questionnaire, the researcher contacted potential participants and informed them that the study aimed to better understand students' speaking anxiety and their oral communication skills. The researcher also requested the participants to provide honest responses to the questionnaires.

The gathered data was analyzed through both descriptive and non-parametric methods using SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to compute the mean scores and percentages of students' responses. Additionally, non-parametric tests, particularly Mann-Whitney U, were performed to determine whether there were any significant differences in anxiety and oral communication skills among students, based on their gender, perceived vocabulary size, and

frequency of speaking practice. To establish the possible relationship between anxiety and oral communication skills, Pearson's product moment was computed. The confidentiality of the participants was ensured to maintain ethical standards while presenting the study's findings.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Research Findings
Students' Anxiety Levels

Table 1 presents the findings that reveal the students' anxiety levels, which fall under the 'moderately anxious' category, as indicated by an average mean score of 2.84. Out of the 21 anxiety-inducing situations, 17 are categorized as 'moderately anxious', while the remaining 4 fall under the 'slightly anxious' category. Among the top-rated anxiety-inducing situations in the 'moderately anxious' category are 'when I cannot decode the interlocutor's words/phrases' (M=3.31), 'when I cannot understand the meaning behind an utterance' (M=3.29), 'when I don't know the answer to a question' (M=3.23), 'when the interlocutor asks me a question where I am not prepared to answer' (M=3.17), and 'when the interlocutor asks me difficult question(s)' (M=3.17). On the other hand, the four items under the 'slightly anxious' level are 'when the interlocutor corrects my utterance(s)' (M=2.40), 'when the interlocutor speaks a non-native accent' (M=2.26), 'when the interlocutor talks about specific topic(s)' (M=2.21), and 'when the interlocutor shows some sign(s) such as facial expression to make me uncomfortable' (M=2.02).

Table 1
Students' Anxiety Levels

Anxiety-Inducing Situation	Mean	SD	Level
When the interlocutor is a proficient speaker of English	2.56	.98	MA
When the interlocutor speaks a native-like accent	2.75	1.17	MA
When my accent is difficult for the other interlocutor to understand	2.91	1.08	MA
When I cannot decode the interlocutor's words/phrases	3.31	1.08	MA
When I am not familiar with the interlocutor's accent	2.94	1.24	MA
When the interlocutor speaks a non-native accent	2.26	1.08	SA
When the interlocutor speaks fast	3.23	.97	MA
When there are more than two or more interlocutors	2.72	1.20	MA
When I cannot understand the meaning behind an utterance	3.29	1.17	MA
When I don't know the word(s) for saying something	3.15	1.28	MA
When the interlocutor asks me a question that I am not prepared to answer	3.17	1.15	MA
When I don't know the answer to a question	3.23	1.23	MA
When the interlocutor uses word(s) or phrase(s) I am not familiar with	2.95	1.03	MA
When I am not familiar with the topic of the discourse	2.98	1.07	MA
When it is my turn to speak	2.76	1.17	MA
When I cannot use the word(s) correctly	2.99	1.10	MA
When the interlocutor shows some sign(s) such as facial expression to make me uncomfortable	2.02	1.09	SA
When the interlocutor corrects my utterance(s)	2.40	1.13	SA
When the interlocutor asks me difficult question(s)	3.17	1.16	MA
When the interlocutor talks about specific topic(s)	2.21	1.00	SA
When the interlocutor seems unwilling to communicate	2.61	1.28	MA
Average	**2.84**		

SA – slightly Anxious; MA – moderately anxious

The relationship between students' self-perceived speaking skills and their anxiety

To scrutinize the potential interplay between students' self-perceived speaking skills and their levels of anxiety, a comprehensive Pearson's correlation analysis was undertaken. This statistical examination sought to establish the presence and strength of any discernible

relationship between these two variables. The results, as delineated in Table 2, reveal a Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) of -.45, indicative of a moderate negative association between students' self-perceived speaking skills and their anxiety levels. The negative sign of the correlation coefficient suggests an inverse relationship, signifying that as students' self-perceived speaking skills increase, their anxiety tends to decrease. The statistical significance of this relationship is further substantiated by a p-value of .000, highlighting that the observed correlation is unlikely to occur by chance. The correlation analysis, based on a sample size of 85 participants, provides empirical insight into the dynamics between self-perceived speaking skills and anxiety among students. The findings imply that there exists a meaningful connection between these variables, warranting additional exploration and consideration in the context of language learning and teaching. This nuanced understanding of the relationship between self-perceived speaking skills and anxiety contributes valuable insights to the broader discourse on language acquisition and underscores the multifaceted nature of factors influencing students' language learning experiences.

Table 2
The relationship between students' self-perceived speaking skills and their anxiety

		Self-Perceived Speaking Skills	Anxiety
Self-Perceived Speaking Skills	Pearson Correlation	1	-.445**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	87	87
Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	-.445**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	87	87

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between students' self-perceived vocabulary size and their anxiety

Another Pearson's correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationship between students' self-perceived vocabulary size and their anxiety. The results of the analysis indicate that there was a weak negative correlation between students' self-perceived vocabulary size and their anxiety, r(85) = -.24, p = .024 (Refer to Table 3).

Table 3
The relationship between students' self-perceived vocabulary size and their anxiety

		Self-Perceived Vocabulary Size	Anxiety
Self-Perceived Vocabulary Size	Pearson Correlation	1	-.242*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.024
	N	87	87
Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	-.242*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.024	
	N	87	87

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The difference in students' anxiety regarding gender

To examine whether there was a significant difference in students' anxiety with respect to gender, a Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. The results show a significant difference in the level of anxiety between female students (Mean rank = 50.05, n = 61) and male students (Mean rank = 29.81, n = 26), U = 424.000, z = -3.424 (corrected for ties), p>.05, two-tailed (Refer to Table 4).

Table 4
Mann-Whitney U test results of the difference in students' anxiety regarding gender (N=87)

	Anxiety
Mann-Whitney U	424.000
Female mean rank	50.05
Male mean rank	29.81
z-score	-3.424
p-value	.001

Discussion

The present study identified and categorized various situations that induced students' anxiety in speaking English outside the classroom. The findings showed that most of the anxiety-inducing situations fall under the 'moderately anxious' category, while a few of them are under the 'slightly anxious' category. Some of the top-rated anxiety-inducing situations include communication difficulties such as not being able to understand the interlocutor's words or phrases, not understanding the meaning behind an utterance, not knowing the answer to a question, being asked difficult questions, and not being prepared to answer. Moreover, the present study also identified situations that induce 'slightly anxious' levels of communication apprehension, including being corrected by the interlocutor, listening to a non-native accent, discussing specific topics, and noticing signs such as facial expressions that make one uncomfortable. These findings are consistent with the findings obtained in Wilang and Singhasiri's (2017) study conducted in the Thailand context and other studies such as Çağatay's (2015) study in the Turkish context and Heng et al.'s (2012) study in the Malaysian context.

The findings of the present study suggest that English-speaking apprehension and anxiety are prevalent among individuals in various communication situations. The results indicate that some communication situations induce higher levels of anxiety than others. Previous studies have also reported similar findings. For example, McCroskey and Richmond (1991) maintained that communication apprehension is more intense in situations where individuals are lack of communication competence or perceive a higher level of evaluation or judgment from the interlocutor. Similarly, Neuliep and McCroskey (1997) reported that individuals experience higher levels of anxiety when interacting with people from different cultures or when using a non-native language. The anxiety-inducing situations identified in the present study can be seen as triggering negative thoughts and perceptions, such as inadequacy and fear of being judged by others. Current theories on language anxiety suggest that it is a complex phenomenon that can be influenced by various factors such as individual differences, situational factors, and language learning contexts (Horwitz et al., 1986). The findings obtained in the present study shed light on the different array of situations that trigger anxiety in students when speaking English outside the classroom, which enrich our understanding of the nuanced triggers for language anxiety. This highlights the need for tailored interventions to address these anxieties in language learners.

The results also indicated a moderate negative relationship between students' self-perceived speaking skills and their anxiety and a weak negative correlation between students' self-perceived vocabulary size and their anxiety. These findings are in line with those obtained in Abrar's (2017) study in the Indonesian context and in Tercan and Dikilitaş's (2015) study in the Turkish context. One possible explanation for this finding is that the students who are more confident in their speaking skills or have a larger vocabulary may feel less anxious about communicating with others. Therefore, their self-perceived speaking skills or vocabulary size could act as a protective factor against anxiety. On the other hand, students who struggle with speaking or have a smaller vocabulary may feel more anxious about communicating with others. The observed moderate negative relationship between self-perceived speaking skills and

anxiety also aligns with previous research on the role of self-efficacy and confidence in language learning, highlighting that students who feel more competent in their speaking abilities tend to experience lower levels of anxiety (Bandura, 1997; Gregersen, 2003). Skehan (1989) argued that "students at higher levels might enjoy wider repertoire of behaviours which would help them to deal with anxiety in language learning contexts more flexibly" (p.116). Additionally, the weak negative correlation between students' self-perceived vocabulary size and anxiety emphasizes that a richer vocabulary may slightly reduce language-related anxiety, possibly by increasing students' confidence in their ability to confront communication challenges (MacIntyre et al., 1998). These findings underscore the importance of addressing students' self-perceptions and language competence in language education to reduce anxiety and promote effective language learning.

The present study also found that there was a significant difference in the level of anxiety experienced by female and male students, with females exhibiting higher levels of anxiety than males. This result is consistent with the results obtained in several studies in different EFL contexts (e.g., Çağatay, 2015; Gargalianou et al., 2015; Park & French, 2013) but differs from Khreisat's (2022) study, where no significant difference was found in overall anxiety levels between male and female students. Several factors may contribute to the observed difference in anxiety levels, including societal expectations and gender roles, cultural values and practices, lack of confidence, fear of negative evaluation, and different learning styles. Females may feel greater pressure to conform to social norms and expectations surrounding language use, leading to increased anxiety when speaking a foreign language. A meta-analysis research by McLean and Anderson (2009) on gender differences in anxiety disorders has consistently shown that females are more susceptible to experiencing various anxiety disorders, including generalized anxiety disorder and social anxiety disorder. This phenomenon is attributed to a complex interplay of social, cultural, and biological factors. However, these findings are not conclusive in similar contexts (e.g., Abrar, 2017) and further research is necessary to better understand these factors and design effective interventions aimed at reducing anxiety and improving language learning outcomes for all students.

CONCLUSION

The present study has identified various situations that induce students' oral English communication anxiety beyond the classroom, highlighting the importance of understanding the factors that contribute to communication apprehension. The findings suggest that language processing difficulties, situational factors, and individual differences all play a role in inducing communication anxiety. The study also found a moderate negative relationship between students' self-perceived speaking skills and their anxiety and a weak negative correlation between their self-perceived vocabulary size and anxiety. These results suggest that confidence in speaking skills and vocabulary size may act as protective factors against anxiety, and that anxiety may hinder the development of speaking skills and vocabulary. Furthermore, the study found a significant difference in anxiety levels between male and female students, indicating that gender may also be a factor in English communication apprehension.

These findings have practical implications for curriculum designers and teachers in the Indonesian context. It is important to create a safe and supportive learning environment that encourages students to practice their language skills and reduce anxiety-inducing situations. Strategies such as role-play, group discussions, and language games can help students feel more comfortable in using the target language. It is also important to provide opportunities for individual practice, constructive feedback, and positive reinforcement to help build students' confidence. Additionally, educators should take into account individual differences and cultural factors when designing English language learning programs. For example, addressing societal expectations and gender roles can help reduce the gender gap in communication apprehension.

Finally, further research is needed to better understand the factors that contribute to communication anxiety and develop effective interventions aimed at reducing students' English-speaking anxiety.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the valuable insights obtained from this study, the present study has several limitations that should be taken into consideration when interpreting the results. Firstly, the data collected in this study were based solely on self-report questionnaires, which could lead to response bias and may not fully capture the complexity of the phenomenon under investigation. Future studies should consider using different methods, such as observational studies or interviews, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' English communication anxiety in various contexts. Secondly, the number of participants is small and restricted to only three higher institutions in a single province in Indonesia, which may not be representative of the larger population. Therefore, caution should be taken in generalizing the findings to larger populations. Future studies could involve a larger and more diverse sample from multiple provinces in Indonesia to increase the generalizability of the findings. Finally, this study was conducted in a specific context, and the results may not be applicable to other cultural or linguistic contexts. Future studies should investigate oral English communication anxiety in different contexts to provide a more nuanced understanding of this phenomenon.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings of the present study, the following recommendations can be made for future research. The present study focused on situational and individual factors, but cultural factors may also play a role in students' English-speaking anxiety. Future research could compare anxiety levels and coping strategies among students from different cultural backgrounds and explore how cultural norms and expectations influence their speaking anxiety. Additionally, the present study found a significant difference in anxiety levels between male and female students. Future research could explore why this difference exists and whether it persists across different cultural and linguistic contexts.

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