



## Article

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# Understanding Second-Year Students' Speaking Anxiety in EFL Virtual Classroom

**Ariqoh Nurjihan**

Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia

**Fancista Azriel Firmansyah**

Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia

**Afrina Majdanis Shofia**

Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia

**Wahyu Indah Mala Rohmana**

Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia

## Abstract

This study investigates speaking anxiety among second-year EFL students in online learning contexts by analyzing four main dimensions: their emotional responses, the factors that provoke anxiety, its impact on speaking performance, and the strategies they use to manage it. Using a qualitative descriptive design, the study gathers data through interviews with fifteen students who have previously engaged in online English-speaking activities. The results show that the experience of speaking anxiety differs across individuals. While some students feel more comfortable in virtual classes because the lack of direct eye contact helps reduce pressure, others report heightened anxiety due to insufficient preparation, poor internet connectivity, limited vocabulary, or fear of errors and negative judgment. These influences shape students' fluency and concentration during speaking tasks. To deal with anxiety, students employ various strategies, such as preparing their material beforehand, calming themselves before speaking, using humour to ease tension, or utilizing supporting tools like digital prompters. The lecturer's behaviour also plays a crucial role, as supportive and expressive instructors tend to create a more relaxed atmosphere, whereas less engaging teaching styles can intensify stress. Online learning environments may either lessen or heighten anxiety depending on classroom management and learners' readiness. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to foster a supportive and comfortable learning space to enhance students' confidence in speaking.

## Keywords

Confidence, EFL students, Online learning, Speaking anxiety.

## Introduction

One of the most essential skills in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning is speaking, because it requires learners to express ideas clearly but also interact meaningfully and use language spontaneously in real-time communication. This skill is paramount as it directly reflects communicative competence, which is the ultimate goal of language acquisition (Yuzar et al., 2023). For university students, especially those in English Education Programs, speaking competence becomes even more significant as it underpins academic

presentations, group discussions and future classroom teaching responsibilities, where they must model linguistic accuracy and fluency. However, despite its central role, many EFL learners still experience difficulties in developing their speaking proficiency due to psychological barriers, particularly speaking anxiety (Koçali & Aşık, 2026; Nguyen, 2025). This persistent anxiety highlights the need to understand how emotional and cognitive processes interact with speaking performance in EFL settings, suggesting that affective filters can significantly impede language output even when grammatical knowledge is sufficient.

Speaking anxiety is commonly described as emotional discomfort, fear and tension that arise when learners are required to speak in a foreign language, often resulting in disrupted fluency and reduced classroom participation (Permatasari, 2023). According to Cancino & Cabello (2024), foreign language anxiety involves feelings of worry and negative emotional reactions when using a language that is not one's mother tongue, which is categorized as a situation-specific anxiety. These negative emotions can interfere with cognitive processing, making it more difficult for learners to retrieve vocabulary or construct sentences smoothly during speaking tasks because working memory resources are divided between performance and self-monitoring. In online learning contexts, speaking anxiety may be deepened due to technology mediated communication, peer presence on screen, and performance pressure during synchronous virtual interactions (Cancino & Cabello, 2024). As a result, learners often experience additional layers of emotional strain that may not be present in a traditional face-to-face speaking environment, such as anxiety over technical issues, hyper-awareness of self-image on camera, and the ambiguity of digital social cues.

The transition to online learning has reshaped speaking practices in EFL classrooms, altering the dynamics of interaction and exposure. Virtual platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet create new psychological situations where some learners feel increased anxiety due to unstable internet connections, limited preparation time, and fear of being judged when speaking on camera (Salsabilla et al., 2025; Korompot, & Baa, 2022). However, online settings can also reduce anxiety for some learners because limited physical presence and reduced eye contact may create a more comfortable speaking space (Fadhillah et al., 2024), indicating that the digital environment possesses a dual nature it can both provoke and alleviate anxiety. Lecturer support, feedback style, and classroom atmosphere play a significant role in shaping learners' emotional comfort during online speaking activities, underscoring that instructor mediation is crucial in navigating the affective challenges of virtual language learning.

Although research on speaking anxiety in online EFL contexts has grown, studies focusing specifically on second year university learners remain limited. Second year students represent a transitional stage, no longer beginners yet not fully advanced, where academic expectations increase but emotional regulation in speaking tasks may still fluctuate. This developmental position makes it important to examine how speaking anxiety is experienced and managed during online English learning, as these students are at a critical juncture where their speaking habits and confidence levels are being solidified for upper-level academic and professional contexts. In this context understanding the structural and delivery aspects of effective speaking such as those outlined in informative speaking frameworks becomes relevant. For instance effective informative speaking relies on not overestimating audience knowledge, relating the subject directly to listeners, avoiding overly technical language, steering clear of abstractions, and personalizing ideas all of which can help reduce speaker anxiety and enhance clarity and engagement (Rinda, Romana, & Indrastana, 2019).

Therefore, this study aims to explore speaking anxiety among second year EFL students in online English classes by identifying forms of anxiety, contributing factors, and coping strategies employed during virtual speaking tasks. The findings are expected to contribute insights for lecturers in designing supportive online speaking environments that enhance confidence, engagement, and oral proficiency, thereby facilitating a more effective and psychologically secure language learning experience in digital modalities (Fadhillah et al., 2024; Sulistyowati & Mukti, 2023).

## Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative design to explore how qualitative design to explore how students experience speaking anxiety while participating in online learning. The main technique used is interviews, so that researchers can obtain firsthand accounts from second-year students who are learning English as a foreign language. The selection of this method helped the researcher to further understand the emotional reactions of the participants, because the qualitative approach, especially interviews, is effective in exploring personal experiences and emotional conditions in educational situations (Nugroho, Miftakh, & Wahyuna, 2021; Subekti & Goram, 2022; Merdiana, 2022). Through this approach, this study aims to provide a more in depth and detailed description of how students interpret anxiety when attending virtual classes.

This study involved fifteen second-year students from the English Education Program as respondents. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, allowing the researcher to determine which students truly met the required criteria. In this way, the information provided by the respondents was richer and more relevant because it came from their own experiences (Nugroho, Miftakh, & Wahyuna, 2021; Afidawati, Arrasyid, & Ikawati, 2024). All selected participants were also accustomed to using digital platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet, which are an important part of the online learning process that is the focus of this study (Kaniadewi, 2022; Andewi & Trinovita, 2024). These tools had been part of their regular English learning activities. This study employed an interview instrument consisting of fifteen structured questions. These questions were designed to examine students' experiences of speaking anxiety in online learning contexts. This is aligned with the studies that showed interviews are effective for identifying emotional, cognitive, and situational factors of this research (Fitriani, Julia, & Gusrayani, 2022). The primary instrument for this study was a qualitative descriptive approach with an interview guide developed to investigate the four aspects systematically: 1) Emotional Reactions, 2) Factors of Anxiety, 3) Effects on Speaking Performance, and 4) Coping Strategies. The use of structured interview aligns with Nur and Baa's (2022) to explore students speaking anxiety and the strategies to be applied during the learning activities.

The interview data were examined using a thematic analysis approach. This method enabled the researcher to identify recurring patterns related to speaking anxiety in online English classes, a technique also applied in Nur and Baa's (2022) investigation of learner's anxiety factors and coping strategies during online learning. After the initial coding process, the findings were organized into several thematic categories. These categories were formed based on similarities observed across participants' responses. A study from Fitriani, Julia and Gusrayani (2022) found that speaking anxiety emerges from low confidence, fear of negative evaluation, and comparison with peers. Finally, this study formulates several main themes, namely how students respond emotionally, what factors their anxiety, and how this anxiety affects their speaking ability, and the steps they take to overcome it.

## Findings & Discussion

This study focuses on how second-year students experience various emotional reactions, what factors their anxiety, how anxiety affects their speaking ability, and the steps they take to overcome it while attending online English classes. From the thematic analysis of the interviews, four main themes emerged: 1) Emotional reactions toward online speaking, 2) Factors that cause anxiety, 3) The impact of anxiety on speaking performance, and 4) Strategies used by students to deal with this anxiety.

### Emotional Reactions toward Online Speaking

Most participants explained that speaking session in online classes often cause considerable emotional stress. Of the fifteen students, thirteen admitted to feeling anxiety or tension when asked to speak in English on Zoom or Google Meet (Andewi & Trinovita, 2024).

These feelings do not usually occur alone, but are accompanied by physical reactions such as trembling hands, a frozen mind, or uncontrolled speech. This situation is understandable because speaking in a virtual space creates the sensation of being “stared at” directly by all participants, making students feel they must perform perfectly. This is clearly illustrated in R3’s statement.

“When the lecturer calls my name, my hands get cold because I keep thinking I will say the wrong sentence.”

The fear of making a mistake causes the body to respond spontaneously. Similarly, R8 experienced similar panic and said,

“Even before un muting my mic, my heartbeat gets very fast and I feel like my mind is blanking out.”

This quote shows that the anxiety that arises is not just ordinary nervousness, but intense enough to affect their physical condition and focus. These findings show how the online environment can increase feelings of insecurity when students have to speak English in front of many people, even if it is only through a screen.

Although many students experience anxiety when speaking in online classes, there are also some participants, seven in total, who actually feel more confident when speaking online. They believe that virtual environment provides a more comfortable space because there are no direct stares from friends or lecturers, which can often feel intimidating in face-to-face classes. Some of them said that interacting through a screen makes the atmosphere feel more private and less awkward than speaking in a physical room full of an audience. This is illustrated in R4’s statement,

“In online classes I feel more confident because I don’t have many eyes staring at me. It makes me speak more freely and without overthinking every word.”

This statement reflects that the absence of direct eye contact can reduce the mental pressure that usually arises when someone has to perform in front of a large audience. A similar experience was shared by R6, who stated:

“Speaking online feels safer for me since I’m not standing in front of people, I can focus on my sentences without worrying about how everyone looks at me.”

This statement shows that virtual spaces help some students focus their attention on the contents of the conversation, rather than on the judgment of others. These findings illustrate that online learning does not always have a negative impact on speaking skills; for some individuals, the online environment is actually a safer and more supportive place to express themselves.

Despite the convenience of online learning, some students still feel that the online classroom environment does not always help them maintain their motivation. Five participants mentioned that they often lose interest during class because of limited interaction and a monotonous learning rhythm. Long periods of silence, a lack of spontaneous responses from classmates, and minimal classroom dynamics make them feel bored quickly. This was conveyed by R9, who said:

“Sometimes online classes feel boring because there is not much interaction.”

This opinion was reinforced by R13, who said:

“I lose motivation easily since the atmosphere feels quiet and passive.”

These quotes show that a classroom atmosphere that is too static can dampen enthusiasm for learning, especially for students who are accustomed to direct interaction. On the other hand, four students had a much more positive experience. They considered online classes to be a pleasant learning space because they provided freedom and comfort that they did not get in face-to-face classes. The more relaxed atmosphere, not having to travel far, and the flexibility of attending classes from home made them feel calmer and more ready to participate. As R1 said:

“I enjoy online learning because I feel comfortable participating from my home.”

Similarly, R14 added:

“It’s more flexible for me, and I feel less pressure when answering questions.”

For his group, online learning actually reduces social pressure, allowing them to focus on the material without worrying about other people’s stares or judgments. These findings show that students’ experiences with online classes vary greatly. Some find the flexibility helpful, while others find it difficult to maintain motivation due to the lack of interaction.

### Factors of Anxiety

Various factors contribute to causing anxiety in speaking among students, and these findings show that the source of anxiety does not only come from language ability, but also from technical factors and the learning environment. One of the most common causes is the fear of making mistakes. Ten participants admitted to being afraid of making mistakes in grammar, pronunciation, or choosing the right vocabulary. This is evident in R3’s statement;

“I often hesitate before speaking because I’m scared my grammar will be wrong.”

This kind of anxiety usually arises because students feel that their language skills will be immediately assessed by lecturers and peers. R7 also had similar concerns and said;

“I always worry that I will pronounce a word incorrectly and people will notice.”

Fear of being judged by others causes many of them to hold back, which makes their anxiety even stronger. Technical issues are also a major factor contributing to anxiety during online learning. Eight students mentioned that unstable internet connections or audio glitches made them panic when they had to speak. R10 explained;

“When my internet starts lagging, I panic because I think the lecturer can’t hear me clearly.”

When technology fails, students feel they have lost control of the situation, which adds to their mental stress. R12 experienced something similar and said;

“Audio delays make me anxious because I’m scared people will misunderstand me.”

This fear of being misunderstood is natural because interrupted communication can make messages unclear.

In addition, nine students stated that they often forget the material they have prepared, which factors anxiety. R5 describes this with the sentence;

“Sometimes my mind suddenly goes blank even though I prepared.”

This “blank mind” phenomenon often occurs when pressure increases, and students feel that all their preparation has disappeared. R9 also experienced this and said;

“I get anxious when I forget my points while speaking. It makes me feel unprepared even when I studied before class.”

This shows that even though they have studied, the pressure of having to perform makes them doubt their own abilities. Another equally important factor is the lecturer’s teaching style. Six students admitted that lecturers who are too strict or evaluative exacerbate their anxiety. One respondent said;

“When the lecturer sounds strict, I become afraid to speak because I don’t want to be corrected harshly.” (R4)

Students who are sensitive to criticism often refrain from speaking to avoid harsh comments. R6 reinforced this by saying;

“The experience of receiving feedback that is considered “sharp” can leave a feeling of fear that affects the next speaking session.”

Overall, these findings indicate that speaking anxiety arises from a combination of internal and external factors that influence each other. This emphasizes the importance of creating a more supportive learning environment so that students feel more prepared and confident when speaking.

### Effects of Anxiety on Speaking Performance

Anxiety has been proven to have a significant impact on students’ oral performance and activity during learning. Ten participants said that they often experience symptoms such as nervousness and loss of focus when they have to speak. R2 revealed;

“When I start speaking and anxiety suddenly arises, my head feels empty.”

This experience shows that anxiety can suddenly interrupt the flow of thought, as if everything that had been prepared beforehand has simply vanished. This is natural when the pressure to perform well causes students to focus too much on the possibility of making mistakes, rather than on the message they want to convey.

Similarly, R6 said;

“Sometimes I talk too fast because I want to finish quickly. Afterwards, I realize that what I said was unclear because my anxiety took over.”

This admission shows how anxiety can cause someone to shorten the speaking process in order to reduce discomfort. However, this pattern actually makes the message unclear, so that the communication goal is not optimally achieved. In addition to affecting fluency, anxiety also causes some students to choose to be passive. Five respondents admitted that they felt more comfortable staying silent than taking the risk of making mistakes.

“I often choose not to speak because I’m afraid of making mistakes. It feels safer to avoid embarrassment than to embarrass myself.” (R11)

This attitude shows that fear is considered more dominant than opportunities for growth, so students place themselves in a “comfort zone” that actually hinders their progress.

R14 also described a similar situation, saying;

“When I get nervous, I prefer to turn off the microphone and just listen. I’m afraid my voice will sound bad in front of my friends.”

This statement indicates that anxiety is not only related to the content of speech, but also physical aspects such as voice. Fear of being judged by others makes students feel more comfortable hiding behind a screen, especially in online classes. However, not all effects are negative without solutions. Six participants said that understanding the material or practicing beforehand can improve fluency and self-confidence.

“I am more confident speaking when I already know the topic. With practice, my anxiety decreases and I can speak more naturally.” (R9)

This experience confirms that thorough preparation can calm the mind and give a sense of control, so that anxiety no longer dominates. R3 expressed a similar sentiment, saying;

“The more often I participate in speaking sessions, the more comfortable I feel. Over time, I realized that making small mistakes is normal.”

This statement illustrates that repeated exposure to speaking activities allows students to build tolerance for fear. With routine practice, they begin to understand that mistakes are not embarrassing, but rather part of the learning process. These findings show that anxiety can indeed hinder performance, but it is not something that cannot be overcome. Through regular practice and good preparation, students can build confidence and gradually reduce the negative effects of anxiety when speaking (Nguyen, 2025). This supports broader the view that emotional factors and performance are closely interconnected and it plays a crucial role in improving speaking outcomes. Therefore, the findings emphasize that teachers should not only focus on language accuracy but also create supportive learning environments to normalize mistakes and encourage active participation (Ding and Yusof, 2025).

### Coping Strategies

Many students have their own ways of relieving anxiety when they have to speak in online classes. Most choose to prepare in advance because this step gives them a sense of control over what they are going to say. Preparation does have a calming effect because we are not entering the situation without direction. This method also helps reduce worries about forgetting or losing ideas when it is our turn to speak. It is no surprise that this strategy is a popular choice among students (Bárkányi, 2021). However, while preparation is widely preferred, it should be viewed not only as a practical strategy but also a mechanism to promote confidence and emotional regulation. Therefore, the effectiveness of preparation gives a readiness but also the role in shaping learners to improve communicative ability. When learners have mentally prepared, they are more willing to take risk in communication, that becomes a key for speaking development (Nguyen, 2025).

“Before speaking, I always prepare what I want to say because it makes me calmer.” (R1)

This statement illustrates how preparation can significantly reduce mental pressure. Students who write down important points find it easier to stay focused and not panic. This strategy feels very relatable because almost everyone feels more confident when they feel prepared. Preparation also provides space for clear thinking, making the speaking process feel more natural.

Five other students chose a more physical approach to calm themselves. They tended to use breathing techniques, drink water, or relax a little before speaking. In addition, simple actions such as taking a deep breath can help control the heart rate, which usually increases due to nervousness. These small methods show that managing anxiety does not always have to be complicated.

“I usually take a deep breath before speaking to control my heart rate.” (R4)

“Drinking water and relaxing my shoulders make me a little more relaxed.” (R12)

Both statements confirm that physical calmness has a strong influence on mental calmness. By relaxing their bodies, students feel more prepared to face stressful speaking situations. This technique is suitable for those who often experience physical reactions such as cold hands or a pounding heart. This method is also easy to apply at any time without the need for additional tools. This shows that anxiety management can be done through very simple steps.

Two other students chose to use humor as a weapon to break the tension. They usually crack light jokes before starting to speak, in order to create the atmosphere, and feel more relaxed. This technique also helps shift the focus from anxiety to warmer interactions.

“I make a few jokes before I start talking, it makes me more relaxed, especially when I see my friend smiling.” (R10)

This statement shows that humor can create a friendlier and less intimidating atmosphere. When the atmosphere is lighter, students do not feel so pressured to perform perfectly. This strategy is suitable for those who have a spontaneous personality or are accustomed to building social relationships through humor. In addition, humor can also be a reminder that communication is not just a performance, but an interaction between people. That way, the mental burden is reduced.

In addition to humor, some students rely on the power of positive thinking. Five respondents chose to remind themselves that mistakes are part of the learning process. This approach is very wise because dealing with anxiety mentally requires courage. They try to change their perspective from fear of making mistakes to seeing mistakes as opportunities for growth. This strategy helps them stay engaged in discussions without being too hard on themselves (Nadia et al, 2023; Hanifa, 2018). Besides, it shows the internal mindset also plays an important role in reducing anxiety. When students think positively, they become calmer and more willing to speak. As a result, they can more focus on expressing their ideas rather than worrying about mistakes. Therefore, positive thinking not only helps students emotionally but also supports better speaking performance and confidence.

“I always remind myself that making mistakes is normal because we are still learning. This way of thinking helps me to speak up.” (R7)

“I remind myself that other people must have been nervous too, so I don’t need to be embarrassed.” (R9)

Both quotes illustrate how positive self-talk can reduce mental pressure. By convincing themselves that everyone experiences tension, they no longer feel alone. I think this approach is very effective because anxiety often arises from excessive negative thoughts. This proves that psychological strategies can be as powerful as technical strategies.

Some students also feel more comfortable when speaking activities are packaged in an interesting way. Eight respondents mentioned that games, role plays, or visual aids help to create a more relaxed atmosphere. Fun activities are indeed able to divert attention from fear to focus on the task at hand. These kinds of activities break the ice in a classroom that is usually tense. In addition, students become more involved because the interaction feels more natural and less formal.

“Roleplaying is fun and makes speaking tasks feel less formal.” (R8)

“Activities like games make the class feel less tense than usual.” (R7)

These two statements show that creative learning designs can significantly reduce psychological pressure. Game based activities encourage students to try without feeling closely monitored. This strategy is important, especially for students who tend to be shy. When the atmosphere is made more lively, speaking skills can emerge spontaneously. This proves that the classroom atmosphere plays a big role in building confidence.

In addition to personal strategies, support from lecturers also has a very strong impact. Eleven students said that friendly, empathic, and supportive lecturers made them feel safe. The role of lecturers is crucial because the way they respond can influence students’ courage to speak up. When lecturers give feedback in a gentle and non-judgmental manner, students’ anxiety usually decreases. The warmth of lecturers also creates a more humane learning space.

“Warm and supportive lecturers make the class feel safe, not scary.” (R9)

“If the lecturer gives feedback gently, I’m not afraid to try again.” (R5)

These two statements emphasize that emotional support from teachers should not be underestimated. Students tend to be more willing to take risks when they feel valued. Teachers who are

able to create a positive atmosphere can help students overcome the fear that has been holding them back. This kind of support encourages students to try again even if they have made mistakes. This proves that interpersonal relationships greatly determine the learning experience.

This finding shows that speaking anxiety remains a major challenge for second-year students. Factors such as a fear of making mistakes, lack of preparation, and technical obstacles such as poor internet connection are common causes. However, some students feel that online classes provide a more comfortable environment because they do not have to appear in person. Strategies such as thorough preparation, emotional management, and lecturer support have proven to be very helpful.

These results confirm that speaking anxiety is not something that cannot be overcome. With the right support and strategies, students can gradually build their confidence and improve their speaking skills. The findings of this research examine speaking anxiety becomes the main challenges for second year EFL student in online class activities. The findings revealed that almost participants shared comparable views, with thirteen out of fifteen respondents state has experienced nervousness or anxiety during online speaking sessions. This data shows even though online classes allow students to speak from a more comfortable environment, some students are experiencing emotional pressure. This statement also stated by [Permatasari \(2023\)](#), that explained if students feel afraid and nervous when they have to speak English in online class room. Besides, according to [Toubot, Seng, and Azizah \(2018\)](#), speaking represents the most difficult skill in learning a language, because it requires students to produce language in a real time.

Based on the interview results, lots of students felt nervous, afraid of being judge, and worried about making mistakes in practicing to speak English. The primary reason from students' speaking anxiety were grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary problems. Several students also reported that technical disruptions, such a weak internet access caused audio delayed or having unclear pronunciation made students more anxious due to concerns that their speech could be interrupted. The findings by [Akmad & Abatayo \(2024\)](#) stated that unstable internet connection can disturb students' focus and feel embarrassed. A bad internet connection disturbed students' focus on speaking ability because students can lose focus and it reduce their confidence to speak English.

The interview data indicate that seven students feel more confident to speak in online classes because they did not need to face their classmates and lectures directly. It also supported by [Kusmayanti, Hendryanti & Suwarsono \(2022\)](#), who discovered that online platforms may offer a more relaxed environment for learners who are shy and introvert. Besides, [Andewi and Trinovita \(2024\)](#) states that, if virtual classroom designs an interactive feature to create real-time interaction, immediate feedback, and peer collaboration to achieve proficiency in speaking English. It helps students to speak English more comfortably and reduces the pressure of speaking in front of the larger group of people. The mixed opinions highlight that comfort in virtual learning varies based on personal characteristics and the support they received. Students experienced emotional reactions because it influenced by several factors, such the fear of being judge when they make errors. [Pakpahan and Gultom \(2020\)](#) stated if students pursuit perfection is associated with fear of making mistakes, that demonstrate sign of perfectionism. In addition, poor internet stability may present a considerable challenge. It also in line with the statement by [Nugroho, Miftakh, and Wahyuna \(2021\)](#) that students were concern the audience might not understand what are they talking about because poor internet connections caused their speech become unclear. Besides, the two factors previously discussed that limited vocabulary requires students to prepare well, as lacking sufficient word knowledge can hinder oral performance and increase anxiety ([Faqihi, 2024](#)).

Anxiety has a noticeable impact on students' speaking performance. Ten students mentioned that when they felt nervous, they tended to speak too quickly or lose focus on what they intended to say. This aligns with the findings by [Topalov, Knežević, & Halupka-Rešetar \(2023\)](#), who reported that anxiety can disturb students' concentration and reduce their confidence in speaking English. Lots of students also less active or remained quiet in class because they were afraid of making errors. In contrast, students who has prepared before class will be easier and confident to speak better. This is also supported by [Fadillah et al](#)

(2025), who suggested preparation and practice help student to reduce their anxiety. Having enough preparation not only reduces anxiety but also increases the quality of students' performance in speaking.

The studies found several ways for students in managing speaking anxiety. The common strategy is preparing notes or materials before class; it helps students' readiness to speak English and reduce their nervousness. Some students also use calming techniques or commonly called as relaxing method, such as deep breathing, drinking water, also having a positive thinking. It also agrees with the research by Afidawati, Arrasyid, and Ikawati (2024) that relaxation or calming techniques is used to decrease speaking fear. These strategies are similar to research found by Liu & Wang (2023), who states that positive thinking and emotional control help to reduce speaking anxiety. By having a positive thinking helps students to improve their presentation performance.

Another important result concerns the role of lecturer support and how the feedback is delivered, it was mentioned by most all participants. Students indicated that they felt easily speaking when lecture provided encouraging and approachable feedback (Muntasir et al., 2022). In contrast, student felt more afraid to talk English when the lecture overly strict or offered comment that felt harsh. Alshumaimeri and Alhumud (2021) states if students' confidence in speaking English can be increased when the learning environment feels safe and non-threatening, supporting, that lecturer emotional support can reduce fear and encourage participation. These insights correspond with Cancino and Cabello (2024), who argued that the teacher's emotional approach plays a key role in building students' confidence and participation in online speaking classes.

## Conclusion

This study examines the speaking anxiety experienced by second-year EFL students in virtual classroom environment. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the researcher conducted interviews with fifteen students who has previously participated in online English-speaking classroom. The study focuses on four major dimensions, such as students' emotional responses, the source of speaking anxiety, the impact of speaking anxiety on students' performance, and the strategies used by students to cope with it. The findings show that students' emotional responses vary widely, starting from mild nervousness to intense fear. Most of the respondents reported feelings of worry, tension, embarrassment, and self-doubt when required to speak in front of their classmates and lecturers during the virtual session.

Several factors contribute to these anxious feelings. The internal factors included fear of making mistakes, perfectionism, limited vocabulary, and low self-confidence. External factors involved fear of negative judgement, pressure about other people expectations, and technical issues such as unstable internet connections that caused students fear they speaking would not be understood. The impact of speaking anxiety is impacted to students' performance, such as spoke less fluently, do not have larger ideas and has a limited vocabulary. Anxiety also reduced their ability to think clearly and difficulty to organize thoughts.

Despite these challenges, students employes various coping strategies. These included preparing a note before speaking, relaxations also having a positive thinking. Some of students also relied on seeking support from peers or creating a comfortable environment before speaking in virtual classroom. Overall, the speaking anxiety in virtual classroom is a complex emotional experience influenced by both psychological and technological factors.

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**Corresponding author:** Ariqoh Nurjihan

Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, Indonesia.

**Email:** [ariqohnurjihann@gmail.com](mailto:ariqohnurjihann@gmail.com)

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