



Factors Influencing Beginner Students' Anxiety in Speaking English

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Abstract

Anxiety is a feeling of uncertainty or hesitation about one's ability or what one wants to do. In the context of learning a foreign language, anxiety can be described as a feeling of tension or apprehension. This research aimed to identify the factors that influence beginner students' anxiety in speaking English and to present strategies for reducing anxiety in speaking English for beginner students at the Savannakhet University. The research was conducted with beginner students at the Savannakhet University. Qualitative data analysis was used. The researcher collected data from 19 students in the beginner class, 10 of whom were male and 9 of whom were female. The findings showed that there were two factors that influenced the beginner students: (1) speaking activities, and (2) error correction. Furthermore, the researcher found four strategies for reducing anxiety in speaking English: (1) preparation, (2) relaxation, (3) making friend, and (4) positive thinking. The researcher also recommends that future research on this topic focus on other factors that may influence beginner students' anxiety, such as the level of the student's English proficiency, the teaching methods used, and the classroom environment. **Keywords:** 1) Anxiety 2) Beginner Students' 3) Speaking English activities

1.1 Introduction

English is a West Germanic language that originated in England. It is the third most widely spoken native language in the world, after Mandarin Chinese and Spanish. English is also the most widely learned second language, and is spoken as a lingua franca in many regions around the world. The English language has a long and complex history. It is descended from the Anglo-Saxon language, which was brought to England by Germanic tribes in the 5th century AD. Over time, the Anglo-Saxon language was influenced by other languages, including Old Norse, French, and Latin. This resulted in the development of Middle English, which was spoken from the 11th to the 15th centuries. Modern English began to develop in the 16th century, with the introduction of the printing press and the Renaissance. This period saw a great deal of innovation in the English language, including the introduction of new words and phrases from other languages. Today, English is spoken by over 1.5 billion people around the world. It is the official language of 53 countries, and is used in many international organizations. English is also the language of science, technology, and business. The English language is constantly evolving, and new words and phrases are being added all the time. This makes English a very dynamic and interesting language to learn. English came about in England Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and in the south eastern part of Scotland. The English language is a fascinating and complex language with a long and rich history. English influences of United Kingdom and Great Britain throughout the British Empire form the seventeenth to the mid- twentieth century's the language has been propagated widely around the world (Reddy, 2020). English is spoken in many countries and it is considered as official language. English is the only language which serves as a link language uniting people at the global level. It is not only a language of business, industry and information, but also confers

confidence, imagination and power to discover, invent, innovate and create. English is taught as second language and has also become a symbol of better life in India (Rajitha, 2020). English is a top requirement of those who are seeking jobs. English as a foreign language is taught in all schools in Indonesia. It has been taught in every Educational Institution Level (Rohmah, 2020).

Presently, English is more powerful in Laos because Lao people are now using the social networks and the varieties of cultural all around the world. Therefore, Lao people should adapt themselves in order to be able to communicate in English thus to keep up with those situations, and to provide a good servicing to the visitors (Bounpan Keomany et.al., 2020) There are many languages in the world but only some languages are used by the people as a global language in international forum such as English, Chinese, Russian, Italian and Spanish, among them, English becomes more popular than other languages in the modern world. For over 60 nations in the world use English as their official language, and have a dominant place in a further 20. It is also dominant in all six continents. There were plenty numbers of students starting their English since they were in secondary school. But unfortunately, could not help them to communicate with foreigners. In contrast, it made them less confidence. This might affect to get an opportunity as a profession and to support higher education in the future. The Ministry of Education has recognized that kind of problems, and they instituted the foreign language curriculum. English program started from secondary school in order to open more chances to teenagers. So, they can be familiar with English skill for self-development, to pursue their further knowledge and paving way for their future career. According to Ellis, Mark & Johnson, Christine "Classroom activity is one of the most effective methods to generate chances for students interacting with others, providing them to be able to communicate efficiently prepare for speaking in the current situation, and also to generate English speaking confidence".

After Laos established its independence as Lao People Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) in 1975, the English language has played the important role of the country development. Various international organizations were appropriately accepted by the government policy to assistant for developing the Lao country (Souriyavongsa, 2013). However, at that moment the English language was limited use, because the majority of the language officially used as Lao language used in official documents of the government and a medium of teaching and learning processes in institutions including secondary schools and higher education levels (Souriyavongsa, 2013). The English language is one of the foreign languages that necessary and needed for the workplace to develop a high level of English skills in business communication. Identify that the demands for English is increasing among Lao people in the conditions of employments, especially within the government in seeking recruits' officers with good command of English skills to attract more foreign capital for economic development. Several of occupations require the applicants who have a good English knowledge. It is believable that teaching English as a foreign language has become a priority for educational reforms and development strategies (Medalla, 2004). Laos is one of the EFL countries focuses on the English language learning in order to develop its possible to be equal to other countries (Phatchara, 2018).

From my observation the Beginner students may lack confidence in their English-speaking skills. They may feel like they don't know enough vocabulary or grammar, and this can make them feel insecure. The researcher's findings suggest that it is important to address the factors that contribute to anxiety in speaking English in order to help English learners improve their English-speaking skills. By creating a supportive environment, helping students build their confidence, and teaching them about the language, we can help them overcome their anxiety and become more fluent English speakers.

1.2. Specific Objectives

- To identify the factors influencing beginner students' anxiety in Speaking English for beginner students at the Savannakhet University.
- To present the strategies in reducing anxiety in speaking English for beginner students at Savannakhet University.

1.3 Research Questions

- What are the factors influencing beginner students' anxiety in speaking English at Savannakhet University?
- How can they reduce English speaking anxiety among beginner students at Savannakhet University?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Influential factors

The influential factors are those factors that can affect some features of target object. Influential factors can be used as control variables to determine the key influential factors of an object. In the field of mobile phone behavior analysis, influential factors mainly include demographic factors, geographical factors, and psychological factors (Abidilatha, 2021). The availability of family members is of course an influential factor in the receipt of support. The other important influential factor is the longevity, number and form of prior connections with the adopted region for retirement (dictionary, 2023) Influential factors are those that have a significant impact on something. They can be either positive or negative, and they can be internal or external. Internal influential factors are those that come from within a person or organization. They can include things like personality, skills, knowledge, and motivation. External influential factors are those that come from outside a person or organization. They can include things like the economy, the political climate, and the social environment. The importance of influential factors can vary depending on the situation. For example, in a business setting, the economy might be a more important influential factor than personality. In a personal setting, personality might be a more important influential factor than the economy. Influential factors can be difficult to identify and measure, but they are essential for understanding and predicting outcomes. They can help us to predict outcomes. By understanding the influential factors that affect a particular situation, we can make better predictions about the likely outcome. Influential factors can be difficult to identify and measure, but they are essential for understanding and predicting outcomes. By understanding the influential factors that affect a particular situation, we can make better decisions and achieve our goals. (Igi-global, 2021).

2.2. Speaking activities

Speaking activities is a linguistic behavior coupled with listening for the purpose of interpersonal communication. It is the articulation of the voice in a language to convey the knowledge, thoughts, feelings, or needs of the speaker to the listener by using words, tone of voice, and gestures, until it is understood. Good speech is the use of words, tone of voice, and various gestures. Efficiently and ethically social traditions to convey useful ideas, knowledge, feelings, needs, attitudes and experiences to the listeners and cause the responses that the speakers want. (Nantawan&Souvarinthon, 2019). They can be used to improve a learner's fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and confidence in speaking. There are many different types of speaking activities, but some of the most common ones include: Discussions: Learners discuss a topic in pairs or groups. This can be a free-flowing discussion or one that is structured around a set of questions. Role-plays: Learners take on the roles of different characters and act out a situation. This can be a way to practice using language in a specific context. Simulations: Learners participate in a simulated experience, such as a job interview or a medical emergency. This can help them to develop the language skills they need for real-world situations. Information gap: Learners are given different information and then need to communicate with each other to complete a task. This can be a way to practice using language for exchanging information. Brainstorming: Learners come up with ideas or solutions to a problem. This can be a way to practice using language creatively. Storytelling: Learners tell a story, either their own or one that they have read. This can be a way to practice using language in a narrative form. Interviews: Learners interview each other or a guest speaker. This can be a way to practice asking and answering questions. Story completion: Learners are given a story that is incomplete and need to fill in the missing parts. This can be a way to practice using language to describe events. The best speaking activities for a particular learner will depend on their level of proficiency, interests, and learning style. It is important to choose activities that are challenging but not overwhelming, and that will help the learner to achieve their specific goals. Speaking activity is the understood as a planned pursuit or undertaking with a clear goal in mind. This goal can be largely dependent on what type of activity you take part in (Maccorf, 2019).

2.3. Error correction

Error correction is a process by which students have to identify the error/mistake in a sentence and convert it into a grammatically correct sentence (Denian, 2021). Error correction is the process of detecting errors in transmitted messages and reconstructing the original error-free data. Error correction ensures that corrected and error-free messages are obtained at the receiver side (Marin, 2022). Error correction is an essential part of many modern communication and data storage systems. It helps to ensure that the data is transmitted and stored accurately, even in the presence of errors. Error correction is a form of the feedback

given to learners to help them improve. Understand the importance of error. In this article, we will learn about error correction definition and its types (Karala, 2020).

2.4. Strategies in reducing anxiety in Speaking English

A strategy for reducing or rewriting strategy is a relation specifying a rewrite for each object or term, compatible with a given reduction relation. Some authors use the term to refer to an evaluation strategy (Palame, 2020). A strategy is a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term or overall aim. It is a way of thinking about how to achieve a goal, and it usually involves a number of different steps or actions. Strategies can be used in a variety of contexts, including business, education, sports, and personal life. In business, for example, a company might develop a strategy to increase market share, improve profitability, or enter a new market. In education, a teacher might develop a strategy to help students learn a new concept or skill. In sports, a coach might develop a strategy to win a game or tournament. This will help you to develop a strategy that is realistic and achievable. A plan of action: The next step is to develop a plan of action that will help you to achieve your goal. This plan should include the specific steps that you need to take, as well as the resources that you will need. Monitoring and evaluation: It is important to monitor your progress and evaluate your strategy on a regular basis. This will help you to identify any problems or challenges that need to be addressed, and to make sure that your strategy is still on track. Strategies can be complex and time-consuming to develop, but they are essential for achieving long-term goals. By taking the time to develop a well-thought-out strategy, you can increase your chances of success. A strategy for reducing is a relation specifying a rewrite for each object or term, compatible with a given reduction relation. Some authors use the term to refer to an evaluation strategy (Recon, 2018).

2.5. Preparation

Preparation is the action or process of making something ready for use or service or of getting ready for some occasion, test, or duty, something that is prepared (Merriam-Webster.com, 2023). the state of being ready for something that will happen, or an action taken to become ready, plans or arrangements that you make to prepare for something (Cambridge dictionary.com, 2016). Preparation is the process of getting ready for something. By taking the time to prepare, you can increase your chances of achieving your goals. Preparation a substance prepared according to a formula, is an activity leading to skilled behavior also is the activity of putting or setting in order in advance of some act or purpose, is the state of having been made ready or prepared for use or action. Preparation is preparatory school work done outside school (Pronunciation Flashcards, 2018).

2.6. Relaxation

Relaxation is the absence of tension. When we're relaxed our breathing is deep, our heart rate is steady, and our mind is clear. Physiologically, relaxation is the activation of our parasympathetic nervous system (Kelsey Schultz, 2019). Relaxation is a process that decreases the stress effects on your mind and body. Relaxation is the techniques can reduce stress symptoms and help you enjoy a better quality of life, especially if you have an illness. Explore relaxation techniques you can do by yourself (Mayo clinic, 2022). Taking a warm bath or shower: A warm bath or shower can help to relax your muscles and promote relaxation. Add essential oils to the bath water for an even more relaxing experience. Taking a nap: A short nap can help to reduce fatigue and promote relaxation. Aim for a nap of 20-30 minutes. When your body is relaxed breathing slows, blood pressure and oxygen consumption decrease, and some people report an increased sense of well-being. This is called the "relaxation". Relaxation is an active skill that requires practice. Like sleeping, you can't force a state of relaxation. It requires mental rest as well as physical and so differs from passive activities such as watching television or reading. It's also not the same as sleeping (mstrust.org.uk, 2020).

2.7. Positive thinking

Positive thinking just means that you approach unpleasantness in a more positive and productive way. You think the best is going to happen, not the worst. Positive thinking often starts with self-talk. Self-talk is the endless stream of unspoken thoughts that run through your head (Staff, n.d). Positive thinking means approaching life's challenges with a positive outlook. It doesn't mean seeing the world through rose-colored lenses by ignoring or glossing over the negative aspects of life. Positive thinking does not necessarily mean avoiding difficult situations. Instead, positive thinking means making the most of potential obstacles, trying to see the best in other people, and viewing yourself and your abilities in a positive light (Cherry, 2022).

Relaxation is a state of physical and mental calmness. It is the opposite of stress, anxiety, and tension. When you are relaxed, your body is loose and your muscles are relaxed. Your breathing is slow and deep. Your mind is clear and focused. There are many different ways to relax. Some common relaxation techniques include:

Meditation: Meditation is a practice of focusing your attention on the present moment. There are many different types of meditation, but all of them involve training your mind to let go of thoughts and emotions.

Deep breathing: Deep breathing is a simple but effective way to relax your body and mind. When you breathe deeply, you bring more oxygen into your body, which helps to reduce stress and anxiety.

Progressive muscle relaxation: Progressive muscle relaxation is a technique that involves tensing and relaxing different muscle groups in your body. This helps to release tension and promote relaxation.

Yoga: Yoga is a mind-body practice that combines physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation. Yoga can be a great way to relax your body and mind and improve your overall health and well-being.

Massage: Massage is a hands-on therapy that involves applying pressure to the muscles and soft tissues of the body. Massage can help to reduce tension, improve circulation, and promote relaxation.

Aromatherapy: Aromatherapy is the use of essential oils to promote relaxation and improve overall health and well-being. Essential oils can be inhaled, massaged into the skin, or diffused into the air.

Listening to music: Listening to calming music can help to reduce stress and promote relaxation. Choose music that you find soothing and relaxing.

Taking a warm bath or shower: A warm bath or shower can help to relax your muscles and promote relaxation. Add essential oils to the bath water for an even more relaxing experience.

Taking a nap: A short nap can help to reduce fatigue and promote relaxation. Aim for a nap of 20-30 minutes.

Relaxation is important for physical and mental health. It can help to reduce stress, anxiety, and pain. It can also improve sleep, concentration, and productivity. If you are feeling stressed or tense, try some relaxation techniques to help you feel better. Positive thinking means that you approach negative news or stressful situations with a positive outlook. You're able to look beyond the crisis or setback rather than being consumed by it. You may have to acknowledge and process the negative aspects, but you understand that you will get through it. You know that bad news doesn't mean the entire world is bad or that you will never experience goodness again (Shonna Waters, 2022).

2.8. Making friend

Making friend, describes people who are kind, caring, and make you feel comfortable. You might be new to town, but the people are so friendly that you'll soon feel right at home (RohJohn, 2018). Making friend is a kind and helpful person who treats everyone, either familiar or unfamiliar, with a friendly manner (Nadeem, 2018). Making friends is the process of building relationships with people who you enjoy spending time with and who make you feel good about yourself. It is a lifelong process that can be challenging at times, but it is also incredibly rewarding. There are many different ways to make friends. Some common ways include:

Put yourself out there: This means being open to meeting new people and making new connections. You can do this by joining clubs or groups, taking classes, or volunteering.

Be yourself: People can tell when you are being fake, so it is important to be yourself when you are trying to make friends. This means being honest about your interests and passions, and not trying to be someone you are not.

Be a good listener: People appreciate it when you take the time to listen to them and really hear what they have to say. This shows that you are interested in them and their lives.

Be supportive: Friends are there for each other through thick and thin. Be there for your friends when they need you, and offer them your support.

Be positive: People are drawn to positive people. So, try to be optimistic and upbeat when you are around others.

Be patient: It takes time to build strong friendships. Don't get discouraged if you don't make friends right away. Just keep putting yourself out there and eventually you will find people who you connect with.

Making friends can be a challenge, but it is also a lot of fun. By following these tips, you can increase your chances of making new friends and building lasting relationships. Here are some additional tips for making friends:

Be interested in others: Ask questions and get to know people.

Be yourself: Don't try to be someone you're not.

Be positive and upbeat: People are drawn to positive people.

Be a good listener: Pay attention to what people are saying and really listen to them.

Be supportive: Be there for your friends when they need you.

Be patient: It takes time to build strong friendships.

Be forgiving: Everyone makes mistakes. Be willing to forgive your friends when they make mistakes.

Making friends is a lifelong journey. There will be ups and downs along the way, but it is worth it in the end. By following these tips, you can increase your chances of making new friends and building lasting

relationships. Making friend is the person who is in sympathetic relationship to oneself or one's side; one who shows no hostility (Loland, 2020)

3. Research Methods

Research Design: This research employed the descriptive qualitative method. (Sugiyono, 2009) defined qualitative research as descriptive, meaning that data collection was in the form of words rather than numbers. This method was intended to describe everything related to the topic of the research. To find qualitative data, the researcher obtained data through interviews. The data was collected to identify the factors influencing beginner students' anxiety in speaking English and to present strategies for reducing anxiety in speaking English for beginner students. **Research Participants:** The participants in this research is the students from Savannakhet University (Beginner Level) class. **Research instruments:** Several instruments were employed to support this research. The instrument that was employed in this research included: **Research Instruments: from Interview** the researcher interviewed the students who had speaking performances to get information about their anxiety effects and the strategies they used to reduce their anxiety. The researcher formulated a question protocol consisting of six open-ended questions to make the interview process easier. **Data collection:** the researcher introduced themselves to the target participants, who also introduced themselves. The researcher and target participants then proceeded with the information-gathering process as follows: **In-depth Interview** the researcher will interview one by one then take note and records; **Recording** by using the smart phone. **Data analysis:** the researcher transcribed the data from audio recordings into written transcripts. This is consistent with Kaelan (2005), who defines data analysis as the process of organizing data in a systematic way, grouping it into patterns and categories, and describing the data's unity. Based on this explanation, the data should be ordered, grouped, and categorized in order to make it easier for the researcher to analyze. The researcher used qualitative data analysis based on Miles and Huberman's (1994) theory, which states that data is collected and then analyzed. The results of the analysis are then displayed and verified. The analysis consists of three steps: data reduction, data recording, and conclusion or verification.

4. The result found that:

Speaking activities: According to interviewed 19 people. 16 of them said that they were shy this showed that 84.2% of the people interviewed. 14 of them said that they were lack of confidence this showed that 73.6% of the people interviewed the study's findings suggest that shyness can be a barrier to learning a new language. However, by creating a supportive and encouraging environment, researchers could help beginner students overcome their shyness, lack of confidence and succeed in learning a new language. **Error correction:** According to interviewed 19 people. 15 of them said that they had a problem with error correction in speaking English showed that 84.2% of the people interviewed. They were confused about parts of speech and the past, present, and future tenses. The study's findings suggest that error correction can be a barrier to learning a new language. However, by creating a supportive and encouraging environment, researchers could help beginner students overcome their error correction difficulties and succeed in learning a new language. **Strategies in reducing anxiety in speaking English;** 1) Preparation according to 14 people out of 19 people interviewed said that they needed preparation in speaking English, which showed that 73.6% of them found preparation to be the most important thing in speaking English. They said that reviewing the lesson before class and preparing their speech helped them to make their speech clear and to reduce their anxiety. However, researchers believe that by creating a supportive and encouraging environment, they can help beginner students with their positive thinking and succeed in learning a new language. 2) Relaxation of 19 people interviewed said that they needed relaxation in speaking English, which showed that 63.1% of them found relaxation is important thing in speaking English. They said that being relaxed had helped them to speak more fluently and clearly, and that it had also made it easier for other people to understand them. However, researchers believe that by creating a supportive and encouraging environment, they can help beginner students with their positive thinking and succeed in learning a new language. 3) Positive thinking: According to 10 people out of 19 people interviewed said that they needed positive thinking in speaking English, which showed that 52.6% of them found positive thinking is important thing in speaking English. They believed that this would help them to overcome their mistakes and solve any problems that they might encounter. However, researchers believe that by creating a

supportive and encouraging environment, they can help beginner students with their positive thinking and succeed in learning a new language. 4) Making friends: According to 11 people out of 19 people interviewed 57.8% said that needed to make friends with people they didn't know in order to reduce their anxiety about speaking English. This was especially true when they were speaking English with foreigners whose English level they didn't know. They just needed to greet them to make friends and invested time to make the relationship and speak English without anxiety. However, researchers believe that by creating a supportive and encouraging environment, they can help beginner students with their positive thinking and succeed in learning a new language.

5. Conclusion

The researcher found that the strategies for reducing anxiety in speaking English were preparation, relaxation, making friends, and positive thinking. The researcher conducted a comprehensive study to uncover effective strategies for reducing anxiety specifically in those who struggle with speaking English. The findings of this study indicate that implementing these strategies can significantly enhance the proficiency of individuals in their English-speaking abilities. Moreover, by successfully reducing anxiety levels, individuals will be better equipped to achieve their ultimate goal of becoming fluent English speakers. It is important to highlight that these strategies not only focus on language skills but also on building confidence within individuals. By addressing their fears and doubts, the strategies presented in this research can empower individuals to overcome their anxiety and dare to engage in English-speaking activities. Overall, this research provides valuable insights and practical guidance on how individuals can effectively reduce anxiety in speaking English, ultimately leading to improved language proficiency and increased self-assurance.

Recommendation: Students should be aware of the different types of anxiety that can affect their learning process, especially in speaking and classroom performance. They should also be aware of the strategies that can help them reduce their anxiety in speaking English. By understanding the effects of anxiety, students can motivate themselves to do things more efficiently to achieve their goals to improve their English language proficiency and build their confidence in communicating effectively by incorporating interactive and engaging learning materials, incorporating essential speaking practice activities, and fostering a supportive and encouraging environment. Teachers should know what kind of strategy is suitable to apply in the learning classroom to overcome students' anxiety in speaking performance. They should create a pleasant learning atmosphere in the classroom so that students feel relaxed and enjoy speaking English. Teachers should also motivate students so they can be confident in speaking performance. They can also use some methods in teaching speaking, such as dialogue, group work, debates, and group discussions. These methods may help students overcome their anxiety in speaking English performance in the classroom. This study can be a guide for students and English teachers to measure students' anxiety in speaking. It can also be used as a reference to create a better teaching and learning environment. Teachers should understand and anticipate anxiety in any cases. By knowing the types of anxiety experienced by students, they are expected to be able to find their own strategies to reduce anxiety, which can lead to better achievement. It is important for English learners to understand the different types of anxiety that they may experience when speaking English. By understanding their anxiety, they can start to develop strategies to manage it. Anxiety is a common emotion that can be experienced in many different situations. It can be mild or severe, and it can be caused by a variety of factors. When it comes to speaking English, anxiety can be a major obstacle to learning and fluency. Further research needs to be conducted to explore more issues related to anxiety cases. This research should be conducted in a wide range and long interval, or it should continue until it reaches a saturated result. Teachers can play an important role in helping students to manage anxiety in speaking English. Here are some tips for creating a supportive learning environment: Be understanding and patient: Teachers should understand that anxiety is a common emotion that can be experienced by English learners. They should be patient with students who are struggling with anxiety and provide them with the support they need. Create a positive and relaxed environment: The learning environment should be positive and relaxed. This will help students to feel more comfortable and less anxious. Encourage students to practice speaking English: Teachers should encourage students to practice speaking English in a safe and supportive environment. This can help students to build their confidence in speaking English and reduce their anxiety. Provide positive feedback: Teachers should

provide students with positive feedback when they speak English. This will help to boost their confidence and reduce their anxiety. Be a role model: Teachers should be a role model for students. They should speak English confidently and fluently, and they should be patient and understanding of students who are struggling with anxiety.

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