

**SPEAKING ANXIETY AMONG SAUDI ESL LEARNERS STUDYING IN
AUSTRALIA**

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Research

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STATEMENT OF CANDIDATE

This thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree at any other university or institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another author except where due reference is made.

An approval for the research has been obtained from the Macquarie University Ethics Committee.

The protocol number is: 5201500302

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ABSTRACT

Studies in the field of second language acquisition have long been interested in the phenomenon of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) (e.g., Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). These studies confirm that many L2 learners experience anxiety during the process of language learning. In terms of speaking anxiety, current research points to the need to better understand this phenomenon.

Recent research focusing on Saudi foreign language learners points to the important role of cultural factors and speaking context in speaking anxiety (e.g., Al-Saraj 2014a; Javid, 2014). However, much of this research has been done in Saudi Arabia, and a gap exists in the current research literature pertaining to the relationship between speaking anxiety and language learning among Saudi ESL learners in mixed-gender classrooms. This study aimed to investigate the triggers of speaking anxiety for nine Saudi ESL learners studying in Australia. It also examined the manifestations of such anxiety, as well as coping strategies identified by the participants.

Participants were observed in a classroom context participating in three types of speaking activities: pair work, group work, and oral presentation. This was followed by individual semi-structured interviews and stimulated recall sessions. Analysis of the data revealed five socio-contextual factors contributing to participants' experiences of anxiety, including proximity to learners of the opposite gender, two psycho-linguistic factors including fear of incorrect L2 usage, and three overlap factors including linguistically demanding speaking tasks. The manifestations of speaking anxiety among the participants were both physical and psychological in nature and included avoiding eye contact, holding onto objects tensely, and forgetting words. The main coping strategies reported by the study cohort were learning additional vocabulary and undertaking thorough preparation prior to speaking.

The findings from this study have implications for pedagogical practices related to teacher behaviour, classroom management practices, and the design of learning activities when instructing Saudi ESL learners.

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY:

Anxiety as a psychological construct is a multifaceted phenomenon. Moreover, the relationship between learner anxiety and foreign language learning has been explored from a range of perspectives and in relation to various foreign language learning contexts. Notably, a number of terms appear in the literature in discussions of learner anxiety and language learning. The following definitions and abbreviations are provided for clarity of meaning throughout this research study:

Language anxiety: the fear or apprehension that occurs in a person when learning or using a second or foreign language (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; MacIntyre 1999). It is typically regarded by researchers and academics as a negative psychological factor in the process of L2 acquisition (Arnold & Brown, 1999).

Language learning anxiety (LLA): the anxiety a learner feels during the process of language learning (Riasati, 2011).

Second/Foreign language anxiety: this research distinguishes between second language anxiety (L2 anxiety) and foreign language anxiety (FLA). L2 anxiety is defined as language-related anxiety which manifests in the learner in language learning environments where the target language is also the main language of communication outside of the classroom (Tanveer, 2007; Woodrow, 2006). FLA is a form of situation-specific anxiety that manifests ‘specifically in the unique foreign language learning context’ (Al-Saraj 2011, p. 1). The primary research interest of the present study is in L2 anxiety, but throughout this thesis, the terms LLA and FLA are also used. LLA is used primarily when discussing the “processes” of language learning and their relationship to anxiety creation, while FLA is used more widely during the discussion of learners’ experiences of anxiety in foreign language learning classrooms.

Speaking anxiety: language anxiety related conditions such as fear and apprehension but in relation to the language learner’s speaking performance only (rather than reading, writing, or listening). Speaking anxiety may manifest in the learner inside or outside of the formal language learning setting, and in both second language and foreign language environments (Tanveer, 2007; Woodrow, 2006).

Learners of English as a second/foreign language: this research distinguishes between learners of English as a second language (ESL) and learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). ESL refers to students learning English in classrooms outside of their country of origin in parts of the world where English is widely spoken as a first language. EFL refers to students learning English in classrooms within their country of origin where English is not spoken as a first language. In distinguishing between L2 anxiety and FLA this study aims to draw attention to the language learning setting as one of many potential contextual factors to influence the emergence of speaking anxiety in Saudi ESL learners.

1. Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Statement of the Problem:

Speaking is an important component of language development in the context of English as a Second Language (ESL) learning. In order to communicate effectively, complex mental operations are required (Salem & Al Dyar, 2014). However, issues such as language anxiety can affect these mental operations and potentially impact the learner's speaking proficiency and performance during the language learning process.

An increasing number of Saudi students are studying English abroad in English speaking countries. This trend raises important questions related to approaches to language instruction and the impact of the classroom and broader social environment on learners' language proficiency and speaking performance. For example, Saudi students are typically accustomed to teachers employing the grammar-translation method for language learning, and to participating in single gender and mono-cultural learning settings during the language learning process. In contrast, being an ESL learner in an English speaking country implies that English (not Arabic) is predominantly spoken both inside and outside of the classroom, and learners representing both genders and different cultures will generally inhabit the learning environment.

The underlying assumption in this research is that the learning environment – both in terms of the immediate classroom setting as well as the broader social and cultural context – plays a significant role in language learning and forms the potential onset of language anxiety (Al-Saraj, 2015). In addition to the environment, the potential for culture to impact language learning is reflected in the assertion from Risager (2006): “Human culture always includes language, and human language cannot be conceived without culture” (p. 4). People interact with each other and learn cultural norms through language, and use language in a way that is closely associated to culture (Al-Saraj, 2015). Thus, in relation to language anxiety, perceptions of anxiety-provoking situations by some students, and their behaviours in response to the anxiety that they experience, may vary depending on the cultural background of the learner as well as the learner's response to the culture of the host nation.

1.2. Background of the study

Investigating language anxiety, particularly speaking anxiety as a specific domain of language anxiety, is an important area of research given the potential impact of this anxiety on the language learning process and the learner's communication proficiency (Young, 1991). Language anxiety is defined by MacIntyre and Gardner (1994, p.284) as "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with L2 contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning".

Learners of English as a foreign language regularly cite speaking as their "most anxiety-producing experience" (Young 1990, p. 539), and "difficulty in speaking in class" as their most common worry (Horwitz et al. 1986, p. 126). Furthermore, language anxiety may adversely affect students' proficiency in language acquisition (Crookall & Oxford, 1991). Moreover, the presence of speaking anxiety during any performance in the L2 is likely to challenge the speaker's concept of self as a good communicator and result in self-consciousness, fear, reluctance to speak, or even panic (Salem & Al Dyar, 2014).

Second or foreign language anxiety is understood as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon (Young, 1991). As such, the factors contributing to the onset of speaking anxiety, how it manifests among ESL learners, and the coping strategies they use to manage speaking anxiety warrant further research investigation to facilitate the learning process for the ESL/EFL students. In fact, the majority of research studies to date have investigated classroom-based anxiety. In response, this present study aims to broaden the scope of academic understanding of speaking anxiety by investigating speaking anxiety within a two-dimensional framework; namely, communication within the classroom as well as everyday communication situations outside of the classroom in Australia.

1.3. Aims of the research

This study aims to explore Saudi ESL students' perceptions and experiences of speaking anxiety both inside and outside the language classroom. This includes exploring the external (social-contextual) and internal (psycholinguistic) factors that may cause speaking anxiety. This study also aims to explore manifestations of speaking anxiety among the participants, as well as the coping strategies that they use to alleviate the anxiety that they experience. Suggestions for stakeholders (teachers and language learners) on how to prevent or overcome speaking anxiety experiences are also presented in this study.

The study specifically aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the commonly identified triggers of speaking anxiety among a cohort of Saudi ESL learners studying in Australia?
2. How is speaking anxiety manifested in the performance of these Saudi ESL learners who are studying in Australia?
3. What coping strategies do these Saudi ESL learners studying in Australia employ to overcome their speaking anxiety?

If a deeper understanding of speaking anxiety is to be attained it is crucial to consider the emotions of the affected speaker and his or her understanding of the anxiety experience. This is because human subjectivity is at the heart of FLA (Al-Saraj, 2015). Towards this outcome, this study employed qualitative research approaches to investigate how speaking anxiety affects the L2 learning process. Particular consideration was given in the investigation to the role of culture (the speaker's home and the host country culture), classroom expectations and the nature of the learner in relation to speaking anxiety onset, manifestation, and management. Presently, the bulk of research conducted on FLA has privileged quantitative data from instruments to measure the anxiety level of the learner. Few studies have sought qualitative data to better understand the individual's anxiety experience. Moreover, this is (to the author's knowledge) the first study to undertake a qualitative investigation of Saudi ESL learners' experiences of speaking anxiety while learning English in Australia.

As a study of speaking anxiety conducted on a mixed gender group of Saudi ESL learners studying abroad, this study contributes to the field of foreign/second language anxiety. It does so primarily by providing deeper insight into the interplay between socio-contextual, psychological, and linguistic factors in the onset of speaking anxiety. As such, previously underexplored (in the case of Saudi ESL learners) elements such as gender proximity, interactions with native speakers, and Western learning environments can be investigated for their impact on speaking anxiety.

It is anticipated that the results of this study can be beneficial for Saudi ESL learners, English language instructors, and second language acquisition (SLA) researchers. Because there is generally understood to be a negative correlation between language anxiety and achievement (Dalkilic, 2001; Horwitz, 2001; Krashen, 1985), when learners understand what triggers speaking anxiety and learn new strategies to reduce it, they can help to improve their performance and learning satisfaction. Lastly, research of this kind will help to further elucidate

the relationship dynamic between learner, context, and task design and how it contributes to the onset of speaking anxiety.

1.4. Organization of the study

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the research topic, relevant background information, the aim of the study, the research questions, and study design. Chapter 2 reviews extant literature on language anxiety generally and speaking anxiety more specifically. Gaps in the literature are identified and connections are established between the issues raised in the literature and the development of the research questions. Chapter 3 describes and justifies the methodological approach used in this study. Details of the data collection methods, namely classroom observation, semi-structured interviews, and stimulated recall interviews, are also provided. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the procedures for data analysis and the ethical considerations applied in the study. Chapter 4 identifies and discusses the findings to emerge from the data analysis with reference to each of the research questions. Chapter 5 summarizes the key findings, sets out the implications of these findings, and acknowledges the limitations of this study.

2. Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Anxiety is widely recognised as a factor of influence in the process of language learning. This review identifies and discusses the key issues and points of focus raised in the literature on the relationship between anxiety and second/foreign language learning. It also explores the correlations and points of difference presented in research studies on LLA. Following a review of the literature on LLA in general, the focus is narrowed to speaking anxiety in specific language learning contexts. This overview of the existing research provides both a context and a theoretical foundation for the investigation and analysis of speaking anxiety in Saudi ESL learners undertaken in this thesis.

2.2. Anxiety as a psychological construct

Anxiety is a subjective experience linked to the stimulation of the autonomic nervous system (Hilgard, Atkinson & Atkinson, 1971; Spielberger, 1983). It is typically described as feelings of ‘worry about future events’ or fear as ‘a reaction to current events’ (p. 196) that result in physical symptoms such as elevated heart rate and shakiness (Battaglia & Ogliari, 2005). When characterised as a psychological disorder, the symptoms of anxiety disorder often include chronic apprehensiveness, extreme worry, and sometimes overwhelming physical responses such as fatigue, headaches and nausea as identified in the DSM-IV (the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) under generalized anxiety disorder (Battaglia & Ogliari, 2005).

State / Trait / Situational anxiety

Human anxiety is often separated in three categories: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. Trait anxiety is described as a personality characteristic or unique disposition which naturally tends the individual towards feelings of anxiety (Brain, 2002; Ellis, 2008). As such, people with high trait anxiety may feel anxious in almost any circumstance or situation (Casado & Dereshiwsky, 2001; Ellis, 2008; Scovel, 1978; Spielberger, 1983). State anxiety is described as more transient in nature and suggests the individual has a propensity to develop feelings of anxiety in particular situations (Brain, 2002; Spielberger, 1983). As such, state anxiety manifests in response to a perceived threatening situation and subsequently disappears when the threat no longer exists or the situation changes (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991;

Spielberger, Gorsuch & Lushene, 1970). Situation-specific anxiety is similar to state anxiety in that it is linked to anxiety-provoking situations. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), situation-specific anxiety reactions in an individual may manifest as feelings of tension, nervousness, trepidation or uneasiness and can render the individual incapable of successfully performing a range of learning activities, including (for some individuals) activities associated with learning a foreign/second language.

Studies of anxiety generally attempt to measure LLA in one of three ways: behavioural tests which observe participant actions; self-report of feelings and actions by participants; or physiological tests of heart rate, blood pressure, etc. (Scovel, 1991; Zheng, 2008). Participant self-report surveys and behavioural tests are viewed by some researchers (e.g., Scovel, 1991) as more effective than physiological tests for data collection as they are more able to focus directly on the anxiety construct. As a result 'pen and paper' and 'self-rater' tests have traditionally been more widely used in applied psychology studies of anxiety (Scovel, 1991) compared to the physiological tests.

The relationship between skills usage and anxiety has been the basis for numerous research studies in the field of educational psychology to examine the impact of anxiety on academic performance (e.g., Beeman, Martin & Meyers, 1972; Verma & Nijhawan, 1976). Using mostly behavioural tests, these studies are important to this present study not only because they demonstrate the complex nature of the relationship between anxiety and student performance, but also because they have drawn attention to the many 'intervening variables' (p. 136) that can contribute to the onset of learner anxiety (Scovel, 1991). These variables are typically identified as intrinsic factors such as intelligence or self-perceptions and extrinsic factors such as the difficulty of the subject, the classroom environment, and the pedagogical practices employed by the teacher.

Furthermore, the presence of intervening variables and the complex nature of the anxiety construct itself add to the difficulties in measuring LLA in learners. In his review of studies on anxiety, Scovel (1991) draws attention to the problematic nature of trying to quantify anxiety (e.g., as either high or low), to categorise its presence in the disposition of the individual as either momentary or lasting, and to differentiate between state anxiety and trait anxiety.

2.3. Second/foreign language anxiety

When anxiety is associated with learning a second or foreign language it is labeled as second / foreign language anxiety (Hashemi & Abbasi, 2013). Over recent decades there has been growing research interest in the relationship between anxiety and second/foreign language learning. As Lamendella (1977) pointed out, because of the subjective or emotional nature of anxiety it has the potential to play a direct or indirect role in various human endeavours including communication. As a result, trait, state, and situation-specific anxiety are commonly identified as relevant to the language learning domain (Batiha, Noor, & Mustaffa, 2014). This is because they collectively allow for further understanding of the relationship between anxiety and the learner, the external environment (inside or outside of the classroom), and the specific learning activity in the context of L2 acquisition.

Scovel (1978) reported in his important early review article about LLA that early studies of anxiety produced inconsistent results regarding the association between anxiety and L2 achievement. The author attributed these inconsistencies to the different conceptualisations of anxiety as well as the different anxiety measures used. Scovel (1978) asserted that the inconsistent experimental results could be resolved, however, by distinguishing between facilitating and debilitating anxiety.

A particularly influential research study in the field of LLA is Horwitz et al. (1986). This seminal work on foreign language classroom anxiety describes FLA as ‘a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the (foreign) language learning process’ (p. 128). The authors argued that FLA is primarily concerned with performance evaluation and as a result they conceptualised the phenomenon according to three related performance anxieties: ‘communication apprehension; test anxiety; and fear of negative evaluation’ (p. 127). One of the major contributions of their paper was the development of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). This self-report instrument measures anxiety responses specific to foreign language classroom settings and has been used in many studies of FLA. The results of these studies demonstrated that language anxiety typically has a debilitating effect in both second and foreign language classrooms across different contexts.

One such debilitating effect is communication apprehension, which is characterised as ‘anxiety about communication with people’ (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127), particularly in groups or in

public. Horwitz et al. (1986) argued that the main reason for its emergence is the speaker's personal knowledge of difficulties in making himself or herself understood, and in understanding others. Communication apprehension is also associated with the speaker's fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz et al., 1986). This anxiety factor is described as the apprehension to emerge from the expectation that others would provide a negative appraisal of the speaker in regard to L2 usage, leading to subsequent attempts to avoid evaluative situations (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009). Although Horwitz et al. (1986) reported this type of fear frequently emerged in test-taking situations they assert that it is also closely related to the social aspect of the classroom and thus 'may occur in any social, evaluative situation' (p. 128) including informal evaluation of an individual's speaking ability by teachers and peers. In turn, language classroom anxiety incorporates communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation within the broader construct of FLA (Horwitz et al., 1986). As some authors (e.g., MacIntyre, 1999; Trang, 2012) have pointed out, however, while speaking apprehension and fear of negative evaluation may be more readily linked to FLA, test anxiety is more commonly regarded as a general anxiety factor. As such, it is a general problem that may manifest in a range of classroom contexts in addition to the foreign or second language classroom (Trang, 2012).

Integral to the research conducted by Horwitz et al. (1986) is their assertion that FLA is a cause rather than a consequence of poor performance by the language learner. Drawing on the FLA construct proposed by Horwitz et al. (1986), and the FLCAS they developed to measure learner anxiety, Horwitz (2001) sought to further explain the extent to which anxiety is indeed a cause of 'poor language learning in some individuals' (p. 112). Horwitz (2001) argued that 'language anxiety is a specific anxiety' (p. 112) and asserted the necessity of distinguishing between trait anxiety and LLA in order to properly understand the latter (Horwitz, 2001). Throughout her review of the literature, the author identified and discussed two core factors as potential sources of LLA in the learner: the difficulties some learners face in achieving authentic self-presentation; and the language teaching practices employed by instructors to support students' L2 acquisition (Horwitz, 2001).

However, other authors such as Sparks and Ganschow (1995) argued that 'one cannot discuss anxiety without inferring a cause' (p. 236). In turn, the authors proposed an alternative view to that expressed by Horwitz et al. (1986). While not dismissing outright the possibility that anxiety could contribute to language learning difficulties in students, they favoured the view

that language anxiety is the result of poor language learning rather than its cause. This view of the causal relationship between language anxiety and student learning outcomes is supported by Argaman and Abu-Rabia (2002). In their examination of the influence of language anxiety on student achievement in English writing and reading comprehension tasks, the authors found a significant correlation between language anxiety and poor reading and writing achievement. In turn, they posited that language anxiety may in fact be a consequence rather than a cause of low level achievement in learning a foreign language (Argaman & Abu-Rabia, 2002).

Debilitating vs. facilitative effects of foreign language anxiety

In addition to the ‘cause or consequence’ debate outlined above, the nature of the effects of language anxiety on achievement has long been a point of contention among researchers of foreign or second language learning. Working from the premise that ‘anxiety itself is neither a simple nor well-understood psychological construct’ (p. 132), Scovel (1991) examined the traditional psychological theory of anxiety and its reported ‘facilitating and debilitating’ (p. 129) effect on language learning. The debilitating effect of anxiety is widely discussed in the literature in the context of foreign language learning. This form of anxiety is represented as a negative construct that may reduce the level of motivation the student has for language learning, resulting in withdrawal and/or avoidance behaviours (Alpert & Haber, 1960; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; Occhipinti, 2009; Scovel, 1978; Yu & Watkins, 2008). Al-Shboul, Ahmad, Nordin and Rahman (2013) found that the nature of a debilitating relationship between FLA and achievement can vary depending on the particular language or skills being learned. In addition, the level of language proficiency, the background of the learner, and the learning stage can also influence the effect of FLA on achievement (Al-Shboul et al., 2013).

In contrast, facilitating anxiety in the context of foreign language learning is far less commonly researched. Notwithstanding the paucity of research, it is the view of some scholars that in some instances LLA experienced by a learner may exert a positive effect on performance. Some decades ago, Alpert and Haber (1960) and Scovel (1978), for instance, countered the unidimensional absolutist view that LLA is debilitating by suggesting that low level anxiety may in fact have a facilitative effect. According to Alpert and Haber (1960), in these cases the low level anxiety may lead the learner to perceive the language task to be a challenge. As a result, the anxious learner becomes more motivated to engage in optimal practice to improve their preparedness to do well on a task or to perform well in a competitive language classroom environment (Alpert & Haber, 1960). More recent research has also sought to explore anxiety

as a positive construct in some instances of language learning, suggesting that it may increase the level of motivation a student has for language learning or lead the student to undertake a more rational approach to the language learning task (Na, 2007; Occhipinti, 2009). Although Horwitz (1990) believed that all anxiety in the language learning environment is likely to be debilitating and that there is no such thing as facilitative anxiety, Oxford and Ehrman (1995) and Brown (2000) expressed the view that facilitative anxiety exists.

Predictive factors of language learning anxiety

Numerous studies have sought to examine the causal relationships among affective variables associated with language anxiety and to identify predictive factors. As established above, Horwitz et al. (1986) identified the main sources of language anxiety as communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. These sources are quite broad in scope and as a result other studies have sought to pin-point more specific personal and contextual sources. For instance, in his case studies of FLA, Price (1991) found the main causes of FLA in learners were the difficulty level of foreign language class, learners' self-perception of language aptitude, personality variables such as perfectionism or fear of public speaking, and stressful classroom experiences. These four factors can be linked to the findings presented by Young (1991) in her review of the research on anxiety in the foreign language classroom. Similar to Price (1991), Young (1991) found language anxiety was associated with aspects related to the learner, the teacher, and the instructional practice. She identified six main causes of anxiety as related to one or more of these three aspects: personal and interpersonal anxiety; learner perceptions of language learning; teacher perceptions of language teaching; instructor-learner interactions; teaching and learning activities; and language testing. In a later paper, Young (1994) further asserted that the six sources of language anxiety are interrelated.

In their 1999 study of 210 university students, Onwuegbuzie, Bailey and Daley (1999) found seven variables could be identified as significant contributors to the potential onset of FLA among university EFL students: age, academic achievement, history of travel to foreign countries, prior experience with foreign languages, expected grade average for the language course, perceptions of academic competence, and perceptions of self-worth (Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999). In terms of the debilitating effects of anxiety in the context of foreign language learning, Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999) reported that students tend to experience mental blocks, partake in negative self-talk, and dwell on poor performances.

Adding further insight in the research understanding of FLA and its causal factors is the study by Oxford (1999) of the relationship between the learner's stylistic preferences for learning and language anxiety. The author investigated the extent to which conflict between the teacher's pedagogical style and the learner's preferred learning style may result in feelings of anxiety in the learner. The key finding presented by Oxford (1999) was that style conflicts (such as concrete-sequential teaching versus a preference for intuitive-random learning) can increase the potential for anxiety among students in the language classroom.

Acknowledging the role of the learner as a causal factor of FLA, Brown, Robson and Rosenkjar (2001), and MacIntyre and Charos (1996) sought to examine more closely the association between personality traits in ESL learners and anxiety arousal. Specifically, introversion and extroversion were examined to test the assumption that extroverts are less likely to experience speaking anxiety than introverts because they are more likely to feel comfortable in a group dynamic or public speaking situation. Similar to Brown et al. (2001) and MacIntyre and Charos (1996), Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) contributed to our understanding of how specific learner traits may influence anxiety experiences in their examination of the relationship between perfectionist tendencies in the individual and language anxiety. The authors found that the onset of language anxiety in some students may be the result of their perfectionist tendencies. They concluded that a student's perfectionist tendencies may have the potential to create anxiety during the language learning process due to not being easily satisfied with their achievements, their concerns over error making, and a tendency not to celebrate small victories (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002).

Recent discussions in the research literature have continued to focus on ways in which learner traits may be predictive of FLA. A recent critical review of the literature by Zheng (2008) drew attention to the relationship between language anxiety and learner attitudes and motivation (Zheng, 2008). Zheng (2008) reported that anxiety behaviours including reluctance to participate and work avoidance may be defence mechanisms employed by anxious learners to counter their emotional distress. There may be some cultural reasons behind the association between these kinds of anxiety behaviours and learner attitudes as reported by Jones (2004) in his assertion of a relationship between culture and language anxiety. In particular, the author proposed that cultural pressures related to threats to face are associated with low proficiency and fear of negative evaluation as causal factors of language anxiety (Jones, 2004). In turn, anxious learners may prefer to remain silent or avoid communication whenever such threats arise.

Components of language learning anxiety

Given the multi-faceted nature of language, recent studies of LLA have sought to examine the phenomenon in relation to the four macro language skills: speaking, writing, reading, and listening. As a result, there is a growing body of research literature on learners' experiences of speaking anxiety, writing anxiety, reading anxiety, and listening anxiety. Collectively, these studies point to the multifaceted nature of LLA and the complex suite of sources that may contribute to an anxiety experience for the second or foreign language learner in relation to any one or combination of the language skills.

2.4. Speaking anxiety

A learner's experience of speaking anxiety can affect the nature of his or her interactions and level of achievement in the language learning classroom. A review of the literature reveals that speaking anxiety is often associated with foreign language or L2 learning classroom situations for two main reasons: first, the student in the classroom feels that he or she has a low level of control over the communicative situation; and second, he or she is aware that speaking performance is being monitored (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Speaking anxiety in second / foreign language learners can manifest in various ways including nonverbal behaviours such as blushing, palm rubbing, perspiration, loss of control over voice, poor speaking performance, variations in speed of speech, unwillingness to speak, and reluctance to make eye-contact (Hashemi & Abbasi, 2013). As a result, second / foreign language learners who experience speaking anxiety symptoms often try to avoid such anxiety-provoking situations (Alrabai, 2014; Basic, 2011; Hashemi & Abbasi 2013). As an alternative to dealing with anxiety through avoidance, the literature contains recommendations for teachers and learners to reduce or manage language anxiety. For example, Young (1990) presented the following suggestions: (1) identifying the anxiety level in a given interaction by using an anxiety graph; (2) providing a support group or additional instruction for anxieties arising from learner's personality; (3) using more pair and group work for anxieties arising from classroom procedures; (4) playing language problem-solving games; and (5) engaging in introductory activities with role-playing to create rapport in the classroom. Regarding teachers' role in reducing students' anxiety, Young added that behaviours such as kind error correction, and being friendly and patient with the students, are likely to help them to feel more relaxed.

Non-Arab studies of speaking anxiety

Numerous studies of language anxiety in general and speaking anxiety in particular have been conducted on non-Arab learners. Some of these studies focused on causal factors and techniques to alleviate language anxiety such as Tóth (2011); Awan, Azher, Anwar and Naz (2010); Adeel (2011); Hashemi (2011); Riasati (2011), Shabani (2012); and Yan and Horwitz (2008). Other studies have been conducted on speaking anxiety and its sources, manifestation, strategies to reduce its effects, and its effects on language achievement in EFL or ESL contexts on learners from different countries. A list of these studies includes Tanveer (2007); Occhipinti (2009); Azarfam and Baki (2012); Woodrow (2006); Zgutowicz (2009); Sadeghi, Mohammadi and Sedaghatghofar (2013); Mahmoodzadeh (2012a, 2012b); and Mak (2011). Given the relationship of these studies to the research topic of this thesis a brief discussion of some of these studies is provided.

Mak (2011) investigated the factors contributing to the speaking-in-class anxiety among a sample of 313 Chinese ESL first-year university students in Hong Kong. Using Horwitz et al.'s (1986) FLCAS, the author found five factors primarily contributed to speaking anxiety among the students: fear of negative evaluation; unease when speaking with native speakers; negative perceptions of the English classroom; negative self-evaluation; and fear of personal failure. In addition, the secondary factors contributing to speaking anxiety identified in Mak's (2011) study included lack of preparation, being corrected when speaking, being rushed, and not being allowed to use their first language (L1) in the classroom. It is worth noting that these findings differ to those reported by Javid (2014) in his study of speaking anxiety among Saudi students; that is, lack of preparation was found (by Javid, 2014) to be a primary factor causing speaking anxiety and fear of negative evaluation by classmates as a secondary factor.

A study by Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009) of middle school EFL students in Greece also examined the characteristics and causal factors of speaking anxiety. Using qualitative research methods including semi-structured interviews, group discussion, and direct observation, the authors found the main factors causing English language speaking anxiety were fear of negative peer evaluation and perceptions of low ability compared to peers (Tsiplakides & Keramida 2009). The authors concluded that these two factors were primarily responsible for the students'

unwillingness to participate in speaking activities and general lack of interest in learning the English language (Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009).

Mahmoodzadeh (2012b) investigated speaking anxiety in Iranian EFL learners in relation to two outcomes: the learners' perceptions of how the elements of their interlanguage system such as phonology, grammar and interlanguage meaning influenced their experiences of speaking anxiety; and gender and level-based differences among the EFL learners. Using a self-report questionnaire based on Horwitz et al.'s (1986) FLCAS instrument, the author measured the speaking anxiety levels of 31 male and 43 female EFL learners aged from 14 to 23 years. Mahmoodzadeh (2012b) found the participants more commonly attributed their in-class speaking anxiety to their interlanguage meaning system rather than grammar or phonology variables. In relation to gender differences, Mahmoodzadeh's (2012b) results reflected those of some previously discussed studies focusing on Arab learners, in that female EFL learners were more likely to experience speaking anxiety than their male EFL learner peers.

Similar to Mahmoodzadeh (2012b), Sadeghi et al. (2013) examined speaking anxiety among Iranian EFL learners. Specifically, the authors investigated the rate of speaking anxiety among 76 (38 male and 38 female) EFL learners at the Iran Language Institute. Using the FLCAS instrument to measure anxiety levels, the authors discovered significantly higher levels of speaking anxiety among females compared to males. Sadeghi et al. (2013) drew similar conclusions to those drawn by Salem and Al Diyar (2014), Al-Saraj (2014b), and Qaddomi, (2013) that socio-cultural reasons were primarily responsible for the differences in speaking anxiety outcomes between females and males, pointing to such factors as social status, senses of gender identity, and the learners' self-perceptions.

Thus, similar to studies of speaking anxiety among Arab second or foreign language learners, studies of non-Arab second or foreign language learners reveal a similar range of anxiety-provoking factors including communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. It is perhaps of some interest to note, however, that gender and culture variables were more commonly reported as factors of influence on speaking anxiety in EFL learners in Middle Eastern countries (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Iran and Palestine) than on EFL learners in countries outside of the Middle East (e.g., Greece and Hong Kong).

With regard to the manifestations of speaking anxiety and its suggested coping strategies, a study of language anxiety related to the speaking skills of Iranian EFL learners, Azarfam and Baki (2012) found the manifestations of speaking anxiety included a combination of physical and psychological changes. Specifically, the authors reported the student participants demonstrated trembling and blushing along with reduced comprehension of the learning material and less interaction with peers during the lesson. The study suggested some strategies to reduce learners' anxiety, such as considering learner-centered approach. Similar to Azarfam and Baki (2012), a study by Adeel (2011) conducted on 34 Pakistani participants including 27 learners and seven experienced language teachers suggests some strategies to be followed in the classroom to alleviate students' anxiety, such as applying a communicative approach in the classroom where students can practise more English.

Arab studies of speaking anxiety

A review of the literature reveals a number of Arab studies have been conducted on language anxiety in general. Many of these studies have focused on the sources and levels of language anxiety, including Al-Saraj (2014a); Al-Saraj (2014b); Alrabai (2014); Javid (2014); Qaddomi (2014); and Batiha, Noor and Mustaffa (2014). Other studies have focused on the teacher's role in reducing anxiety such as Alrabai (2014), or on the effects of language anxiety on language learning such as Oda (2011), and Mathew, Al Damen and Islam (2013). Most importantly, researchers such as Yahya (2013) and Salem and Al Dyiar (2014) conducted studies of sources of speaking anxiety in Arab learners in EFL contexts and its effects on language achievement.

Given the primary focus of this research study is on speaking anxiety, a brief discussion of the studies related to this topic is provided. Before commencing however it should be noted that the term "Arab learners" is used in reference to EFL learners from Middle Eastern countries in general. This generalisation only serves to support the following brief analysis of studies and is in no way meant to disrespect or to overlook the diversity among learners from different countries in the region.

With regard to studies of Arab learners, Yahya (2013) conducted a study of 104 second language learners at the Arab American University in Palestine. The aim of the study was to identify the factors that caused them speaking anxiety in an English speech communication classroom. Yahya deployed the FLCAS instrument to measure student anxiety levels, but

similar to Al-Saraj (2014b), he found it necessary to make minor adaptations to improve its suitability for his study cohort. Yahya (2013) found the students reported fear of negative feedback to be the main cause of speaking anxiety. This was followed by communication anxiety; with test anxiety (perhaps surprisingly) reported by participants as the least likely factor to cause them speaking anxiety.

Interestingly, Yahya (2013) recommended English language teachers ensure the atmosphere of the English language classroom is both cheerful and non-threatening in order to mitigate the debilitating effects of low mood associated with trait anxiety. The author argues ‘the mood dimension of trait anxiety (TA) is an influential factor on speaking anxiety’ (p. 244) and it is therefore important for language teachers to support positive moods in the learners to make an anxiety experience less likely. This recommendation is interesting given the contrasting description in other literature and research studies discussed in this review (e.g., Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Qaddomi, 2013; Scovel, 1978) of language anxiety more broadly and speaking anxiety in particular as a form of situation-specific anxiety.

Salem and Al Dyar (2014) investigated the relationship between speaking anxiety and speaking fluency in Arab EFL students. In contrast to Yahya (2013), Salem and Al Dyar (2014) examined speaking anxiety in intermediate school students in Kuwait (n = 121; 68 males and 53 females), and also sought to identify gender differences regarding the relationship between speaking anxiety and oral fluency. Employing a descriptive research design, the researchers combined the speaking anxiety scale developed by Berko et al. (2001) and an oral fluency skills interview to collect their data.

Salem and Al Dyar (2014) found no statistically significant difference between male and female students in relation to speaking anxiety. The authors did, however, discover a statistically significant difference between the genders in regard to the relationship between speaking anxiety and oral performance fluency. Specifically, male students demonstrated greater fluency in speaking English compared to their female counterparts, even though speaking anxiety levels reported by the male and female participants were not significantly different. To account for this difference, Salem and Al Dyar (2014) alluded to the influence of culture (along with gender) on speaking anxiety in their assertion that Arab girls – whether or not they suffer a learning difficulty – will logically be shy to speak in front of people.

The variables of culture and gender as influencing factors for speaking anxiety have been identified in studies of Arab EFL learners by Al-Saraj (2014a, 2014b); Mathew, Job, Al Damen and Islam (2013); Qaddomi (2013); and Sadeghi, Mohammadi, and Sedaghatghofar (2013). Al-Saraj (2014b) posited that female foreign language learners in Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries in particular may be particularly prone to language speaking anxiety in the EFL classroom 'due to the importance of honor and respect in Saudi Arabian culture' (p. 3). According to Al-Saraj (2014b), Saudi females are more likely to experience concerns about self-presentation and embarrassment as a result of cultural pressures which, in turn, may manifest as speaking anxiety. The same study also found that low English language proficiency levels, teaching style, and personal competitiveness were the major contributors to feelings of anxiety among Arab female EFL learners when learning English. A previous study by Al-Saraj (2014a) found that students showed mild-to-extreme avoidance behaviours (e.g., truanting on test days) along with high levels of language anxiety among female language learners. On the basis of her study findings Al-Saraj (2014a) suggested that language teachers working in the Saudi context demonstrate greater sensitivity to and consideration for the female learners' social status, senses of identity, and self-perceptions, particularly during speaking activities and communicative tasks.

Al-Saraj (2014b) also raised concerns about the usefulness of FLCAS as a western-developed instrument to measure language anxiety in Saudi female ESL learners. Of particular concern to the researcher was the applicability of the FLCAS instrument in Saudi language learning classrooms for females, which are uniquely single gender environments with a small number of women all 'studying within a single program' (p. 65). Al-Saraj (2014b) thus modified the FLCAS instrument to develop the Arabic Foreign Language Anxiety Questionnaire (AFLAQ) to measure anxiety levels in her study cohort.

Qaddomi (2013) studied 52 EFL students (21 females and 31 males) studying at Al-Quds Open University in Palestine. Using the FLCAS questionnaire to measure anxiety levels, similar to Salem and Al Diyar (2014), the author found females demonstrated higher levels of anxiety than males related to communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Qaddomi (2013) attributed the higher level of anxiety among female EFL students to 'the nature of female students' (p. 1555) and their tendency to be 'more shy and hesitant in front of others than males' (p. 1555). The findings of Salem and Al Diyar (2014) and Qaddomi (2013) contrast with those presented by Mathew, Job, Al Damen and Islam (2013). The latter authors studied motivation and types of anxiety in 100 male and female Arab learners in a private

college in the Sultanate of Oman. Using a questionnaire to collect data on the anxiety experiences of the students, the authors found no difference overall in the levels of anxiety and motivation reported by each gender (Mathew et al., 2013).

A study by Javid (2014) of anxiety and its causes in Saudi EFL learners administered the FLCAS to 216 freshmen male and female students enrolled in the preparatory year programme at Taif University in Saudi Arabia. It is worth noting that the author refers to the FLCAS as a 'reliable tool to identify language learning anxiety in EFL contexts' (p. 184), although the reasons for its purported reliability are not provided. This is in contrast to some other researchers (e.g., Al-Saraj, 2014b) who questioned its applicability to the Saudi EFL learning context. Javid (2014) found speaking anxiety (communication apprehension) to be common among this cohort, mostly related to classroom anxiety, then fear of negative evaluation anxiety, with test anxiety the least common among the freshman Saudi EFL learners. Notably, unlike some of the studies discussed above, Javid (2014) did not find Saudi female freshman EFL learners demonstrated a greater propensity for speaking anxiety than their male counterparts. According to Javid (2014), the main cause of speaking anxiety reported by Saudi students was communicating in English without prior preparation, rather than fear associated with speaking in English in front of classmates. Javid (2014) concluded from his findings that EFL teachers need to do more to ensure that strong teacher-students and student-student relationships are established in the EFL classroom to support increased interaction in the target language.

The numerous studies of speaking anxiety among Arab learners of a second or foreign language reveal a range of potential causative factors such as negative self-perceptions of speaking proficiency, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. It is worth noting at this point that because these studies did not investigate the manifestations or coping strategies related to speaking anxiety these aspects have not been discussed in this review. The studies discussed above did, however, highlight culture and gender as potential variables to influence how these causative factors manifest and the level of speaking anxiety they provoke in the Arab learners.

Studies of speaking anxiety in learners learning English outside of their country of origin

As evidenced in the above studies, a review of the literature reveals a strong tendency for research on speaking anxiety on foreign/second language learners to be conducted in the learners' country of origin. As such, only a limited number of studies to date provide a perspective of learners' experiences of speaking anxiety in 'second language' (as opposed to

‘foreign language’) contexts where learners are living in a country where the target language is extensively used in the public domain. One such study was conducted by Woodrow (2006), involving 275 students enrolled in advanced English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses prior to entering Australian universities. The author developed a new instrument to measure students’ oral communication inside and outside the language learning classroom: the L2 speaking anxiety scale (SLSAS). In turn, Woodrow (2006) presented findings to indicate the most common source of speaking anxiety for the ESL students was interacting with native speakers.

Woodrow (2006) also presented findings on the manifestations of speaking anxiety among the study cohort. According to the author, the participants reported more physiological (51.1%) and cognitive manifestations (48.9%) than behavioural (34%) manifestations. The physiological reactions included sweating, quickened heartbeat, and blushing, and the cognitive reactions included concerns about performance and going mentally blank. The behavioural reactions reported by participants included fidgeting, excessive talking and stuttering. Woodrow (2006) also reported on the main coping strategies to manage speaking anxiety experiences identified by the participants. In particular, the study found the main strategies used by the participants to manage L2 speaking anxiety were perseverance and purposeful skills development. Other coping mechanisms reported by the participants included positive thinking, compensation and relaxation techniques (Woodrow, 2006).

Similar to the cross-cultural learning setting utilised by Woodrow (2006), Ohata (2005) conducted a study of potential sources of anxiety for Japanese ESL learners studying at colleges in the United States. Using in-depth qualitative interview format the author sought to identify sources of speaking anxiety relevant to the affective needs of the Japanese ESL learners. Ohata (2005) found five common sources of speaking anxiety among the participants: fear of negative evaluation/ losing face; low self-confidence in English speaking proficiency; competitiveness; test anxiety; and cultural beliefs. With regard to cultural beliefs in particular, the participants indicated they found it particularly difficult to change or adapt to American cultural standards in relation to assertive speaking (e.g., offering contrary opinions, interrupting etc.).

2.5. Gaps in the literature

This literature review has identified a number of gaps in the literature on speaking anxiety among adult ESL learners. The gaps relate to contexts of study, ESL classroom dynamics, and data collection methods. The present study aims to address these gaps and to contribute to our

research understanding of speaking anxiety in three key ways. First, with regard to the context of study, Fiske (2004) reminds us that contexts that seem puzzling motivate discovery and the search for explanations and resolutions. As such, a study of speaking anxiety related behaviours in Saudi students learning English in a foreign country classroom will enable the researcher to analyse the phenomenon from a contextual perspective (Arnold, Price & Moisio, 2006). This is an important consideration given the association made in previous research between ESL learner language anxiety and a learning context where 'the target language is also the language of everyday communication' (Woodrow, 2006, p. 309).

This study focuses on Saudi ESL learners' experiences of speaking anxiety while studying in Australia. The relevance of this study focus is evident in the increasing number of international students in general and Saudi students in particular whose first language is not English who are studying abroad. This review of the literature highlighted the paucity of studies on speaking anxiety among adult ESL learners. Indeed, it could not locate studies of speaking anxiety among Saudi students learning English outside their countries of origin. This study may therefore contribute important insights into how a foreign country learning context contributes to, or works to reduce, experiences of speaking anxiety during in-class and out-of-class speaking activities.

Second, this review highlighted the strong preference in previous studies of ESL learner speaking anxiety to include classroom settings comprised of homogeneous learner cohorts. Although this study focuses on Saudi learners, the setting for this study is a university English language classroom comprised of adult ESL learners from various cultural backgrounds. This setting is relevant to research on speaking anxiety among ESL learners because it represents contemporary English language classrooms at universities accessed by international students. This study recognises that contexts are important to researchers to develop and test theories (Arnold, Price & Moisio, 2006).

In turn, use of a language classroom context that comprises multiple nationalities among the student group will enable the researcher to develop an understanding of Saudi ESL learner speaking anxiety within a cross-cultural framework. In addition, the co-educational learning dynamic in the classroom setting selected for this study clearly contrasts with the separated learning environments for males and females in some Arab countries, notably Saudi Arabia. This will enable the proposed study to examine how cultural variables and gender variables may influence speaking anxiety in Saudi ESL learners. As such, this study has the potential to

contribute a new perspective to the research field related to learners' perceptions of how multicultural learning contexts may shape their experiences of speaking anxiety during in-class and out-of-class speaking activities.

Third, this study aims to contribute to the research field on speaking anxiety among adult ESL learners through its use of stimulated recall for data collection. Few studies of speaking anxiety have utilised qualitative data collection methods, and no study on the phenomenon appears to have used stimulated recall for data collection. The relevance of using stimulated recall in this study is tied to its capacity to elicit data from participants related to their thought processes while undertaking a specific activity (Gass & Mackey, 2000). Thus, use of stimulated recall in this study will enable the researcher to track participants' recollections of their anxiety throughout the speaking task. This will be useful to access the learners' perceptions of how their speaking anxiety fluctuated during the in-class speaking tasks as well as the factors the learners identified as increasing or decreasing the levels of anxiety they felt during the task.

2.6. Conclusion

Anxiety is clearly established in the literature as a potentially debilitating factor for learners of a second or foreign language. Research shows that LLA is commonly associated with elements encompassing communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and classroom anxiety. The primary focus of this study is speaking anxiety in Saudi ESL learners: particularly the learners' perceptions of what causes their speaking anxiety experiences when participating in in-class speaking activities; and how they interpret their speaking anxiety experiences. To guide this research investigation a review of the current academic and research literature was conducted. What emerges from this review – and what is therefore important for consideration in the research process – is that both learner-centred and context-related variables have the potential to work independently and/or combine to significantly influence the onset of speaking anxiety in ESL learners.

3. Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Qualitative research paradigm

Research paradigms refer to the way of thinking that underpins the research process (Krauss, 2005). They may be considered from three interconnected domains: ontology (the notion of reality), epistemology (how one comes to know that reality), and methodology (the processes used to attain knowledge of reality) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In this way, researchers will be guided by a set of ideas (ontology) which they use to formulate a set of questions (epistemology) to investigate in a specific way (methodology) (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The epistemological construct is thus important to the researcher's choice between qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Krauss, 2005). The epistemological assumption for quantitative researchers is that true knowledge of a social world phenomenon emerges from facts. Thus, to determine the facts it is necessary to gather data that allows the calculation of ratios, statistics, measurements and amounts. The researcher then uses the quantitative data analytical techniques to deduce the truth (Collins, 2010). In contrast, qualitative research paradigms suggest that true knowledge of social world phenomena emerges from interpretation. As a result, the qualitative researcher collects data on individuals' thoughts, beliefs, understandings and values which she or he then uses to interpret or induce the meaning or truth about the phenomenon being studied.

Research investigations of learning settings (e.g., classrooms) often reflect the interests and concerns of teachers. Moreover, the research is mostly conducted on site (i.e., in the researchers' teaching contexts), with the aim to relate the research outcomes directly to teaching practice (Burton & Mikan, 1993). Hence, research of events and practices in classroom settings often utilises applied research paradigms with their underlying assumption that reality is a socially constructed phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Indeed, constructivists posit that each individual possesses a subjective understanding of the world, thus implying the existence of multiple perspectives and interpretations of reality (Crocker, 2009).

Qualitative methodology was selected for this study. The rationale for this choice is that it allowed the researcher to explore in detail the situational variables affecting second language speaking anxiety in Saudi ESL learners. A detailed examination of these variables could only be achieved by applying qualitative research paradigms as they enabled the researcher to

examine how anxiety levels and symptoms in the ESL learners changed from moment to moment during speaking tasks.

This study sought to examine a range of in-class and out-of-class L2 speaking opportunities and to identify at what point the Saudi ESL learners indicated they felt anxious. It also sought to focus on the manifestations of this anxiety, as well as steps taken by individual participants to mitigate the anxiety or its effects. Thus, the application of qualitative methodological paradigms allowed for the identification of different kinds of situational variables (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) at play in the speaking anxiety of the ESL learners and the changes in anxiety they experienced.

Language acquisition and use is significantly influenced by social, cultural, and situational factors (Al-Saraj, 2014b; Qaddomi, 2013). Qualitative research is thus ideal for gaining insights into such contextual elements and influences as understood from an insider's (in this case a language learner's) perspective (Dörnyei, 2007). Moreover, a qualitative approach facilitates a research investigation using multiple sources of data to deliver a comprehensive description of the phenomenon in focus (Creswell, 2012).

For these reasons, the qualitative research approach applied in this study is valuable to the academic understanding of speaking anxiety from the participant's point of view. Al-Saraj (2015) pointed out that researchers have found it difficult to properly untangle the complexities of FLA in part because of their reliance on quantitative data (i.e. numbers) rather than on speakers' (qualitative) experiences. At the core of foreign language anxiety (FLA) is the human experience and the emotions and motives of the speaker (Al-Saraj, 2015). Thus, understanding the emotions and motives from the participant's point of view is vital to achieving a deeper level understanding of the ways in which speaking anxiety impacts foreign language learning.

3.2. Participants

The study sample included nine Saudi ESL students and nine non-Saudi ESL students. Including non-Saudi ESL learners in the sample created a more "typical" ESL classroom environment in Australia, but the actual data collection focused only on the Saudi participants. The non-Saudi ESL learners were from different nationalities (e.g., China, Pakistan, and Taiwan). The recruitment of participants consisted of the following steps. After obtaining ethics approval (see Appendix 1), participants were sought through the Head of Academic Learning Programs and the Learning Advisors of Macquarie University English Language Centre (MUELC). Permission was obtained to attend appropriate classes at MUELC to recruit

volunteers for the study. When attending the classes the aims and purpose of the study were outlined to potential participants. To recruit sufficient numbers of Saudi participants it was also necessary to contact other Saudi students outside MUELC. Once again with the necessary institutional ethics approval, the researcher spoke to English language learners from her personal network and explained the nature of the study and what it would involve for participants. The confidentiality protocols to be applied in the study were outlined to potential participants along with what they would be required to do should they be accepted. The researcher left her contact details for the participants and interested participants contacted her. A follow up e-mail with the details of the study was then sent to interested students.

Those who expressed a willingness to participate were contacted via email and a meeting was arranged to provide them with a study kit. The kit included a participant consent form to be signed (see Appendix 2), details of the aims and purpose of the study, a map with directions to the classroom (study setting), and details of the attendance schedule.

Demographic profiles of each participant can be found in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Demographic Profile of Each Participant

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Years of learning English in Saudi Arabia	Time spent learning English in Australia
Hani	21	Male	6 years	12 months
Amjad	26	Female	6 years	18 months
Ahmad	28	Male	6 years	1 month
Najeebah	22	Female	9 years	2 months
Areej	30	Female	6 years	6 months
Hasnah	29	Female	6 years	12 months
Sawsan	28	Female	6 years	3 months
Tahani	29	Female	6 years	10 months
Rawan	30	Female	6 years	5 months

Participants were recruited for this study using homogeneous convenience sampling. This involves the selection of one particular sub-group with similar characteristics for particular research focus. The advantage of this sampling technique for the purposes of this study is that it provided a cost-effective and reliable way to access willing participants from a limited population (Johnson & Christenson, 2010). Moreover, the homogeneous nature of the cohort allowed the investigation of key research themes of interest and value; that is, emergent patterns

of speaking anxiety among Saudi ESL learners and the coping mechanisms employed by this cohort in response to their speaking anxiety, to be identified and examined in great depth (Patton, 2002).

At a fundamental level, a qualitative inquiry is not concerned with the overall representativeness of the sample or how the phenomenon under study is distributed among a given population. Rather, the primary goal of sampling for a qualitative study is to include participants who can contribute varied and rich insights into the research phenomenon so as to optimise what can be learnt (Polkinghorne, 2005). On the basis of this premise, the convenience sampling method helped to achieve this goal (Polkinghorne, 2005). Furthermore, a well-designed qualitative study need only include a relatively small sample number of respondents to provide the rich data required to more fully understand even subtle meanings in the phenomenon being investigated (Dörnyei, 2007). Accordingly, this study achieved a relatively small sample via convenience sampling methods to enable the researcher to explore in detail the views and experiences of the participants (Mackey & Gass, 2013).

3.3. Study setting

The language learning classroom for this study was set up to replicate a usual language learning classroom at a university. That is, it included all of the equipment one would typically find in a language classroom such as desks and chairs, a teacher's desk, a white board and other technologies (e.g., audio and audio-visual equipment) to support the language learning process. Every effort was made to create an authentic ESL language classroom setting with which the participants would feel familiar. While it is acknowledged that the ESL classroom could only be semi-authentic given its "construction" for the purposes of this study, the classes and learning activities were nonetheless designed and presented to potential participants as authentic learning experiences. Indeed, both Saudi and non-Saudi participants were recruited for the study using the incentive that their participation would provide them with the opportunity to gain speaking and oral presentation practice. They were also offered a \$10 voucher or a movie ticket as a gesture of appreciation for their participation.

The choice to use a supplementary classroom emerged for many reasons. First, there are a number of logistical challenges associated with the use of an actual ESL classroom setting. For instance, an approach was made by the researcher to several language learning centres to request permission to utilise their classrooms and ESL learners to conduct this study. The objective was to observe and video record the learners as they engaged in three speaking

activities (individually, in pairs, and in groups), as well as to interview the learners about their experiences of speaking anxiety. On each of these occasions, however, permission was refused. Second, in a purposely designed intensive English speaking session classroom, the participants (learners) could do a variety of authentic in-class speaking activities in a short space of time without disrupting a formal language classroom practices. Third, finding an ESL classroom that included the required number of Saudi ESL learners would have been difficult.

In this study the ESL supplementary classroom was set up to support the researcher to achieve the core aim of the study; that is, to explore the causes of participants' in-class speaking anxiety, their anxiety symptoms, and their coping strategies. It was arranged for the ESL classroom sessions – attended by the ESL instructor, the Saudi and non-Saudi ESL learners, and the researcher in an observer's role – to be conducted over two days. Each classroom session was about 90 minutes' duration. During this time the participants engaged in two intensive English speaking sessions conducted by a professionally qualified ESL teacher with experience in teaching adult learners. The learning sessions focused on how to deliver a good oral presentation and as such the participants had the opportunity to practise their English and to improve their presentation skills.

3.4. Data collection

Data was generated in this study using three qualitative methods; research observation notes, semi-structured interviews and stimulated recall interviews. Prior to the semi-structured and stimulated recall interviews the ESL learners participated in three different speaking activities: speaking one-on-one with a peer, speaking within a group dynamic, and delivering an individual presentation to the class. The broad rationale for including three types of speaking activities in this study was to identify the potential factors leading to speaking anxiety in the participants, how the speaking anxiety manifested (if at all), as well as to identify the strategies used by the participants to overcome their anxiety. The three speaking situations were also selected for data collection because they allow the focus to be on speaking as part of social interaction and classroom participation rather than grammar practice.

Past research evidence shows that when L2 learners engage in interactive and participative communication they are more directly involved in the process of negotiating the message meaning (Pica & Doughty, 1985). Collectively, the three speaking activities required the ESL learners to participate in what Gass and Varonis (1985) refer to as one-way (e.g., individual presentation) and two-way (e.g., pair work and group work) communicative exchanges of

information. Therefore, this researcher believes this high-level involvement by the ESL learners in relation to the input and interaction components of the SLA process provides the most suitable classroom context to explore experiences of speaking anxiety. Furthermore, including activities that represent both forms of information exchange enables the researcher to collect data that provides valuable insights into the types of correlations that may exist between experiences of speaking anxiety and the speaking communication dynamic.

The first session (Day 1) included two types of speaking activities: pair work and group-work. Participants were divided into pairs and groups by the teacher to balance the way that Saudi (males and females) interacted and how they interacted with non-Saudi participants as well. Students worked with only one partner at the pair work stage, and then partners were changed by the teacher so that three students worked together at the group work stage. During the pair work task, the teacher presented two videos to the students: an example of a good presentation and an example of a bad presentation. The teacher then asked the students to work in pairs to comment on the videos. As for the group tasks, the first activity required students to work in groups to read commonly used phrases when doing a presentation and arrange them under suitable headings (e.g., Introduction and overview, summarising, etc.). A low-stakes competitive element was part of this activity, with the first group to finish being recognised as the winner. The second task required each group to look at a list of sentences and then one student from each group would write a sentence on the board under the heading *Dos and Don'ts* after discussing the options with the group members. Only one student at a time from each group was permitted to write the answer on the board. The sentences were statements pertaining to what students should or should not do during a presentation (e.g., Prepare in plenty of time, Use informal language, etc.). At the end of the first session the teacher asked each student to prepare an individual presentation of approximately five-minutes' duration about the advantages and disadvantages of studying English abroad to be delivered during the second teaching session (i.e., the next day). All students were provided with a presentation outline to help them to prepare their presentation. Each participant received feedback from the classroom teacher regarding his or her presentation privately.

The classroom learning activities were video/audio recorded and field notes were recorded by the researcher based on her observations of the classroom. Data was collected on speaking anxiety related to the in-class speaking performances of the Saudi ESL learners only. One Saudi and two non-Saudi participants dropped out of the study on the first day and thus did not

attend the second teaching session. This meant that a total of nine Saudi and nine non-Saudi participants attended the two sessions.

Research observation (field notes)

Researcher observations can facilitate an understanding of context and/or the identification of specific examples which may become points of reference in subsequent participant interviews (Merriam, 2014). This researcher attended the ESL classroom and compiled observation notes during each participant's performance in the in-class speaking activities. The field notes enabled the researcher to collect supplementary data on the learning environment which may not have been accessible via video mode or due to the angle of the camera. The researcher's observations were also used to generate prompts and questions during the stimulated recall sessions.

Semi-structured interviews

To understand students' experiences, including experiences of studying a second language, students' voices should be a source of information (Yan & Horwitz, 2008). However, foreign/second language learners' voices are noticeably absent from research supposed to explore their experiences, even of an important affective variable such as anxiety (Al-Saraj, 2014a). Therefore, the researcher sought to gain additional information and insight into students' experiences through interviews.

The semi-structured interviews with the Saudi ESL learners were conducted either at the institute attended by the participant or in a quiet, convenient location which supported a clear recording. They were conducted at a time suitable to the student within five days after the class sessions. The students were informed of the objectives of the interview and then each interview was conducted. The interviews were approximately 30 minutes duration and were audio-recorded. The semi-structured interview format was chosen on the basis of the flexibility it offered the researcher. Indeed, this interview format allows the interviewees to speak broadly on the phenomenon and to develop ideas on the issues raised by the researcher during the interview (Denscombe, 2014).

The objective of each interview in this study was to explore the individual participants' views on and experiences of second language speaking both inside and outside the classroom setting.

Notably, the term ‘anxiety’ was not specifically mentioned in the interview questions/prompts to allow the participants to explain their L2 speaking experiences in their own terms.

The semi-structured interview comprised 11 items (some adapted from previous studies of speaking anxiety (e.g., Tanveer, 2007 and Al-Saraj, 2014b). The items were designed to collect data on four broad topic areas related to participants’: language learning history; attitudes towards English; impressions of and attitudes towards university English classes; and attitudes to communicating in English. Indeed, this stage of data collection enabled the researcher to ascertain the extent to which factors related to L2 speaking anxiety were discussed by the Saudi ESL learners. This enabled the study to identify the sources of speaking anxiety and the symptoms participants experienced when learning English and how they coped with their anxiety (see Appendix 3 for a copy of the interview questions).

To address concerns related to participants’ English language proficiency and its impact on data quality (i.e., the ability to provide nuanced and detailed responses and reflective commentary), the interviews were conducted in the participants’ L1 (Arabic) and were audio recorded.

Stimulated recall interviews

Stimulated recall is an introspective data collection method that utilises visual or aural reminders to prompt participants to recall the thoughts they had while performing a task (Gass & Mackey, 2000). The researcher typically supports the recall process in the participant through targeted questions addressed to the learner about their understanding of particular behaviours or events apparent in the stimulation material (Gass & Mackey, 2000). The validity of stimulated recall methods for the procurement of reliable data on participants’ thoughts is evident when this method is compared to other data collection methods. For instance, post-hoc interview methods rely heavily on unprompted recall which may degrade the accuracy of the memory, and think-aloud protocols require prior participant training on how to perform the protocols effectively (Gass & Mackey, 2000).

The stimulated recall interviews with each participant were conducted immediately after the semi-structured interviews. Each stimulated recall interview lasted approximately 30 minutes duration. During the interviews data was collected from the participants on how they felt during each of the three speaking activities and whether they believed that anxiety might have affected their ability to communicate in English. The aim was also to identify additional symptoms and factors not identified by the participants in the first interviews. As with the semi-structured

interviews, the stimulated recall interviews were conducted in the participants' L1 (Arabic) and were audio recorded.

3.5. Data analysis

Generally, qualitative data analysis provides a method for categorising and organising the subtleties of everyday social phenomena in a meaningful way. In this study the objective was to build on our academic understanding of speaking anxiety in Saudi ESL learners by identifying the key elements of the phenomenon and then establishing how the elements relate to the study context and processes. To facilitate this process the audio recordings were used to transcribe the participants' interview comments directly related to speaking anxiety (e.g., times of anxiety, reported physical or emotional responses while experiencing anxiety, coping strategies etc.) and the transcriptions were then translated into English. Comments not related to speaking anxiety were omitted and therefore did not appear in the final translation. This enabled the researcher to undertake a targeted analysis of the data provided.

The information (participants' comments, opinions etc.) from these data sources and the field notes were recorded in one of two subject categories for identification: ESL learner interviews and ESL learner stimulated recalls. The qualitative data analysis process involved the search for patterns of common themes across multiple sources of transcribed data; that is, individual interviews and stimulated recalls.

The approach undertaken to analyse the data was recursive in its objective to establish appropriate classification of data as well as identify relevant comparisons and contrasts (Merriam, 1988). The initial stage of the data analysis process was to assign codes or themes to the interview and stimulated recall data. The primary objective was to identify similar comments, phrases, patterns or categories embedded in the participants responses related to their experiences of speaking anxiety. An inductive search for factors related to sources of speaking anxiety as reported by participants, how their speaking anxiety experiences manifested, and what coping mechanisms (if any) were applied in response to the speaking anxiety experience was then undertaken. This was completed in order to create tentative categories based on relationships (as suggested by Miles & Huberman, 1994) between the causes or manifestations of the speaking anxiety, or the coping strategies applied.

After isolating the emergent similarities and differences in the experiences and processes (Miles & Huberman, 1994) related to speaking anxiety in the data, a negative case analysis was

performed. Ely (1991) describes this process as a ‘search for evidence that does not fit into the emergent findings’ (p. 98) of the present study and thus force a re-inspection of the study findings. The data analysis process also included member-checking (see details below).

3.6. Establishing trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is reliant upon four core constructs: credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability and confirmability (McKay, 2006). In turn, trustworthiness based on these four elements was established in this study using triangulation, member checking, peer checking and the provision of rich, detailed description.

Data triangulation was performed to identify thematic convergences and contrasts across the different data sources and thus strengthen the internal validity of the study (Johnson & Christensen, 2010). Member checking refers to the process of sharing the researcher’s data interpretations with the data sources (i.e., participants) to verify the accuracy of the interpretations (Dörnyei, 2007). Emphasis was placed in this qualitative research on accessing participant understandings of their speaking anxiety experiences. Thus, an obvious strategy was to include the participants in the processes undertaken to provide accurate study findings. Following the semi-structured interviews and stimulated recalls the participants were provided with a copy of the transcript. They were then invited to check the accuracy of the researcher’s interpretation of their statements / interpretations and suggest changes where appropriate.

Peer checking involved the use of a colleague to develop and test a coding scheme for comparison with the coding scheme developed by the researcher. All differences were discussed and justified and alterations to the researcher’s coding scheme were made where appropriate. Both of these measures helped to strengthen the credibility of the results (Dörnyei, 2007). In addition, rich and detailed descriptions of the research context and process were provided. This was to support external validity outcomes and enable other researchers to identify transferability to other contexts (Johnson & Christensen, 2010). Lastly, with regard to confirmability (sometimes referred to as objectivity), this has been established in this research by way of extensive references to the results of other research studies and academic papers to confirm and/or substantiate the results.

3.7. Ethical considerations

Ethics approval was sought and obtained from the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. This study required the collection of information related to personal L2

learning experiences and an interaction between researcher and participant. Therefore, important ethical considerations including participant confidentiality, the protection of vulnerable participants, and issues of informed consent were all taken into account.

Ethical questions invariably emerge related to the researcher-participant relationship, how data is to be used; namely ‘how much data to disclose, to whom and in what contexts’ (p. 2) and the data interpretation and analysis processes (Miller, Mauthner, Birch & Jessop, 2012). Due to the personal and potentially sensitive nature of the data collected, privacy and confidentiality were maintained during the data collection and analysis processes by identifying all participants by a code letter rather than their names. For the purposes of the reporting and discussion of the findings, participants were each assigned a pseudonym.

Prior to the start of the study a signed consent form was sought and obtained from all participants. Participants were also informed that their involvement in the study was voluntary and that they could freely withdraw from the study at any time without explanation. The contact details of the chief researcher were also provided to participants for use if they had any concerns or questions about the study.

3.8. Conclusion

This chapter has described the methodology employed in this study, focusing particularly on the application of qualitative research paradigms and the rationale for the study design. The description also established the target population for investigation as Saudi ESL learners and the key role played by non-Saudi ESL learners to achieve the study aims. Also reported was that ethics approval for this study was obtained from the appropriate committee and all necessary ethical considerations were applied throughout entire research process. The chapter concluded with details of how the research data was collected, entered and analysed to address the study questions.

4. Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this study was to identify the triggers of speaking anxiety inside and outside the language classroom for Saudi ESL learners. This study also aimed to examine the manifestations of speaking anxiety among the participants in relation to their participation in three speaking activities. In addition, the coping strategies used by the ESL learners to manage experiences of speaking anxiety are also investigated. This chapter presents and discusses the results from the data analysis. Nine adult Saudi ESL learners currently enrolled at different language learning institutions participated in this study, and data was collected via one-on-one semi-structured interviews, stimulated recall interviews, and researcher note-taking during classroom observation. The following discussion of the study results is divided into three sections to cover the three domains of speaking anxiety within the research focus; that is, triggers, manifestations, and coping strategies.

4.2. Triggers of speaking anxiety

Analysis of the data was undertaken to identify the possible factors causing speaking anxiety in the Saudi ESL participants to answer Research Question 1. The findings to emerge from the interviews and stimulated recall sessions show the participants identified a range of factors as potential contributors to experiences of speaking anxiety. In turn, the results may be loosely classified into three trigger domains: linguistic factors, psychological factors, and contextual factors. The analysis of the data also revealed, however, that the three categories of factors often combined or overlapped to provoke speaking anxiety in the Saudi ESL learners.

Therefore, to elucidate the triggers of speaking anxiety in Saudi ESL learners it was necessary for the researcher to develop three trigger categories; that is, socio-contextual factors, psycholinguistic factors, and combined overlap factors. Figure 1 illustrates the three factor categories as well as the way in which they both combine and overlap. It displays the fact that the setting in which the overlap of factors was most pronounced was the classroom environment – as shown in the middle of the graphic.

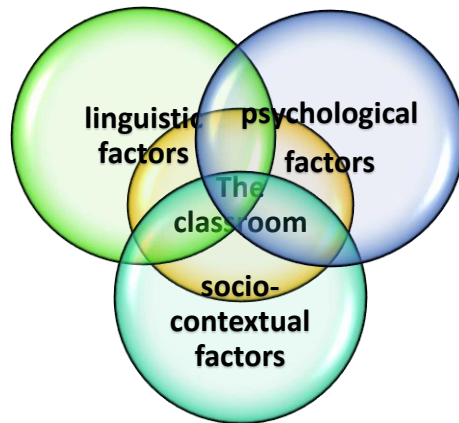


Figure 1 Speaking anxiety triggers and how they overlap

4.2.1. Socio-contextual factors

A combination of social and contextual factors was found to contribute to speaking anxiety in the Saudi ESL learners in this study. The ‘social’ factors refer to both the internal classroom environment and the external social environment. The ‘contextual’ factors refer to both the classroom norms and expectations with which the participants identify, as well as to their perceptions of the social and language norms of the classroom culture. Five socio-contextual factors emerged in this study as likely contributors to speaking anxiety in Saudi ESL learners. They are shown in Figure 2 below from most identified to least identified based on participants’ responses.

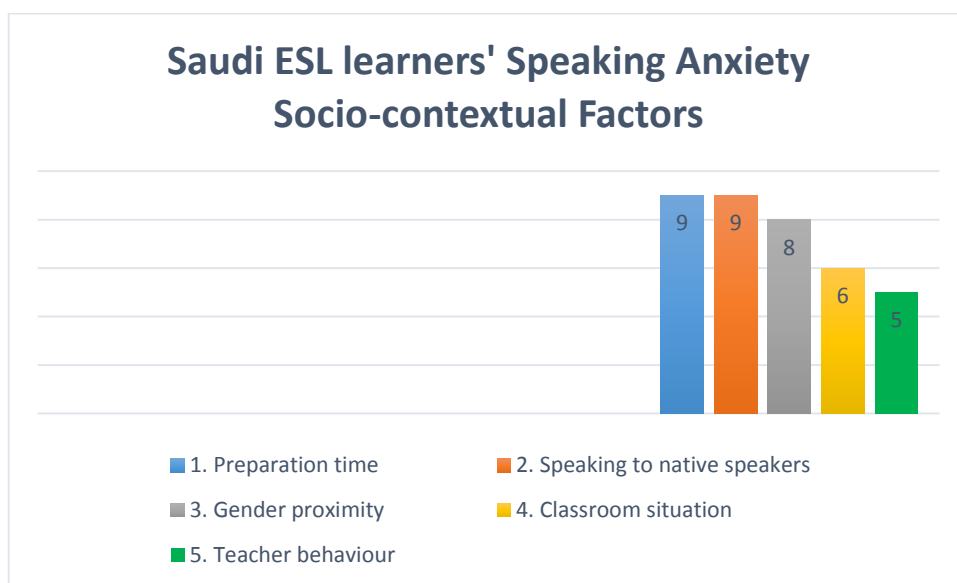


Figure 2 Saudi ESL learners’ speaking anxiety socio-contextual factors

Preparation time

A socio-contextual factor reported by the participants to contribute to speaking anxiety was limited time to prepare for the speaking activity, whether a presentation or an oral exchange. This factor was mentioned by all of the participants (n = 9) during the interviews and/or stimulated recall sessions and is illustrated by the comments below:

If the speaking topic is difficult and I don't have enough time to prepare for it, I would have fewer things to say about it. And this might cause anxiety. (Najeebah)

If the teacher doesn't give me time to prepare an answer for a speaking activity, I will be anxious. (Areej)

If I'm not prepared and the teacher asks me a question suddenly, I will be anxious... If I had only a short time, I would be anxious if I talk about a difficult topic. (Hasnah)

If the topic is easy then I will be confident, even if I have to prepare in a short time. (Sawsan)

I will be anxious when doing a presentation, especially if I'm not well prepared. ... If I'm well-prepared I will be more confident and more comfortable. (Rawan)

The participants' responses above indicate that speaking anxiety can emerge from the relationship between the difficulty or unfamiliarity of the speaking topic and the amount of time given to prepare for the speaking activity. Although the pair- and group-based speaking activities designed by the ESL teacher for this study presented obvious limitations on the amount of time the students had to 'prepare' to speak, the issues of topic difficulty and preparation time were most evident in relation to the individual oral presentation activity. The participants were given notice of the task requirement only one day before the scheduled presentation. As a result, many participants felt they did not have the time they would have liked to look for information and to practise suitable vocabulary. In addition, many participants anticipated making language usage errors during the oral presentation and subsequently linked this to their experiences of speaking anxiety. As stated by Rawan: "I remember that I was very anxious during the oral presentation because I didn't have enough time to prepare for it and I made too many mistakes"

The limited preparation time based progression towards speaking anxiety is illustrated in Figure 3 below:

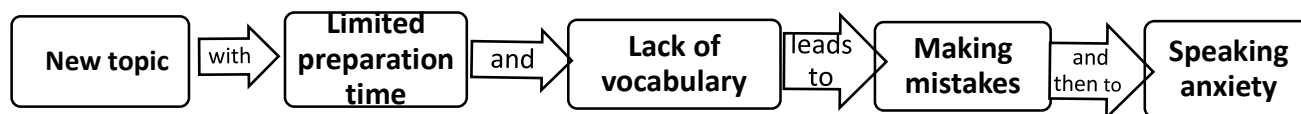


Figure 3 Links between preparation time and speaking anxiety

Notably, the study participants did not feel the same preparation time pressures when speaking outside of the classroom. Indeed, many indicated that they feel more relaxed when speaking outside of the classroom because they can talk about daily routine topics that were familiar to them. As Tahani remarked; “I feel more relaxed when I talk about daily things in daily routines”.

The finding of a relationship between speaking topic and preparation time, and the onset of speaking anxiety is also reported in other research studies (e.g., Batiha, Noor & Mustaffa (2014); Javid (2014); Salem & Al Diyar, 2014). For instance, in their study of Saudi L2 learner anxiety, Salem and Al Diyar (2014) reported it was not so much the result of the mere act of speaking, but rather the anxiety was triggered by a lack of preparation for their participation in the language class.

Speaking to native speakers

The analysis of the interview and stimulated recall responses from the participants also identified speaking with native speakers of English as a socio-contextual factor to potentially contribute to the onset of speaking anxiety. This factor was mentioned by all participants (n = 9) and is reflected in the following comments:

If I speak with native speakers I will be anxious. (Areej)

When I speak with native speakers specifically, I try to speak quickly because I try to reach their level and when I try to speak quickly, I make mistakes. (Rawan)

I feel anxious when speaking with native speakers because I have to arrange the words in sentences. (Ahmad)

Speaking to native speakers causes anxiety and cross-cultural misunderstanding because you have first to adjust to that culture. Then you will have a proper conversation with them. Because you are conscious of the culture, it causes anxiety. (Najeebah)

Some people outside of the classroom are not patient. They don't want to wait until they understand what I want to say. (Hasnah)

From the comments above it is evident that the relationship between speaking anxiety and speaking with native speakers is multifaceted. For instance, Hasnah and Rawan both mention that their speaking anxiety emerges out of their perceived need to convey their message to the listener quickly; whereas Najeeba links her experience of speaking anxiety to a consciousness of culture and the need to 'adjust' her speaking style to meet the conversational norms and expectations of the native speaker's culture. In addition, Ahmad's comment reveals a sense of frustration and stress surrounding the management of English language structures (e.g., "arrange the words in sentences") and the subsequent onset of speaking anxiety when talking to native speakers. It was also revealed by a number of participants that of most concern to them was lack of vocabulary compared to the native speaker, uncertainty about cultural rules such as when to interject, and the length of time they should speak. As a result, many participants in this study felt locked into an unequal status relationship leading to feelings of anxiousness or stress. This sentiment is reflected in the comment from Sawsan; "I feel like I am not equal to [native speakers] so I am worried about speaking".

The comment from Najeebah above also establishes an explicit connection between managing the broader cultural aspects associated with the native speaker and the onset of speaking anxiety. In particular, the notion of cross-cultural misunderstandings is raised by the participant and the potential for such gaps in cultural understanding to provoke speaking anxiety in the non-native speaker. Indeed, the cross-cultural misunderstandings mentioned by Najeebah and the lack of 'patience' from native speakers to which Hasnah refers pertain to the culture-related pressures ESL speakers are sometimes required to manage during conversations with native speakers.

Furthermore, one explanation for the reports from participants of speaking anxiety related to cultural norms and nuances may be 'culture shock'. Little (1984; cited in Crookall & Oxford, 1991) applied this phrase to the context of language learning and posited that language learners in foreign contexts are inherently limited in their L2 proficiency. Therefore, they may experience culture shocks throughout the language learning process. Crookall and Oxford (1991) further explain that culture shock may be due to not fully understanding the language conventions and expectations applied in that culture.

The results in this study linking speaking anxiety in ESL learners to factors related to talking to native speakers are affirmed in other studies, including Woodrow (2006) and Tanveer (2007). In Woodrow's (2006) study of ESL learners attending an intensive English course for academic purposes in Australia, the author reported that speaking with native speakers was the most anxiety-provoking situation among her study participants.

Gender proximity

Another prominent socio-contextual factor found in this study to contribute to speaking anxiety in the Saudi ESL learner participants was proximity with members of the opposite gender inside or outside of the classroom. Specifically, the gender proximity issues were found to be related to such aspects as being in a mixed gender classroom, sitting next to or behind a person of the opposite gender, or speaking with a person of the opposite gender. This factor was identified by the majority of participants ($n = 8$) during the individual interviews and stimulated recalls.

The potential for gender interaction to be a source of speaking anxiety is illustrated in the following comments from participants:

When I noticed that I'm going to work in pairs with a Saudi man, I was shocked. I tried to ask the teacher to change my partner. I feel very anxious when I sit with a Saudi man. (Hasnah)

When I noticed the Saudi men I got nervous. I feel more comfortable looking at people from other backgrounds. I prefer talking to women rather than men. Because you know I'm not used to talking to men in general. (Najeebah)

When I first came I was very anxious and worried about dealing with Saudis, especially males. (Sawsan)

I try to be careful when dealing with Saudi students and if I get the chance to work with ten Chinese girls or 1 Saudi girl, I will choose to work with the ten Chinese girls. (Hani)

Proximity to the opposite gender as a factor of speaking anxiety was identified by female participants in particular, although not exclusively (as illustrated by the comment from Hani, a male participant, above). Moreover, there was often a gender-related evaluative element associated with the proximity that was anxiety provoking for the participants. Hasnah stated: "The presence of Saudi males made me a little bit anxious because I was afraid they are going to judge my performance." The relationship between gender proximity and speaking anxiety

referred to in the participants' comments elucidate the social or cultural factors of influence in speaking anxiety. In relation to Saudi ESL learners specifically, there are salient religious and cultural factors to consider in order to better understand the relationship between culture, gender interactions, and speaking anxiety.

Males and females are separated in Saudi schools and as a result they are not used to sitting together and talking to each other in a formal learning environment. This point is made explicitly by Najeebah in her remark: "Because we are separated in Saudi schools we are not used to sitting and talking with Saudi men." Indeed, given the lack of experience most Saudi learners have of co-educational classroom environments, it is arguably not unexpected that proximity to the opposite gender emerged in this study as an anxiety-provoking situation for Saudi ESL learners when asked to participate in mixed gender speaking activities. This sentiment is well-encapsulated in Hasnah's comment; "I feel very anxious when I sit with a Saudi man because I'm not used to it. At the beginning I was anxious even with the international male students, but after that I found out that it is okay to sit with them".

Thus, it may be argued that unfamiliar classroom interaction dynamics may place added pressure on Saudi ESL learners to demonstrate proficiency and to save face in front of Saudi students of the opposite gender. This unfamiliar classroom context may then function as a causal factor of speaking anxiety behaviours related to gender proximity. Notably, no other studies reporting findings related to gender interactions as a source of speaking anxiety among Saudi L2 learners can be drawn on for comparison with this study. This is because the majority of studies of speaking anxiety among both female and male Saudi language learners focus primarily on the differences in the levels and types of anxiety experienced by each gender.

Classroom situation

The classroom situation also emerged as a socio-contextual factor causing speaking anxiety in the participants. The classroom situation includes such aspects as the formal classroom climate, large class size, and peer scrutiny. This factor was reported by the majority of participants (n = 6) during the semi-structured interviews and stimulated recall interviews as evidenced in the following remarks:

When I speak inside the classroom, I feel that everyone is expecting you to speak without mistakes... I feel relaxed in pair work activities when I speak with only one student. (Tahani)

During the group work I felt relaxed also because it was only a small group, not like when speaking in front of a large number of people. I think speaking outside of the classroom is easier for me because I have the basics, but inside the classroom they want us to speak in an academic way. (Sawsan)

I will be embarrassed if I make mistakes in front of a large number of students. (Hasnah)

As can be seen from the above excerpts, the Saudi ESL participants tend to feel more relaxed speaking outside of the classroom because they regard the classroom as a ‘formal’ environment where students are expected to speak in an academic way. Also, they prefer to be in a classroom with only a small number of students. Some of the participants indicate that a small number of students helps them to concentrate on the teacher’s instruction and that they don’t like noisy classes. Others report that they fear feeling embarrassed if they make mistakes in front of a large group of students. For example, Rawan commented that if there are a lot of students in the classroom she does not ask the teacher questions because she is concerned the other students will judge that “she doesn’t understand” and that the answer to her question may be something that is easy for the other students to understand. She went on to say that when there is a smaller number of students in the classroom she is more relaxed about asking her questions.

Hani, however, expressed a contrary opinion:

If there are a lot of students in the class, it will be more interesting because I will be mixing with people from different nationalities. I can speak with different groups and I can learn from their cultures. Before I came here, I didn't know anything about any other culture.

It is interesting to note Hani’s reference to cultures and nationalities (in the plural form) in his comment. This draws attention to one of the complexities for ESL students learning English in Australia. As a multicultural society, Australia presents to many foreign students as a unique language learning environment. That is, they can interact with students (and non-students) of diverse cultural backgrounds who bring with them their own cultural influences to the language learning process and English usage demands.

The classroom situation as a trigger of speaking anxiety for the participants of this study is affirmed in other studies. For example, Tóth (2011) found the classroom situation (e.g., the number of students) as a source of speaking anxiety in her study of EFL learners. In addition, the finding in this study that L2 classroom situation elements potentially contribute to speaking anxiety in L2 learners affirms the findings by Tanveer (2007). His study of international ESL

learners found the formal and evaluative nature of the L2 classroom to be stressful and the catalyst for error-making.

Teacher behaviour

Another socio-contextual factor found in this study to contribute to speaking anxiety was the Saudi ESL learners' impressions of teacher behaviour such as perceived constant correcting or impatience when waiting for a response. During the individual interviews and stimulated recall sessions a number of participants ($n = 5$) regarded perceived impatience and overcorrection by the teachers in response to error making as teacher behaviours most affecting their willingness to communicate in the classroom. They similarly reported that the behaviours adversely impacted their willingness to actively engage in the language learning activities.

The relationship between teacher behaviour and speaking anxiety is illustrated in the following comments from the participants:

Whenever I make errors such as grammatical mistakes, the teacher stops me and corrects me. This makes me feel a little bit anxious. (Ahmad)

The teacher corrects my mistakes whenever I make a mistake. Whenever I speak she stops me. I feel embarrassed and this makes me unmotivated to participate. (Tahani)

If the teacher is relaxed and patient with the students and gives them a chance to speak, I will be relaxed. (Hasnah)

As can be seen in the above comments, sensitive approaches to error correction on the part of the teacher can be an important contributor to the mitigation of speaking anxiety experiences of ESL learners in the classroom. Ahmad for example indicated; "I prefer if she [the teacher] corrects me after I finish my speaking. Or even between me and her after the class. I think every teacher should not expect that language learners are proficient".

The participants' comments above provide further insights into the way that the interactions that take place within the language learning context can provoke speaking anxiety. In this instance, it is the 'formal' interactive dynamic between the language instructor and language learner combined with the social (or public) setting in which the interaction unfolds. What emerges from the above comments is that the Saudi ESL learners' speaking anxiety experiences may at times be less about a perceived lack of English language usage proficiency and more

about their perceptions of the teacher's responses to the usage issues. As such, the data reveal a powerful social dimension to speaking anxiety as evident in the way the social context and the learner's perceptions of the teacher's behaviours within that social context shape the language learning experience and the potential for speaking anxiety.

A range of studies have noted the potential causal relationship between perceived teacher behaviour in the L2 classroom and speaking anxiety, including Alrabai (2014), Al-Saraj (2014a), and Alghonaim (2014). For instance, Alrabai (2014) acknowledges the language teacher as a key player in students' language anxiety, framing the discussion around such aspects as lack of teacher support, unsympathetic teacher personality, negative evaluations, threatening questioning styles, overcorrection, and intolerance towards learner errors.

4.2.2. Psycho-linguistic factors

A combination of psychological and linguistic factors were also found to potentially cause speaking anxiety in the Saudi ESL learners in this study. The 'psychological' factors refer to such aspects as self-image, confidence levels, and self-perceptions as a language speaker. The 'linguistic' factors refer to such aspects as perceptions of language proficiency and correct/incorrect language usage. The results to emerge in this study reveal two psycho-linguistic factors are associated with speaking anxiety among the study cohort: loss of confidence due to perceptions of low-level English language proficiency and fear of incorrect L2 usage (as shown in Figure 4 below).



Figure 4 Saudi ESL learners' speaking anxiety psycho-linguistic factors

Lack of confidence from perceptions of low language proficiency level

The results in this study reveal low confidence due to perceptions of low level English language proficiency as a causal factor of speaking anxiety in Saudi ESL learners. This factor was identified by all participants (n = 9) in this study during the interviews and stimulated recall sessions. Examples are provided in the following responses:

I feel very depressed if someone asks me about my hijab and why I'm covering my face and I cannot explain because of my language disability. I cannot express or explain what I want to say. In such situations, I prefer to be silent. (Sawsan)

I felt how the dumb and deaf feel because I couldn't speak English. (Amjad)

If I am surrounded by higher language proficiency level students who are more fluent, I will be anxious. (Areej)

Working with the Chinese girl made me feel very relaxed and comfortable. I think that was because her English level is lower than mine. (Swasan)

I lack confidence when speaking because here they focus on grammar. When I speak I make grammatical mistakes which make me lose confidence. (Ahmad)

My self-confidence is low when I speak because I know I will make mistakes. (Rawan)

The participants' responses above and the data more generally reveal that they may experience the L2 learning process as potentially threatening to their self-image or 'face'. In turn, the self-perceived low self-esteem by the participant appears often to be as a result of comparing themselves to an idealised image of others. Areej's reference, for example, to feeling "surrounded by higher language proficiency level students" highlights the nature of such comparisons. When this psychological position is combined with the norms and expectations in the classroom context (e.g. competitiveness of peer evaluations) it may contribute to speaking anxiety. Research findings point to a tendency in language students with speaking anxiety to compare themselves to their peers in the classroom (Occhipinti, 2009). Hence, the loss of confidence in their English language proficiency identified by the participants in this study may be the result of over-thinking potential negative evaluations and/or undervaluing their ability based on competition-based self-comparisons with their peers.

The finding that perceptions of low language proficiency levels contributed to speaking anxiety experiences is confirmed in other studies of Saudi L2 learners. A study by Alqahtani (2011) of

the language needs of Saudi students enrolled in British postgraduate programs, for instance, found the self-perception of low English language proficiency was a major contributor to anxiety experiences.

Fear of incorrect L2 usage

A second psycho-linguistic factor to emerge as a causal factor for speaking anxiety among the participants in this study is fear of incorrect L2 usage. Similar to perceptions of low language proficiency level, fear of incorrect L2 usage was mentioned by all participants (n = 9) in the study. Specifically, the participants pointed to elements such as difficulty with meaning creation, lack of vocabulary, applying grammatical rules, correctly pronouncing words, and the use of wrong expressions. The final two elements were attributed by participants to differences between the Arabic and English languages. These elements as triggers for speaking anxiety are illustrated in the following comments from participants during interviews and stimulated recall sessions:

I can't deliver my message because of the lack of vocabulary and mainly because I am not fluent... Because I always produce wrong sentence structures, I cannot deliver my message and this makes me stressed. (Sawsan)

I have to keep up with their [native speakers] vocabulary so that can be a bit stressful... When I get so nervous, I miss out some words even though I know the right words. That could be stressful I guess. (Najeebah)

I don't want others to misunderstand me if I don't have that amount of vocabulary and grammar. (Tahani)

Sometimes I feel anxious when I have to use words that are alike. They have similar pronunciation and the difference is on the vowels as (sit –set) and others..... We pronounce two words which are similar, but contain one different vowel. (Hani)

When translating things from Arabic into English, I know there is something wrong in my sentences and I feel embarrassed. (Hani)

Pronunciation makes me anxious because even in English sometimes there are two letters that are written together to pronounce only one sound like (sh, ph, ch, th ...) but in Arabic we

pronounce every letter in the words. I feel that they should explain this and teach us this from the beginning of the course. (Amjad)

I feel anxious when I don't know how to pronounce some words because I pronounce them differently sometimes and as a result I say another word. Like for example in the hospital I used to say “pen” for “pain”. Because we don't have the same vowels in Arabic. (Areej)

The many references to fear of incorrect L2 usage by the participants as a contributing factor to speaking anxiety may be explained in relation to their inability to deliver their messages because of their self-perceived linguistic status, resulting in disappointment and negative evaluation by native speakers, peers or teachers. Indeed, the participants' comments demonstrate that they identify differences in the Arabic and English languages as platform from which usage mistakes are exposed.

Amjad alludes to the linguistic component of the 'fear' in particular in her claim that there are a number of “problematic sounds” for Arabic speakers when learning English. Sounds such as “tion, p, v, ph, gh, sh, and ch, and silent letters like in “know” are not familiar to Arabic speakers. In addition, in Arabic every written letter is pronounced independently, in contrast to pronunciations in English which combine two or more letters into one sound for pronunciation. Lack of vocabulary was also a linguistic factor reported by participants as anxiety provoking and a deterrent to participating in speaking activities. Tahani, for example, commented that if she knows she is going to make mistakes due to lack of vocabulary she prefers to remain silent and not to participate in the learning activity. In addition, Najeebah points out that lack of vocabulary is a source of stress for her when speaking to native speakers in particular.

The data thus points to the relationship between perceived linguistic deficiencies and a psychological response. Most salient is the fear of negative evaluation for incorrect L2 usage that the participants try to avoid both inside and outside of the classroom environment. For instance, Hani's feelings of embarrassment at not using English sentences correctly and Sawsan's feelings of stress at not being able to 'deliver [her] message' demonstrate the link between diminished face and self-image, and the onset of speaking anxiety. The emotive language used by some participants such as 'anxious', 'nervous', 'stressful' and 'embarrassed' in their comments about pronunciation-related language proficiency also reinforces the connection between the psychological and the linguistic in some speaking anxiety experiences. The Saudi ESL participants appear to have the desire to express their thoughts in English, but are at times reluctant to do so for fear of using the wrong words or of mispronouncing correct

choices. However, the data reveals that for many participants the psychological response to their self-perceived linguistic status can result in low self-image, frustration or disappointment. As such, this psycho-linguistic driver of speaking anxiety appears to emerge from the disconnection between their expectations as language learners and their conceptualisations of themselves as language learners.

The causal relationship between experiencing difficulty in conveying an intended message and the likelihood of feeling frustration and speaking anxiety is illustrated in Figure 5 below. In turn, to explain this potential causal relationship one may consider Alrabai's (2014) assertion that Saudi ESL learners tend to focus on the social aspects of L2 learning. As a result, the self-image and identity of the learner is dependent on their level of error-making during their interactions with others. Fear of negative evaluation is acknowledged as a psychological response that threatens an L2 learner's social image, and thus can act as a potential source of anxiety when it is linked to incorrect L2 usage (Alrabai, 2014).

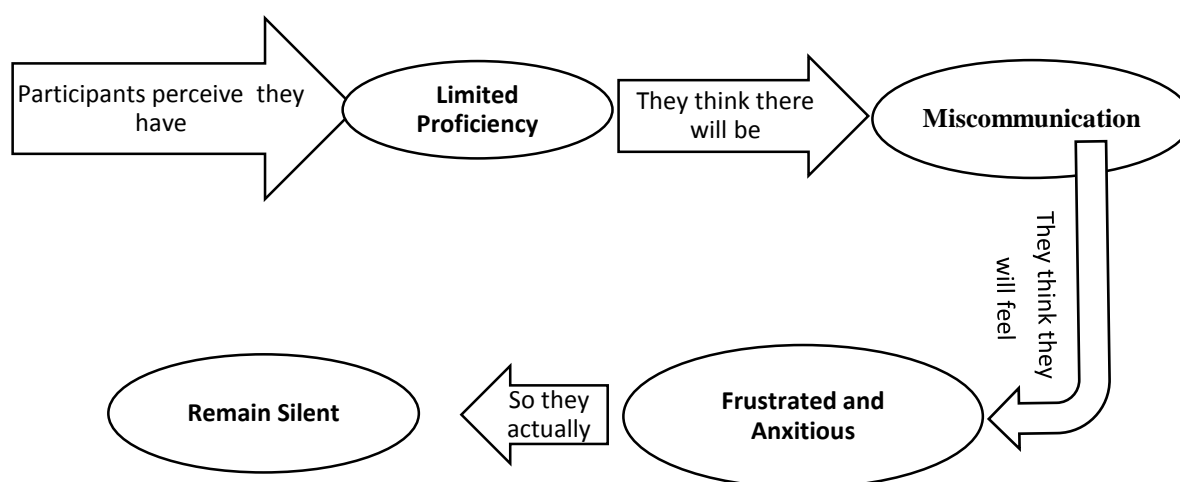


Figure 5 Causal relationships between speaker perceptions and speaking anxiety

The findings in this study of fear of incorrect L2 usage as a contributing factor to speaking anxiety among Saudi ESL learners is in line with findings of other research studies. For

example, Alghonaim (2014) found the majority (88.5%) of Saudi L2 learners participating in his study placed particular emphasis on pronunciation excellence as a marker of their L2 language proficiency. In addition, Batiha et al. (2014) found the three most common factors contributing to fear and/or nervousness in the L2 learners were: not understanding every word spoken by the teacher; poor mastery of the L2; and uncertainty about language ability as a result of not understanding the teacher.

4.2.3. Combined (overlap) factors

Analysis of the data also revealed a combination of overlapping psychological, linguistic, and socio-contextual factors were potential triggers of speaking anxiety in Saudi ESL learners. The overlapping nature of the three elements is evident in the interplay between the speaker's psychological response to the speaking context, the demands of the task, and the presence of the listening audience. As such, it is the nature of this interplay that leads to the manifestation of speaking anxiety. In this study three combined (overlap) factors emerged from the data analysis as having an influence on speaking anxiety among the study cohort: speaker perceptions of the listening audience, the linguistic demands of the speaking activity, and not being welcomed by one's speaking partner. The overlap factors are shown in Figure 6 below.

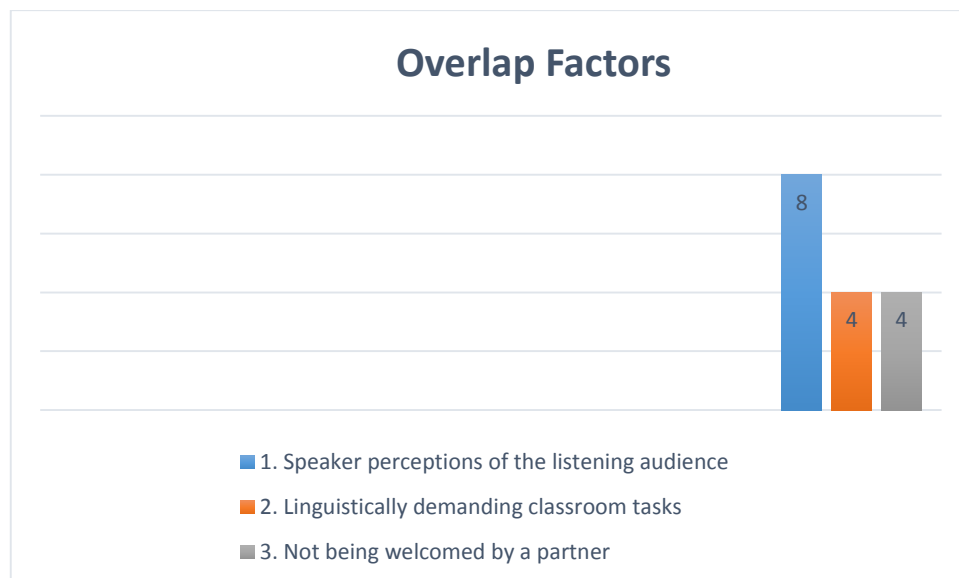


Figure 6 Saudi ESL learners' speaking anxiety overlap factors

Speaker perceptions of the listening audience

The most prominent overlapping factor identified by the participants as contributing to speaking anxiety is their perceptions of the listening audience. Such perceptions include a sense of being evaluated negatively by one's peers and losing face as a result of being judged as under-prepared or unskilled. Negative perceptions of the listening audience were reported by the majority of participants ($n = 8$) during the interviews and the stimulated recall sessions. In this instance, the speaking anxiety experienced by the ESL learners is associated with the opinions that individuals attribute to their peers. Evidence of perceptions of possible negative evaluations by the listening audience as a potential source of speaking anxiety is found in the following remarks:

The presence of a lot of Saudis made me a little bit anxious because I am afraid they are going to judge my performance. (Hasnah)

The oral presentation was the most difficult situation. I was very stressed. (Sawsan)

I feel anxious when I do oral presentations in front of people. Especially if I'm not well prepared. (Rawan)

During the presentation, I was anxious because I didn't know what to say. I wasn't well prepared. And because I was reading from the notes, I became more anxious because I don't want to look unprepared! I was reading and thinking about what the students and what the teacher might say about me because I was just reading from the notes. (Tahani)

One explanation for the results showing a connection between fear of negative evaluation / losing face and speaking anxiety experiences is related to the learning activity. Saudi students are typically not used to speaking in front of the class and giving oral presentations as a classroom learning activity, even in Arabic. Therefore, one might conjecture that the manifestation of speaking anxiety in some participants is derived from being unfamiliar with the individual oral presentation activity and the added pressure of having to use presentation skills such as making eye contact and leading the class while speaking in a second language. Rawan and Tahani for example both indicated the oral presentation was highly anxiety-provoking due to the limited preparation time provided and their fear of a negative evaluation from peers. Indeed, the face-threatening perceptions of the listening audience by the participants may be linked to diminished willingness to participate in speaking activities. As such, the association with speaking anxiety is evident in the participants' responses to having to

overcome their unwillingness and lack of engagement when asked to participate in speaking activities.

The participants' comments above also illustrate the salient nature of the connection made by many participants between being perceived to be adequately prepared for the speaking task and experiences of speaking anxiety. The activity-induced 'fear' mentioned by the participants appears to be related to concerns about likely negative judgements by peers related to evaluations of task preparedness. As a result, the Saudi ESL speakers' experiences of the audiences' perceptions as face threatening appear to generate feelings of self-consciousness and speaking anxiety when called to speak in front of the class.

Notably, Saudi culture may play a key role in the link between fear of negative evaluation and speaking anxiety expressed by the participants. If one considers 'face' as a cultural concept as argued by Jones (2004), the threats to face embedded in the participants' perceptions of being negatively evaluated by peers during speaking tasks may have more to do with Saudi cultural history than the pressures of the speaking activity. That is, it is the participants' perceptions of their peers viewing them as incompetent or undisciplined (e.g., lack of preparation) in the context of Saudi cultural norms and expectations that create anxiety and diminish their ability to communicate. This conclusion emerges from such comments from the participants as; "As Saudis, we always want to show our best and represent our country" (Areej); and "We are judging each other on how we show respect for Saudi culture" (Ahmad).

A graphic representation of the link between speaking anxiety and the desire to save face is provided in Figure 7. It suggests the Saudi ESL speakers' sense of how they are being perceived by their peers or the teacher can be a catalyst for speaking anxiety. It also alludes to the participants' experiences of evaluative classroom situations and perceived monitoring of speaking performance. Notably, researcher observations confirm participant reports that the individual oral activity led to the highest level of anxiety among the participants (compared to the pair and group speaking activities). This is most likely due to the high self-exposure requirement of the individual speaking task.

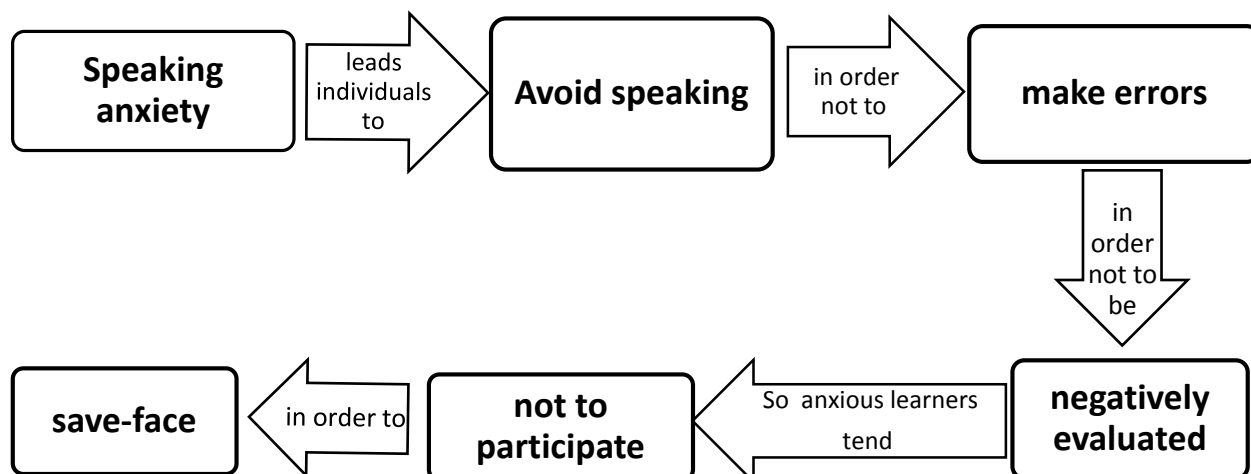


Figure 7 Links between speaking anxiety and the desire to save face

The notion of saving face is embedded into Saudi culture and as a result it is tied to notions of self-worth (Al-Saraj, 2015). Therefore, Saudi students may feel pressured to maintain their self-respect at all times as loss of face is more than just a momentary embarrassment, it is a loss of respect also. Indeed, the participants alluded to the inherent risks associated related to incorrect answers or mispronounced words when speaking in class and how it may lead to speaking anxiety. Although the concept of “saving face” is also relevant in Western cultures, it is experienced at a much deeper and more severe level in Saudi Arabia (Al-Saraj, 2015). Thus, for the Saudi ESL participants in this study, the threat of losing face is a concern to them because of their awareness that mistakes are not easily dismissed in Saudi culture (Al-Saraj, 2015).

The relationship between speaker concerns about audience perceptions, fear of negative evaluation, and the onset of speaking anxiety has been identified in other research studies (e.g., Tóth, 2011; Sadeghi et al., 2013). In relation to Saudi L2 speakers in particular, Alghonaim’s (2014) study of Saudi university students found having to speak in front of others was an explicit source of nervousness for the participants. As reported by the participants, the thought of being judged by the audience (i.e., the teacher and peers) while speaking in English aroused in them feelings of fear and apprehension (Alghonaim, 2014).

Linguistically demanding classroom tasks

The second combined (overlap) factor associated with speaking anxiety in Saudi ESL learners was linguistically demanding classroom tasks. Indeed, the demand level of the task as a contextual-linguistic factor is reported by almost half of the participants ($n = 4$). What emerges from the data is that some participants are fearful of participating in speaking activities because they perceive the demands of the task are beyond their speaking capabilities. Moreover, the link between speaking task difficulty and the onset of speaking anxiety identified by the participants appears to be exacerbated by their awareness that an effort is required by them to communicate their ideas, unlike when communicating ideas in one's first language. These sentiments are evidenced in the following comments from participants:

If the task is not easy I will feel some anxiety because I don't have that much vocabulary and he [the pair-partner] might be able to talk more than me. (Rawan)

I didn't participate during the group work because I didn't understand the task as there was some new vocabulary included. (Areej)

I feel anxious when I know I can't complete the task because it contains words or long sentences that I don't understand. I know I will make many mistakes. (Rawan)

The indications from participants' of an association between task difficulty and speaking anxiety point to the relationship between task and mental processing. Both Areej and Rawan imply that their lack of understanding due to task difficulty is the main trigger for their anxiety. As such, the data suggests the effects of anxiety may increase in the L2 learner in accordance with the level of demand placed on cognitive processes by the task. MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) suggested that "the more difficult the task becomes, relative to ability, the greater the effect of anxiety on processing" (p.255). In contrast, a study by Job and Dipamo (1991) investigated the roles of anxiety and task difficulty but found no interaction between anxiety and task difficulty.

Not being welcomed by a partner

The third combined (overlap) factor identified by participants in this study as a potential contributor to speaking anxiety is the feeling of not being welcomed as a partner. This contextual-psychological factor was identified by a number of participants ($n = 4$) during the

interviews and stimulated recall sessions. Provided below are examples of the participants' comments related to this factor:

When I noticed that my partner during the pair work is embarrassed, I got anxious and embarrassed. (Hasnah)

When I noticed that the girl (Hasnah) I was working with was hesitant to speak with me and was avoiding looking at me, I felt anxious and I knew that she is embarrassed because I am Saudi. (Hani)

My partner was looking at me with a frustrated expression because I didn't say the right words and this made me even more worried. (Najeebah)

In addition to the comments from participants, researcher observations of the participants during the speaking activities also revealed that having to engage in speaking with a person who does not appear to be welcoming – particularly a person of the opposite gender – may result in speaking anxiety for some Saudi students. For instance, Hasnah (female) and Hani (male) were required to work as a pair on the given task. Both participants revealed later (in the interviews) that they felt embarrassed by the pairing and this was consistent with the observation that they avoided looking at each other. As soon as they finished the task Hani immediately turned his chair around and pretended to wait for the teacher. Furthermore, during the group work, another Saudi male (Ahmad) felt that the Saudi female (Areej) who was working with him and another Pakistani female participant was very quiet, as though she was avoiding him. Ahmad said:

I dealt with a Pakistani and a Saudi female. It was okay with me. But I was careful when talking to the Saudi girl because I felt that she was very quiet and like if she is avoiding dealing with us.

The link between an unwelcoming interlocutor (particularly of the opposite gender) and the onset of speaking anxiety may also be explained in relation to Saudi cultural norms and mores. As mentioned above in the discussion of gender proximity as a socio-contextual trigger for speaking anxiety, nervous reactions when working with unwelcoming partners may be due to the conservative culture within which the learners have been raised, in combination with a lack of familiarity in how to manage rejection by a partner of the opposite gender within an educational context. The notions of honour and respect are held in high esteem in Saudi culture. In turn, there is evidence to suggest Saudi foreign language learners, particularly female learners, are more likely to allow concerns about self-presentation and embarrassment manifest

as speaking anxiety (Al-Saraj 2014a). This was alluded to in other comments from participants such as; “I have never seen Saudi girls trying to learn in class before studying here ” (Hani) and “I don’t know what to say a man when he is not trying hard ” (Areej).

4.3. Manifestations of speaking anxiety

Identifying the manifestations of speaking anxiety in Saudi ESL learners was undertaken to answer Research Question 2. Anxiety related to speaking can manifest as physiologically driven physical responses in the speaker including trembling, sweating, increased heart rate, self-manipulation, or quivering voice. When speakers become aware that they are experiencing these physical effects, this awareness can increase the level of anxiety experienced by the speakers with potentially detrimental effects on performance. The four most common speaking anxiety-related effects reported by the participants in this study were ‘making grammatical mistakes and stuttering’ while speaking ($n = 8$), ‘avoiding eye contact’, especially with the other gender ($n = 7$), ‘forgetting’ ($n = 6$), and ‘keeping / going silent’ (5). Figure 8 below illustrates some of the implicit (invisible) and explicit (visible) anxiety related signs mentioned by the participants.

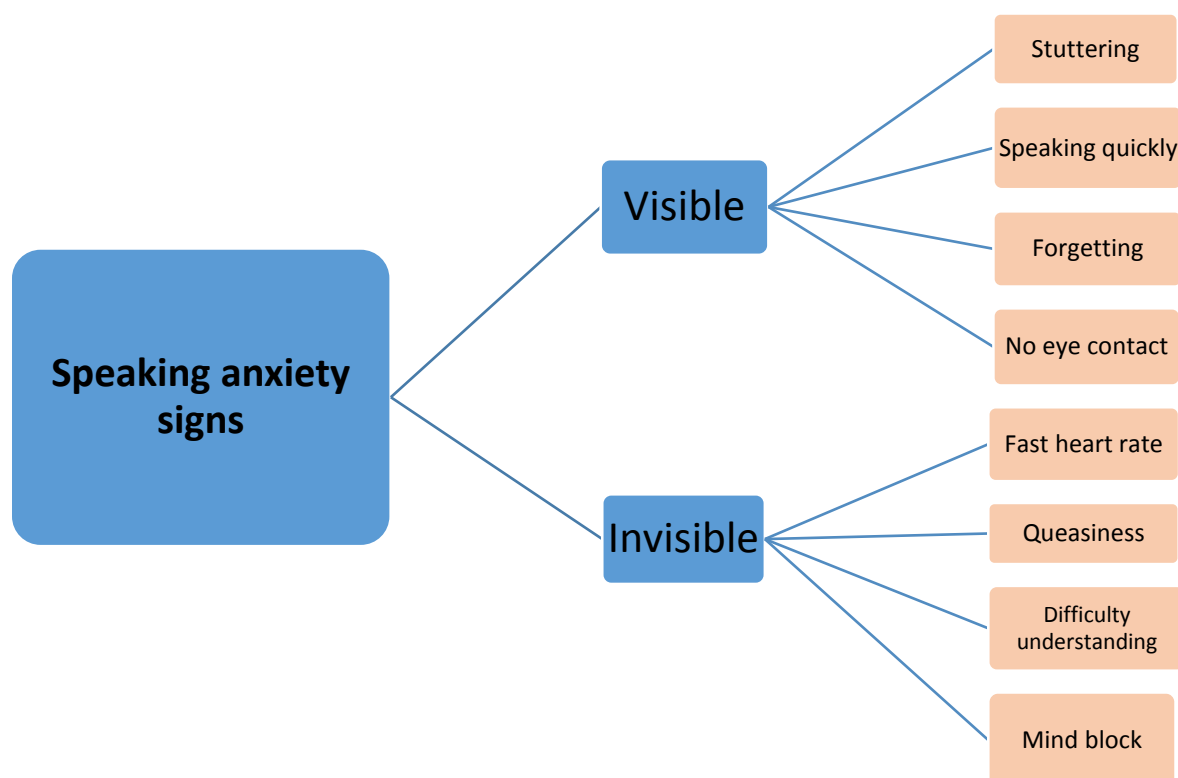


Figure 8 Implicit (invisible) and explicit (visible) signs of speaking anxiety

The participants' experiences of these and other speaking anxiety related behaviours are expressed in the following comments provided during interviews and stimulated recall sessions:

The teacher keeps explaining and I cannot understand the rest of the explanation because I didn't understand something at the beginning. I feel like my mind blocks and I'm not sure when to speak. (Amjad)

When I look at people during the oral presentation, I forget what I want to say and I get stomach ache. I get very anxious. (Rawan)

Many times I dropped a piece of paper on the floor just to waste time. This is because I felt a little bit stressed. I was looking at the table most of the time. (Hani)

Working with a Saudi man made me a little anxious and I couldn't look at his eyes all the time, even when I was speaking. I felt embarrassed when I spoke to him. (Areej)

My anxiety appears in my voice; it is shaking. Also, I start to stutter when I speak... Also during the oral presentation I felt that my heart beats were very fast. (Sawsan)

I don't speak if I feel I will make mistakes. ... I skipped some points because I didn't like what I was doing. (Tahani)

Notably, the manifestations of speaking anxiety in the Saudi ESL participants as revealed in their comments demonstrate that their anxiety-related behavioural responses were not only associated with teacher-controlled whole-class activities. In this study, some participants reported anxiety manifestations during pair and group speaking activities. However, they reported that the manifestations of speaking anxiety were at a relatively lower level when speaking to one or two peers compared to speaking to the class group as a whole. It is also interesting to note Tahani's mention of skipping points as a speaking anxiety manifestation. The participant acknowledged during the stimulated recall session that she had intentionally left out some of what she had planned to say out of a fear of making errors. To an observing teacher however her actions may suggest she does not have a lot to say, or is not making the required effort.

The effectiveness of using stimulated recall sessions to collect data is evident here, as they helped to identify signs of anxiety that could not be identified during interview. For example, Hani explained that he had intentionally dropped a piece of paper on the floor because he was anxious. The stimulated recall session prompted this recollection and he then offered an

explanation of his response. In addition, Hani turned his chair around immediately after completing the pair work task. The researcher observer may have thought that he turned his chair because he was not facing either the board or the teacher and that he just wanted to look at the teacher and wait for her next instructions. However, the stimulated recall session provided a valuable instrument to access a more accurate and insightful explanation.

What emerges from the data is that speaking anxiety among some Saudi ESL learners manifests as the inability to recall information or a tendency to go or remain silent during speaking activities. These types of behavioural responses to feelings of anxiety suggest an association between cognitive processing and speaking anxiety. Figure 9 below provides a graphic illustration of the way in which speaking anxiety manifested in Rawan.



Figure 9 Speaking anxiety manifestation pathway

The ‘forgetting’ or ‘going silent’ responses demonstrated by Rawan and others may be due to what Eysenck (1979) refers to as over-engagement in task-irrelevant cognitive processing. Researcher observations of the participants during the speaking activities revealed many of the more overtly anxious learners appear to be overly conscious about how they should be ‘presenting’ during the oral task. Furthermore, anxious learners are sometimes observed to demonstrate reluctance or frustration towards smoothly transitioning into and out of the speaking interactions with their peers (during pair work and group work). Such behaviours were demonstrated by Hani, for example, when he turned his chair around immediately after completing the pair work task. In addition, Amjad’s comment revealing her uncertainty about when to speak presents further evidence of the difficulty in transitioning in and out of conversations.

As a result, the participants appear to expend a degree of intellectual energy worrying about being anxious or how to conceal their anxiety. For some participants – as illustrated by Rawan

– this appears to place a strain on their cognitive processes leading them to forget or go silent, and thus hindering their speaking performance. In contrast, Areej admitted to deliberately pretending to be mentally tired in order to avoid having to speak. She stated; “When I don’t understand the task I get worried. I try to think about something else, and tell people I am tired just to distract their attention and not think about my anxiety.”

The manifestations of speaking anxiety reported in this study are similar to those presented in other studies, with the exception of skipping over or leaving out sections of a presentation. Similar to this study, other studies including Hadziosmanovic (2012), Hashemi and Abbasi (2013), Alrabai, (2014), Woodrow (2006), and Basic (2011) found feelings of nervousness, stomach upset, blushing, trembling voice, excessive talking, and stuttering to be common manifestations of speaking anxiety among their study participants.

4.4. Coping mechanisms

The third domain of focus in this study is the coping strategies to manage or overcome speaking anxiety employed by Saudi ESL learners while studying in Australia. Identifying the coping strategies to answer Research Question 3 was undertaken via analysis of the participants’ interview and stimulated recall responses. It emerged from the study data that the participants’ coping strategies for speaking anxiety may be categorised into two groups: pre-speaking activity strategies and in-situ speaking activity strategies.

The interview data reveals that the pre-speaking activity coping strategy used by participants to manage speaking anxiety is proactive in nature and associated with language improvement. That is, many participants mention their efforts to learn vocabulary by watching movies, talking to native speakers, thoroughly preparing and practising for the task as methods to reduce the risk of experiencing speaking anxiety. These strategies are illustrated in the following participant comments:

I try to learn vocabulary every day. (Sawsan).

I try to learn more vocabulary. (Tahani)

I have to learn vocabulary. (Hani)

Listen and watch movies a lot. (Amjad)

I focus on my goal that is learning, so I know I must prepare before I talk. (Ahmad)

I try to educate myself and I don't rely only on learning in the classroom. Even if I make mistakes I try to learn to correct these mistakes and try not to make them again. (Hasnah)

I try to practice a lot. (Areej)

In relation to the in-situ speaking activity coping strategies, the stimulated recall sessions proved a useful method to access how participants affected by speaking anxiety predominantly rely on reduced interactive behaviours such as not acknowledging the audience, and bracing behaviours such as holding onto something tightly as coping strategies for their anxiety. The stimulated recall sessions provided access to the other 'in-situ' coping strategies for speaking anxiety identified by the participants including speaking slowly, breathing, self-encouragement, correcting their mistakes, and concentrating when speaking in order to not be anxious while speaking.

The following examples illustrate the in-situ coping strategies they employed:

I try to imagine there is no one in the class. If I get stressed, I try to breathe. (Amjad)

During the oral presentation, I try to convince myself that I will do it even if I make mistakes. (Hani)

Speaking slowly in order not to make mistakes.... I tried to lean on something and hold my hand so strongly because I didn't want people to see that they were shaking. (Sawsan)

When I look at people during the oral presentation I forget what I want to say and I get stomach ache. That makes me anxious. So I try to look at their heads instead of their eyes and I try to breathe deeply before I speak... I try to concentrate to produce a correct sentence. (Rawan)

When I make mistakes because of my speaking anxiety, I try to correct myself immediately to show people that I can do it and I know. (Najeebah)

A graphic example of the coping strategy employed by Najeebah is presented in Figure 10 below. During the stimulated-recall session, Najeebah revealed how her anxiety changed from one moment to the next. An important driver of her strategy is to restore self-confidence and to save face in what she regards as a highly face-threatening situation. Thus, her strategy is to correct herself immediately when mistakes start to occur as a result of anxiety feelings. In this way she can attempt to raise her self-confidence by producing correct sentences and save face in the process.

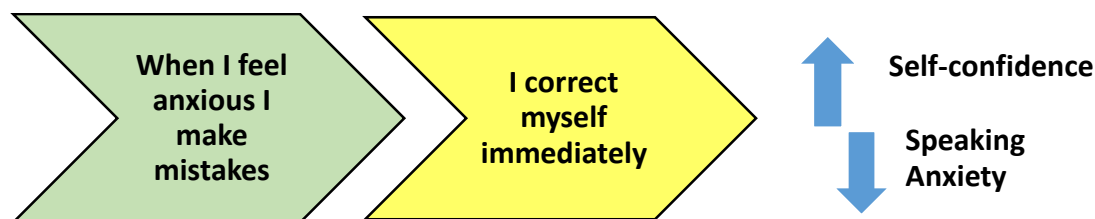


Figure 10 Speaking anxiety coping strategy; example 1

Figure 11 below illustrates graphically the coping strategy employed by Rawan during the speaking tasks. Unlike the intent to save face as the driver of the coping strategy employed by Najeebah, Rawan appears more concerned with managing the task process. As such, her coping strategy is primarily to address the anxiety source (e.g., being conscious of the audience glare) by diverting her own glare onto non-threatening aspects of the audience.

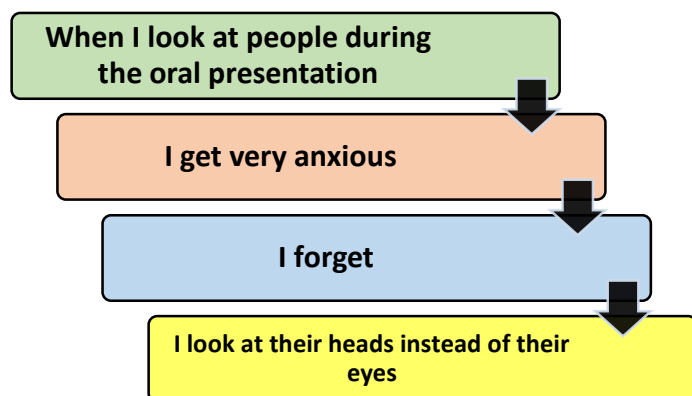


Figure 11 Speaking anxiety coping strategy; example 2

The results in this study related to coping strategies for speaking anxiety identified by the participants are affirmed in other studies. Wang and Roopchund (2015), for instance, identified preparation, self-encouragement, practice, and ignoring others' evaluation among the strategies used by foreign language learners to cope with speaking anxiety.

4.5. Conclusion

The overarching aim of this study was to undertake a comprehensive examination of speaking anxiety in Saudi ESL students learning English in Australia. To achieve this outcome, the potential triggers of speaking anxiety, how speaking anxiety manifests in Saudi ESL students, and the coping strategies employed by the students in response to experiences of speaking anxiety were examined. This results of the research investigation show the causes of speaking anxiety can be categorised into three domains: socio-contextual factors, psycho-linguistic

factors, and overlap factors that combine elements related to speaking tasks, learner perceptions, and the speaking context. For the Saudi ESL learner participants in this study, the most prominent factors found to trigger speaking anxiety for each of the three domains were classroom situation, gender proximity, and speaking with native speakers (socio-contextual domain). In terms of manifestations of speaking anxiety, this study found avoiding eye-contact, error making, and rushed speaking performance to be the most common behavioural representations among the Saudi participants. Lastly, the most common coping strategies to manage speaking anxiety found in this study centred on the speaker's efforts to save face in response to the face-threatening situation through self-correction or thorough preparation, and/or to eliminate the source of anxiety by focusing on non-anxiety provoking aspects within the overseas environment in which they have chosen to study. It is still useful for them to overcome anxiety in the chosen environment so that they maximise their learning while overseas, even if they are planning to return to live and work in Saudi Arabia.

5. Chapter 5: Conclusion and Implications

This chapter summarises the key findings in the research, explores the pedagogical implications for teachers and institutions, outlines recommendations for further research, and identifies the limitation of this study.

5.1. Summary of the key findings

The main objective of this study was to investigate the causes of speaking anxiety inside and outside of the classroom for Saudi ESL learners studying abroad. The secondary aim was to examine how the ESL learners manifest their speaking anxiety and the strategies they employ to alleviate the anxiety. The study was implemented at a university language centre in Australia. A qualitative approach was adopted in order to collect data by means of researcher observations of two classroom sessions followed by one-on-one interviews and stimulated recall interviews with participants.

A key finding in this research is that speaking anxiety during L2 learning is identified by the participants as a primarily situation-specific variable that hinders the learning process. As a situation-specific variable, speaking anxiety is found to be a multifaceted and dynamic variable subject to change over time. In addition, this study found the factors affecting Saudi ESL learners' speaking ability vary depending on different variables including the SLA context, Saudi culture, gender, Arabic-English language differences, and the psychology of the learner. The speaking anxiety manifestations and coping strategies identified in this study are similar to those identified in other earlier research studies (e.g., Alrabai, 2014; Woodrow, 2006) except for the ESL learner skipping sections in the presentation.

Although the findings in this study identified many similar triggers of speaking anxiety in L2 learners as presented in previous studies, this study identified two additional triggers that have not featured in the previous research literature, and which merit further consideration. These were proximity to the opposite gender inside or outside of the classroom (e.g., sitting next to or behind the other gender, or speaking with the other gender), and a feeling of not being welcomed by one's speaking partner. Indeed, this is (to the author's knowledge) the first time in the field of language anxiety that such factors have been identified in relation to Saudi ESL learners studying in the West. The first factor in particular has implications for language learning in mixed gender classrooms and how this can impact the language learning process for

learners who are not accustomed to co-educational learning environments (discussed in the next section).

5.2. Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study confirm there are many triggers of speaking anxiety in Saudi ESL learners that must be recognised as important in L2 instructional settings. Students who are anxious must be supported to become resilient active learners (Horwitz et al., 1986). In turn, to strengthen resilience in Saudi ESL students it is therefore necessary for the teacher to create a classroom environment where students accept mistake-making as a natural part of language learning and not as a reason for non-participation.

In addition, creating the appropriate classroom climate is also crucial to address the culture-based pressures experienced by Saudi ESL learners that lead to speaking anxiety. To build student resilience to these pressures in a sensitive way that does not exacerbate the anxiety experience, the teacher may give priority to mixed gender small group (4-6 students) activities that promote gender interactions in a non-threatening way – as opposed to mixed gender pair work. Most importantly, however, the teacher must create a classroom culture that values showing respect to others and achieving the designated language learning outcomes.

With regard to Saudi ESL learners, teachers first need to become knowledgeable of students' cultural backgrounds (including traditions, religion, values, and communication and learning styles). This is because they (the teachers) are models for developing relationships with others both within and outside the language classroom. Students notice how teachers negotiate the social and moral atmosphere, and this noticing helps them to judge what is acceptable and what is not in the new cultural and classroom environment in which they find themselves. To increase fellow students' knowledge of Saudi culture, teachers could ask all of their students in class to develop family history projects in which students explore their cultural backgrounds and share them with the class.

It is important for teachers of ESL students to develop their awareness of the link between speaking anxiety experiences in learners and cultural and ethnic pressures. As such, task appropriateness and ESL learner task engagement must be considered as nuanced propositions. That is, it is not sufficient for the teacher to focus the design of the task on cultural relevance, or on appropriateness to the learners' level of language proficiency. Task design should also consider the types of learner interactions demanded in the task and how they may impact

learning outcomes, along with the mechanisms in the task for the provision of feedback to learners in a contextually and culturally sensitive way.

In terms of speaking tasks specifically, the speaking mode itself may also positively predict speaking anxiety in Saudi ESL learners. All participants in this study reported speaking anxiety experiences during the individual oral presentation. Given the experiences of speaking anxiety decreased among the Saudi participants in parallel with the decreasing level of audience focus across the oral presentation, group activity, and pair activity respectively, teachers should consider acknowledging and talking about the issues of speaking anxiety explicitly. This will help to normalise these issues for learners, as well as provide scaffolding for the oral presentation.

Thus, the implications for pedagogical practices relate to the roles played by the teacher and the student to manage the situation triggers that may provoke speaking anxiety experiences, as well as to mitigate the effects of speaking anxiety through effective behaviours and practices. Factors such as the size of the learning group, the methods for correction and feedback, the design of interactive activities, and the self-concept of the ESL learner in relation to the language learning process may all be considered by the ESL teacher when preparing the teaching and learning activities.

Furthermore, the revelation in this study that the participants felt more relaxed about speaking in their L2 outside of the classroom than inside it because of the formal nature of the classroom environment draws attention to the way in which the classroom atmosphere created by the teacher can impact speaking anxiety. Research shows the level of support and friendship from the teacher (Moos & Trickett, 2002), along with the teacher's methods for providing feedback and correction (Sadeghi et al., 2013) can affect speaking anxiety experiences in learners. Overcorrection by the teacher was identified as a particularly anxiety-provoking action for some Saudi ESL learners. This reinforces the need for ESL instructors to carefully develop the learners' understanding of error making in language learning as well as develop strategies for the management (e.g., correction) of student error making that reflects the diverse needs of students.

The implications of the results in this study for ESL teaching and learning activities also extend to the role of native speakers. Native speakers can have a strong bearing on the likelihood of speaking anxiety experiences in some ESL learners. Thus, an important consideration for the teacher of ESL students is how to effectively incorporate student interactions with native

speakers to facilitate the language learning process in a way that builds learner self-confidence and L2 usage (Humphries, 2011). As Saudi ESL learners studying in an English speaking country, the participants in the present study reported experiencing speaking anxiety when interacting with native speakers. For some, this diminished their willingness to communicate, thus hindering the language learning process. For this reason, it is important for ESL teachers to assist their learners to create and maintain communicative relationships with others (regardless of whether or not their first language is English) in order to practise their target language. In addition, teachers can introduce various conversation strategies to assist learners in communicating effectively in range of social contexts within the broader community. For example, they could provide students with a video on how to order food in a restaurant and then ask them to role play.

The pedagogical implications of the findings in this study also relate to the learners themselves. A range of strategies is discussed in the literature related to the management of language anxiety by the learner, and to improving the language learning process. Such strategies include students learning to control their emotional state, attending workshops on language anxiety management, and focusing on the development of listening and speaking skills by conversing with native speakers (Al-Saraj, 2015). For Saudi ESL learners with similar profiles to those who participated in this study, it is recommended that they take intensive communication-focused English courses where possible before travelling to countries like Australia to study. This would assist them to participate more fully in Australian life once they arrive, and to develop their confidence in their English abilities. In addition, reading as much as possible about their host country culture prior to arrival may help them to form realistic expectations and minimise the potential for cultural shock.

Lastly, one might also consider the implications of the study findings for experts in the field of linguistics and SLA. The multiple triggers of speaking anxiety in ESL learners and the interplay between linguistic, psychological, and socio-contextual constructs found in this study present particular challenges to ESL curriculum development and the design and structure of learning resources.

5.3. Implications for Further Research

A key finding to emerge in this study is the interrelations between factors related to host country culture, the language learning environment, and the onset of speaking anxiety in Saudi ESL learners. In turn, the implications of culture – host and home culture – for the onset of speaking

anxiety in ESL learners needs further investigation. A comparative qualitative study of speaking anxiety in Saudi ESL learners studying both at home and abroad is required. Such a study with a large sample would add to our academic understanding of the role of culture in ESL speaking anxiety as well further elucidate the role played by the two unique triggers of speaking anxiety that emerged in this study.

Further research on speaking anxiety in Saudi ESL learners which combines both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms should also be conducted. The present research introduced stimulated recall as an effective method for the collection of insightful qualitative data on Saudi ESL learners' speaking anxiety experiences. Future research could combine the collection of subjective data via stimulated recall and semi-structured interview with the collection of objective data via recognised measuring instruments such as the FLCAS. This would help to provide a comprehensive investigation of speaking anxiety in Saudi ESL learners. For instance, it could be used as part of a longitudinal study to track the effectiveness of anxiety mitigation measures/strategies over time from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective.

5.4. Limitations

The main limitation in this study is the small sample size. While the sample size was sufficient to address the research questions and gain insights into speaking anxiety experiences of a group of Saudi ESL learners, it is not possible to generalize the research findings to all Saudi ESL learners studying abroad. Notwithstanding the small sample size, the study has brought to light some sociocultural factors that can be further explored in larger scale studies, with a view to understanding how they might be most effectively addressed by teachers and learners. The second limitation of this study is its duration. Because this research was confined to a ten-month period, the participants were observed and interviewed over a relatively short period of time.

5.5. Conclusion

The two most salient findings to emerge in this study are the relationship between cultural forces and speaking anxiety experiences in Saudi ESL learners, as well as the formal processes within the classroom environment as a speaking anxiety provoking factor. With regard to the former, this study provided empirical evidence of the impact of gender proximity in mixed gender classroom on the onset of speaking anxiety. With regard to the latter, similar empirical evidence of the impact of class size, teacher manner, and task difficulty was provided.

In light of the pedagogical implications to emerge from the study findings, suggestions for L2 teaching and learning were provided. The suggestions encompass such domains as teacher feedback and correction techniques, cultural sensitivity in lesson planning, the classroom environment, and strategies to achieve emotional calm. The suggestions will, of course, not eradicate ESL learner experiences of speaking anxiety. They may, however, help to alleviate the impact of some speaking anxiety experiences. Speaking anxiety in L2 learners can hinder the language learning process. Thus, it is important for language teachers to better understand the nature of the phenomenon and to effectively recognise it in learners. This study shows that this involves consideration by the language teacher of the interrelationship of classroom environment, cultural forces, teacher behaviours, and learner self-perceptions.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Ethics Approval

RE: HS Ethics Application - **Approved** (5201500302)(Con/Met)



People (6)



Inbox x



Fhs Ethics <fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au>

May 12 ☆



to Dr, me ▾

Fhs Ethics

fhs.ethics@mq.edu.au



Show details

Dear Dr Roger,

Re: "Speaking Anxiety in an ESL learning context: A qualitative study of Arab learners of English"(5201500302)

Thank you very much for your response. Your response has addressed the issues raised by the Faculty of Human Sciences Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee and **approval** has been granted, effective 12th May 2015. This email constitutes ethical **approval** only.

This research meets the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). The National Statement is available at the following web site:

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/e72.pdf.

The following personnel are authorised to conduct this research:

Dr Peter Roger

Ms Abeer Hasan A Alyami

Please note the following standard requirements of **approval**:

1. The **approval** of this project is conditional upon your continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).



[Show details](#)

2. **Approval** will be for a period of five (5) years subject to the provision of annual reports.

Progress Report 1 Due: 12th May 2016

Progress Report 2 Due: 12th May 2017

Progress Report 3 Due: 12th May 2018

Progress Report 4 Due: 12th May 2019

Final Report Due: 12th May 2020

NB. If you complete the work earlier than you had planned you must submit a Final Report as soon as the work is completed. If the project has been discontinued or not commenced for any reason, you are also required to submit a Final Report for the project.

Progress reports and Final Reports are available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/current_research_staff/human_research_ethics/application_resources

3. If the project has run for more than five (5) years you cannot renew **approval** for the project. You will need to complete and submit a Final Report and submit a new application for the project. (The five year limit on renewal of **approvals** allows the Sub-Committee to fully re-review research in an environment where legislation, guidelines and requirements are continually changing, for example, new child protection and privacy laws).



4. All amendments to the project must be reviewed and approved by the Sub-Committee before implementation. Please complete and submit a Request for Amendment Form available at the following website:

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/current_research_staff/human_research_ethics/managing_approved_research_projects

5. Please notify the Sub-Committee immediately in the event of any adverse effects on participants or of any unforeseen events that affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

6. At all times you are responsible for the ethical conduct of your research in accordance with the guidelines established by the University. This information is available at the following websites:

<http://www.mq.edu.au/policy>

http://www.research.mq.edu.au/for/researchers/how_to_obtain_ethics_approval/human_research_ethics/policy

If you will be applying for or have applied for internal or external funding for the above project it is your responsibility to provide the Macquarie University's Research Grants Management Assistant with a copy of this email as soon as possible. Internal and External funding agencies will not be informed that you have approval for your project and funds will not be released until the Research Grants Management Assistant has received a copy of this email.

If you need to provide a hard copy letter of approval to an external organisation as evidence that you have approval, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethics Secretariat at the address below.



[Show details](#)

Please retain a copy of this email as this is your official notification of ethics approval.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Anthony Miller
Chair
Faculty of Human Sciences
Human Research Ethics Sub-Committee

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APPENDIX 2: Participants' Consent Form

(English and Arabic version)



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Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Name:

Dr. Peter Roger

Chief Investigator's / Supervisor's Title:

Senior Lecturer in Linguistics

Participant Information and Consent Form

Name of Project:

Speaking Anxiety among Saudi ESL learners studying in Australia: its triggers, manifestations, and coping strategies

You are invited to participate in a study of speaking anxiety in English as a second language context. The purpose of the study is to find out what causes speaking anxiety, how students manifest their anxiety and how to cope with it.

The study is being conducted by Abeer Alyami, Department of Linguistics, 04 262 999 66, email address: abeer-hasan-a.alyami@students.mq.edu.au. The research is being conducted to meet the requirements of Master of Research in the Faculty of Human Sciences under the supervision of Dr. Peter Roger, telephone number: +612 98509650, email address: peter.roger@mq.edu.au, of the Department of Linguistics.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to participate in two classes which you will get the chance to have additional speaking activities with students and the teacher. Each class will be about one hour or more. And you will get feedback on your performance. You are welcome to ask any question about any speaking task in order to have a better understanding. The classes will be held in two separate days. On a future occasion, you will be interviewed by the researcher for about one hour or more. The interview questions will be about your experience in learning English in Australia and how you feel about it. The classes will be video-recorded and the interviews will be audio-recorded for the purpose of the study only and all the recordings will be deleted after analysing the data. There is no risk in taking part of this study. It has nothing to do with your teachers or with your grades. After the interviews, each participant will have the chance to choose a movie ticket or a 10 dollar voucher from the food court in Macquarie University.

Any information or personal details gathered in the course of the study are confidential, except as required by law. No individual will be identified in any publication of the results. No one except the researcher will have access to the data. A summary of the results of the data can be made available to you on request. You can email the researcher so she can send you the results to your email.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to participate and if you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason and without consequence.

I, have read and understand the information above and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this research, knowing that I can withdraw from further participation in the research at any time without consequence. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant's Name: _____

(Block letters)

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Name: _____

(Block letters)

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the Committee through the Director, Research Ethics (telephone (02) 9850 7854; email ethics@mq.edu.au). Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.

(PARTICIPANT'S [OR INVESTIGATOR'S] COPY)

قسم اللغويات

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محاضر في علم اللغة

نموذج معلومات وموافقة المشارك

اسم المشروع:

قلق التحدث في سياق تعلم اللغة الثانية : دراسة كيفية لعرب متعلمين للغة الإنجليزية

أنت مدعو للمشاركة في دراسة لقلق التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية في سياق اللغة الثانية. والغرض من هذه الدراسة هو معرفة أسباب القلق المرتبط بالتحدث، كيف يظهر هذا القلق على الطلاب وكيف يتعاملون معه

تقوم بالدراسة طالبة الماجستير عبير اليامي، من قسم اللغويات، جوال رقم 0426299966، البريد الإلكتروني

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ويجري البحث لتلبية متطلبات درجة الماجستير في بحوث كلية العلوم الإنسانية تحت إشراف الدكتور بيتر روجر، رقم هاتف:

61298509650+،

البريد الإلكتروني peter.roger@mq.edu.au . من قسم اللغويات

إذا قررت المشاركة، سوف يطلب منك أن تشارك في حصتين من خلالها سوف تحصل على فرصة لممارسة أنشطة إضافية للتحدث مع الطلاب والمعلمين. سوف تكون كل حصة حوالي ساعة واحدة أو ساعة ونصف. في حال رغبتك، يمكنك سؤال المعلمة عن أدائك ويمكن طرح أي سؤال واستفسار يخص المعلومات المعروضة في هذه الحصتين من أجل الحصول على فهم أفضل. ستعقد الحصتين في يومين منفصلين. في فرصة قادمة، سوف تتم مقابلتك من قبل الباحثة لمدة ساعة واحدة أو أكثر. أسئلة المقابلة سوف تكون حول تجربتك في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية في أستراليا وكيف تشعر حيال ذلك. سيتم تسجيل الحصتين بالفيديو وتسجيل المقابلة صوتياً فقط وذلك لغرض الدراسة فقط وسيتم حذف جميع التسجيلات بعد تحليل البيانات. لا يوجد أي خطر في المشاركة في هذه الدراسة. لن تؤثر أبداً في علاقتك مع المدرسين أو مع الدرجات الخاصة بك. بعد المقابلات، ستكون لكل مشارك الفرصة لاختيار تذكرة سينما أو قسيمة شراء بـ 10 دولار من مجمع المطاعم الكائن في جامعة ماكوارى.

أي معلومات أو تفاصيل شخصية تم جمعها في سياق هذه الدراسة سرية، باستثناء ما يقتضيه القانون. ولن يتم تحديد أي فرد في نشر النتائج. لا أحد باستثناء الباحثة يستطيع الحصول على البيانات. ويمكن إجراء ملخص لنتائج البيانات لك عند الطلب. يمكنك مراسلة الباحثة عبر البريد الإلكتروني عندما تريد الحصول على النتائج لتتم إرسالها إلى البريد الإلكتروني الخاص بك.

المشاركة في هذه الدراسة هي عمل تطوعي تماماً: انت غير ملزم بالمشاركة. وإذا قررت المشاركة، أنت حر في الانسحاب في أي وقت دون الحاجة إلى إعطاء سبب.

أفيدكم أنا أنني قمت بقراءة وفهم المعلومات الواردة أعلاه، وقد تم الرد على أية أسئلة بالشكل الذي يرضيني . أوافق على المشاركة في هذا البحث، مع العلم أنني أستطيع الانسحاب من المشاركة في البحث في أي وقت دون أي ضرر. لقد أعطيت نسخة من هذا النموذج للحفاظ عليه

اسم المشارك: -----

- توقيع المشارك ----- التاريخ -----

اسم الباحث: -----

- توقيع الباحث ----- التاريخ -----

قد تمت الموافقة على الجوانب الأخلاقية لهذه الدراسة من قبل لجنة أخلاقيات البحوث الإنسانية بجامعة مكناري. إذا كان لديك أي شكوى أو تحفظات على أي جانب أخلاقي من مشاركتكم في هذا البحث، يمكنك الاتصال باللجنة عن طريق مدير أخلاقيات البحوث هاتف رقم 0278549850

أو عن طريق البريد الإلكتروني ethics@mq.edu.au

سيتم التعامل مع أي شكوى بسرية، وسوف تكون على علم بالنتيجة

(نسخة المشارك [أو الباحث])

APPENDIX 3: Interview Questions

Individual's semi-structured Interview questions (English and Arabic version): (about 30 minutes)

1. In which countries and for how long have you learned English prior to arriving in Australia?
(Language learning history)
2. How would you compare your experiences of being a language learner in your home country and a language learner in an English speaking country? Please explain (Language learning history or attitudes toward English?)
3. In what ways do you think speaking English with people from a different culture influences your speaking performance? (Attitudes to communicating in English)
4. Some people feel uncomfortable when having to speak a foreign or a second language. How do you feel when speaking English? (Attitudes towards English in general and communicating in English more specifically)
5. What do you think are the reasons for the feelings of discomfort you experience? (Attitudes towards English in general and communicating in English more specifically)
6. What types of speaking situations cause you to feel uncomfortable or stressed? Please explain with examples. (Attitudes to communicating in English and impressions of and attitudes towards English classes)
7. What do you think are the effects of feeling uncomfortable or stressed while speaking? Do you think such feelings affect your language learning process in a positive or negative way? (Attitudes toward English or attitudes to communicating in English)
8. When do you feel relaxed when speaking English? Why? (Attitudes towards English in general and communicating in English more specifically)
9. What is the difference to you (if any) between speaking English inside the classroom and outside the classroom? Do you feel it is easier to speak English outside the classroom? If yes, please explain why? (Impressions of and attitudes to English classes and attitudes toward communicating in English)

10. In your own experience, in what ways do you think the following factors play a role in your speaking ability? (Impressions of and attitudes to English classes, and attitudes toward communicating in English)

- The classroom teacher
- Classroom environment
- The number of the students in the classroom
- The English proficiency level of your classmates in the classroom
- Fear of failure
- Preparation for any speaking activity before the teacher asks you to speak
- Being surrounded by native speakers of English outside the classroom
- Making errors inside the classroom and outside the classroom
- Fear of negative evaluation
- Self-esteem and self-confidence
- The speaking topic
- Lack of vocabulary
- Pronunciation
- Grammatical rules and sentence structure
- Wrong expressions
- Interactions with students and teachers
- Cultural differences (Studying with people from different cultures in a different country)

11. What would you suggest to other language learners in order to for them to feel more comfortable when speaking English?

Stimulated-recalls during individual open-ended Interview questions: (About 20-30 minutes).

The final interview questions will be developed based on the classroom sessions. The researcher will ask the participants questions about their speaking experiences during the two lessons they attended while they watch the video-recording of the classroom activities (stimulated-recalls).

The questions covered the following topics:

1. The triggers cause speaking anxiety
2. Manifestation of speaking anxiety
3. Alleviation strategies

أسئلة المقابلة الشبه مقيدة للطلاب/للتالبات :

1. في أي دول سبق وأن تعلمت لغة انجليزية من قبل ؟ ولمدة كم في كل دولة؟
2. صف/ي تجربتك كمتعلم/ة للغة الإنجليزية في بلدك وكم تعلمتها في بلد اللغة الأم فيها هي اللغة الإنجليزية؟
3. كيف تعتقد أن التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية مع أشخاص ثقافتهم مختلفة (معلمين وطلاب من ثقافات متنوعة) يؤثر على طريقة تحدث ؟
4. بعض الناس يشعرون بعدم الراحة عندما يضطرون إلى التحدث بلغة أخرى غير لغتهم, والبعض الآخر يشعر براحة تامة. كيف تصف/ين شعورك عندما يتوجب عليك التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية؟
5. السؤال السابق متعلق بوصف شعورك عند التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية, في وجهة نظرك, ماهي أسباب هذا الشعور؟
6. هل هناك مواقف معينة مرت بك عند التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية كانت سبب في الشعور بعدم الراحة أو الانزعاج؟ الرجاء التوضيح بالعملة ؟
7. في وجهة نظرك, ماهو تأثير الشعور بعدم الراحة عند التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية؟ هل يؤثر على عملية التعليم (تأثيرات سلبية أو إيجابية والتي من الممكن ان تسهل وتحفز أو تعيق عملية التعليم)
8. هل هناك أوقات تشعر/ي فيها بالراحة عند التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية؟ هل من الممكن التوضيح مع إعطاء أمثلة؟
9. من تجربتك, ما هو الفرق بين تحدث الإنجليزية داخل الفصل الدراسي وخارجه؟ هل تشعر أن التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية خارج الفصل الدراسي أسهل؟ ولماذا ؟
10. في وجهة نظرك, ماهي الأسباب الرئيسية التي لها تأثير سلبي أو إيجابي على قدرتك على التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية؟ مع الأخذ في الاعتبار أسباب مرتبطة بك, بالعلم/ة, وزملائك/زميلاتك, والخلفية الثقافية الخاصة بك, وبيئة التعلم

- معلم/ة الصف.

- البيئة الصفية.

- عدد الطلاب/ الطالبات في الفصول الدراسية.
- مستوى إجادة زملائك/ زميلاتك للغة الإنجليزية في الفصول الدراسية.
- الخوف من الفشل (العلامات).
- التحضير المسبق للدروس والأجوبة قبل أن يطلب/ تطلب منك المعلم/ة التحدث.
- كونك محاطة/ بمتحدثين ناطقين باللغة الإنجليزية خارج الفصول الدراسية.
- ارتكاب أخطاء لغوية داخل الفصول الدراسية وخارج الفصول الدراسية (الهوية الذاتية، الخجل، والصورة الذاتية).
- الخوف من التقييم السلبي (لإرضاء الآخرين- الثقة بالنفس).
- الحكم الذاتي، التقدير والثقة بالنفس.
- الموضوع الذي تتحدث عنه .
- قلة المفردات الإنجليزية ، والاختلافات في تركيب الكلمة بين اللغة العربية واللغة الإنجليزية.
- النطق (حروف العلة في اللغة الإنجليزية، الأصوات الإنجليزية التي لا توجد في العربية).
- قواعد اللغة الإنجليزية (الفروق في قواعد اللغة العربية واللغة الإنجليزية في ترتيب الكلمات وبناء الجملة).
- التعبير الخاطئ. (استخدام عبارات خاطئة) مثلا عند ترجمة مصطلحات باللغة العربية إلى اللغة الإنجليزية.
- التفاعل بين الطلاب/ الطالبات والمعلمين/المعلمات (علاقة الطالب/الطالبة بمن هو/هي أعلى منه/منها ، مناداة المعلمين/المعلمات بأسمائهم ، وسوء الفهم بين الثقافات).
- الاختلافات الثقافية (الدراسة مع طلاب/طالبات من ثقافات وبلدان مختلفة).

11. ما النصيحة التي تقدمها/تقدميها للمتعلمين الإنجليزية ليشعروا بالراحة عند التحدث باللغة الإنجليزية؟