EFL STUDENT TEACHERS' SPEAKING ANXIETY: THE CASE IN ONE ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

This present study examined student teachers' Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA) associated with gender and proficiency differences. The participants of the study were 72 second-year EFL student teachers at the English teacher education program of one public university in Jambi, Indonesia. A close-ended questionnaire developed from Syakur (1987) and Horwitz et al, (1986) was administered to the participants to explore their FLSA. The results indicated that EFL student teachers are highly anxious when speaking English. Furthermore, the findings revealed that there is no statistical difference between male and female student teachers on FLSA. On the contrary, proficiency does affect EFL learners' anxiety wherein more proficient students seem to be less nervous to speak.

Key Words: Foreign language speaking anxiety; EFL; genders; proficiency

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini membahas kecemasan berbicara bahasa asing (FLSA) siswa yang dihubungkan dengan perbedaan jenis kelamin dan kecakapan berbahasa Inggris. Jumlah peserta dalam penelitian ini sebanyak 72 mahasiswa tahun kedua pada program studi pendidikan bahasa Inggris di salah satu universitas negeri di Jambi. Kuesioner tertutup diberikan kepada peserta penelitian untuk mengetahui FLSA mereka. Hasil penelitian mengindikasikan bahwa siswa pembelajar bahasa asing (EFL) sangat cemas ketika berbicara bahasa Inggris. Selain itu, hasil juga menunjukkan bahwa tidak ada perbedaan statistik yang signifikan pada FLSA antara siswa laki-laki dan perempuan. Sebaliknya, tingkat kecakapan sangat mempengaruhi kecemasan siswa EFL dimana siswa yang mempunyai kecakapan dalam bahasa Inggris terlihat tidak terlalu cemas untuk berbicara.

Kata Kunci: Kecemasan berbicara dalam bahasa asing; Bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa Asing; gender; kemampuan berbahasa

INTRODUCTION

As a non-English speaking country, many EFL student teachers might have found themselves frequently confronted by the silent situation in the language classroom and the low levels of motivation. Mukminin, Masbirorotni, Noprival, Sutarno, Arif, & Maimunah (2015) argued that learning English as a foreign language had been a challenging subject for language learners as they learned the complex language only at school or in college. In learning a foreign language, the learners need to accommodate both cognitive and affective features to be successful in learning the language. Anxiety, recognised as an affective factor in language learning, is a frequent-observed issue which certainly governs students' performance (Chastain, 1975; Scott, 1986) and contributes to the students' worry and nervousness in learning process (Arnold & Brown, 1999; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Oxford, 1999). This problem is often seen in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes, particularly in speaking modules (Horwitz, 1986; Palacios, 1998; Price, 1991) because the learners have to think and talk simultaneously.

Literally, speaking is known as the process of language delivery by using speech organs, such as mouth, vocal tract, vocal chords, tongue, teeth, and also lips. In more specific terms, speaking does not only involve language production, but it also comprises information receiving and processing as it is considered an interactive and communicative process of constructing meaning (Brown, 1994: Burns & Joyce, 1997). Besides, speaking requires the learners to master both linguistic and sociolinguistic competence (Nunan, 1999). In foreign language classes, it is often found that linguistic competence becomes a challenge as it is the foundation of language learning, and encounters on how to produce specific aspects of language. According to Syakur (1987), there are five language components which learners need to engage with: comprehension, grammar, pronunciation, word choice, and fluency. *'Comprehension'* relates to the speakers' ability to comprehend the meaning as well as having the capacity to engage in a conversation (Syakur, 1987; Heaton 1991). It means that the speakers are required to understand and actively engage in a talk. *'Grammar'* denotes the students competence to produce well-structured sentences. Heaton (1978) defines grammar as the learner's ability to manipulate sentence structures and distinguish them in order to arrange correct sentences in

conversation. *'Pronunciation'* refers to the ability to produce easily comprehensible articulation (Syakur, 1987). In other words, pronunciation is associated with language production. The aspect *'word choice'* concerns the appropriate diction used in communication. Nobody may transfer the language well if s(he)uses inappropriate vocabulary or has a limited range of vocabularies. Lastly, *'fluency'* refers to "the ease and speed of the flow of the speech" (Harris, 1974, p.81). It obviously indicates that fluency is the smoothness of the talk with a reasonably constant speed and small numbers of pauses. Thus, Syakur's theory (1987) was used as the framework of this study.

Anxiety is "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (Horwitz *et al*,1986, p.125). In line with this definition, Foreign Language anxiety can be assumed to be a distinct complex of self-perception, behaviour, feeling, and belief related to using a foreign language in classroom communication. Since anxiety has been considered as a very important factor which affects the learning process, a great number of studies focusing in this research area has been undertaken since the 1970s. The major purpose of the studies was to explore the causes of language anxiety. Young (1991) represented six potential causes of anxiety, including personal and interpersonal, learner beliefs about language learning, instructor beliefs about language teaching, instructor-learner interactions, classroom procedures, and language tests. In addition, Horwitz *et al* (1986) claimed three influential anxiety affecting-factors: apprehension of verbal communication, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. This finding is a well-known one and is still relevant to this day in the discourse of language anxiety. In this present study, two out of three causes from Horwitz have been explored – apprehension in verbal communication and negative evaluation.

In Foreign Language classrooms, speaking is deemed essential to master as it is one of the productive skills of language. However, EFL learners often express their feeling of anxiety while speaking in the target language. Some researchers found the same evidence through their research findings. Horwitz *et al* (1987), for instance, found that communication apprehension to be closely interwoven with foreign language anxiety. Moreover, Palacios (1998) reported that speaking caused the most anxiety among the language

students. Price (1991) observed that the learners in her foreign language class revealed that speaking in front of the peers in the target language was the most anxiety-provoking. More and more studies (Tercan & Dikilitaş, 2015; Çağatay, 2015; Luo, 2014: Fariadian *et al*, 2014; Qaddomi, 2013; Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2013; Muhaisen & Al-Haq, 2012; Zhao & Whitchurch 2011; Cui, 2011; Liu, 2006), since then, on speaking anxiety, have been conducted from many differences, such as gender and proficiency.

The proposed concept on foreign language anxiety (Horwitz, 1986) has seemingly inspired many researchers to carry out studies on FLSA. The studies had been conducted in different sites with different perspectives as well as results. Çağatay (2015) conducted a four-issue study on FLSA, including anxiety level, gender, proficiency, and communication differences. A hundred and forty-seven students of Basic English department at a Turkey state university took part in his study. The questionnaire, 18 items adapted from FLSA Horwitz (1986) was used as an instrument to gain the data. The results indicated the majority of respondents experienced moderate level of FLSA. To measure FLSA level,the researcher calculated the total score of each participants' FLSA and its mean score.

Moreover, gender playeda role in FLSA in which female seems to be more anxious when speaking than male learners, whereas proficiency did not. In addition, the learners' FLSA increases when speaking to native speakers. Another study on FLSA in Turkish context was carried out by Oztürk & Gürbüz (2009). They examined the factors affecting speaking anxiety, motivation, and students' perception. In collecting the data, a mixed-method design was employed by distributing a questionnaire to 383 preparatory program students and interviewing 19 random students from the survey respondents. The findings of their quantitative and qualitative data are supporting each other. They concluded, from the data, that female students demonstrated higher level of foreign language learning motivation than male students. In terms of gender difference, female learners were reported to be more anxious when speaking English, especially to native speakers.

In 2014, Fariadian, *et al.*, carried out gender-based FLSA among Iranian learners. The data were collected by administering the questionnaire to 80 EFL students at Ilam language institution. From their study, they concluded that male learners demonstrated higher level of anxiety

than female. The questionnaire used in this study was adopted from FLCAS developed by Horwitz, (1986). However, the adopted questionnaire does not exclusively and effectively measure FLSA because it accommodates other scopes, such as listening, test anxiety, and attitudes in learning English.A study undertaken by Luo (2014)attempted to examine Chinese Foreign Language learners' anxiety from gender and proficiency differences. To gain the data, Luo supplied 8 adapted questions in relation to speaking from FLCAS (Horwitz, 1986) to 257 learners. The results revealed that gender had a significant effect on anxiety as females were found to be more anxious than males, while proficiency difference, based on students' current instructional level, had not. Supporting Luo's finding, Zhao and Whitchurch (2011) confirmed that there was not any statistically significant difference between elementary and intermediate level of students' proficiency, though elementary level students, based on its statistical summary, seemed more nervous than intermediate level students in speaking English. Similarly, Tercan & Dikilitas (2015), in their study, reported that proficiency level had not a significant effect on students' speaking anxiety.

A contradictory result on gender and proficiency difference effect was found by Muhaisen and Al-Haq (2012) and Liu (2006). Muhaisen and Al-Haq's (2012) research focused on the relationship between anxiety and foreign language learning in Jordan. Their finding suggested that there is no difference between the genders in FLSA, but female students, on average, demonstrated more anxious feelings than males. In terms of proficiency, Liu (2006) carried out a study entitled "Anxiety in Chinese EFL students at different proficiency levels". She uncovered that a more proficient learner inclined to be less anxious. These suggest that the findings of the studies -although the purposes, methods, and instruments are the same - may not be similar to one another due to context and cultural differences.

Despite a great number on studies on FLSA experienced by learners in different contexts (Tercan & Dikilitaş, 2015; Çağatay, 2015; Luo, 2014: Fariadian *et al.*, 2014; Qaddomi, 2013; Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2013; Muhaisen & Al-Haq, 2012; Zhao & Whitchurch 2011; Cui, 2011; Liu, 2006), they discovered inconsistent findings on gender affect (Fariadian*et al*, 2014; Cui, 2011; Muhaisen and Al-Haq, 2012), and proficiency (Luo, 2014). sThis fact encourages the authors to carry out

similar study in Indonesia context since there wasonly a few studies were addressed on this issue. Mukminin *et al.*, (2015), for instance, investigated Indonesian senior high school students' source of anxiety. It was a qualitative design research and there was no gender or proficiency differences compared. Therefore, this quantitative study attempted to fill the gaps that exist in previous studies in Indonesia, in particular at the university level and addressed the issue of identifying speaking anxiety in EFL student teachers.The main objective of this study was to explore whether the EFL student teachers in one English teacher education program at one public university in Jambi were anxious to speak English or not. In line with its purpose, the present study addressed some following research questions:

1. Do student teachers experience foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) when speaking English? If so, what is their anxiety level?

2. Does the foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) level differ according to gender?

3. Is there a significant difference in terms of foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) among student teachers according to their proficiency levels?

METHOD
Participants and Setting

This present study aimed to examine FLSA in Indonesian context on several differences factors, most notably gender, proficiency. Gender difference was seen from male and female student teachers, whileproficiency, with regard to this study, was classified from the student teachers' experienced in attending English courses. In this sense, the students who attended the course(s) are categorised as more proficient students that the students who did not. The participants in this quantitative inquiry were 72 second-year EFL student teachers studying in one English teacher education program at one public university in Jambi.Of 72 respondents, the number ofmale participants was 18, while the number of female participants was 54. The big gap difference of participants' number in gender was because more female students are taking the course. In addition, the reason for choosing second-year learners as respondents is because they had experienced and completed speaking modules.

Research Instruments and Measurements

The research instrument in this study was a close-ended questionnaire which comprised of 13 questions and

was written in English. The questions were constructed from developing Syakur's (1987) theory about speaking aspects, and adapted some elements of Horwitz's (1986) questionnaire on FLCAS. The first three question items concerned with the respondents' background, such as gender, class type, and English course experience, while the fourth of the thirteenth statements was set to question how their speaking proficiency aspects anxiety, with details Q4 & Q5 (comprehension), Q6 & Q7 (grammar), Q8 & Q9 (pronunciation), Q10 & Q11 (diction), Q12 & Q13 (fluency). In addition, the Likert-scale with five gradations was used in constructing statements' options, (5) strongly agree, (4) agree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (2) disagree, (1) strongly disagree. Some of the questionnaire items are the in following table, and the complete questionnaire can be seen in the appendix (see appendix 1):

Table 1. Example of Questionnaire

Question Item(s)	S A	A	NA /D	D	S D
I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking English in my speaking class.					
I often do not feel confident when I use contextual words in speaking English.					
I am ashamed that the lecturer and/or my classmates laugh at me when I mispronounce English words.					

Before it was distributed, the expert, a tutor, assessed its content validity. According to Carmines and Zeller, quoted in Cohen, *et al.,*(2011), Content validity focuses on how "the instrument must show that it fairly and comprehensively covers the domain or items that it purports to cover" (p.188). There was some revision to the questionnaire, particularly in wordings and the number of items. After that, the questionnaire was distributed to 30 random students to see its reliability. The *Cronbach's Alpha* for these questionnaire items was found as .91, suggesting very good internal consistency reliability for the scale.

Research Procedures in Data Collection

After ensuring its validity and reliability, the questionnaire, then, was administered to the second-year student teachers of one English teacher education program at one public university in Jambi. The instrument was distributed to the respondents with the help of the researchers' collages (the speaking module tutors). Each tutor administered the questionnaires in his/her class after being informed by the researchers about the important points regarding the study and questionnaires. Then, the result of questionnaire was sent to researchers via online.

Research Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analysed with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 22.0 through descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings were presented in tables and illustrated in bar charts. The inferential statistical differences were tested by using T-tests.

Research Ethical Consideration

Regarding this issue, an initial consent letter was sent as a first procedure before undertaking the study. After gaining the permission from the site, the consent form, informing the nature and the purpose of the study, was also administered to all respondents along with a set of questionnaire as a proof of their voluntary participation in the project. For those who were not willing to participate might not complete or even return the questionnaire. Another effort in relation to ethics was anonymity to protect the participant's identity.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Student Teachers' Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA) Level

In general, the respondents demonstrated a high level of English speaking anxiety. This finding was based on descriptive analyses questionnaire result. The respondents were distributed 10 items of questions regarding to the speaking anxiety. Since the questionnaire is a 5-graded Likert scale, the total score ranged from 10 – 50. A total score ≤ 20 indicates a low level of anxiety; a total score ranged from > 20 - ≤ 30 shows a moderate level of speaking anxiety; and a total score more than 30 presents a high level of speaking anxiety. After calculating the mean scores for all participants' total anxiety score, it was found the students experience a high level of FLSA (*M*=30.50; *SD*=7.003), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Level of FLSA

Level of FLSA	N	Mean	SD
	72	30.50	7.003

Gender Difference in Anxiety about Speaking English

To determine the comparison between males and females in English speaking anxiety, an independent sample T-test was performed after the *anxiety scale* was found approximately normally distributed from some evidence, including skewness and kurtosis z-values, Shapiro-wilk p-value, and histogram, Q-Q plot, and box plot results in the following Tables (3 and 4) and Figures (1, 2, and 3).

Table 3. Skewness and Kurtosis

				Statistic	Std. Error
Total anxiety scale	Mean			30.50	.825
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound		28.85	
		Upper Bound		32.15	
	5% Trimmed Mean			30.58	
	Median			31.00	
	Variance			49.042	
	Std. Deviation			7.003	
	Minimum			15	
	Maximum			46	
	Range			31	
	Interquartile Range			12	
	Skewness			-.125	.283
	Kurtosis			-.727	.559

Table 4. Shapiro-Wilk

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Total anxiety scale	.089	72	.200*	.978	72	.253

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
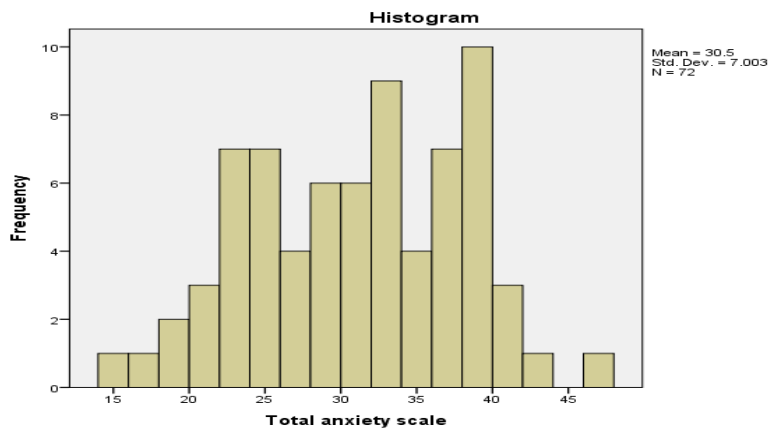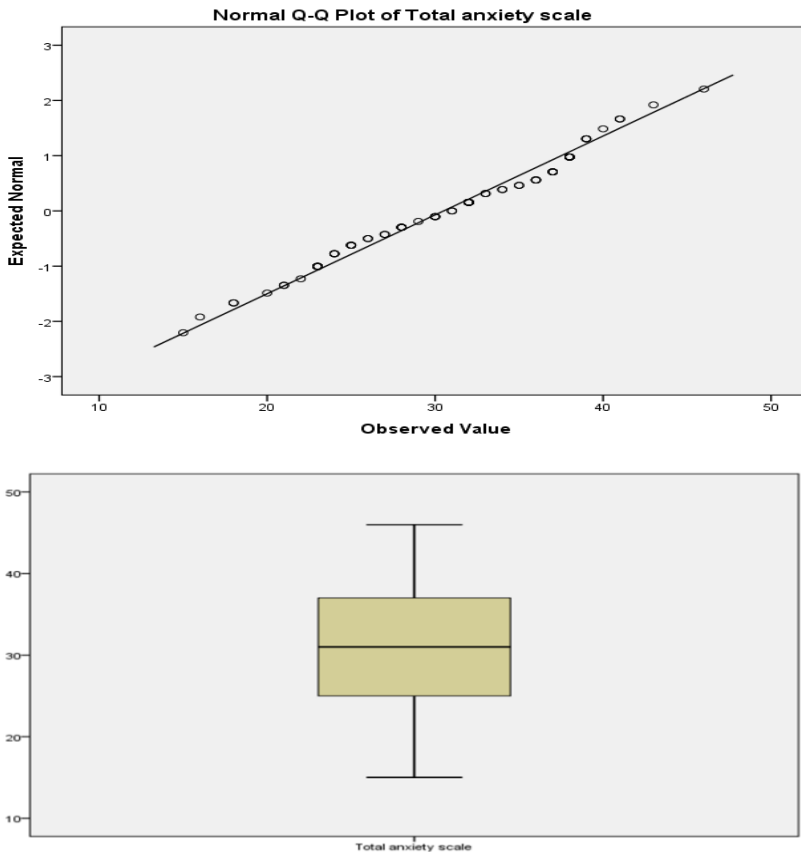

Figure 1. Histogram

Figure 2. Q-Q Plot

The above Tables (3 and 4) and Figures (1, 2, and 3) indicate that the "*anxiety scale*" is normally distributed. Table 3 represents z-value of skewness and kurtosis of the scale. The skewness z-value of the scale is 0.00, and kurtosis z-value is -1.30. Both values show the normal univariate distribution of the scale because they are between -2 and +2 (George & Mallery, 2010). Table 4 presents Shapiro-wilk p-value of the scale. This test also suggests that the scale is normally distributed because p-value of this test is > 0.05 (0.253). In addition, histogram, q-q plot, and box plot figures show the normal distribution of the data.

Table 5. Statistical summary

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	18	31.89	7.045
Female	54	30.04	6.993

Table 5 shows the mean score and standard deviation of both genders. As can be seen, males had slightly higher mean and standard deviation

scores (M=31.89, SD=7.045) than females (M=30.04, SD=6.993). Thus, it explicitly indicates that there is a relatively small difference between the genders.

Table 6. T-test result

	Levene's test		T-test		
	F	Sig	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Equal variances assumed	.004	.952	.971	70	.335

In an attempt to find out if there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of males and females, a t-test was applied due to two different variable types, in which one is nominal and another is scale. According to Connolly (2007), it is first necessary to check the statistical significance of Levene's test for equality of variances. The variances are assumed equal since $p> 0.05$, specifically 0.952. In the Table 3 above, the test statistic $t=.971$, the degree of freedom $df=70$ with a significant level $p=0.335$. The probability of value ($p=0.335$) is greater than 0.05, so the result is not statistically significant. Hence, the alternative hypothesis is rejected which states that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female students in relation to their anxiety about speaking.

Proficiency Difference in Anxiety about Speaking English

In order to explore whether there is a difference between proficient and less-proficient students in English speaking anxiety, an independent sample T-test, again, was conducted since the anxiety scale was found normally distributed.

Table 7. Statistical summary

Proficiency	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Students experienced English course(s)	34	27.88	6.508
Students never experienced English Courses	38	32.84	6.664

There is a difference of mean and standard deviation scores as illustrated in Table 7. The participants who have learned in English course(s) had lower scores, both mean and standard deviation (M=27.88, SD=6.508) than those who only learned English at school (M=32.84, SD=6.664). This result infers that proficient students have less anxiety in speaking English, on average, than less-proficient students.

Table 8. T-test result

	Levene's test		T-test		
	F	Sig	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Equal variances assumed	.020	.889	-3.188	70	.002

Table 8 clearly displays Levene's test and t-test results. A Levene's test is used to examine whether the variances are equal or not and its result is initially checked before looking at the result of the independent t-test (Connolly, 2007). Since *p*-value of Levene's test is greater than 0.05 (*p*=.889), the variances are regarded as equally assumed. Additionally, Table 8 represents three essential pieces information of t-test result which determine the significant difference between two groups (*t*=-2.881, *df*=70, *p*=0.002). Since the actual statistical significance of the finding (*p*-value) is < 0.05 (0.002), a difference is found between proficient and less-proficient students in relation to English speaking anxiety. In other words, less-proficient students get more anxious than proficient students when speaking English in speaking module(s).

Regarding the first question of this study, the findings revealed that EFL student teachers, on average, experience a high level of anxiety. This is in line with what Horwitz (1986), Palacios (1998), and Price (1991) argument that speaking is the most provoking anxiety factor, especially in foreign/ second language classroom(s). In addition, this study supports Cui's study that EFL student teachers had comparatively high anxiety in English

language learning. The result of the second research question pinpoints that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female EFL student teachers on FLSA.This finding contradicts the majority of previous studies (Çağatay, 2015; Luo, 2014: Fariadian, *et al.*, 2014; Qaddomi, 2013; Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2013).This might result from the few total number of respondents (n=72) and a big gap of two genders' representation (male=18, female=54. Althoughthere was no statistical difference, the finding – similar to other research results (Fariadian *et al*, 2014; Cui, 2011) – represents that male EFL student teachers demonstrated a slight higher anxiety than females. This tendency is possible to happen because males and females are believed to have different abilities regarding language. Gardner and Lambert (1972) state that females had a more positive attitude toward the speakers of a second language, and were more motivated toward learning a second language than males.

The third research question was intended to explore the difference between proficient and less-proficient student teachers in speaking English. Student teachers' proficiency level in this study was determined by their experiences in learning English outside of school/university. Those who have

learned English at English courses are regarded to be more proficient than those who have not. The finding revealed that there is a statistically significant difference between proficient students and less-proficient students toward the oral practice of English. This result is congruent with Liu (2006) finding in the sense that more proficient learners seem to be less nervous to speak. The reason for this finding could be the fact that the students who have learned English at informal institution(s) gain more experiences at speaking English. As Skehan (1989) argues that "students at higher levels might enjoy *wider repertoire of behaviours* which would help them to deal with anxiety in language learning contexts *more flexibly*" (p.116). So, it seems reasonable that as students progressed through the experiences, their anxiety levels would gradually decrease.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study explored foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) and its relationship with participants' background, including gender and proficiency. The findings revealed that the participants experience a high level of anxiety when speaking English during the speaking learning activities. This fact could be used as a reflexion for the tutor(s) to create a more conducive classroom atmosphere by selecting appropriate methods in the module as an attempt to reduce students' anxiety to speak the foreign language. Another prominent result of the study is that male students are more anxious to speak English than female students. To cope with this issue, the teachers may set relevant speaking topics and activities, e.g. sports, which encourage male students to speak actively and comfortably. Once the students feel more motivated for a topic, they usually speak without any fears and hesitations. The final finding of this present study is that proficiency plays a role in determining student teachers FLSA. The students, in the context of this study, who experienced English course(s) seems to be less anxious that those who did not. To address this matter, the teachers, again, may need to be wise and treat the students equitably by giving more chances for less proficient students to speak or pairing them with more proficient peers.

This study has some limitations. The first is in terms of sample size. The sample of this inquiry (n=72) is relatively small, so the result of this study might not represent the whole population. The second is the setting of research only involved one university in Jambi. It is hoped that the further

related study can be undertaken with a larger sample size from more than one institution (schools/ universities). Therefore, the result of larger study is able to be generalised.

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