

The Use of Non-Verbal Cues in Expressing Anxiety during Oral Presentation: A Qualitative Study of ESL Speakers

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Abstract: *English language has become a tough second language to most ESL learners. The struggle gets tougher when they are overly committed to speaking the language, with minimal errors. Speaking skill involves various language elements such as vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, and strategies. Hence, it is crucial for the ESL learners to be equipped with good speaking skills. However, speaking anxiety occurs due to some reasons. This study hence aims to determine some non-verbal cues that the learners used to express anxiety and to identify some reasons for writing anxiety during oral presentation. Non-verbal cues provide useful information, in which messages are conveyed through the speakers' gesture, body movement and facial expression. This qualitative study involved five ESL learners from a public university. To obtain the data, semi-structured interview and observation were used as the primary method for the data collection. A video of the speaker's presentation was recorded and narrated to obtain the findings. Based on the findings, it was found that the learner used non-verbal cues whenever she felt anxious, and nervous during the presentation. The findings show that the non-verbal cues displayed were associated with speaking anxiety with some perceived reasons. Results of this study have given a great impact on teaching and learning of ESL academic writing.*

Keywords: ESL learners, non-verbal cues in speaking, Oral Presentation, Speaking anxiety, reasons, qualitative study, observation, semi-structured interview

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Knowing English becomes essential to all language users. To satisfy their daily requirements, they should communicate either verbally or non-verbally. It is important for the users to use understandable language when speaking. Hence, developing a simple sentence which could be understood is the main concern when communicating. Speaking refers to a speaker's capability to produce sounds and convey thoughts and opinions (Miranda and Wahyudin, 2023). Moreover, Arini & Wahyudin (2022) highlight the need for language learners to develop good speaking skill as the skill has been perceived as an important and useful medium to communicate thoughts, ideas, information and meaning when interacting with others.

To develop a good speaking skill, students must be supported by effective classroom activities that could enhance their ability to speak. Students' ability to communicate their thoughts and ideas is measured when people manage to understand them. According to Arini & Wahyudin (2022), speaking is a language application utilized by the speakers to convey thoughts or information so that people can understand them. Therefore, to achieve communicative competence in a language classroom, speaking lessons are crucial to help students communicate effectively.

However, due to some challenges, students have difficulties communicating using the English language. While learning the language, students found that the major factors that influence them to speak fluently may come from the students themselves (Mandasari and Oktaviani, 2018). One of the struggles that they face when talking to others is feeling

anxious of being wrong especially when their friends do not understand them. Rahim and Hayas (2014) affirmed anxiety as a significant factor that determines learners' performance in second language learning. Hence, having useful and effective classroom activities is essential so that the challenges and language difficulties can be minimized.

In general, identifying non-verbal cues during oral presentation that can be associated with speaking anxiety can be a helpful way to encounter the problems in speaking. Nevertheless, the researcher aims to explore the factors of students' anxious feelings and ways to improve their speaking skill.

1.2 Problem Statement

In learning English, students are expected to communicate the language effectively. This is because, their communicative competence is measured by the ability to speak understandable language. To communicate, non-verbal cues are used, so that others can understand the ideas or thoughts being delivered. Besides, non-verbal communication is a functional tool as it is used to clarify, confirm and complete verbal communication functions (Basir and Ro'ifah, 2018).

However, due to some challenges, students fail to communicate their ideas, and thoughts as well as to speak fluently. Miskam and Saidalvi (2019) state that speaking anxiety has a prominent influence on learners' communication skills. The students are unaware of the major reasons that cause them to feel anxious and nervous during the oral presentation.

Hence, this qualitative study is intended to identify non-verbal cues performed by the speaker which can be associated with anxiety. Besides that, the researcher aims to identify the

concrete reasons of writing anxiety experienced by the writers during the writing process. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following research questions.

- What are the non-verbal cues displayed by the ESL speaker during oral presentation?
- What are the factors of students' anxious feelings during oral presentation?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Non-verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication can be defined as "movement," and refers to the study of hand, arm, body, and face movements (Hans&Hans, 2015). Through non-verbal communication, the information is delivered through body language, movements, and expressions. According to Rahmat et. al (2019), non-verbal cues are the physical movement including body language, facial expression, eye contact, gestures, postures, and appearance. These non-verbal cues are considered as a tool that is used to convey messages nonverbally. Besides conveying information, non-verbal cues are also used to express feelings (Najarzadegan and Dabaghi, 2014). Since the non-verbal cues display speakers' implied feelings and convey messages, speaking anxiety hence, can be addressed via gestures, body movement and facial expression during the speaking process. Indah et. al (2018) state that students usually use facial expressions to express their feelings such as fear, surprise and shyness. Nonverbal cues are important in oral presentations because nonverbal cues aid the presenter to be more engaged with the audience. Nonverbal cues have a variety of uses. According to Newman et al. (2016), a slight change of nonverbal cues can immediately change the atmosphere of the presentation.

Moreover, a learner's speaking capability can be associated with his or her attitudes and behavior while speaking. This is due to a situation when a learner feels anxious and nervous during oral presentation that permits her or him to display non-verbal cues to express the speaking anxiety. Some scholars such as Sahid et. al, (2018); Indah et. al, (2018); and Caganaga, (2015) reported that learners use their physical behaviors to express anxiety, for example facial expression, body movements, hand gestures, and other physical signs when they are anxious while speaking under time constraints.

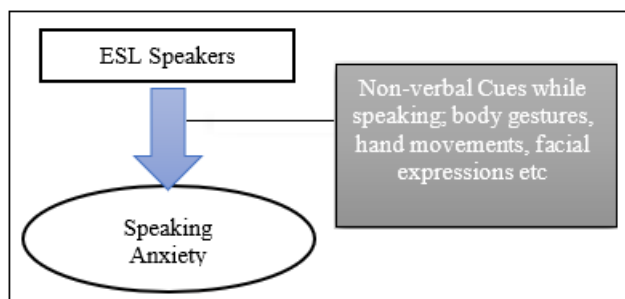


Figure 1: ESL learners, Speaking Anxiety and the non-verbal cues displayed by ESL learners

Figure 1 illustrates a connection between ESL learners, speaking anxiety and the use of non-verbal cues or signs during the oral presentation that can be associated with speaking anxiety. Based on the figure, when ESL speakers

feel nervous or anxious while presenting, they tend to use or display non-verbal cues to express their anxiety. These cues such as physical attitudes, hand movements, body gestures and postures, facial expressions, and emotion can be displayed to cue the speaker's unpleasant feelings.

2.2 Non-Verbal Cues vs Speaking Anxiety

During oral presentation, it is common for the second language learners to experience anxiety such as feeling nervous, worried and afraid, as well as sweating, shaking, trembling. These unpleasant situations could lead to rapid breathing and increased heart rate. All these apprehensive signs are displayed by the writers through some physical signs or traits such as facial expressions, body and hand movements, hand gestures, postures, and other physical signs. Some scholars such as Sahid et. al, (2018) reported that learners use their physical behaviours to express anxiety. According to Aripin & Rahmat (2021), there are some behaviours or signs presented by the learners that are associated with speaking anxiety such as writer's body posture, hand movements and facial expression.

2.2.1 Hand movement

Hand movements are common gestures associated with anxiety. During oral presentation, anxious speakers tend to make more hand movements especially when they have limited ideas, and vocab with limited time to speak. Hand movements can be related to the learner's way of touching and when they fidget pen or pencil. In a study by Sahid et. al (2018), it was reported that anxious individuals tend to use hand movement or gestures to cover their anxiety or nervousness. The researchers also mention in their study that a female participant repeatedly touched her scarf when she felt anxious during a seminar presentation as she tried to control and hide her nervousness by touching her head using both her hands.

2.2.2. Facial expression

Our faces are the most expressive part of our bodies as they can portray happiness, sadness, fear, anger, and disgust. Facial expression is known as a way to express feelings through facial expression like pouting to show sadness (Rahmat et. al, 2019). Facial expression is strong to express anger, fear, surprise, disgust, sadness, distress, and enjoyment (Ekman, 2004). People can simply identify someone's feelings and emotions through facial expressions. Learners usually use facial expressions as the way to express emotion and feelings like happiness, anger, surprise, fear, and sadness (Caganaga, 2015).

2.2.3 Eye-contact

Eye contact becomes a significant way to communicate with others as this cue serves various communications functions such as to regulate interaction, monitor interaction, deliver information, and establish interpersonal connections. In communication, we use eye contact to signal others that we are ready to take turns to speak or even to cue others to speak (Rahmat et. al, 2019). Our eyes also provide us with useful information or details when we need to interpret people's movements, gestures, and eye contact, besides determining if an audience is engaged, confused, or bored during communication. Eye-contacts can provide a signal that the

person is feeling anxious, fearful and nervous. Some learners cope with their anxiety by avoiding eye-contact just to reduce their tense or anxiety (Sulistyorini, 2018).

2.2.4 Shaking

Shaking is considered as a physical movement displayed by speakers while doing the oral presentation. The act of shaking can be related to anxiety when the writers repeatedly commit to the actions such as shaking hands and legs, tapping fingers on the table and tapping pen or pencil. Najarzadegan and Dabaghi (2014) stated that some repeated movements such as shaking legs and tapping pen or pencil on the desk are considered as signs of nervousness.

2.2.5 Head movements and body posture

These nonverbal cues are often used to acknowledge others or audiences. Sometimes, people use these movements to communicate their interests. A head nod is a usual sign as everybody uses this signal beginning at birth, even before a baby could know that it has a corresponding meaning. A common and universal head movement is the head shakes back and forth which signifies 'no'. Meanwhile, there are four general human postures: standing, sitting, squatting, and lying down.

2.3 Speaking Anxiety in Oral Presentation

Oral presentation is a method to deliver messages to persuade or inform the audiences of the subject matter that is being presented. This method is mostly used in higher learning to show the understanding of the students on the subject matter based on the knowledge that they have acquired. In a professional context, as stated by De Grez *et al.* (2012) oral presentation is mostly used to persuade the client. A good oral presentation requires the mastery of nonverbal cues. During the oral presentation, presenters use verbal and non-verbal cues. Burgoon *et al.* (2016) reported that nonverbal cues help an individual to deliver messages without using any verbal cues as this method is more efficient in voicing out emotions and feelings. However, presenters might not realize that nonverbal cues play a major part in having a successful oral presentation.

Speaking anxiety, on the other hand, was found as a language barrier that causes speakers to struggle and fail to perform in their oral presentations. Tian and Mahmud (2018) also indicated that anxiety is one of the main factors affecting oral presentation performance, especially for foreign and second language learners. Speaking anxiety occurs among ESL speakers at all levels and differs in terms of the mode and context of speaking (Tercan and Dikilitas, 2015). The findings indicate that learners at tertiary level suffer from speaking anxiety in English due to various factors such as preparedness, question-answer, testing, discussion, public speaking, error correction. Learners show high anxiety levels during speaking tests and speaking with the teacher and in front of the classroom. Ahmed (2016) in his study summarises the reasons for speaking anxiety include, being afraid of other negative evaluations and being ridiculed by them, as well as being worried about making language mistakes. It has become clear that the reasons for speaking anxiety could come from the internal factors, the learners themselves and external factors, such as test, audience, setting and context.

Thus, in delivering an oral presentation, students will experience a different level of speaking anxiety.

2.4 Factors causing Speaking Anxiety

There are manifold researchers who have explored and conducted studies on reasons and causes of speaking anxiety. Due to the numerous researchers; low self-confidence, worries about negative evaluation and comments, lack of linguistic knowledge, and teaching techniques are among the most common causes of speaking anxiety experienced by ESL learners.

According to Rehan (2023), the factors causing speaking anxiety are categorised into two main categories called self-reasons and teaching methods. The personal reasons are lack of exposure to English speaking, social pressure, the influence of L1, lack of confidence, and comprehension issues, while unsuitable teaching techniques and lengthy syllabus are categorised under teaching methods. Other researchers like Sulistyowati (2023); Bai (2023) also found in their studies that less self-confidence and feeling fear of negative evaluations and feedback are the major causes of speaking anxiety during oral presentations.

In addition, Hajiyewa (2024) proposed four major categories of factors causing speaking anxiety namely linguistics factors, cultural factors, social factors, and personality factors. The sub-categories of linguistics factors are complex rules of grammar, vocab, syntax, and pronunciation. Meanwhile, the influence of L1 is known as cultural factors in which the learners are influenced by their first language when speaking although they have been learning their second language for many years. For social factors, the researcher stated that lack of exposure, social pressure, and fear of negative evaluation and comments are among the factors that fall under this category. Lack of self-confidence, lack of practice, and inadequate English proficiency are the sub-categories of personality traits that lead to speaking anxiety.

Moreover, less exposure to English language, insufficient speaking practice, poor reading habits, low self-confidence, lack of topical knowledge, lack of motivation and bad experience due to fear of negative evaluation and comments are among the causes of speaking anxiety experienced by ESL learners (Golda, 2015; Min and Rahmat, 2014).

2.5 Past Studies

In a study by Zulkflee *et al.* (2023), the researchers found that many of the participants possess moderately high and high anxiety levels during oral presentations. The researchers have analysed four major factors that cause speaking anxiety namely positive mindset, physical effects, preparation anxiety, and performance anxiety. Based on the findings, it was reported that preparation anxiety scored the highest means as the participants stated that they started to feel anxious while preparing for the presentation. In terms of performance anxiety, the study found that the type of anxiety occurred during oral presentation when the ESL speakers received comments from the teachers. The researchers have summarised that many students still have the fear of speaking in front of many people or preparing for an oral test. Even

though different studies have revealed varied factors associated with anxiety, a few common issues have been identified among students who exhibit speaking anxiety.

Moreover, a study by Rehan (2023) on the causes of English language speaking anxiety among secondary school students found that students and teachers both are responsible for the causes of speaking anxiety. The results showed that students faced anxiety because of their personal reasons and teaching methods. Based on the findings, the self-reasons listed are lack of exposure, social pressure, the influence of L1, lack of confidence, and comprehension issues, while teaching methods are influenced by unsuitable teaching techniques and lengthy syllabus. The findings of the study can be used as teaching and learning aid for both teachers and students. Besides that, the study suggested some approaches and teaching techniques for the teachers to develop which will help in reducing the anxiety.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design, Sampling, and Instrumentation

This qualitative descriptive study aims to explore the physical and non-verbal cues presented by the speakers during the oral presentations that can be associated with anxiety. Besides that, the study is intended to determine the factors of writing anxiety perceived by the speakers when they do oral presentations. The selected sample for this study is a male and four female ESL learners from a public university who have attended an English course called Integrated Language Skill III. In addition, the instrument used for this study is semi-structured interview and observation. The aim of employing the interview is to urge the participants to reveal their thoughts and opinion about factors causing speaking anxiety and how they perceive this speaking barrier. According to Hyland (2003), interviews allow the subjects to freely share their experiences, opinions, feelings, and perception as writers. Meanwhile, the observation is conducted to determine the non-verbal cues or signs displayed by the speakers while doing oral presentation. These signs were then analysed to associate with speaking anxiety. Hence, the researcher believes that these research tools and instruments are practical and useful to provide the researcher with additional information for the study.

3.2 Data Collection Procedure

To meet the purpose of the study, five ESL learners were selected to perform oral presentations on any of her preferred movies. During the oral presentation, every single movement, gestures, expression were videotaped by the researcher to determine the non-verbal cues. After the process, a procedure called narrative enquiry was conducted to analyse all the movements made by the participants. The gathered information from the narrative enquiry was later transcribed and interpreted by the researcher to attain the findings for the study. After the presentation, semi-structured interviews were then conducted to get first-hand in-depth information regarding speaking anxiety. The students get to share their thoughts and opinions about self-experience of speaking anxiety. After both procedures were complete, the field notes of the observation and the interview answers were then

interpreted and analysed by the researcher to attain the findings for the study.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the findings of the study based on the data obtained from observation and semi-structured interview procedures. The findings are discussed according to the following research questions.

- a) What are the non-verbal cues displayed by the ESL speakers during oral presentation?
- b) What are the factors of students' anxious feelings during oral presentation?

4.1.1 Findings for Research Question 1

(i) What are the non-verbal cues displayed by the ESL speaker during oral presentation?

(a) Facial expressions

Signs	Description
	<i>Staring and rolling eyes-When the speaker could not get the ideas to say, she was staring and rolling her eyes while forcing herself to quickly get the ideas</i>
	<i>Smirk – The speaker smirked when he was lacking of ideas.</i>
	<i>Lowering brows-She lowered her brows when she was unsure about the points she talked about.</i>

Table (a) presents various facial expressions cued by the presenters during oral presentations. Rolling eyes and staring were among the common signs displayed by most speakers whenever they had issues while presenting. For example, they stared, smirked, and rolled eyes when they could not get the ideas or unable to elaborate the ideas. Besides that, the speakers were seen rolling eyes several times when they had some language difficulties such as vocab, sentence structure, and grammar. A facial expression such as raising and lowering brows is strong to express anger, fear, surprise, disgust, sadness, distress, and enjoyment (Ekman, 2004). According to Caganaga and Barabar (2015) facial expressions were used by learners as a way to express emotion and feelings of happiness, anger, surprise, fear and sadness. Moreover, Rahmat et al. (2019) defined facial expression as the expression of feelings, such as pouting as a sign of sadness, while Ekman (1978) states that EFL learners who were anxious during public speaking scenarios showed facial expressions to hide their anxiety.

(b) Hand movements

Signs	Description
	<i>Touching/Rubbing-The speaker was unable to elaborate the ideas. While trying to do so she was rubbing her forehead.</i>
	<i>Hand gestures-The speaker was nervous when she could not think of ideas that she wanted to say. She was patting and rubbing her head using both hands while saying the word in the Malay language.</i>

Based on Table (b), the speakers were seen committing touching and rubbing behaviours during their oral presentations. During the observation, the researcher noticed that the speakers would touch their head and face with whenever they could not get the ideas. At times, the writer was fidgeting pen while thinking of ideas. According to Ekman (2004), when a person feels anxious, and nervous, the most common touching behaviour that she or he would perform are scratching, twirling hair, fidgeting with fingers or hands, coughing and throat clearing. In a study by Sahid et al. (2018), it was reported that anxious individuals tend to use hand movements or gestures to hide their anxiety or nervousness. The researchers also mentioned in their study that one participant repeatedly touched her scarf when she felt anxious during a seminar presentation, as she tried to control and hide her nervousness by touching her head with both hands. This result is similar to the findings of Widagdo et al. (2022) who claimed that people suffering from anxiety show various physical and physiological signs such as body tremors, pallor, hand movements, seizures, shortness of breath, tension, cold hands.


(c) Eye-movement/eye-contact

Sign	Description
	<i>Eye-contact-When thinking of ideas, the speaker was avoiding from having any eye-contact with the teacher.</i>
	<i>When explaining the story to the audiences, she preferred to look everywhere instead of making eye contact with the audiences.</i>

Based on table (c), both speakers were avoiding from having any eye-contact with their teacher. They would rather stare at the corner or the ceiling of the room. Based on the field note

from the observation, the researcher noticed that the speakers were more comfortable to look at other area or to avoid any eye especially when they paused while thinking of any ideas. In a study by Dohnalova (2019), the researcher examined eye movement and eye tracking as one of the somatic indicators of the manifestation of anxiety. Somatic symptoms such as blink frequency are examined to describe the relationship with the authors' emotions (anxiety). This can be supported by Reichle et al. (2010) who described that individuals who catch themselves digressing their thoughts seem to have frequent eye movements. Based on the results, the researcher confirmed that eye movements are considered one of the indicators of anxiety.

(d) Head movement and body posture

Sign	Description
	<i>Based on figure 3, it shows that the female speaker performed head movements and changed her body postures several times whenever she felt uneasy during the presentation. The movements are said to indicate the speaking anxiety experienced by the speaker.</i>

Based on table (d), the speaker was seen changing her standing postures several times. She displayed slumped posture when she was desperately recalling for some ideas to talk during the presentation. At the end of the presentation, the presenter slightly crouched her body signing that she was a bit unsure about her speaking performance. The speaker was also repeatedly making head movements such as nodding during the presentation. Based on the field note from the observation, the researcher noticed that the writer was not comfortable during the presentation as she was shaking her legs a few times when she paused while thinking of any ideas. According to Indah et al. (2018), rigid body and slumped posture indicate defeat, nervous or depression. Besides that, Najrzadegan and Dabaghi (2014) stated that repetitive movements such as shaking legs and are also signs of nervousness.

4.1.2 Findings for Research Question 2

(ii) What are the factors of students' anxious feelings during oral presentation?

(a) Student 1

Question	Answer
1. What did you think were the causes of speaking anxiety?	<i>I have issues with the language, unable to think of the ideas for the topic "</i>
2. Do you feel anxious when it comes to speaking in front of others?	<i>"I have problems thinking of the points. I am worried if I could not get ideas to say. "</i>
3. What are the normal habits that you do when you feel anxious?	<i>"Whenever I feel nervous, I will be shaking and mumble stray thoughts. Sometimes my hands are sweating too "</i>
4. Which part of your body that you use the most when you feel anxious during oral presentation?	<i>"My hands. I will do a lot of movements with my hands. "</i>

Based on the data presented, student 1 stated that *language issues* and *having problems to brainstorm ideas* during the presentation were the main reasons that cause speaking anxiety. The speaker also admitted that every time she presented in front of others, she was worried if she did not have ideas to talk. Besides that, the student stated that whenever she felt anxious while presenting, her hands were shaking and sweating. She tended to display more hand gestures or hand movements when she was anxious and nervous during the oral presentation.

(b) Student 2

Question	Answer
1. What did you think were the causes of speaking anxiety?	<i>"I am always worried about time allocated for the presentation"</i>
2. Do you feel anxious when it comes to speaking in front of others?	<i>"My biggest problem is I am worried that people might judge on my presentation, because my language is not so good especially my grammar"</i>
3. What are the normal habits that you do when you feel anxious?	<i>"Whenever I feel anxious, I will force myself to think until I get the answers. Sometimes I pat my head to force myself to talk"</i>
4. Which part of your body that you use the most when you feel anxious during oral presentation?	<i>"My hands, and facial expression. I like to move my hand a lot when I lost words and I cannot hide"</i>

During the interview with student 2, it was reported that inability to present during allocated time and fear of others' judgment or comments were the causes that lead to speaking anxiety. The speaker mentioned his concern on grammar rules as he was worried that he might make a lot of grammar mistakes hence the others will judge him during the presentation. During the presentation, the speaker would pat his head whenever he did not know the words to say and sometimes, he fidgeted pen or fingers to get what he wanted to say. The speaker also agreed that making facial expressions was one of the ways to express his anxious.

(c) Student 3

Question	Answer
1. What did you think were the causes of speaking anxiety	<i>"In my opinion, the causes are time allocation, lecturer-they might scold me for grammatical errors..."</i>
2. Do you feel anxious when it comes to speaking in front of others?	<i>"I am nervous when I do not have ideas to say. I also nervous to use the language itself especially the grammar rules..."</i>
3. What are the normal habits that you do when you feel anxious?	<i>"I will avoid from doing the presentation if I have choice to do so. But sometimes I forced myself to speak up"</i>
4. Which part of your body that you use the most when you feel anxious during oral presentation?	<i>"My facial expression. It is too obvious when I am nervous."</i>

Meanwhile student 3 stated during the interview that the reasons for feeling anxious during the oral presentation were time constraints and teachers' feedback. She was very

concern about her grammar errors and she was worried of being scolded for the errors. To avoid anxious feelings, the speaker would rather to avoid from doing the presentation. She thought that it was the best decision to no making any errors during the presentation. The speaker also admitted that whenever she gets anxious, her facial expressions will express the unpleasant feelings. It was too obvious and she admitted that she could not hide the feelings.

(d) Student 4

Question	Answer
1. What did you think were the causes of speaking anxiety?	<i>"Based on my previous experience, I notice that my anxiety is caused by time constraints. I am worried if the time allocated is not enough. Besides that, I also worried about getting bad comments..."</i>
2. Do you feel anxious when it comes to speaking in front of others?	<i>"Of course, I am worried about it. I always have a feeling that people might not understand especially my lecturer"</i>
3. What are the normal habits that you do when you feel anxious?	<i>"I do not have any specific physical signs or acts whenever I feel anxious. But the most obvious part is my eyes, which I like to roll my eyes. Sometimes I pat my head forcing myself to think for ideas"</i>
4. Which part of your body that you use the most when you feel anxious during oral presentation?	<i>"My eyes movement, and facial expression will display my anxious feeling."</i>

In the interview, student 4 stated that she was anxious when she knew that there was time allocated for the presentation. She was worried about not having enough time to present all the ideas and due to that her marks might be affected. The other reason for having anxious feeling during oral presentation was fear of getting negative comments from the teacher. The speaker always has a feeling that the audiences might have understanding issues when listening to her presentation. In terms of using non-verbal cues that can be associated with anxiety, the speaker stated that the most obvious physical sign that she used was eyes contact or eyes movement in which she rolled her eyes whenever she felt nervous.

(e) Student 5

Question	Answer
1. What did you think were the causes of speaking anxiety?	<i>"Struggle with the language itself. I am worried that I might do a lot of mistakes while presenting."</i>
2. Do you feel anxious when it comes to speaking in front of others?	<i>"Yes, I do. I am embarrassed with my friends when I cannot perform"</i>
3. What are the normal habits that you do when you feel anxious?	<i>"Whenever I feel nervous, I will be shaking and stop presenting."</i>
4. Which part of your body that you use the most when you feel anxious during oral presentation?	<i>"My hands will be shaking and I get stuttered when I feel nervous."</i>

Moreover, student 5 admitted that having difficulties to use the language could be the main reason for speaking anxiety. The struggles to use the language made her worried as she could make a lot of mistakes. Besides that, the speaker also worried of being laughed at by her friends whenever she made mistakes while presenting. Hence, the speaker would prefer to avoid presenting at all cost so that she would not feel overwhelmed every time they have oral presentation in class. During oral presentation, the author stated that she was shaking and sometimes took a pause because of the anxiety.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Non-verbal Cues in Oral Presentation

Based on the findings presented and discussed above, it can be concluded that some of the non-verbal cues and signs portrayed by the ESL learners during the oral presentations could be associated with anxiety. It was found that facial expression (staring, rolling eyes, lowering brows and smirking, eye-contact, and hand movements (fidgeting, touching and rubbing) were among the non-verbal cues shown by the writer during the observation. All the actions displayed were related to anxiety as researchers (Ekman, 2004; Caganaga and Barabar, 2015) affirmed that facial expressions were used by the writers to express their emotion and feelings including nervousness and fear. In addition, Sahid *et. al* (2018) reported in their study that a female participant repeatedly touched her scarf when she felt anxious during a seminar presentation as she tried to control and hide her nervousness by touching her head using both her hands. The researcher found that the speakers were avoiding from having eye-contact with the teachers while presenting. They would prefer to stare at the corner of the room or to close their eyes instead of engaging with the teachers. This is due to the fact that the speaker was afraid of getting feedback or

comments from the teacher as stated by Bai (2023), learners are fear of getting negative comments from the teacher. Hence avoiding eye-contact was the way to reduce anxiety. According to Sulistyorini (2018) students who are coping with anxiety will avoid any eye-contact to reduce the tense. From the observation, the researcher can conclude that non-verbal cues are used to help the learners in reducing their anxiety by incorporating elements of physical movement such as body language, facial expression, eye contact, gestures, postures and appearance in an oral presentation.

5.2 Factors Causing Speaking Anxiety

On the other hand, it can be assured from the interview with all the participants that there were six major reasons of speaking anxiety experienced by the writers during the oral presentations. Manifold researchers in the previous studies (Rehan, 2023; Bai, 2023; Hudayani, Husein &Dirgeyasa, 2020; Liu&Ni, 2015; Parichut, 2014; Kurniasih, 2017; Kirmizi and Kirmizi, 2015) affirmed that fear of negative comments and feedback, time constraints, negative attitudes, lack of self-confidence and low self-esteem, inability to speak and understand in English language, social pressure are among the common personal factors or self-reasons that make them anxious during oral presentation. On the other hand, Hajiyeva (2024); Rehan (2023), Zulkflee et al. (2023); and Liu&Ni (2015); Parichut (2014); Kurniasih (2017); Kirmizi and Kirmizi (2015); Golda (2015); Min and Rahmat (2014) found that cultural and environment could also lead to speaking anxiety.

Based on the findings gathered from the interview with all five participants, the researcher could recap several major factors causing speaking anxiety experienced by ESL writers during oral presentations. The reasons are presented in the following table.

Table 4.2.2: Factors causing Speaking Anxiety gathered from the study

Self-Reasons	Environment
1. Limited time to write/ time constraints	1. Teaching techniques
2. Having problems to brainstorm relevant ideas.	2. Teachers' approach
3. Limited knowledge of writing mechanics.	3. Classroom environment
4. Fear of negative comments.	4. lengthy syllabus
5. Difficulties to write in English/ grammar	5. Teachers' negative evaluation and feedback
6. Low confidence in writing-worried of writing low-quality essays	6. The influence of L1

Based on the findings gathered from the interview sessions with all the participants, the researcher recapped that there were six major self-reasons that caused learners to encounter speaking anxiety and four environmental causes of speaking anxiety. The table presents limited time to write, having problems to develop ideas, limited knowledge of writing mechanics, teacher's evaluation, difficulties to write in English, and low self-confidence towards writing as the self-reasons obtained from the study, while teaching techniques, teachers' approaches, classroom environment and syllabus are the environmental factors that lead to speaking anxiety during oral presentations.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of Findings

ESL learners who struggle to excel in the language would experience speaking anxiety, a situation that hinders them from having a good speaking performance. During oral presentation anxious presenters could be traced by adhering some obvious non-verbal cues and signs that could be associated with anxiety. It has been proven in the study that hand movements or gesture, facial expressions, body postures, and eye-contact are measured as vivid signs of anxiety due to valid justifications from the previous researches. Besides that, the present study also managed to verify some possible reasons of writing anxiety based on the participants' answers during the interview sessions. Hence, this can be summarized that apprehensive ESL learners could

be identified from the signs and reasons acknowledged in the study.

6.2 Pedagogical Implications of the study

Based on the discovered findings in the study, it is affirmed that apprehensive ESL learners could be identified during oral presentation through classified signs and reasons. Hence, the findings will provide new data and information to writing teachers, lecturers and educators in terms of understanding this writing barrier better. In fact, by recognising signs and reasons of the anxiety, they could figure out appropriate learning methods for the apprehensive ESL learners during the oral presentations. This would help them to perform well during the oral presentation with minimal anxiety traits regardless the struggles and challenges that they encounter in learning their second language.

6.3 Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should explore a more thorough investigation on consequences of unrestrained speaking anxiety for the ESL learners, besides allocating some efficient ways and methods to deal with this language barrier. In fact, speaking anxiety can also be explored from different angles with varied methods and instruments such as narrative enquiry and think-aloud protocols. This would help researchers to probe deeper on speaking anxiety during oral presentations.

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