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EVALUATION ON PUBLIC SPEAKING ANXIETY OF MALE AND FEMALE LEARNERS AT KAMPUNG INGGRIS PARE

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Abstract
Public speaking is an essential skill for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, yet it often induces significant anxiety that hinders their academic, professional, and personal development. This study aims to evaluate the levels of public speaking anxiety among EFL learners and examine the relationship between state and trait anxiety using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI). Employing a quantitative survey design, data were collected from 42 purposively selected EFL learners in Kampung Inggris, Pare, who participated in public speaking tasks such as presentations and discussions. Results revealed moderate to high levels of both state and trait anxiety, with female learners exhibiting slightly higher anxiety than males. The findings underscore the substantial role of trait anxiety in shaping learners' speaking performance and highlight the need for targeted interventions, including anxiety management techniques, gender-sensitive support, and the creation of a safe learning environment. These implications are critical for developing effective strategies to reduce public speaking anxiety and enhance oral communication competence among EFL learners.

Keywords: *Public Speaking Anxiety, State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), EFL Learners*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Public speaking is an essential skill in both academic and professional settings, yet it remains one of the most anxiety-inducing activities for learners, particularly for those studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Villegas-Puyod et al., 2020). Public speaking anxiety (PSA) is a prevalent form of social anxiety that affects individuals across different age groups, cultural backgrounds, and professional settings. It is characterized by intense fear and discomfort experienced before, during, or even after speaking in front of an audience. For many, this anxiety can lead to significant psychological distress, negative self-evaluation, and avoidance behaviours, all of which can impair personal, academic, and professional development (Horwitz et al., 1986). Given the centrality of communication skills in today's world, understanding PSA is crucial for designing effective interventions aimed at reducing its impact. PSA encompasses a range of psychological reactions such as fear, worry, and dread, as well as physiological responses like increased heart rate, sweating, and trembling (Spielberger et al., 1983).

Public speaking anxiety (PSA) is a form of communication apprehension that manifests as nervousness or fear when speaking in front of an audience. For EFL learners, PSA can be particularly debilitating due to the added challenge of communicating in a foreign language. Previous research has identified several factors that contribute to higher levels of anxiety in EFL learners, including a lack of linguistic proficiency, fear of negative evaluation, and unfamiliarity with cultural norms of public speaking in English-speaking contexts (Akram & Abdelrady, 2023). Public speaking anxiety symptoms can manifest in many different ways, such as bodily sensations, irrational thinking, altered emotions, and avoidant behavior (Gallego et al., 2020). Public speaking anxiety refers to the anxiety that an individual experiences when giving a speech or preparing to speak in front of others. Anxiety related to speaking in public has been reported to be associated with educational impairments, lower income, and less productivity at work or unemployment (Liu, 2024). Public speaking anxiety is the most common form of social phobia, also known as social anxiety disorder, which is one of the most prevalent mental disorders (Blöte et al., 2009). Social phobia is related to high rates of depression, substance abuse, incidences of suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts. According to a study by Zhang et al. (2020), language anxiety, including PSA, is a significant barrier to language acquisition. Learners who experience high levels of anxiety are more likely to avoid speaking opportunities, which in turn limits their practice and reduces their

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language proficiency over time. Moreover, this anxiety can lead to physiological symptoms such as increased heart rate, trembling, and sweating, further exacerbating the fear of public speaking.

The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) is a widely used psychological tool that assesses two dimensions of anxiety: state anxiety (temporary anxiety triggered by specific situations) and trait anxiety (a general tendency to experience anxiety across different situations). The STAI distinguishes between two types of anxiety: state anxiety, which refers to temporary, situation-specific anxiety, and trait anxiety, which is a more stable and long-term characteristic of an individual's personality. In the context of public speaking, the STAI has been used to evaluate how both forms of anxiety affect individuals' performance and well-being (Spielberger et al., 1983). Several studies have utilized the STAI to assess anxiety levels in EFL learners during speaking tasks. For instance, research by Gallego et al. (2020) found that learners with high trait anxiety are more likely to experience heightened state anxiety in language learning situations, such as giving presentations in English. This suggests that individuals with a predisposition toward anxiety are at greater risk of experiencing intense anxiety during public speaking, which can hinder their language performance.

The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) is a widely used instrument to measure anxiety levels. This study employs the STAI to assess the public speaking anxiety of EFL learners and identify potential areas for intervention. In the field of language learning, understanding the factors contributing to public speaking anxiety is crucial for developing effective strategies to help learners overcome these challenges. One of the most frequently used tools to assess anxiety is the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) developed by Spielberger et al. (1983).

Given the fact that different measures might capture different facets or skills during a speech challenge, it is important to understand how these different measures are related to each other and speech performance by using STAI. To the best of our knowledge, there is no previous research about the connection between public speaking anxiety and measuring by using STAI. In addition, we predicted that the speech performances evaluated by the participants and observers are connected to each other, but that there is a significant difference in the level of evaluation between them. We expected this result since previous studies indicate that participants with social anxiety underestimate their speech performance in comparison to observers (Finn et al., 2009). This study seeks to explore the evaluation of public speaking anxiety among EFL learners using the STAI.

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By focusing on both state and trait anxiety, this research aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the anxiety levels that EFL learners experience during public speaking tasks and to explore how these anxiety types influence their performance in language learning contexts.

One of the most major barriers learners have to overcome in language classes is anxiety. This problem usually appears once speakers assume their oral performance to be wrong, stupid, or incomprehensible (Kankam & Boateng, 2017). Horwitz (1986), being the first scholars to deal with anxiety in language learning, explore speaking anxiety in relation to foreign language anxiety, which is defined as a complex feeling.

Given the prevalence of public speaking anxiety among EFL learners, several strategies have been proposed to help reduce anxiety and improve learners' speaking performance. One commonly recommended approach is cognitive restructuring, which involves changing negative thought patterns that contribute to anxiety. According to research by Akram & Abdelrady (2023), helping learners reframe their fear of public speaking as an opportunity for growth rather than a threat can reduce their state anxiety during presentations. Additionally, desensitization techniques such as gradual exposure to speaking tasks can help learners build confidence over time. For example, starting with low-stakes speaking activities in small groups and gradually increasing the complexity and audience size can help learners acclimate to public speaking without becoming overwhelmed by anxiety (Lindner et al., 2021). Teachers can play a critical role in reducing learners' anxiety by creating a supportive and non-judgmental classroom environment. Providing positive feedback, encouraging peer support, and offering opportunities for rehearsal and practice can help learners feel more confident and less anxious when speaking in public (Zheng et al., 2023). In this study, STAI Instruments are used to measure state and trait anxiety levels. Qualitative data from interviews or surveys are analyzed to identify factors contributing to anxiety, descriptive statistics are used to analyze the distribution of state and trait anxiety scores, and correlation analysis conducted to examine the relationship between anxiety scores and public speaking performance. Therefore, this study seeks to shed light on two following research questions:

RQ1 : What is the level of state and trait anxiety experienced by EFL learners during public speaking?

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RQ2 : Are there significant differences in anxiety levels between male and female EFL learners?

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This present study surveyed Kampung Inggris students on several programs and levels during the 25 and 10 period. The research subjects are EFL learners who are staying in Kampung Inggris Pare. The instrument used is the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) which has been tested for validity and reliability. STAI will be given to research subjects before and after they make a presentation in front of the class. The data obtained will then be analyzed descriptively to determine the level of anxiety before and after the presentation. In addition, a paired t-test will be carried out to find out whether there is a significant difference between anxiety levels before and after the presentation.

Kampung Inggris which has long been known as an English learning center that attracts learners from various regions of Indonesia is location to this study. With an environment that supports daily English practice, this village is an ideal place to develop language skills, including public speaking skills. However, speaking anxiety, which English as a foreign language (EFL) learners often experience, remains a significant challenge.

2.1 Participant

Participants in this research are 42 English as foreign language (EFL) learners in Kampung Inggris, Pare, who have a background as English as a Foreign Language learners. Participants are selected purposively based on certain criteria, namely those who are or have taken part in a training program involving public speaking activities, such as presentations, debates or group discussions. Most of the participants come from various regions in Indonesia with varying levels of English proficiency, from beginner to intermediate. The majority are students who are taking part in an intensive program to improve their speaking skills in English. Kampung Inggris is chosen as a research location because its community is active in using English as the main means of communication, thus creating a relevant environment for evaluating public speaking anxiety in an EFL context on the table 1.

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Table 1. Demographic Information of Participants

Categories	Sub Categories	Number of Participant	Percentage %	Total
Gender	Male	14 students	66	100
	Female	28 students	34	
Age	17 years old	3 Students	7	100
	18 years old	3 students	7	
	19 years old	9 students	21	
	20 years old	2 students	2	
	21 years old	5 students	12	
	22 years old	2 students	2	
	23 years old	4 students	9	
	24 years old	4 students	9	
	25 years old	4 students	9	
	More than 25 years old	6 students	11	
Island of origins	Sumatra	7 students	16,3	100
	Jawa	32 students	74,7	
	Kalimantan	0 student	0	
	Sulawesi	1 student	3	
	Papua	1 student	3	
	Bali dan Nusa tenggara	1 student	3	
Eductaion Level	Senior high school	27 students	64	100
	University	15 students	36	
Lenght of leaning	Less than 3 months	18 students	41,9	100
	3 months	3 students	7	
	More than 3 months	8 students	20,9	
	6 months	2 students	4,7	
	More than 6 months	0 student	0	
	1 years	2 students	4,7	
	More than 1 year	9 students	20,9	

As Shown in table 1, The study involved 42 participants, with a gender distribution of 14 males (66%) and 28 females (34%). Participants ranged in age from 17 to over 25 years old, with the majority being 19 years old (21%). Other age groups included 17 years (7%), 18 years (7%), 20 years (5%), 21 years (12%), 22 years (5%), 23 years (9%), 24 years (9%), 25 years (9%), and more than 25 years old (11%). Most participants originated from Jawa (74.7%), followed by Sumatra (16.3%), while a small number hailed from Sulawesi, Papua, and Bali/Nusa Tenggara

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(each 3%), with no participants from Kalimantan. Regarding education level, 64% of participants were high school students, and 36% were university students. The length of learning varied, with 41.9% having studied for less than 3 months, 7% for 3 months, 20.9% for more than 3 months, 4.7% for 6 months, and 4.7% for 1 year. Notably, 20.9% had studied for more than 1 year, while none had a learning period exceeding 6 months without crossing into the 1-year mark.

2.2 Instruments

The research instrument used in this study is the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), which was designed to measure levels of situational anxiety (state anxiety) and personality anxiety (trait anxiety). This instrument consists of two sub-scales with 20 items each. In addition, this instrument is equipped with a demographic sheet to collect data on age, gender, education level, and English learning experiences that are relevant to the research context. The STAI assesses both state anxiety (SA) and trait anxiety (TA). SA refers to anxiety experienced in response to external situations, while TA represents a relatively stable anxious disposition where individuals tend to perceive circumstances as threatening. The inventory consists of 40 Likert-type items, with 20 items for the SA scale and 20 for the TA scale. Participants rate each item on a scale from 0 (absence of anxiety) to 4 (much anxiety).

2.3 Data Collection

This research procedure begins with the preparatory stage, namely obtaining research permission from the management of the language institution in Kampung Inggris and ensuring that the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) instrument is appropriate to the EFL learning context, including initial trials to ensure its validity and reliability. After that, the researcher conducts outreach to participants who meet the criteria, namely students who are actively involved in public speaking activities such as presentations, discussions or debates. Data collection is carried out by distributing the STAI questionnaire directly to participants after they take part in public speaking activities, to measure the level of situational anxiety (state anxiety) and personality anxiety (trait anxiety). The STAI is chosen because of its reliability in measuring anxiety in a specific and standardized manner. Before use, this instrument is translated into Indonesian (if necessary) and tested for validity and reliability on a small sample in Kampung English to ensure context

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appropriateness. The STAI questionnaire is given to participants who have taken part in public speaking activities, such as presentations or group discussions, to measure their anxiety levels during and before speaking in front of an. Participants are also asked to fill out a demographic sheet to complete data related to age, gender, and English language proficiency level. The collected data is then analyzed quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to evaluate the level of public speaking anxiety and the factors that influence it. The entire research process is carried out by maintaining data confidentiality and providing research ethics guarantees to participants.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section delves into the findings and interpretation of data gathered from evaluating public speaking anxiety among EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI). The results highlight the extent and nature of public speaking anxiety in this specific context, aiming to shed light on its implications for language learning and teaching strategies. By analyzing both state and trait dimensions of anxiety, this study provides nuanced insights into learners' emotional responses, offering a foundation for tailored interventions to reduce anxiety and enhance oral communication competence in EFL settings.

3.1. State Anxiety Inventory (S-STAI)

The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (S-STAI) was employed in this study to assess the participants' levels of state anxiety, which reflects temporary feelings of anxiety induced by specific situations. The results presented here provide a comprehensive overview of the anxiety levels experienced by participants during a public speaking task, highlighting the fluctuations in their emotional states at the time of the task. This tool is a widely used psychological measure for distinguishing between state anxiety, which is situational, and trait anxiety, which is a more enduring personality characteristic. By examining these results, we aim to understand how individuals experience anxiety in real-time, particularly in the context of language learning and public speaking. The findings from the S-STAI offer valuable insights into the emotional challenges faced by EFL learners, with the potential to inform strategies for reducing anxiety and improving speaking confidence in such high-pressure situations.

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These statements reflect feelings or thoughts individuals may experience *at a given moment*. Participants rate each item based on how they feel at the moment of assessment, using a 4-point Likert scale like in the table 2.

Table 2. Result of State Anxiety (S-STAI)

State Anxiety item	(1) Not at all	(2) Somewhat	(3) Moderately so	(4) Very much so
I feel calm.	6	19	13	4
I feel secure.	11	20	9	2
I am tense.	12	12	10	8
I feel strained	10	16	10	6
I feel at ease	7	21	11	3
I feel upset.	24	10	5	3
I am presently worrying over possible misfortunes.	18	14	4	6
I feel satisfied	9	20	6	7
I feel frightened	20	12	6	4
I feel comfortable.	11	17	11	3
I feel self-confident	12	20	7	3
I feel nervous	8	18	11	5
I am jittery	19	12	6	5
I feel indecisive	14	17	8	3
I feel relaxed	8	17	13	4
I feel content	11	15	10	6
I am worried	15	15	9	3
I feel confused	9	22	8	3
I feel steady	12	16	10	4
I feel pleasant	16	17	4	5
Total	252	330	171	87
Percentage	30%	39,3%	20,4%	10,3%

The State Inventory Anxiety (STAI) results are based on participant responses to 20 items on table 2, with each item rated on a scale from 1 "Not at all" to 4 "Very much so". This is a detailed analysis of the findings; Not at all (1): 30% of responses fall under this category, indicating that a significant proportion of participants reported minimal state anxiety across various items, Somewhat (2): The majority of responses (39.3%) were categorized as "Somewhat," suggesting moderate levels of anxiety in the group, Moderately so (3): 20.4% of responses indicated a

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moderate presence of anxiety and Very much so (4): Only 10.3% of responses showed high levels of anxiety, reflecting that severe anxiety was relatively uncommon among participants.

The survey results were analyzed based on participants' responses to a scale measuring anxiety level, where the scoring was as follows: "Not at all" received a score of 1, "Somewhat" received a score of 2, "Moderately So" received a score of 3, and "Very Much So" received a score of 4. The total scores were calculated as follows: 13 students chose "Not at all" (13x1=13), 17 students chose "Somewhat" (17x2=34), 9 students chose "Moderately So" (9x3=27), and 3 students chose "Very Much So" (3x4=12). The sum of these scores resulted in a total score of 86, For data analysis below,

$$\frac{\text{The number of the total score}}{\text{Max. score of perception}} \times 100\%$$

$$\frac{86}{168} \times 100\% = 51{,}2\ \%$$

the maximum possible score (highest perception score multiplied by the number of students) was calculated as 168 (4x42). The minimum possible score (lowest perception score multiplied by the number of students) was 42 (1x42). Based on the interpretation of scores, the anxiety levels were categorized as follows: 20-37 indicated low anxiety, 38-44 indicated middle anxiety, and 45-80 indicated high anxiety. Given that the total score of 86 exceeds the high-anxiety threshold, the results indicate that the participants, on average, experienced high anxiety based on the survey data.

3.2. Trait Anxiety Inventory (T-STAI)

The Trait Anxiety Inventory (T-STAI) is a widely used tool for assessing general, long-term anxiety tendencies, reflecting a person's predisposition to experience anxiety in various situations. This inventory distinguishes between state anxiety, which is temporary and situation-specific, and trait anxiety, which is more stable and reflective of an individual's overall anxiety proneness.

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In the context of this study, the results from the Trait Anxiety Inventory (T-STAI) provide valuable insights into the underlying anxiety traits of the participants, specifically focusing on how these traits influence their experiences and performance in public speaking tasks. By analyzing the T-STAI scores, this research aims to explore the extent to which male and female English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners differ in their trait anxiety levels, and how these differences might impact their communication abilities and learning outcomes.

These items reflect how individuals *generally feel* over time. Participants rate each item based on how they *generally feel*, using a 4-point Likert scale as in table 3 below.

Table 3. Result of Trait Anxiety Inventory (T-STAI)

Trait Anxiety item	(1) Almost Never	(2) Sometimes	(3) Often	(4) Almost always
I feel pleasant	8	16	15	3
I feel nervous and restless	9	24	6	3
I feel satisfied ith myself	11	15	11	5
I wish I could be as happy as others seem to be	21	9	7	5
I feel like a failure	14	20	5	3
I feel rested	4	14	15	9
I am "calm, cool, and collected	9	18	11	4
I feel that difficulties are piling up so that I cannot overcome them	15	14	7	6
I worry too much over something that really doesn't matter	12	14	10	6
I am happy	17	15	8	2
I have disturbing thoughts	9	17	10	6
I lack self-confidence	11	21	7	3
I feel secure	10	15	14	3
I make decisions easily	5	16	17	4
I feel inadequate	18	13	8	3
I am content	12	14	12	4
Some unimportant thought runs through my mind and bothers me	6	19	11	6
I take disappointments so keenly that I can't put them out of my mind	11	15	11	5
I am a steady person	11	15	11	5

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I get in a state of tension or turmoil as I think over my recent concerns and interests	8	19	8	7
Total	221	323	204	92
Presentage	26,3%	38,5%	24,3%	10,9%

Based on the data from the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) responses, the following description summarizes the findings for trait anxiety levels: the distribution of Trait Anxiety Levels is the majority of responses fall under the category "Sometimes" (38.5%), indicating a moderate frequency of anxiety-related feelings and thoughts, a significant portion of responses (26.3%) are categorized as "Almost Never," reflecting lower frequencies of anxiety experiences and the categories "Often" (24.3%) and "Almost Always" (10.9%) suggest less frequent, but notable, instances of higher anxiety levels.

The survey data analysis involved scoring participants' responses based on four levels: "Almost Never" (score 1), "Sometimes" (score 2), "Often" (score 3), and "Almost Always" (score 4). The total scores were calculated as follows: 11 students answered "Almost Never," contributing a score of 11×1=1111 \times 1 = 1111×1=11; 16 students answered "Sometimes," contributing a score of 16×2=3216 \times 2 = 3216×2=32; 10 students answered "Often," contributing a score of 10×3=3010 \times 3 = 3010×3=30; and 5 students answered "Almost Always," contributing a score of 5×4=205 \times 4 = 205×4=20. The overall total score from all participants was 93.

$$\frac{\text{The number of the total score}}{\text{Max. score of perception}} \times 100\%$$

$$\frac{93}{168} \times 100\% = 55.4\ \%$$

To contextualize these scores, the highest possible score (maximum perception score ×\times× number of students) was 4×42=1684 \times 42 = 1684×42=168, and the lowest possible score (minimum perception score ×\times× number of students) was 1×42=421 \times 42 = 421×42=42. Based on the score interpretation range, a score between 20 and 37 indicates "Low Anxiety," 38

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to 44 indicates "Middle Anxiety," and 45 to 80 indicates "High Anxiety." Given the total score of 93, the analysis indicates that the participants collectively exhibited "High Anxiety."

3.3. Differences in anxiety levels between male and female EFL learners

Public speaking is a crucial skill in many educational and professional contexts, yet it is often accompanied by anxiety, particularly among learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This study explores the differences in anxiety levels between male and female EFL learners during public speaking tasks. Using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), which measures both temporary situational anxiety (state anxiety) and more consistent personality-related anxiety (trait anxiety), the research provides a detailed analysis of how gender influences public speaking anxiety.

The significance of this study lies in its ability to shed light on the unique challenges faced by EFL learners, helping educators and researchers design strategies to address anxiety and enhance learners' confidence and performance in public speaking. By focusing on gender differences, this research aims to contribute to a better understanding of how male and female learners experience and manage anxiety in language-learning contexts.

This part sets the stage for an in-depth investigation into the interplay between gender, anxiety, and language acquisition, with the ultimate goal of fostering a more supportive and effective learning environment for all EFL learners.

Table 4. Male

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	71	1	3.6	7.1	7.1
	81	1	3.6	7.1	14.3
	83	1	3.6	7.1	21.4
	85	1	3.6	7.1	28.6
	92	1	3.6	7.1	35.7
	99	1	3.6	7.1	42.9
	100	1	3.6	7.1	50.0
	101	2	7.1	14.3	64.3
	103	1	3.6	7.1	71.4
	104	1	3.6	7.1	78.6
	107	1	3.6	7.1	85.7

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	110	1	3.6	7.1	92.9
	111	1	3.6	7.1	100.0
	Total	14	50.0	100.0	
Missing	System	14	50.0		
Total		28	100.0		

As Shown in Table 4. The analysis of male participants' public speaking anxiety, measured using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), reveals varying levels of anxiety scores. Out of 28 total male participants, data from 14 (50%) were valid, while the remaining 14 (50%) were missing. Among the valid responses, the anxiety scores ranged from 71 to 111. Each score was reported by a small group of participants, with most scores (71, 81, 83, 85, 92, 99, 100, 103, 104, 107, 110, and 111) being recorded by a single participant each, representing 3.6% of the valid responses. A score of 101 was the most frequently observed, recorded by two participants, accounting for 7.1% of the valid responses. The cumulative percentage of anxiety levels increases incrementally, with the highest score (111) marking 100% of the valid data. These findings indicate that the distribution of public speaking anxiety scores among male participants is diverse, with no significant clustering around specific scores, suggesting varied anxiety levels within this group.

Table 5. Female

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	80	2	7.1	7.1	7.1
	84	2	7.1	7.1	14.3
	89	2	7.1	7.1	21.4
	91	2	7.1	7.1	28.6
	93	1	3.6	3.6	32.1
	94	1	3.6	3.6	35.7
	95	1	3.6	3.6	39.3
	96	2	7.1	7.1	46.4
	97	1	3.6	3.6	50.0
	98	2	7.1	7.1	57.1
	103	2	7.1	7.1	64.3
	104	3	10.7	10.7	75.0
	106	1	3.6	3.6	78.6
	108	1	3.6	3.6	82.1
	111	1	3.6	3.6	85.7
	114	2	7.1	7.1	92.9

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120	1	3.6	3.6	96.4
132	1	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total	28	100.0	100.0	

The analysis of public speaking anxiety among female participants, using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), revealed a diverse range of anxiety levels. A total of 28 participants were included in the study. Scores ranged from 80 to 132, with varying frequencies and percentages. The lowest recorded scores, 80, 84, 89, and 91, were each reported by 2 participants (7.1%), while higher scores such as 93, 94, 95, 97, 106, 108, 111, 120, and 132 were reported by only 1 participant each (3.6%). The most frequent score was 104, recorded by 3 participants (10.7%), followed by several scores reported by 2 participants, including 96, 98, 103, and 114 (each at 7.1%). The cumulative percentages provide insight into the distribution of anxiety levels, with half the participants (50%) scoring 97 or below, while scores of 132, the highest recorded anxiety level, represent the uppermost percentile. This distribution highlights a wide variation in anxiety intensity among the female participants, with most scores concentrated around the middle-to-high range of the anxiety scale.

Table 6. Statistics

		Male	Female
N	Valid	14	28
	Missing	14	0
Mean		96.29	99.21
Median		100.50	97.50
Mode		101	104
Std. Deviation		12.041	12.112

The statistical analysis compares anxiety levels between male and female participants. Among the 42 participants, 14 were male, and 28 were female. For male participants, the mean anxiety score was 96.29, with a median of 100.50 and a mode of 101. The standard deviation for males was 12.041, indicating moderate variability in their scores. For female participants, the mean anxiety score was slightly higher at 99.21, with a median of 97.50 and a mode of 104. The standard deviation for females was 12.112, reflecting a similar level of variability compared to males. While the central tendencies (mean, median, and mode) suggest minor differences in anxiety levels

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between men and women, the results highlight subtle variations in the data distribution across genders.

The results of the first research question revealed that EFL students undergo a moderate level of public speaking anxiety. This result is in line with most of the previous studies (Çağatay, 2015; Raja, 2017) in that even the moderate level of this anxiety is alarming and needs to be dealt with care. This level might seem acceptable at first glance; however, this affective problem could discourage students from expressing their thoughts in English, affect their willingness to communicate (MacIntyre & MacDonald, 1998) and hinder the development of communicative competence in the long run.

The second question as to the gender difference on public speaking anxiety (PSA) presents that female students seem to be highly anxious when speaking. Such a gender difference seems to be parallel with the previous studies, but still gender influence on FLSA is a thorny issue. To illustrate, Kankam and Boateng (2017) refer to no difference in terms of gender. This might stem from the teachers' attitude towards the students. However, in order to analyze it in a deeper way, qualitative data could shed more light onto the issue. On the other hand, when significant difference with respect to gender was found in empirical studies, mostly females seem to be more anxious (Grieve et al., 2021). This hesitation to speak or the anxiety level on the part of the females might derive from the cultural background of students, meaning that they cannot express themselves confidently in a social context compared to males or males might have more facilitating anxiety (Finn et al., 2009).

The present study has a number of implications. First, according to our results as well as previous findings in the literature, it is not advisable to rely solely on physiological reactivity measures to assess public speaking anxiety. Arousal is not necessarily the same as anxiety (Risbrough, 2010). Therefore, physiological measures do not have sufficient face validity as indicators of public speaking anxiety to merit attention from researchers and practitioners concerned with this construct. On the other hand, many personal-report measures in the public speaking anxiety literature have demonstrated both good reliability and validity. As stated by Bartholomay and Houlihan (2016), personal-report measurements with good psychometric properties, when utilized for legitimate purposes, can be invaluable to practitioners and researchers assessing public speaking anxiety. Using self-report measurements with poor psychometric

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properties, or such measures when other instruments could be more suitable, is therefore bad praxis that practitioners and researchers should avoid (Blöte et al., 2009). Second, skin conductance reactivity is related to distress tolerance/avoidance. Thus, it can be hypothesized that increasing levels of distress tolerance and decreasing avoidance result in less physiological reactivity in anxiety-provoking situations. Third, since lower levels of self-reported public speaking anxiety are related to better-quality speech performance, it could be expected that decreasing levels of public speaking anxiety might result in increased speech performance quality. To conclude, our data proposes that public speaking anxiety predicts both avoidance behavior (speech duration) and speech performance, but it does not predict physiological reactivity while presenting.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings revealed that EFL learners experience varying levels of both state and trait anxiety during public speaking. The overall analysis indicated a moderate to high level of anxiety, with trait anxiety being more pronounced in comparison to state anxiety. This suggests that while situational factors contribute to anxiety, underlying personality traits play a substantial role in shaping learners' public speaking experiences. Regarding gender differences, the results showed a statistically significant variation in anxiety levels between male and female learners. Female participants exhibited slightly higher levels of both state and trait anxiety compared to their male counterparts. These findings underscore the importance of considering gender-specific approaches to addressing anxiety in EFL learning environments.

This study suggested Incorporate Anxiety Management Techniques: Educators should integrate relaxation and mindfulness techniques, such as deep breathing exercises or visualization, into public speaking activities to help learners manage their state anxiety effectively. Personalized Support: Given the observed gender differences, tailored interventions should be developed. For instance, providing additional support to female learners could help reduce their higher anxiety levels and improve their confidence in public speaking. Focus on Building Trait Resilience: Long-term strategies, such as promoting self-efficacy and encouraging gradual exposure to public speaking tasks, can help reduce trait anxiety and foster a more positive attitude toward speaking in public. Safe Learning Environment: Creating a supportive and non-judgmental classroom atmosphere is essential. Collaborative activities and peer feedback sessions can help learners feel

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more comfortable and reduce the pressure associated with public speaking. Further Research: Future studies should explore additional factors, such as cultural background, language proficiency, and prior public speaking experience, to gain a deeper understanding of anxiety dynamics among EFL learners.

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