

## English Public Speaking Anxiety of Third-Year Students from a Tertiary Education Institution

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### ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the English public speaking anxiety of the third-year students from a tertiary education institution in Olongapo City, Philippines. One hundred ninety-seven (197) purposively selected respondents participated in the exploration of the four main components of English Public Speaking Anxiety. The researchers then analyzed the collected data through nonparametric tests. Results yielded no significant difference in the level of public speaking anxiety of the third-year students however when grouped by sex and program, the study found significant findings. With this, researchers proposed a seminar-workshop to help student-respondents increase their self-esteem and confidence in using English as their medium in facilitating their future students.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The English ability of Filipino learners is one of the nation's acknowledged assets, helping to propel its educational system and make it globally competitive. English has long been the world's most widely spoken and widely accepted language. However, according to the study by Chen (2022), public speaking is the most anxiety-provoking speaking activity for English as a foreign language (EFL) students. At the same time, traditional lecture-based classrooms hinder EFL learners' constant practice and frequent interaction due to large class sizes and limited time. It is part of the learning that a student feels anxious at school. According to the study of Aguila and Harjanto (2016), foreign language anxiety is a complex self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors connected to classroom language learning emanating from the uniqueness of the language learning process." In addition, Xue et al. (2020) defined English Public Speaking as "an act of strategic communication," which requires not only language proficiency but also critical thinking, creative ideas, and logical constructions, according to Lee and Kleinsmith (2019). Public speaking is a vital skill for success in learning and education. However, Martins (2021) stated that fear of speaking a foreign language is common among Filipino students. This study sought to identify the elements causing students' oral participation anxiety in the classroom and identify the significant differences between the factors affecting the students' anxiety levels. The findings imply that students' levels of fear during oral participation are not very high, as the most common answers revolve around the words "Sometimes" and "Often," which means "Low Anxiety" and "High Anxiety," respectively.

Understanding and using English creates effective communication and comprehension for the learners. So, this study seeks to explore the level of public speaking anxiety using the English Language among the pre-service teachers of Gordon College. In addition, this study also investigates why the learners feel anxious to use the language, knowing that it should be mastered since it is the medium of their chosen field. When someone experiences communication anxiety, it's challenging to articulate ideas and thoughts in the language they are learning. Many individuals regard this idea with language learning anxiety as their most significant obstacle. Many people find it challenging to utilize the words they know when the situation calls for them, and the worry this produces worsens the problem. Several types of research have revealed that anxiety can hinder success in second or foreign language learning.

Language anxiety has been proven to have crippling effects on language learners and to be one of the best indicators of language learning success. While encouraging anxiety improves learners' performance, excessive anxiety could result in subpar performance. Furthermore, in the study by Tristanti (2023) entitled *The Anxiety About English Public Speaking in The Students of English Education Department*, students' lack of speaking confidence in English, fear of making mistakes when speaking, nervousness when the teacher asks them to speak up, and shyness to perform in front of the class are the causes of students' speaking anxiety. This type of anxiety can affect a person's ability to learn

positively or negatively. By causing the student to become unsettled intellectually and psychologically, anxiety may reduce the effectiveness of the learning process. In other cases, anxiety may boost students' willingness to learn because they feel under pressure. This study aimed to examine the causes of students' worry about speaking a foreign language and how it affects their speaking ability.

Speaking anxiety among student teachers can negatively impact foreign language education. However, our current understanding of this construct still needs to be improved. So, teachers and instructors are vital components of the educational process. The training they receive impacts their level of English-speaking competency. Teaching practice must be the foundation on which aspiring educators amass the necessary experiences to improve their abilities as educators in the future.

Thus, the researchers decided to investigate the English public speaking anxiety among third year students from a tertiary education institution in Olongapo City, Philippines. Based on the reviewed materials, there is scarcity of literature involving a particular cohort sample in the collegiate level of learning. Therefore, this makes the study unique and novel at the same time. The result of this study can contribute to the growing literature of language-related studies, as well as the students, the teachers, and the institution itself can benefit from it.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In 2014, in the article "Public Speaking Instruction," Al-Tamimi states that some students with weak speaking competence may have a more significant challenge in delivering oral presentations because of problems with expressive communication skills. Furthermore, some students are reluctant to talk due to anxiety. In the study by Rajitha and Alamelu (2020), they consider English language speaking anxiety as one of the most challenging issues in learning. Many internal and external factors impact the level or intensity of speaking anxiety. This notion may be caused by low English proficiency, non-practice, competition, and task difficulty. The awareness of performing poorly in English also will lead to the loss of self-esteem among the students

Public speaking in the classroom is essential, especially in the fields that are mastering the courses in which public speaking is very relevant. Not everyone can learn and master speaking publicly. In fact, inside the classroom setting, public speaking becomes harder if a student fails to overcome and work on it as he goes to school. It may affect and worsen academic performance and even the transfer of learning since the English language is significant in every discipline.

A fundamental skill of learning a language is speaking. However, speaking anxiety harms students' performance when learning a second or foreign language. It has many factors to be considered when facing this challenge, such as self-confidence issues, which are the foundation of speaking nervousness. As stated in the study of Sadiq (2017), speaking is arguably the skill most affected by language anxiety. Thus, English and Foreign Language

Teachers have an essential role in learning. Many lecturers or teachers should realize the importance of public speaking for second-language learners. In fact, in the study of Tercan (2016), anxiety is one of the critical issues in the acquisition of speaking by EFL learners in an instructed language teaching context.

Furthermore, Elaldi (2016) stated in the study of Kabigting (2020) that anxiety is seen to be a very prevalent phenomenon in the acquisition and learning of a language, which is found to be a negative variable. It performs a vital role in the success of education or the lack of it. Over the years, language educators have placed great interest in investigating language anxiety, as it is believed to hamper learning. Unfortunately, in the study of Abidin and Yee (2014), they found out that most ESL students need help with speaking skills, as they need more confidence. Public speaking would be helpful to improve the students' speaking skills as they perform speaking in front of other people to train them in reducing their speech anxiety in speaking English.

By introducing a public speaking program, students could overcome their fear of speaking English and improve their motivation to speak. Additionally, Tati et al., (2013) reveal that learners demonstrated poor speaking performance and incompetence with the target language in their study. The study investigates the factors affecting speaking anxiety among the learners, the common elements of stress, and the strategies learners employ to overcome their fear of speaking the English language.

Over the past decade, there has been an increased prevalence of anxiety among college-aged students. Even in college counseling centers, they have become increasingly concerned about the negative impact of stress on students.

Speaking ability is frequently utilized as the prime factor of an English learner's success in Indonesian English language instruction. If a person can communicate verbally, others are more likely to consider them competent English users. A similar tendency also exists in many Indonesian-based sectors, which would generally test a candidate's English competence by holding an English interview as one of the crucial phases in recruiting new staff. They place more emphasis on speaking ability than other talents. This practice has demonstrated that knowing English is frequently seen as a remarkable linguistic ability. Various factors may make students anxious about the teaching practicum, such as using grammar and the English language in teaching.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

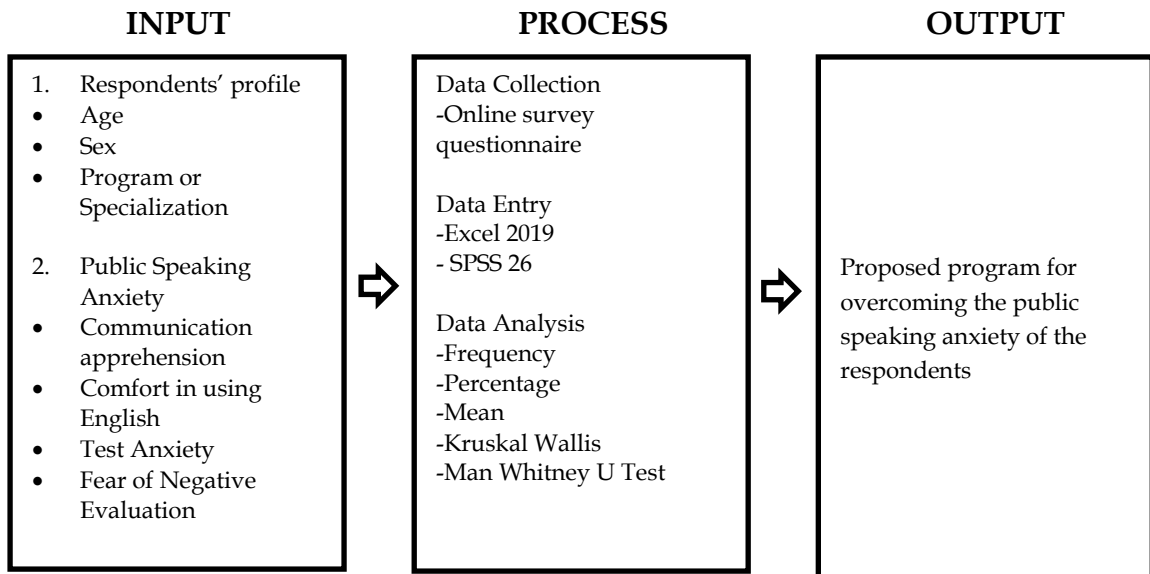


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

## METHODOLOGY

### *Research Design*

The researchers used a descriptive quantitative research design to determine the English public speaking anxiety level among the aforementioned CEAS students. It is more efficient, as it involves both descriptive and numerical data. Quantitative research systematically investigates a case in which the data from the different respondents are based on numerical figures. However, the conclusions drawn are primarily descriptive in nature. With this, it helps the researchers to recognize the level of English public speaking anxiety among the pre-service teachers.

### *Study Participants*

The data was gathered from the third-year College of Education, Arts, and Sciences students who only utilize the English language in their significant fields as a medium of instruction. The researchers chose these respondents because they believed they were the most accurate, relevant, and fit as they were more exposed to the said language. Thus, to obtain a more precise answer, the researchers used a purposive sampling technique for 121 female and 76 male respondents among the exact 220 population of third-year CEAS students for the academic year 2022-2023. In addition, the respondents' age ranges from 20 to 37 years old, and currently reside in Olongapo City, Zambales, and

Bataan. The respondents are diverse, which ensured that the data analysis was different from each other and not biased.

### *Instrumentation*

The researchers used an adapted questionnaire checklist and a standardized questionnaire from the Usaha and Yaikhong's Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS), which obtained an internal consistency of .84 using Cronbach's alpha coefficient when administered and was factor-analyzed to establish the construct and the final version. Since the primary purpose of developing a PSCAS was to construct a one-dimensional measure of speaking component in the public speaking class, factor analysis was employed to help select items to be included.

### *Statistical Analysis*

The researchers used different software and statistical treatments to analyze the answers gathered from the respondents in the online survey questionnaire, and it includes both Excel 2019 and SPSS 26 in the data entry procedure. Moreover, the researchers also utilized these data analysis treatments below in finding the English public speaking anxiety level of the student-respondents, as well as the significant differences when grouped according to their profiles: frequency, percentage, Shapiro-Wilk test, Mann-Whitney U test, and Kruskal-Wallis H test. Moreover, the researchers also utilized the descriptive equivalents with the interpretation below to identify the level of English public speaking anxiety of the student-respondents.

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Score Limits</b>	<b>Descriptive Equivalents</b>	<b>Descriptive Interpretation</b>
5	4.21 - 5.00	Always	Very High
4	3.41 - 4.20	Mostly	High
3	2.61 - 3.40	Sometimes	Moderate
2	1.81 - 2.60	Rarely	Low
1	1.00 - 1.80	Never	Very Low

## **RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS**

Table 1. Mean of English Public Speaking Anxiety Scale

<b>Factors in English Public Speaking Anxiety</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Communication Apprehension	3.64	High
Comfort in using English	3.20	Moderate
Test Anxiety	3.49	High
Anticipated Behaviors	3.50	High

Table 1 shows that in the first component, with a mean of 3.64, the average score for communication apprehension is relatively high, indicating that individuals in the study have a significant level of anxiety or fear when communicating with others. This context shows they may feel uneasy, self-conscious, or nervous in various communication situations. Meanwhile, the second component, accumulating a mean of 3.20, reveals that the average score for comfort in using English is moderate, implying that participants have a moderate level of ease and confidence when using English as a language. While not exceptionally high, they feel reasonably comfortable using English in various contexts. These results

Moreover, in the third component, garnering a mean of 3.49, the average score for test anxiety is relatively high, indicating that participants experience a significant level of anxiety or stress when faced with tests or examinations. This result shows they may feel nervous, worried, or pressured during test-taking.

Lastly, in the fourth component, with a mean of 3.50, the average score for anticipated behaviors is high, suggesting that participants expect themselves to engage in certain behaviors in particular situations. This finding may indicate that they have a strong sense of anticipated actions or responses, possibly related to their level of communication apprehension or other factors.

Table 2. Difference in the Level of English Public Speaking Anxiety by Age

Factors	Age	n	Median	H	Asymp. Sig	Conclusion
Communication Apprehension	20-21	137	3.83	4.075	.253	Not Significant
	22-23	45	3.67			
	24-25	7	3.67			
	> 26	8	3.42			
Comfort in Using English	20-21	137	3.25	7.544	.056	Not Significant
	22-23	45	3.25			
	24-25	7	2.75			
	> 26	8	2.63			
Test Anxiety	20-21	137	3.67	5.940	.115	Not Significant
	22-23	45	3.33			
	24-25	7	4.33			
	> 26	8	3.17			
Fear of Negative Evaluation	20-21	137	3.50	.831	.842	Not Significant
	22-23	45	3.50			
	24-25	7	3.75			
	> 26	8	3.63			

Note:  $df= 3$

Table 2 presents the difference in the level of English public speaking anxiety by age using the Kruskal-Wallis H test. The test found no statistical difference in terms of communication apprehension among groups [ $H(3) = 4.075, p = .253$ ], with a median value of 3.83 for those aged 20–21, 3.67 for those aged 22–23, 3.67 for those aged 24–25, and 3.42 for those aged 26 and above; in terms of comfort in using English [ $H(3) = 7.544, p = .056$ ], with a median value of 3.25 for those aged 20–21, 3.25 for those aged 22–23, 2.75 for those aged 24–

25, and 2.63 for those aged 26 and above; in terms of test anxiety [ $H(3) = 5.940$ ,  $p = .115$ ], with a median value of 3.67 for those aged 20-21, 3.33 for those aged 22-23, 4.33 for those aged 24-25 and 3.17 for those aged 26 and above; and lastly in terms of fear of negative evaluation [ $H(3) = .831$ ,  $p = .842$ ] with a median value of 3.50 for those aged 20-21 and 22-23, 3.75 for those aged 24-25 and 3.63 for those aged 26 and above. These findings indicate that student respondents had the highest communication apprehension at 20-21 years old. In contrast, they experience anxiousness in using the English language. Moreover, 26-year-old and above student-respondents showed lower English public speaking anxiety levels than the lower ages. Based on the study of Donovan and MacIntyre (2009), communication apprehension and self-perceived competence present a negative association that does not vary with age in the present sample. Additionally, the results showed that student-respondents aged 20-21 are more comfortable using English than those in the higher age bracket. The result implies that respondents in the lower age bracket mainly experience English public speaking anxiety as they experience nervousness and unsureness in using the said mode of instruction. On the contrary, this result contradicts the study of Gaibani and Elmenfi (2016), which states that there is a negative effect of age disparity on public speaking anxiety of English Language Learners as it elevates the anxiety level of the learners.

Table 3. Difference in the Level of English Public Speaking Anxiety by Sex

Factors	Sex	n	Mdn	U	z	Asymp. Sig.	Conclusion
Communication Apprehension	M	76	3.50	2968.000	-4.196	.000*	Significant
Comfort in Using English	M	76	3.38	3850.500	-1.929	.054	Not Significant
	F	121	3.00				
Test Anxiety	M	76	3.33	3927.500	-1.735	.083	Not Significant
	F	121	3.67				
Fear of Negative Evaluation	M	76	3.25	3605.000	-2.562	.010*	Significant
	F	121	3.75				

Note: \* $p < .05$

Table 3 presents the difference in the level of English public speaking anxiety by sex using a Mann-Whitney U test that discovered a statistically significant variation in communication apprehension between males (Mdn = 3.50) and females (Mdn = 3.83), with  $U = 2968.000$ ,  $z = -4.196$ , and  $p = .000$  at the 5% significance level. The finding implies that female respondents have higher English public speaking anxiety than male respondents. Thus, they experience more elevated communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation than males. This result agrees with the study of Hwa and Peck (2017), which states that female tertiary English as a Second Language (ESL) students display a higher level of speaking anxiety than male peers. Thus, it affirmed that there is no significant difference between female and male students on ESL speaking concern about the three influential factors: English classroom speaking anxiety, social-environmental factor, and perception factor.



Moreover, for fear of negative evaluation, the test revealed a statistically significant difference in the level of English public speaking anxiety between males (Mdn = 3.25) and females (Mdn = 3.75), with  $U = 3605.000$ ,  $z = -2.562$ , and  $p = .010$  at the 5% significance level. This result implies that females have a higher level of anxiety regarding using the English language than male respondents. Thus, females have a higher level of fear of negative evaluation compared to males. The result contradicts the study of Gaibani and Elmenfi (2016), which declared that being male or female does not make students anxious about speaking. The result means that regardless of gender, a learner still experiences English public speaking anxiety, which makes them stutter, nervous, and uncomfortable using the said language inside the classroom.

Also, the table revealed the evaluation of no significant difference in the level of English public speaking anxiety in terms of comfort in using English between males (Mdn = 3.38) and females (Mdn = 3.00), with  $U = 3850.500$ ,  $z = -1.929$ , and  $p = .054$ ; and in terms of test anxiety between males (Mdn = 3.33) and females (Mdn = 3.67), with  $U = 3927.500$ ,  $z = -1.735$ , and  $p = .083$  at the 5% significance level. This finding indicates that female student respondents have a higher fear of negative evaluation than male respondents. Thus, it revealed that females experienced panic attacks when speaking English in front of them compared to males. These results are further explained in the study of Lee and Kleinsmith (2019), which states that this anxiety level may manifest in the student's nonverbal behavior and physiological responses, which can negatively affect performance and evaluation.

In conclusion, when the student-respondents were grouped by sex, it revealed that females have a higher English public speaking anxiety level than males, as social and cultural conventions impact women's nervousness when speaking in English. Women often have more demands from society, which pressures them to conform to preconceived gender norms or specific communication styles. Women may experience more criticism of their appearance, voice, and public speaking abilities, which can make them feel more self-conscious.

Table 4 shows the difference in the level of English public speaking anxiety by program using the Kruskal-Wallis H test. The test found a statistically significant difference in terms of comfort in using English among groups [ $H(6)=14.403$ ,  $p = .025$ ], with a median value of 2.75 for BSEd Mathematics, 3.00 for BSEd Science, 3.25 for BSEd English, 3.25 for BEEEd, 3.00 for BECEd, 3.75 for BCAEd, and 3.50 for BPEd. The post hoc analysis was conducted using the Kruskal-Wallis comparison of the distribution across programs, showing that there is a statistically significant difference in the level of English public speaking anxiety in terms of comfort in using English between the BSEd Mathematics and BCAEd ( $p = .010$ ) at the 5% significance level. It indicates that language anxiety varies among educational programs and groups of language proficiency. Furthermore, BSEd Mathematics students may have more anxiety while communicating in English, as English may not be their first language, and they may not have had as much exposure to it as BCAEd

students. Additionally, students enrolled in culture and arts programs may receive additional training in public speaking and performing abilities, leading to enhanced confidence and less fear while speaking in public.

Table 4 Difference in the Level of English Public Speaking Anxiety by Program

Factors	Program	n	Mdn	H	Asymp. Sig	Conclusion
Communication Apprehension	BSEd Mathematics	19	3.67	5.862	.439	Not Significant
	BSEd Science	20	3.50			
	BSEd English	56	3.75			
	BEEd	34	3.83			
	BECED	15	3.83			
	BCAEd	16	3.58			
	BPEd	37	3.50			
Comfort in Using English	BSEd Mathematics	19	2.75	14.403	.025	Significant
	BSEd Science	20	3.00			
	BSEd English	56	3.25			
	BEEd	34	3.25			
	BECED	15	3.00			
	BCAEd	16	3.75			
	BPEd	37	3.50			
Test Anxiety	BSEd Mathematics	19	4.00	3.293	.771	Not Significant
	BSEd Science	20	3.67			
	BSEd English	56	3.33			
	BEEd	34	3.67			
	BECED	15	3.67			
	BCAEd	16	3.50			
	BPEd	37	3.67			
Fear of Negative Evaluation	BSEd Mathematics	19	3.75	2.953	.815	Not Significant
	BSEd Science	20	3.50			
	BSEd English	56	3.50			
	BEEd	34	3.63			
	BECED	15	4.00			
	BCAEd	16	3.38			
	BPEd	37	3.75			

Note:  $df= 6$

*BSEd – Bachelor of Secondary Education, BEEd – Bachelor of Elementary Education, BECED – Bachelor of Early Childhood Education, BCAEd– Bachelor of Culture and Arts Education, BPED– Bachelor of Physical Education*

Also, Table 4 presents no significant difference in the level of English public speaking anxiety by the program using the Kruskal-Wallis H test in terms of communication apprehension [ $H(6)=5.862, p= .439$ ], with a median value of 3.67 for BSEd Mathematics, 3.50 for BSEd Science, 3.75 for BSEd English, 3.83 for BEEd, 3.83 for BECED, 3.58 for BCAEd, and 3.50 for BPEd; in terms of test anxiety [ $H(6) = 3.293, p=.771$ ], with a median value of 4.00 for BSED-mathematics, 3.67 for BSED-Science, 3.33 for BSED-English, 3.67 for BEEd and BECED, 3.50 for BCAEd and 3.67 for BPEd; and lastly, in terms of

fear of negative evaluation [ $H(6)=2.953, p=.815$ ], with a median score of 3.75 got Based-Mathermatics, 3.50 for BSED-Science and BSED-Englsih, 3.63 for BEEd, 4.00 for BECEd, 3.38 for BCAEd and 3.75 for BPed at the 5% significance level. The result implies that groups did not significantly differ regarding communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Based on the study of Pontillas and Talaue (2021), environmental factors, personal experiences, and exposure were factors that affect a college student's speaking skills and anxiety. Furthermore, this result declares that no matter the specialization program a student includes, they still experience communication and vocabulary anxiety in using English as the target language.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were drawn, which are as follows:

1. The majority of the third-year CEAS students who are utilizing the English language as their medium in their field aged 20 to 21 years old are mostly females. Moreover, the respondents' specialized program revealed that BSED-English and BPed programs cover the highest population in the CEAS department.
2. Third-year CEAS students who use English in their fields experience English public speaking anxiety. It showed that they have a high level of English public speaking anxiety even though they use English as their medium of instruction and communication in their fields.
3. When grouped by age, there is no significant difference in the level of public speaking anxiety of the third-year CEAS students. Moreover, when grouped by sex, there is no significant difference in the respondents' comfort in using English (component 2) and test anxiety (component 3). Furthermore, no significant difference exists when grouped by programs except for the ease of using English.
4. Researchers should address the result to the CEAS office and pass the intended program proposal regarding the high English public speaking anxiety level.

Based on the results and conclusions, the following are recommended:

1. School organizations should conduct a series of trainings and workshops for the students who utilize the English language as their medium in their field. This idea could be done with the collaboration of student leaders and instructors. Also, please work with the students to identify accommodations that can help alleviate their anxiety during public speaking situations.
2. Student leaders and program coordinators should collaborate in organizing events like English public speaking seminars and training for third-year students and the junior college education department who utilize English as their medium in their field. This concept is to create a safe and supportive classroom environment where the student feels comfortable expressing their concerns. Foster a positive, non-judgmental atmosphere that encourages open communication and empathy among peers.

3. Offer workshops or training sessions focused specifically on public speaking skills. Since the target respondents of this study are third-year students who will be deployed out of the school by the next academic year, coordinators and instructors should strengthen the respondents' English-speaking skills. Teach students strategies such as adequate speech preparation, organization, body language, and vocal techniques. Encourage and motivate the students to adopt a growth mindset by emphasizing that public speaking skills can be developed and improved over time with practice and effort. Help them understand that anxiety does not define their abilities and that they can become more confident speakers. Providing them with practical tools and techniques can increase their confidence and competence in public speaking.

### ADVANCED RESEARCH

Out of 220 under the seven (7) programs, including the BSEd Math, BSEd Science, BSEd English, BPed, BCAEd, BECED, and BEEd, the researchers gathered the data from 197 students. However, the primary purpose of this study is to identify the levels of public speaking anxiety using the English language in class and to find the significant difference when the respondents are grouped according to profile. Furthermore, the age of the respondents ranges from only 20-37 years old. At the same time, most of them reside in Olongapo City, and the others are from Zambales and Bataan. The study did not go further into other fields, as these programs are the most appropriate respondents since they are the ones who are exposed to utilizing the English language in their areas.

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