

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results of the study. The data analysed were obtained through questionnaires, interviews as well as the scores of the oral presentation. The issues investigated were whether learners experience test anxiety when doing public speaking, whether there is a difference in the anxiety levels of high and low proficiency learners, whether low anxiety learners perform better than high anxiety learners in their speaking test assessment and finally the factors contributing to speaking anxiety.

4.2 CLASSIFICATION OF DATA

In the study, the researcher analysed the feelings of anxiety experienced by subjects when doing a speaking evaluated presentation via questionnaires. To further investigate the anxiety level of the subjects, they were interviewed with more in-depth questions than the questions given in the questionnaires. The results of the interviews are reported in this chapter, along with the results from the questionnaires. The results of their test scores were also examined to see if their anxiety had actually affected their performance in the presentation and if there was any correlation in the adapted FLCAS scores and their test scores.

The researcher first analysed the results obtained from both questionnaires (pre and post presentation questionnaires) based on the FLCAS which has been adapted to identify high anxiety subjects. The use of the FLCAS was found to have made it easier for the researcher to correlate the scores and the test scores of the subjects. Adaptation of the FLCAS was necessary as “the FLCAS did not measure students’ anxiety related to the specific oral exam” (Phillips, 1992: 20). Hence, the researcher had to make

several amendments to the FLCAS in order to suit the needs of this study. 14 high anxiety subjects were identified and one subject was identified to have very low anxiety. Out of the 14 high anxiety subjects, 9 were from the low proficiency group while 5 were from the high proficiency group. The only low anxiety subject that was interviewed came from the high proficiency group. The reason why he was chosen for the interview was to see if he had any anxiety at all during the presentation. After the identification process was completed, these subjects were interviewed.

4.3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the results of the questionnaires, interviews and test scores would be discussed in detail. It first starts with discussion of the questionnaires, after which the selection of high and low anxiety learners will be explained before proceeding with the interview results. Finally, the results of the test scores will be discussed.

4.3.1 LOW PROFICIENCY SUBJECTS

Results of self-rating of English skills

Table 4.1 Low proficiency subjects' self-rating of their English skills

No	Item	Very Well %	Well %	Okay %	Not Well %	Badly %	Total Ss
1	How well do you speak English?	0%	5%	47%	47%	0%	19
2	How well do you read English?	0%	47%	37%	16%	0%	19
3	How well do you understand other people speaking English to you?	0%	37%	53%	11%	0%	19
4	How well do you write English?	0%	5%	63%	32%	0%	19

Table 4.1 shows how the low proficiency subjects have rated themselves based on the four English skills, i.e. speaking, reading, listening and writing. Among all the skills, they have rated themselves the lowest on speaking and writing with only 5% responding that they can speak and write well in English (questions 1 and 4). If the “Not well” and “Badly” categories are considered, it can be seen that the largest percentage is from speaking with 47% (question 1), meaning that it is one of their weakest skills. However, reading has got the highest percentage in the “Very well” and “Well” categories with 47% which means that reading is their strongest skill (question 2). This is followed by understanding of English when being spoken to as the second highest with 37%, which is related to the listening skill (question 3). Therefore, what can be deduced is that the low proficiency subjects have rated themselves higher on the receptive skills i.e. reading and listening, whereas for the productive skills i.e. speaking and writing, they have rated themselves lower.

Results from the questionnaires

Table 4.2 Low proficiency subjects' perception of anxiety level at the pre-presentation stage

No	Item	Strongly Agree % (1)	Agree % (2)	Neutral % (3)	Disagree % (4)	Strongly Disagree % (5)	Total Ss
1	I am well-prepared for the presentation.	11%	58%	31%	0%	0%	19
2	I don't feel anxious about the presentation.	0%	11%	15%	63%	11%	19
3	I don't worry about making mistakes during the presentation.	0%	16%	21%	37%	26%	19
4	It doesn't embarrass me to speak in front of my peers or classmates.	5%	32%	47%	16%	0%	19
5	I don't feel very self-conscious about speaking English and being evaluated in front of other students.	0%	21%	47%	32%	0%	19
6	I'm not worried about my friends laughing at me when I make mistakes during the presentation.	0%	47%	21%	26%	5%	19
7	I'm not worried about the consequences of failing the presentation.	0%	5%	5%	68%	21%	19
8	I like to speak in front of an audience.	5%	5%	58%	32%	0%	19
9	I'm not worried about being speechless during the presentation.	0%	5%	11%	58%	26%	19
10	I'm confident that I will not tremble during the presentation.	5%	32%	26%	26%	11%	19
11	It doesn't worry me if the audience does not understand what I say.	0%	5%	16%	47%	32%	19
12	The presence of the evaluator / examiner will not make me feel nervous.	5%	26%	21%	42%	5%	19
13	I'm not worried when my presentation is evaluated.	0%	11%	37%	37%	16%	19

In order to determine the high anxiety subjects, the researcher has utilized the Likert scale ranging from one to five, with one (1) and two (2) representing those with low anxiety while four (4) and five (5) would be representing those with high anxiety. Table 4.2 shows the responses of the 19 low proficiency participants in answering the pre-presentation questionnaire. The statements were arranged in such a way in order to easily determine the high anxiety learners through their answers.

From Table 4.2, the identification of high anxiety learners was done based on the percentage obtained from the answers that fall between the ranges of four to five. This table shows that more than half of the low proficiency group are anxious about the presentation as indicated in the second statement. The factors that contribute the most to their high anxiety are fear of failing their presentation in statement 7 (scale 4 – 68%, scale 5 – 21%), worry of being speechless during the presentation in statement 9 (scale 4 – 58%, scale 5 – 26%), worry about audience not understanding their presentation in statement 11 (scale 4 – 47%, scale 5 – 32%) and worry about the presentation itself in statement 2 (scale 4 – 63%, scale 5 – 11%). All these responses are obtained from the subjects who have mostly responded with a four or five in the abovementioned statements, thus indicating their high level of anxiety.

Table 4.3 Low proficiency subjects' perceptions of anxiety level at the post-presentation stage

No	Item	Strongly Agree % (1)	Agree % (2)	Neutral % (3)	Disagree % (4)	Strongly Disagree % (5)	Total Ss
1	I am satisfied with my performance in the presentation.	5%	53%	21%	21%	0%	19
2	I didn't feel nervous throughout the presentation.	0%	26%	42%	21%	11%	19
3	I am not worried about my grades.	0%	0%	21%	53%	26%	19
4	I did well in the presentation.	16%	16%	53%	16%	0%	19
5	Even though I made mistakes, I didn't feel nervous during the presentation.	5%	32%	32%	26%	5%	19
6	The more I talked, the more confident I became.	16%	63%	21%	0%	0%	19
7	I maintained good eye contact with the audience.	11%	26%	37%	26%	0%	19
8	The response from the audience was encouraging.	16%	47%	32%	5%	0%	19

Table 4.3 illustrates the percentage of the anxiety level of the low proficiency participants after the presentation. What can be seen from the table is that their anxiety levels have gone down as compared to the pre-presentation stage because the percentage of those who responded in the range between scales four and five has dwindled. This drop in anxiety levels may be due to them feeling relieved as the worst was already over for them. However, there are a few factors that still contribute to their anxiety after the presentation. They were worried about their grades in statement 3 (scale 4 – 53%, scale 5 – 26%), felt nervous during the presentation in statement 2 (scale 4 – 21%, scale 5 – 11%) and felt nervous during the presentation because of mistakes made in statement 5 (scale 4 – 26%, scale 5 – 5%). One factor seems to be consistent with the factors given before the presentation, which is, the concern over failing the presentation and about the grades they will get. Briefly, the main contributor

to the anxiety level of the low proficiency participants regarding the presentation is the worry about failing the presentation, as that would affect their academic performance.

4.3.2 HIGH PROFICIENCY SUBJECTS

Results of self-rating of English skills

Table 4.4 High proficiency subjects' self-rating of their English skills

No	Item	Very Well %	Well %	Okay %	Not Well %	Badly %	TOTAL Ss
1	How well do you speak English?	10%	10%	55%	25%	0%	20
2	How well do you read English?	10%	55%	35%	0%	0%	20
3	How well do you understand other people speaking English to you?	10%	40%	40%	10%	0%	20
4	How well do you write English?	5%	30%	60%	5%	0%	20

Table 4.4 shows the results of how the high proficiency participants have rated themselves with regards to the four English skills. Out of the four skills, they have rated themselves the lowest on the speaking skill with only a total of 20% rating themselves in the “Very well” and “Well” categories (question 1). This is similar to the low proficiency group even though the high proficiency group was expected to have rated themselves higher as their proficiency was better. Most of the subjects have rated themselves in the average (okay) category. As in the case of the low proficiency group, reading has also got the highest percentage of 10% and 55% in the “Very well” and “Well” categories respectively (question 2). This is followed by understanding of English when being spoken to with 10% and 40%, which is related to the listening skill (question 3). The writing skill has been ranked third out of the four skills with a total of 35% (question 4). Hence, it can be summed up that the high proficiency subjects have rated themselves higher on the receptive skills i.e. reading and listening, whereas for the productive skills i.e. speaking and writing, they have rated themselves lower. This

shows that the overall self-rating of the high proficiency group is parallel to that of the low proficiency group.

Results from the questionnaires

Table 4.5 High proficiency subjects' perception of anxiety level at the pre-presentation stage

No	Item	Strongly Agree % (1)	Agree % (2)	Neutral % (3)	Disagree % (4)	Strongly Disagree % (5)	Total Ss
1	I am well-prepared for the presentation.	0%	25%	55%	15%	5%	20
2	I don't feel anxious about the presentation.	5%	40%	15%	25%	15%	20
3	I don't worry about making mistakes during the presentation.	0%	32%	20%	32%	16%	19
4	It doesn't embarrass me to speak in front of my peers or classmates.	15%	20%	15%	40%	10%	20
5	I don't feel very self-conscious about speaking English and being evaluated in front of other students.	15%	20%	25%	35%	5%	20
6	I'm not worried about my friends laughing at me when I make mistakes during the presentation.	15%	20%	15%	45%	5%	20
7	I'm not worried about the consequences of failing the presentation.	0%	0%	5%	63%	32%	19
8	I like to speak in front of an audience.	10%	5%	25%	40%	20%	20
9	I'm not worried about being speechless during the presentation.	5%	5%	20%	60%	10%	20
10	I'm confident that I will not tremble during the presentation.	0%	20%	15%	65%	0%	20
11	It doesn't worry me if the audience does not understand what I say.	0%	15%	25%	60%	0%	20
12	The presence of the evaluator / examiner will not make me feel nervous.	5%	45%	20%	30%	0%	20
13	I'm not worried when my presentation is evaluated.	10%	30%	25%	25%	10%	20

Table 4.5 shows that the main contributor of high anxiety to the high proficiency group is the failure of the presentation in statement 7 (scale 4 – 63%, scale 5 – 32%). This is followed by worry of being speechless during the presentation in statement 9

(scale 4 – 60%, scale 5 – 10%). The two main contributors of their anxiety are the same as those of the low proficiency participants. Another similarity in the contributing factor is worry about the audience not understanding their presentation in statement 11 (scale 4 - 60%, scale 5 – 0%). In brief, it can be deduced that high proficiency learners also experience speaking anxiety before they have to do a speaking presentation.

Table 4.6 High proficiency subjects’ perceptions of anxiety level at the post-presentation stage

No	Item	Strongly Agree % (1)	Agree % (2)	Neutral % (3)	Disagree % (4)	Strongly Disagree % (5)	Total Ss
1	I am satisfied with my performance in the presentation.	10%	15%	20%	40%	15%	20
2	I didn't feel nervous throughout the presentation.	10%	25%	15%	35%	15%	20
3	I am not worried about my grades.	5%	15%	0%	55%	25%	20
4	I did well in the presentation.	5%	15%	35%	35%	10%	20
5	Even though I made mistakes, I didn't feel nervous during the presentation.	5%	35%	10%	40%	10%	20
6	The more I talked, the more confident I became.	25%	40%	15%	20%	0%	20
7	I maintained good eye contact with the audience.	15%	30%	25%	25%	5%	20
8	The response from the audience was encouraging.	20%	40%	25%	10%	5%	20

The perceptions of the high proficiency participants regarding their anxiety after the presentation are featured in Table 4.6. After the presentation, the percentage of anxiety levels among the high proficiency participants has slightly decreased. The only factor which is still quite obviously high is the fact that they worry about their grades in statement 3 (scale 4 – 55%, scale 5 – 25%). Apparently, the high proficiency group was still worried about their presentation even though their ‘ordeal’ was over. The second

biggest worry is the feeling of dissatisfaction about their performance as shown in statement 1 which can probably be attributed to their perception that they could have done better in the presentation (scale 4 – 40%, scale 5 – 15%). This reason somehow is not one of the main causes of anxiety in the low proficiency group. The other two contributors to their anxiety are the feelings of nervousness during the presentation in statement 2 (scale 4 – 35%, scale 5 – 15%) and the mistakes made during the presentation in statement 5 (scale 4 – 40%, scale 5 – 10%). In sum, the levels of anxiety for the high proficiency participants have not changed much even after the presentation because their worry concerning their grades or failing the presentation is still considered to be high.

4.3.3 SELECTION OF HIGH ANXIETY INTERVIEWEES

Table 4.7 Selection of high anxiety interviewees from the low proficiency group

	Strongly Agree % (1)	Agree % (2)	Neutral % (3)	Disagree % (4)	Strongly Disagree % (5)	High Anxiety (4 + 5)
Sub 1	0%	10%	43%	24%	24%	48%
Sub 2	10%	29%	14%	38%	10%	48%
Sub 3	5%	5%	38%	5%	48%	52%
Sub 4	0%	10%	43%	48%	0%	48%
Sub 5	5%	14%	14%	48%	19%	67%
Sub 6	5%	19%	14%	33%	29%	62%
Sub 7	0%	5%	24%	71%	0%	71%
Sub 8	5%	29%	19%	48%	0%	48%
Sub 9	0%	10%	24%	62%	5%	67%
Sub 10	0%	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%
Sub 11	0%	33%	33%	24%	10%	33%
Sub 12	5%	43%	29%	24%	0%	24%
Sub 13	0%	38%	29%	33%	0%	33%
Sub 14	0%	57%	29%	5%	10%	14%
Sub 15	0%	33%	33%	33%	0%	33%
Sub 16	14%	24%	33%	24%	5%	29%
Sub 17	0%	14%	52%	33%	0%	33%
Sub 18	38%	29%	10%	10%	14%	24%
Sub 19	5%	19%	43%	29%	5%	33%

Table 4.7 indicates how the participants who experienced high anxiety from the low proficiency group were selected for the interview. The reason why the interview was conducted was to gain some insights from the participants as to why they experienced speaking language anxiety, the answers to which could not be found from the responses in the questionnaires. The derivation of the figures in Table 4.7 is explained here. Each statement was divided into 5 different scales (scale 1 to 5 as in the FLCAS, with the lowest scale representing low anxiety and the highest scale representing high anxiety). Each subject responded to 21 statements from the pre and post-presentation questionnaires. Table 4.7 shows the percentage of the 5 scales. It also indicates the interviewees with high anxiety levels from the higher scales of 4 and 5. The total from both scales 4 and 5 give the total anxiety levels of the subjects. For instance, Subject 1 did not respond to scale 1 at all, Scale (1) = 0% whereas the

percentage of his response was 10% for scale 2, Scale (2) = 10%. Meanwhile, Subject 1's response to Scale 4 = 24% and Scale 5 = 24%. Therefore, the percentage from scales 4 and 5 was added to give the figure of 48%. Based on this calculation, the researcher chose the subjects for the interview to understand further the causes of their anxiety. There were 9 subjects whose anxiety levels exceeded 48% as highlighted in Table 4.7. The researcher had initially decided to use 50% as the cut-off point in choosing the interviewees. However, 48% was chosen as the cut-off point in selecting the interviewees as it is the nearest value to 50%.

Table 4.8 Selection of high and low anxiety interviewees from the high proficiency group

	Strongly Agree % (1)	Agree % (2)	Neutral % (3)	Disagree % (4)	Strongly Disagree % (5)	High Anxiety (4 + 5)	Low Anxiety (1 + 2)
Sub 1	5%	0%	5%	67%	23%	90%	5%
Sub 2	5%	14%	33%	38%	10%	48%	19%
Sub 3	0%	19%	19%	48%	14%	62%	19%
Sub 4	52%	24%	10%	5%	10%	14%	76%
Sub 5	0%	10%	14%	71%	5%	76%	10%
Sub 6	0%	0%	19%	81%	0%	81%	0%
Sub 7	0%	33%	38%	29%	0%	29%	33%
Sub 8	0%	5%	19%	62%	14%	76%	5%
Sub 9	10%	43%	10%	14%	24%	38%	52%
Sub 10	0%	24%	0%	76%	0%	76%	24%
Sub 11	5%	5%	65%	15%	10%	25%	10%
Sub 12	5%	19%	0%	48%	29%	76%	24%
Sub 13	48%	29%	14%	5%	5%	10%	76%
Sub 14	5%	0%	48%	10%	38%	48%	5%
Sub 15	0%	33%	19%	48%	0%	48%	33%
Sub 16	0%	67%	0%	33%	0%	33%	67%
Sub 17	5%	67%	0%	29%	0%	29%	71%
Sub 18	5%	10%	70%	10%	5%	15%	15%
Sub 19	24%	24%	10%	29%	14%	43%	48%
Sub 20	0%	48%	24%	29%	0%	29%	48%

Table 4.8 shows the anxiety levels of the high proficiency participants. The same method was used in picking out the high anxiety participants. Those who were selected are highlighted in the table i.e. from Subject 1 to Subject 6. From this group, only five high anxiety learners were chosen, while one very low anxiety learner was

also selected for the interview. The reason why the low anxiety participant was chosen was because the researcher wanted to find out why his anxiety level was low as compared to other participants. Therefore, a total of 15 subjects were interviewed of whom 14 were high anxiety and one low anxiety. Of these, six were from the high proficiency group and nine from the low proficiency group.

4.3.4 Results from the interview

The results will be discussed according to the questions that were asked during the interview.

Q1. Are you a person who gets nervous easily?

Table 4.9 Subjects' self assessment of nervousness

Getting nervous easily	Yes	No
No of subjects	13	2

Most of the participants reported that generally they were people who got nervous easily. Only two participants, one who was the low anxiety participant from the high proficiency group and another participant from the low proficiency group reported that they did not get nervous easily. A common answer that was given without any hesitation when this question was posed to the interviewees was “Yes, very easy”. This can be seen in Table 4.9 where 13 out of 15 interviewees admitted getting nervous easily.

Q2. Do you feel nervous about speaking in public? Why / why not?

Table 4.10 Subjects' self assessment of nervousness – public speaking

Public speaking	Yes	No
No of subjects	13	2

In Table 4.10, one participant each from the low and high proficiency groups reported to not feel nervous speaking in public. The rest seemed to be nervous to speak in public due to several reasons. The most commonly mentioned reasons were grammar inaccuracy, unfamiliar audience and fear of making mistakes. Out of 15 interviewees, four mentioned that the nervousness was related to grammar inaccuracy, three said having an audience which was not familiar made them nervous, and one was worried about making mistakes. However, there was one participant from the low proficiency group who reported to feel nervous when speaking in public only when she had to use English, whereas when the public speaking was conducted in Malay, she did not feel nervous. She made the comment that “...actually erm if, if I speak in English, very nervous but in Malay, ok” (See Appendix B for the full transcriptions of the interviews with low proficiency subjects). Hence, various reasons about their nervousness were given by most of the interviewed participants when they had to speak in public.

Q3. Does the presence of the examiner assessing your speaking presentation make you feel nervous / more nervous? Why / why not?

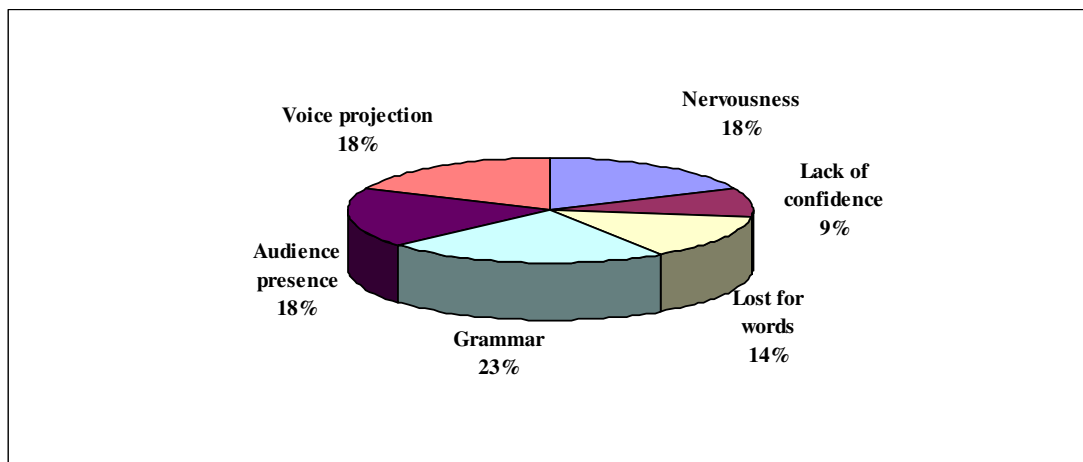
Table 4.11 Subjects' self assessment of nervousness – examiner's presence

Nervous in the presence of examiner	Yes	No
No of subjects	10	5

From Table 4.11, it can be seen that 10 interviewees stated that having the examiner to assess them did make them feel nervous because they felt very self-conscious especially regarding their pronunciation and grammar. Another factor that made them feel nervous was the examiner's perception of them. They appeared to be worried of what the examiner thought of them as they wanted to give a good impression of themselves to the examiner. For instance, one of them said "...because I don't think my English is perfect. I'm afraid that the examiner will think that I'm not good enough in English, so they will judge me in different way" (See Appendix C for the full transcriptions of the interviews with high proficiency subjects). Briefly, it can be deduced that having the examiner to evaluate their presentation exacerbated the nervousness of most of the interviewed participants.

Q4. What are the problems you face when making a public presentation?

Figure 4.1 Subjects' problems while presenting



The participants reported several problems that they faced while presenting. As seen in Figure 4.1, grammar was found to be the biggest problem (23%) for the interviewed participants. One of the comments given was "...sometimes I afraid if I using the wrong grammar, vocabulary", while another said "...my presentation have many grammatical error". The next biggest problems cited by 18% of the interviewees are voice projection, nervousness and the presence of an audience. For instance, one of the participants from the high proficiency group mentioned that the audience seemed to be her problem when presenting. She said, "...nervous...stage fright...erm, in front of all people" created some problems whenever she had to present. Another comment related to audience was "...it's hard for me to maintain eye contact...I normally look down, I don't look up at all". This probably shows that the audience made this particular participant nervous when presenting, particularly when she had to have eye contact with them. In addition to that, the subject's looking down was also probably an indicator that she was shy to present in public as people normally avoid eye contact in a public presentation when they are shy (will be discussed further in Chapter 5, Section 5.2). Being lost for words is the following problem experienced by the participants which contributes 14%. Finally, the least problem faced by the participants is lack of

confidence, mentioned by 9%. In sum, all the interviewed participants, whether they were from the high or low proficiency group, reported to encounter problems when presenting.

Q5. Does it help to reduce your anxiety knowing that the examiner is familiar to you? Why?

Table 4.12 Subjects' familiarity with examiner and reduced anxiety

Familiar examiner reduce anxiety	Yes	No
No of subjects	9	4

In Table 4.12, the majority of the participants i.e. nine participants from both groups reported feeling comfortable with a familiar examiner. This was because they thought that the examiner already had a pre-conceived notion about them. Hence, having a familiar examiner also meant having a familiar 'audience', a factor which aided them in reducing their anxiety level. In the words of one of the low proficiency participants "sebab kita dah rapat sikit kan, dah kenal dia. So tak risau sangat la". {because we are close, right, we know her. So I'm not that worried}. The participant felt that she had a close relationship with the examiner as she had already known her, thus she was not so worried about having the examiner. Thus, for some participants, having a familiar examiner had in fact aided them in lowering their anxiety levels when presenting and probably helped in boosting their confidence level.

Q6. Does your anxiety level affect your presentation / performance? How?

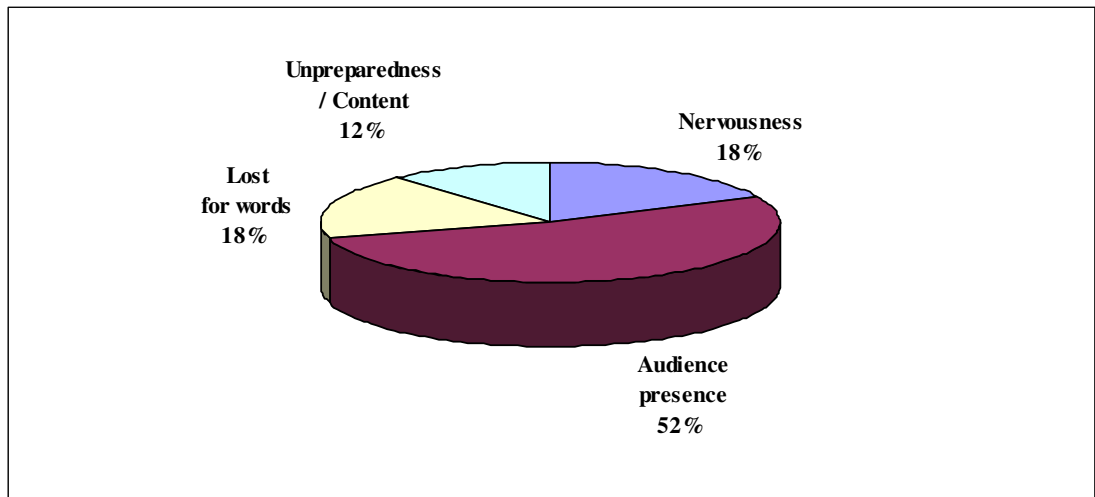
Table 4.13 Subjects' anxiety level and impact on performance

Presentation affected by anxiety level	Yes	No
No of subjects	13	1

13 out of the 15 participants thought that their anxiety affected their presentation based on their responses shown in Table 4.13. The low anxiety participant from the high proficiency group was the only one whose presentation was not affected and another participant from the low proficiency group did not provide an answer to this question. Basically, the majority of them felt that their anxiety influenced their performance. Both groups had similar reasons in explaining how their presentation was affected by their anxiety levels. The reasons given were that it could affect their fluency, voice stability and also the ideas that they had memorised. One participant said that her presentation was affected due to her increased anxiety level, "...when I, erm, when I speak, macam gagap...what I practise is not same as what I present" {when I speak, I stammer...}. In this particular participant's case, her high anxiety level affected her fluency in presenting as she probably did not have the problem when she practised her speech before the presentation. However, it was 'unfortunate' for her because the flow of the presentation did not turn out as what she had practised. Therefore, for these participants, being anxious actually hampers their presentation.

Q7. What factors cause your anxiety level to increase?

Figure 4.2 Factors that increase anxiety level



Some factors that caused the participants' anxiety levels to increase were audience presence, nervousness, speechlessness, unpreparedness, lack of content and waiting time. As can be seen in Figure 4.2, the presence of audience or friends has been found to be the most intimidating factor for seven of the low proficiency participants and two of the high proficiency participants. This contributes 52% from the overall percentage of 100%, which means that more than half of the interviewed participants' anxiety levels increased due to the audience factor. They seemed to worry about what their friends or examiner would think of them particularly when they made mistakes during the presentation. A low proficiency subject stated, "...if audience look at me, and if examiner look like boring, then I think how I want to attract them, especially lecturer". This probably shows that most of the participants were very concerned about their audiences' perception of them.

Q8. What is / are your major concern(s) when your presentation is evaluated?

Table 4.14 Subjects' concerns during evaluated presentations

Major concern(s) during evaluated presentations	High proficiency subjects (6)	Low proficiency subjects (9)
Presentation marks	3	4
Fluency/grammar/content	1	4
Message across	1	3
Presentation tools or aid	1	2
Fillers	-	1
Eye contact	-	1

The high proficiency group as shown in Table 4.14 had fewer concerns regarding the evaluation of their presentations as compared to the low proficiency group. Three high proficiency subjects and four subjects from the low proficiency group asserted that the marks obtained in the presentation were their primary concern. This is consistent with the results obtained in the questionnaires as can be found in Section 4.3.1, Tables 4.2 and 4.3 and Section 4.3.2, Tables 4.5 and 4.6 respectively. In the words of one low proficiency subject regarding her worries when her presentation is evaluated "...grammar and then, marks". For her, these two factors seemed to be important as grammar was one of the things being evaluated in the presentation and when she felt that her grammar was not good enough, it could eventually bring down her grade. Other concerns that worried the low proficiency subjects were mainly their fluency, grammar and content. Four of them and one high proficiency subject felt that these three factors could be affecting the delivery of their presentations, which could be related to their following concern, that is, getting their message across. Three participants from the low proficiency group and one from the high proficiency group thought that their major concern was the audience could not understand the message that they were trying to deliver. This probably shows that they might be worried if their presentations were not understood, especially by the examiner as it could indirectly

affect their results or grades. The other concerns that the subjects had were about using tools or visual aids, having fillers and not being able to have eye contact. One of the high proficiency subjects stated that what worried him in an evaluated presentation was the use of his visual aid. He said "...normally for visual aid, I do kertas mahjong {‘mahjong’ paper}...maybe erm...saya tulis erm yang tak betul ke. Tu lah saya takut" {what I have written might not be correct. That’s what I’m afraid of}. Therefore, the interviewees were found to have various concerns regarding their evaluated presentations, and based on this study, the low proficiency subjects were found to worry more than their high proficiency counterparts.

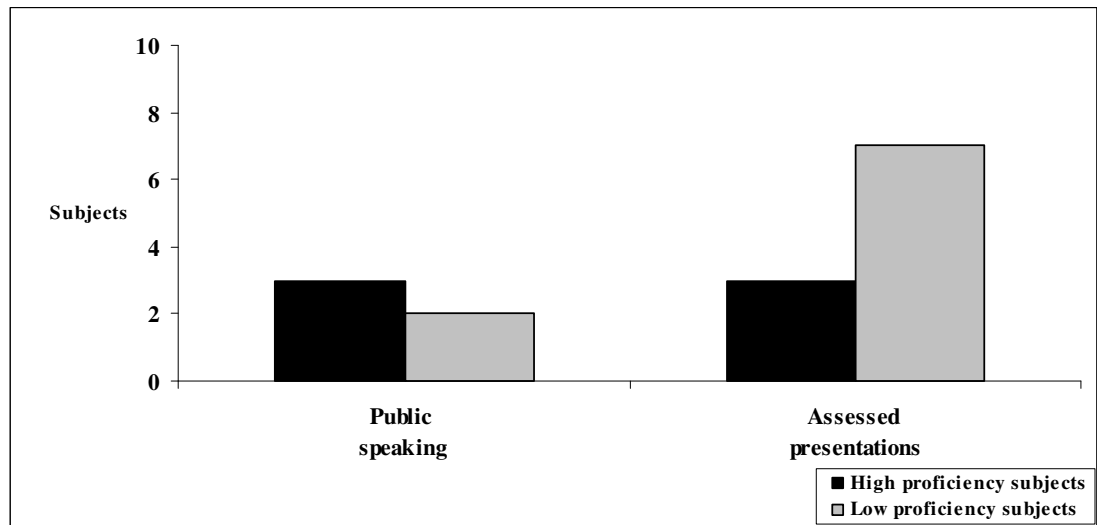
Q9. Which gives you more anxiety? Public speaking in general or assessed presentations? Why?

Table 4.15 Subjects’ anxiety in public speaking or assessed presentations

Anxiety in public speaking or assessed presentations?	Public speaking	Assessed presentations
No of subjects	5	10

Responses from the interviewees show that 10 of them felt that the assessment aspect of public speaking caused them more anxiety (Table 4.15). This was mainly due to the fear of getting low scores. Among these 10, three were from the high proficiency and seven from the low proficiency groups as seen in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3 The number of subjects experiencing anxiety in public speaking or assessed presentations



Hence it can be concluded that the low proficiency subjects feared the evaluation more than the high proficiency ones. Where reasons were concerned, one participant stated that when he does assessed presentations, he was concerned about “...the marks that I will get...I have to make sure that I’m doing it correctly”. So that is the reason why he felt assessed presentations created more anxiety for him as he was apprehensive about the marks that he would get. As for one of the low proficiency participants, she mentioned that “...assessed presentation give more anxiety...when erm, have erm examiner, so it make me prepare...”. In brief, what can be deduced is that the low proficiency participant was worried of the examiner evaluating her presentation which meant that she had to be well-prepared for it. Another participant commented that assessed presentations worried her because “maybe erm the examiner, more he want, she want best from me. So he try to mark. So I’m nervous. My nervous maybe increase”. This participant seemed to think that she had to live up to the expectations of the examiner as she believed that the examiner was expecting the best from her. Overall, the participants had almost the same worry concerning assessed

presentations - they were worried about the expectations of the examiner, and consequently the grades from the examiner.

Q10. Do you have any techniques to reduce your anxiety level? What are they?

Table 4.16 The number of subjects having techniques to reduce anxiety

Techniques to reduce anxiety level	Yes	No
No of subjects	10	4

Table 4.16 shows the responses given by the participants on whether they had any techniques in reducing their anxiety level. 10 out of 15 participants responded that they had certain techniques while four said they did not have any and one did not provide an answer. A variety of techniques were used by these participants to lower their anxiety level when presenting which is shown in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17 Subjects' techniques to reduce anxiety

Techniques to reduce anxiety	High proficiency subjects	Low proficiency subjects
Taking deep breaths	-	1
Asking audience questions	-	1
Using stage space	1	-
Smiling at audience	-	1
Holding on to objects while presenting	-	3

As can be seen from Table 4.17, the majority of the participants appeared to have certain techniques to reduce their level of anxiety. Most of the participants in the low proficiency group had their own techniques with one mentioning that to reduce his anxiety level, he had to make sure that he was taking deep breaths before the presentation, another was asking the audience questions to capture their interest or smiling at them and one was holding on to objects (e.g. a pen or a pointer) to increase

the confidence level. The high proficiency subjects meanwhile did not have any specific way to reduce their anxiety. Only one mentioned that he moved around by using the stage space to calm himself down during the presentation. As for the low proficiency group, one participant said that one way for her to reduce her anxiety level was “to give question at the beginning”. Another stated “...I think when I try erm mungkin, saya senyum {maybe, I smile}. Senyum dengan tu saya boleh kurangkan nervous saya... {With smiling I can reduce my nervousness}. Thus, it can be seen that the participants’ various ways in bringing down their anxiety level could have helped to make them become less nervous in their presentations.

4.3.5 Individual speaking assessment results

This section will discuss the test scores obtained by the participants for their presentations to see if there is any correlation between their anxiety levels and their performance in the presentation.

Discussion of test scores

Table 4.18 Presentation marks of high proficiency subjects

<u>High proficiency subjects</u>	Presentation marks (10%)
Sub 1	8.17
Sub 2	8.17
Sub 3	7.17
Sub 4	9.17
Sub 5	7.17
Sub 6	7.17
Sub 7	9.33
Sub 8	8.83
Sub 9	8.00
Sub 10	8.50
Sub 11	8.83
Sub 12	8.67
Sub 13	8.50
Sub 14	8.17
Sub 15	7.33
Sub 16	8.00
Sub 17	8.17
Sub 18	9.33
Sub 19	8.17
Sub 20	7.17
Average:	8.20

The presentation marks or the test scores of the high proficiency subjects are presented in Table 4.18. It can be seen from this table that generally the high proficiency subjects did very well in their presentations with the highest marks being 9.33 and the lowest 7.17 which averages to 8.20. Out of the six subjects who were selected to be interviewed (highlighted in the table), only Subject 4 had a very low level of anxiety. Even though he did not get the highest marks in the group, he managed to get 9.17 which was the highest marks among those who were interviewed. What is seen here is that his low level of anxiety was reflective of his test performance. Having a low anxiety level seems to be an advantage for Subject 4 as he did not worry when he had to do the presentation. As for the other five interviewed participants, it was found that their high anxiety level did not reflect negatively on their performance in the presentation. Even though they claimed to experience high anxiety throughout the process of the

presentation, they could still manage to achieve good grades, between the ranges of 7.17 to 8.17 which do not differ very much from the average marks. This probably shows that they might not have the confidence in their own ability although they were considered to be good learners. In sum, it can be said that the high proficiency subjects were not so much affected by their anxiety as reflected in their scores, although they claimed that it had. The extra edge that they had was the fact that they were more proficient in the language that probably helped them to perform well.

Table 4.19 Presentation marks of low proficiency subjects

<u>Low Proficiency Subjects</u>	Presentation Marks (10%)
Sub 1	6.33
Sub 2	6.66
Sub 3	7.50
Sub 4	6.67
Sub 5	7.17
Sub 6	7.50
Sub 7	6.00
Sub 8	6.50
Sub 9	6.00
Sub 10	7.67
Sub 11	7.50
Sub 12	6.00
Sub 13	7.50
Sub 14	6.33
Sub 15	7.67
Sub 16	6.33
Sub 17	6.33
Sub 18	6.83
Sub 19	6.83
Average:	6.81

Table 4.19 shows the results obtained by the low proficiency participants in the presentation. A considerable difference can be seen in the results of these participants and the high proficiency subjects. The highest marks obtained in this group is 7.67 and the lowest is 6, with the average marks of 6.81. As for the nine subjects highlighted in the table who were chosen for the interview, six of them obtained marks which were below the average marks. From these, it could be concluded that their high anxiety

affected their performance negatively. However, it must also be noted that these subjects are less proficient in the language. Thus, in this case, the high anxiety levels of these participants and their low proficiency could have contributed to their performance as they did not seem to have obtained comparable results to the high proficiency group. In brief, it can be deduced that having high anxiety levels did not have much effect on the performance of the high proficiency learners as reflected in their test scores because they were more proficient in the language. However, it was not the same for the low proficiency learners as the combination of high anxiety level and low proficiency level had negatively affected their performance and thus, their scores.

4.4 DISCUSSION

In this section, the results obtained in this study will be discussed in order to answer the research questions.

The Research Questions

1. To what extent do second language learners experience test anxiety when they have to perform public speaking?

Out of 39 participants from both high and low proficiency groups, 19 or about 49% of them experienced test anxiety when speaking in public. The two major factors that increase their anxiety levels were mostly related to communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation from others. These factors were cited by both groups. They were also constantly worried about their grades which seem to have had a connection with test anxiety. Therefore, it can be generally assumed that almost half of these participants, whether they were from the high or low proficiency group, did experience test anxiety when they had to perform public speaking.

2. Is there any difference in the anxiety level of learners with high and low proficiency levels?

Many participants reported to be experiencing high anxiety in speaking, whether they were from the low or high proficiency group. The finding of this study suggests that speaking anxiety not only affects learners of lower proficiency levels, but also the high proficiency learners. The assumption would normally be that learners of lower proficiency levels have higher speaking anxiety because of their language incompetence. However, this study has shown that learners of higher proficiency levels do experience high speaking anxiety and that their anxiety levels have in fact exceeded the anxiety levels of those with lower levels of proficiency. This finding was made apparent during the process of selection for high and low anxiety learners (see Section 4.3.3, Tables 4.7 and 4.8).

3. Do low anxiety learners perform better than high anxiety learners?

Table 4.20 Comparison of test results of low and high anxiety subjects

Item	Low anxiety subjects	High anxiety subjects
No of subjects	20	19
Average presentation marks	7.68	7.35
Highest presentation marks	9.33	8.83
Lowest presentation marks	6.00	6.00

Table 4.20 shows the comparison of test results of the low and high anxiety subjects from both the high and low proficiency groups. Overall, the marks of the high anxiety learners are slightly lower than the low anxiety learners. This is seen in the average marks of both groups which are 7.68 for the low anxiety learners and 7.35 for the high anxiety learners. The difference in the average marks is only 0.33 which means that there is not much difference in their scores. Nonetheless, in order to answer this

research question, it can be said that even though some participants experienced high anxiety, their performance did not affect their results especially those in the high proficiency category. The results of this study have also shown that the high anxiety participants who belonged to the high proficiency category have actually performed well in their speaking assessment although their results were not as high as those with low anxiety. This was reflected in the marks they obtained for their assessment. Even though both groups might have high anxiety levels, learners that belonged to the high proficiency group have actually performed better in their speaking assessment than their low proficiency counterparts. This could be due to the advantage of them having a higher proficiency level. All in all, it can be concluded that learners who have high anxiety may not necessarily perform worse than learners with low anxiety, as has been suggested by Mandler and Sarason (1951). Overall, Table 4.20 has indicated that the low anxiety subjects have actually performed better as the highest mark of 9.33 was obtained by a low anxiety participant as compared to the highest mark of the high anxiety subject which is 8.33.

4. What are the factors that lead second language learners to experience speaking language anxiety?

From this study, a number of factors have been found to be leading to learners' speaking language anxiety. The first factor is the learners' self-perception of themselves. The participants in this study self-rated themselves based on the four English skills and the ones with high anxiety were actually the ones who had given themselves a low rating. This low self-confidence could hinder them from performing well in English as there might be other negative issues that could derive from it. When interviewed, some of the participants even mentioned that they thought they were not good enough to speak the language. To them, their fear of speaking was aggravated

when their friends laughed at them when they were speaking. This is in line with the notion that “the perceptions of individuals about language learning, their motives for learning the language, the feelings they have of themselves, and their attitudes may influence how well they will eventually learn the language” (Choy & Troudi, 2006: 120). What can be summarised here is that a number of issues concerning the language learners themselves are some of the key points in determining their success in language learning. So in order to overcome the fear of speaking in public, the learners themselves have to change their thinking.

Another factor that contributes to their speaking apprehension is the worry of failing the speaking test or assessment. In general, the common assumption is that the low proficiency participants would have more problems with this factor. In this study, this problem affected not only the high anxiety low proficiency participants, but also the high anxiety high proficiency participants. In fact, the high proficiency participants seemed to be more worried about the assessment even after the assessment had been carried out which is consistent with the findings of Ardi (2007).

Another issue that caused the participants’ anxiety levels to rise is the fear of being at a lost for words during assessment. Most of the participants stated that being in such a situation could actually increase their fear of speaking in public. Being unable to speak could cause an embarrassment to them especially if it happened in front of their teacher and peers. The participants mentioned that it would jeopardise their performance.

Having a shy personality also seems to have a negative impact on language learners. In this study, some participants reported that shyness was a hindrance to them when they were ‘forced’ to speak in public and especially in a test situation. Shy learners are most of the time experiencing difficulties to express themselves well. This finding confirms MacIntyre’s (1999: 33) comment that “it would appear that the

development of language anxiety is partly based in the personality of the individual student. Those who are shy appear to be more likely to develop language anxiety”. Shy and anxious language learners are therefore the ones who suffer the most when there are oral activities involved in their learning. In addition, this type of personality is more commonly found in Asian learners due to their cultural background, which has been discovered as one of the important causes of language anxiety in Asia (Jones, 2004).

Other contributing factors of speaking language anxiety evident in this study are speakers forgetting what has been memorised, being insufficiently prepared, not projecting their voices appropriately, not using the presentation aids ‘correctly’ as well as being faced by a large audience.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This study has found that to a certain extent, the subjects generally appear to experience test anxiety when speaking in public. This was aggravated by the fact that public speaking formed part of their assessment.

The adaptation of the FLCAS as one of the instruments in this study has displayed its strength. Since the questionnaires were adapted from the FLCAS to measure the subjects’ anxiety related to the specific speaking test, the process of selecting the subjects to be interviewed was much easier with the use of the Likert scale which is part of the FLCAS. The adapted FLCAS has provided a reliable result in distinguishing the high and low anxiety subjects. Phillips (1992: 20) also used the same instrument in her study. However, the FLCAS was not adapted according to the needs of her study. Thus, she said “...because the FLCAS did not measure students’ anxiety related to the specific oral exam, correlations may have been attenuated”. She further added that “...the more specific the anxiety measure is to the performance measure, the more likelihood there is of a correlation” (1992: 20). Therefore, it appears that the

researcher had made the correct decision in adapting the FLCAS in order to attain better and reliable results. The results obtained from the questionnaires were also consistent with the results from the interviews.

In this study too, the notion that only low anxiety learners can perform better than high anxiety learners in the language learning context has been found to be both true and not true. This is because the results obtained in this research show that not only did the low anxiety learners perform well in their speaking assessment, but some of the high anxiety subjects also did very well in their assessment, particularly those in the high proficiency category. Their high anxiety apparently did not negatively affect their performance and test results. The low proficiency subjects, on the other hand, were not as 'lucky' as their high proficiency counterparts as their high anxiety was mirrored in their performance and consequently, their test scores.

Learners of high and low proficiency levels in this study were also found to be experiencing almost similar levels of anxiety. In fact the findings show that some of the high proficiency subjects were experiencing even higher levels of anxiety as compared to the low proficiency subjects. Hence it was not just the low proficiency group who 'suffered' from speaking anxiety; the high proficiency group went through the same experience. Both high and low anxiety learners were found in both proficiency groups. In general, it can be said that there is not much difference in the level of anxiety experienced by both groups of learners.

Finally, several factors have been ascertained that contribute to learners' speaking language anxiety. Some of the factors are learners' outlook of themselves as language learners, worry of failing the assessment, worry of becoming speechless during the presentation, shyness as well as other public speaking-related problems. These factors affected the whole of the subject population and were not confined to only

a specific group. Both high and low proficiency groups seemed to be experiencing them.

In conclusion, speaking language anxiety does not occur only among low proficiency learners, but also happens to high proficiency learners. The findings of this study have suggested that speaking language anxiety is not a problem only to the low proficiency learners, but it can occur across all levels of proficiency. It can affect the performance or test scores of learners depending on the attitude of the learners towards the task given to them, and for some the levels of anxiety. Since public speaking is generally known to evoke anxiety which could worsen in test situations, the findings of this study have confirmed this notion.