



# Lived Experiences of English Pre-Service Teachers on Public Speaking Anxiety: A Speech Improvement Program

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## Abstract

This study explored the lived experiences of 10 English pre-service teachers with public speaking anxiety. Hermeneutic phenomenology guided the qualitative research design, employing interviews and focus group discussions to gather data. Findings revealed seven key themes: language skill gaps, attitudes toward second language learning, low self-confidence hindering speaking, improved teaching strategies, the importance of a supportive, nonjudgmental environment, and the influence of varied internal and external factors on anxiety. The study highlights the need for educators to foster supportive learning environments that mitigate anxiety and encourage confident public speaking. To address this, the researcher proposes "SPEECH: Strategies for Public Speaking Empowerment and Confidence Heightening," a project designed to equip learners with effective public speaking skills and reduce anxiety through targeted activities. This research provides valuable insights into the complexities of public speaking anxiety among preservice teachers, offering practical implications for pedagogical approaches and interventions.

**Keywords:** *Attitude, Hermeneutic Phenomenological Research, Public Speaking Anxiety, Second Language, Self-Confidence, Supportive and Non-Judgmental Environment, Strategies*

## INTRODUCTION

In our interconnected world, effective communication in English is crucial, particularly for preservice teachers who play a key role in shaping future generations. Public speaking anxiety (PSA) is a common challenge educators encounter. Despite extensive research on PSA, a notable lack of studies has focused specifically on the unique experiences of English preservice teachers. Language anxiety in EFL contexts. Building on previous research, this study recognized the complex nature of PSA. For instance, pre-service teachers, despite their English proficiency, still experience anxiety when speaking publicly due to fears of making mistakes, high expectations from the audience, and feelings of unpreparedness. Similarly, [Wahyuningsih and Maisyanah \(2021\)](#) outlined the obstacles faced by preservice English teachers in Indonesia, including limited vocabulary, grammar challenges, and lack of confidence, highlighting the need for targeted support. Additionally, [Faria and Vijaya \(2019\)](#) showed a significant correlation between distress and PSA among educators, emphasizing the psychological aspects of the issue.

This research posed several questions: How do English preservice teachers articulate their experiences with PSA? What challenges do they encounter in public speaking, and what strategies do they use to cope? What themes can be identified from their stories? Based on these findings, what speech-enhancement program can be created?

The importance of this study lies in the critical role that these educators hold. Their ability to communicate effectively in English significantly influenced their students' learning ability and self-confidence. Tackling PSA among educators is vital for promoting effective communication and improving the quality of English language instruction. As noted by [Yasmin et al. \(2020\)](#), factors such



as fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test anxiety significantly contribute to public speaking anxiety. Furthermore, [Siregar \(2022\)](#) highlighted the effect of personal anxiety on students' speaking skills, stressing the importance of addressing emotional factors in language education.

This study employs a phenomenological approach to delve into the essence of the participants' experiences using interviews and questionnaires, followed by thematic analysis. By concentrating on the specific context of English preservice teachers, this research aims to offer practical insights and develop a customized speech-enhancement program, ultimately helping these educators become confident and effective communicators. Additionally, the findings will consider variations in anxiety levels based on factors such as grade level and previous speaking experience, providing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Finally, language anxiety, as previously explored in studies on teachers' anxiety and performance ([Yasmin et al., 2020](#)).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Effective communication skills are considered essential in all professions. However, many individuals experience significant challenges in public speaking, particularly in their second language (L2). While research has explored communication fears and skills among diverse language speakers, there is a notable gap in studies focusing specifically on preservice English teachers. This study aims to address this gap by examining the lived experiences and coping mechanisms of English preservice teachers with public speaking anxiety (PSA).

Public speaking anxiety (PSA) among preservice teachers emerges from a complex interplay of factors, as demonstrated by prior research. At the heart of this anxiety lies a profound fear of judgment and mistakes, a sentiment that permeates numerous studies ([Fagsao & Mi-ing, 2021](#); [Grieve et al., 2021](#); [Pabro-Maquidato, 2021](#); [Yasmin et al., 2020](#)). This fear manifests as emotional tension and physiological unease, particularly when spoken in English ([Pabro-Maquidato, 2021](#)). Compounding this is the burden of linguistic obstacles, where perceived inadequacies in grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary amplify anxieties ([Giray et al., 2022](#); [Wahyuningsih & Maisyanah, 2021](#)). Furthermore, personal factors such as low self-confidence, shyness, and even external stressors like family problems create a fertile ground for PSA to flourish ([Giray et al., 2022](#); [Milan, 2020](#); [Daud et al., 2019](#)). The pressure of external expectations, including competitive environments and the fear of ridicule, adds another layer to this anxiety ([Santos & Kunso, 2021](#); [Valdellon & Lovitos, 2022](#)). Critically, teacher-related factors, such as negative feedback and fear of evaluation, play a significant role in shaping these anxieties, emphasizing the importance of a supportive classroom environment ([Giray et al., 2022](#); [Soriano & Co, 2022](#)).

The consequences of PSA are far-reaching, impacting preservice teachers across multiple domains. Academically, PSA hinders academic performance and the development of effective speaking skills, ultimately affecting their ability to instruct and impact student learning ([Ofiaz, 2019](#); [Yasmin et al., 2020](#)). Beyond academics, PSA negatively influences personal and social aspects, eroding self-confidence and risk-taking abilities. It also takes a toll on emotional and physiological well-being, leading to discomfort and reduced focus ([Pabro-Maquidato, 2021](#); [Siregar, 2022](#)). Moreover, because effective communication is vital for teaching, PSA can impede professional development, hindering students' ability to convey messages and facilitate learning ([Aziz et al., 2021](#); [Yasmin et al., 2020](#)).

However, previous studies have also highlighted various coping mechanisms and strategies that can mitigate the adverse effects of PSA. Central to these strategies is preparation and practice, emphasizing the importance of thorough outlining, practicing, and rehearsing speeches ([Aziz et al., 2021](#); [Maharani & Roslaini, 2021](#)). Cultivating positive thinking and mindset, including positive self-

talk and understanding personal strengths, is equally crucial (Cabansag, 2020; Maharani & Roslaini, 2021; Santos & Kunso, 2021). Building strong support systems through peers, teachers, and counselors provides essential emotional and practical assistance (Giray et al., 2022; Soriano & Co, 2022). Enhancing language proficiency through consistent practice and exposure to the language helps build confidence (Cabansag, 2020; Pabro-Maquidato, 2021; Valdellon & Lovitos, 2022). Furthermore, technological aids, such as digital platforms and podcasts, offer opportunities for practice and exposure to diverse speakers (Nursafira, 2020; Yaprak, 2022). Teachers can also implement effective classroom strategies by incorporating group activities, providing constructive feedback, and using positive reinforcement (Cabaltica & Arcala, 2021; Guibangguibang, 2020; Oflaz, 2019). Finally, motivational strategies, which include designing engaging tasks and leveraging digital technologies, can enhance motivation and reduce anxiety (Eskildsen & Jensen, 2023; Salayo & Amarles, 2020).

Despite the wealth of knowledge provided by these studies, a gap remains in understanding the nuanced lived experiences of English preservice teachers with PSA. Therefore, this study aims to explore these experiences, identify their unique coping mechanisms, and propose a tailored speech enhancement program. By focusing on the specific challenges faced by these preservice teachers, this research offers practical recommendations for teacher training programs and language instructors, ultimately fostering a more supportive and effective learning environment.

### **Synthesis**

The existing literature provides substantial support for this research by elucidating various factors that can impact students with language anxiety. A multitude of sources have delved into the diverse rationales behind why students tend to encounter language anxiety. Collectively, these sources provide a wealth of information that enhances our understanding of this phenomenon. They shed light on the multifaceted nature of language anxiety and offer valuable insights into its underlying causes and triggers.

Furthermore, this literature underscores the significance of exploring the myriad factors that can induce anxiety in language learners, ultimately reinforcing the need to investigate and address this issue comprehensively. In essence, the rich tapestry of the existing literature serves as a robust foundation upon which this research is built, enhancing its depth and context.

The studies and literature mentioned by the researcher. The frequent factors that brought anxiety to the speakers are: (1) fear of being judged and fear of committing mistakes, (2) teacher factor, (3) social factors, (4) the speaker could not express his/her ideas, (5) poor command of English as medium, and (6) low self-confidence and shyness.

This study will focus on the lived experiences and coping mechanisms of English preservice teachers with public speaking anxiety and will propose a speech enhancement program as the output of the study. In line with this, studies have suggested strategies, coping mechanisms, and techniques used by learners, teachers, and researchers to reduce the anxiety level of speakers and make them more comfortable using the English language. These studies will be beneficial to the researcher as a guide to crafting the proposed output of the study.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to understanding experiences as they occur. Qualitative research, which gathers non-numerical data through methods such as interviews and observations, explores people's views, experiences, and attitudes in depth. It is particularly useful for investigating complex topics that are not suitable for quantitative analysis and can help develop hypotheses and inform future studies.

The research focused specifically on the experiences of pre-service teachers with public speaking fear through in-depth interviews. The findings are not generalizable to a larger population. According to [Neubauer et al. \(2019\)](#), this method seeks to explain the meaning of experiences from the participant's perspective. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyze the data.

### **Selection Criteria and Participants**

In this study, the selection of participants was performed via purposeful sampling. Some populations were omitted from the sample due to subjective factors, such as shared characteristics. The participants of this study were the 10 English pre-service teachers of City College of Calamba, who experienced anxiety when doing public speaking based on the questionnaire used by the researchers adapted from [Yaikhong and Usaha \(2012\)](#) entitled Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS). As a faculty member under the Language and Literature cluster, the researcher observed that these would-be English teachers had anxiety when reporting in front of the class and/or when speaking in front of a large number of participants.

### **Research Instrument**

A research instrument is a tool used to gather, quantify, and scrutinize data related to research objectives. Thus, the researcher gathered data through direct observation, and a survey questionnaire was created to select the participants and develop a set of custom interview questions for the student participants. Following the formulation of all the questions, the research instruments were validated, a process carried out in collaboration with five experts in the field of education, each possessing over five years of experience in teaching English. The experts were selected based on criteria such as (1) teaching English for more than 5 years, (2) major subjects, and (3) having at least a master's degree.

The researcher prepared printed copies of the research instruments with the validating tool to be used; each validator received a copy of the research instruments. Additionally, the researcher obtained the validation tool, which contained the signatures of the validators along with their feedback. After evaluating the comments and feedback provided by the validators, it was confirmed that the questions were suitable for the student's level. These questions were straightforward, precise, and within the students' capacity to answer.

Regarding the proposed adjustments, the validators focused primarily on rectifying the grammar errors. Subsequently, the researcher heeded the validators' recommendations and made revisions to certain interview questions. The research instrument was categorized into three sections: an initial question to establish the interview's tone, the main body of questions focusing on language anxiety, and concluding questions to wrap up the interview.

In terms of the modifications suggested, the validators focused on the grammar errors. After validation, the researcher followed the suggestions of the validators and revised some interview questions. The initial question served as the segment where the researcher set the interview's ambiance, aiming to make each participant comfortable and facilitate a smooth conversation. The subsequent segment comprised pivotal questions, focusing on exploring language anxiety. Lastly, the researcher provided closing questions to conclude the interview. The researcher used open-ended questions. The following are the interview guide questions used in the study:

### **Opening Questions**

1. Are you active during class recitations?
2. Do you use English when speaking in class or outside the classroom?

3. Do your teachers encourage students to speak in English, especially during class recitations?
4. How do they encourage you to speak?

### Main Questions

1. How prepared are you in terms of public speaking?
2. How can you describe your public speaking experiences in an ESL Classroom?
3. What problems or challenges do you encounter in public speaking?
4. What adjustments did you make during your public speaking?
5. What motivated you to speak English and participate in class recitations?
6. What will you feel when your teacher asks you to answer or share ideas in class? Why?
7. If there are situations where you feel uncomfortable speaking English, can you specify some of these situations? If there are situations in which you feel comfortable speaking English, can you specify some of these?
8. What would make you comfortable when speaking in English?

### Ending Questions

1. What are your coping mechanisms for those challenges and problems you encounter and how do they work?
2. Have you recently implemented any personal adjustments, and if so, could you share what specific changes you have made?
3. As future English teachers, what will you plan to do to address challenges arising from public speaking anxiety in an ESL classroom?
4. What advice would you give to students like you who are struggling with public speaking because of their anxiety?

The researcher ensured the validation of the research instruments through the evaluation of multiple experts who are well-versed in qualitative research. To assess the validity of this instrument, the researcher followed and adapted the criterion validation methodology.

**Table 1.** Expert Validation Rating Scale

Scale	Interpretation
1	Valid and inappropriate
2	Less valid and less appropriate
3	High validity and appropriateness
4	Very valid and highly appropriate

Additionally, to test the validity and accuracy of the data to be collected, a rating scale was used. A rating scale will be applied along with the following interpretations: 1- Not valid and inappropriate, 2- Less valid and less appropriate, 3- Highly valid and highly appropriate, and 4- Very high valid and very highly appropriate.

### Research Procedure

To ensure that the research flows sequentially and properly, the researcher created an interview protocol that was validated by a panel of specialists, ensuring that the data acquired was rich and significant after the researcher administered the survey questionnaire to identify the participants of the study. The researcher then used the tool to regulate the flow of questions and

responses during the session. The guide questions were designed such that the study questions posed in this study were effectively answered throughout the interview process, ensuring that there was no misinterpretation or miscommunication. The researcher first submitted a letter of request to perform the study, which was addressed to the OIC president, who provided the authorization as the college president. The participants will then be provided with consent forms for verification and acceptance. The researcher planned the interviews with the participants at a convenient time and place and conducted them face-to-face. Before the interview, the researcher supplied the participants with the study title, which was included on the consent form, so that they could understand the scope of the activity. Each interview began with a friendly greeting from the researcher. For participants to have a better understanding of the study, the researcher introduced himself and the goal of the investigation. The researcher also ensured that the first portion of the interview flow explained the brief background and objectives of the study. This was also the period when the researcher explained why the participants were chosen as the primary source of information. In each interview, the researcher requested permission from the participants to record the activity and maintain its confidentiality. This allowed the participants to speak freely without fear of repercussions, and they were not held back. The acquired data were then transcribed, coded, and cataloged.

### **Treatment of Qualitative Data**

The study used Jonathan Smith's Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) a qualitative method well-suited for exploring the experiences of English preservice teachers. As noted by [Smith \(2015\)](#) IPA focuses on in-depth explorations of personal lived experiences. [Alase \(2017\)](#) emphasized that the IPA enabled participants to express their experiences freely. According to [Miller and Barrio \(2016\)](#), the principles of the IPA are flexible, encouraging multiple perspectives while aligning with the research goals.

The data collection process started with the researcher setting aside preconceived notions, followed by audio and video interviews that were transcribed verbatim. The researchers then generated codes from the transcriptions and cataloged relevant quotes, resulting in 10 annotated examples for each interview question. Patterns were identified, and participants' responses were organized into 10 thematic charts to reveal emergent themes. This process culminated in summarizing the themes, illustrating key ideas, discarding poorly represented themes, and creating a cohesive narrative enriched with citations for deeper insight.

### **Methods of Validation**

The designed interview technique and questions were also given to the chosen group of expert validators and the researcher's Qualitative Data Analyst for assessment and evaluation, as well as to the adviser of this project for further recommendations and inputs, if necessary. The instrument has been approved and is suitable for use after a series of evaluations and adjustments.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The researchers addressed ethical issues to protect individuals and groups, ensuring the study adhered to its parameters and respected participants' rights and values. Following [Creswell and Creswell \(2017\)](#), this researcher emphasized ethical considerations in qualitative research. Participants were informed about the study's aims and data collection processes. Questions remained neutral and non-discriminatory, avoiding objectionable language and focusing solely on relevant research inquiries without probing personal matters.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the face-to-face interview conducted by the researcher with the selected student participants who have language anxiety, there were one hundred sixty (160) significant statements identified, 83 (83) formulated meanings, and 7ty (70) subordinate themes with 7 (7) superordinate themes.

### Clustered Themes

Bearing in mind the stages of conducting hermeneutic phenomenological research, the researcher has clustered meanings and themes derived from the statements given by the participants. The researcher classified seven (7) main theme clusters extracted from the significant statements, developed meaning, and initial themes. Before revealing the seven (7) main themes, 83 (83) developed meanings and 70 (70) initial themes emerged in the following tables:

#### *Clustering Developed Meanings for Initial Themes*

Table 2 shows the clustering of the formulated meanings to the subordinate themes gathered from the participants.

**Table 2.** Clustering Formulated Meanings to Subordinate themes gathered from the student-participants.

Interview Questions for Students and Participants:	Formulated Meanings	Subordinate Themes
<b>1. Are you active during class recitations?</b>	Students play a passive role.	Some students are inactive due to poor English skills.
	Hesitations to answer because of the possible judgment of the class may cause laughter due to incorrect grammar.	
	Comfortability with the professor and subject interest affect the participation of the student.	Inactive in class because of low self-confidence
	Participation occurs if the student has an advanced reading.	Uncomfortable feeling toward the teacher
	The self-confidence of students can	Hesitation to speak because of what others may say

Interview Questions for Students and Participants:	Formulated Meanings	Subordinate Themes
	affect their performance.  He is active.	Active in class
<b>2. Do you use English as the target language when speaking in class or outside the classroom?</b>	Uses English based on necessity and requirements.  Poor vocabulary, resulting in code-switching  No fluency in English  Will Speak when encouraged.	Use English when necessary and when required.  Tend to code-switch  No Fluency in English  Encouragement helps students speak.
<b>3. Do your teachers encourage you to speak in English, especially during class recitations?</b>	Explaining the importance of using English in their course and the teacher's words of encouragement.	The use of English as a second language  The teacher's words of encouragement help students.
<b>4. How do they encourage you to speak?</b>	The teacher allows the use of Filipino.  Provide reporting tasks to them.  Language choice	The teacher allows the use of Filipino.  Reporting tasks are a way for teachers to teach students how to speak.  The language choices of students help them to participate in discussions.



Interview Questions for Students and Participants:	Formulated Meanings	Subordinate Themes
<b>5. How prepared are you in terms of public speaking?</b>	Not prepared	Students are not prepared for public speaking for various reasons.
<b>6. How can you describe your public speaking experiences in an ESL Classroom?</b>	Struggling with public speaking anxiety.	Nerve-racking due to public speaking anxiety.
		Fear of judgment by people.
	Introverted and anxious;	Still learning.
	avoidance of public expression fearfully.	Familiarity with people affects comfortability
	Nervousness resulted in body shaking.	Unexplainable feelings.
	Still learning	
	Fear of judgment due to trauma from past experiences	
<b>7. What problems or challenges do you encounter in public speaking?</b>	Familiarity with people affects comfortability	
	Complicated experiences. An idiot board is necessary to smoothen the flow.	
<b>7. What problems or challenges do you encounter in public speaking?</b>	Different problems can cause anxiety when speaking in public.	Nervousness, Fear of judgment, and being humiliated are causes of anxiety.
	Being humiliated causes public speaking anxiety;	

Interview Questions for Students and Participants:	Formulated Meanings	Subordinate Themes
<b>8. What adjustments did you make during your public speaking?</b>	Fear of judgment is a primary problem.	
	Nervousness causes public speaking anxiety	
	Classmates' reactions matter	
	She creates strategies that are suitable for her.	Suitable strategy for students
	Taking deep breaths, Being Relaxed, and always practicing are the common strategies used by students.	Improved teaching strategies
	Teachers prepared activities	Performing breathing exercises
	Students must prepare and focus.	Practice before facing the audience
	Practice and use cue cards during public speaking.	Cue cards and role-playing
	Role-playing, breathing exercises, and practicing help the students.	Positive mindset
	Positive Thinking and games to lighten the mood.	

Interview Questions for Students and Participants:	Formulated Meanings	Subordinate Themes
<b>9. What motivated you to speak English and participate in class recitations?</b>	Students perform when reinforced with intrinsic motivations.	Intrinsic motivation helps students with their public speaking anxiety.
	Students want to achieve the same pace as others	
	Teachers' encouragement and motivation	Teacher factor
	The student compared herself with others.	Comparison with others
<b>10. What will you feel when your teacher asks you to answer or share ideas in class? Why?</b>	Students perform when reinforced with extrinsic motivation	Extrinsic motivation helps students with their public speaking anxiety.
	Pressure motivates her	Pressure motivates her
	Anxiety when using the target language	Nervousness is the feeling that students experience
		Students are unsure of their answers
<b>11. If there are situations where you feel uncomfortable speaking English, can you specify some of these situations? If there are situations in which you feel comfortable speaking English, can you specify some of these?</b>	Students are uncomfortable when forced to speak in English and comfortable when not.	Forcing students to speak makes them uncomfortable
	Uncomfortable when there is someone better than her and	Judging what others may say.
		The relationship with the audience made them feel comfortable and uncomfortable.

Interview Questions for Students and Participants:	Formulated Meanings	Subordinate Themes
<b>12. What would make you comfortable when speaking in English?</b>	comfortable with friends.	
	Relationship with the audience affects comfort in speaking in English.	
	Judging others affects comfort in speaking English.	
	Friendly and Jolly Environment	Students learn in a supportive environment
	Teacher Factor	Students prefer a nonjudgmental environment
	Supportive and nonjudgmental environments	Students need preparedness before public speaking
	Student Preparedness	Teacher Factor
<b>13. What are your coping mechanisms for those challenges and problems you encounter, and how do they work?</b>	Relationship with the audience	Students desire a jolly and friendly classroom environment
		Relationship with the audience matters to how comfortable they are
		Teacher Factor
		Stress toys help students
	Practice and stress toys	
	Teacher Factor	
	Speaking loudly	
	Seeking support from friends	Seeking a support system
	Practicing in front of a mirror and with friends	Self-motivation

Interview Questions for Students and Participants:	Formulated Meanings	Subordinate Themes
	Watching television series that teach English	Watching television series that teach English
	Self-motivation	Practice in front of a mirror and with friends may help.
	Breathing techniques	Positive mindset
	Positive outlook	Self-assessment
	Assessing himself.	Making it fun
	Assessing himself.	Practice breathing techniques
	Assessing himself.	Practice breathing techniques
<b>14. Have you recently implemented any personal adjustments, and if so, could you share what specific changes you have made?</b>	Making it fun	
	Self-motivation	Self-Motivation
	Teacher's word of encouragement.	The Teacher's Word of Encouragement
	Practicing	Practice speaking in English
	Calming himself	Changing the outlook
	Focus	Making one comfortable with people
	Positive mindset	Practice breathing to relieve anxiety
<b>15. As future English teachers, what will you plan to do to address challenges arising from public speaking anxiety in an ESL classroom?</b>	role playing	
	Comfortability and breathing techniques	
	Building a foundation of confidence.	Teachers should build a foundation of confidence.
	Creating a non-judgmental environment.	Create a nonjudgmental environment for language teaching-learning.
	Comfortability	Students will be comfortable in class.
	Words of encouragement	Give them Words of encouragement
	Mistakes are part of learning.	Provide students constructive criticisms

Interview Questions for Students and Participants:	Formulated Meanings	Subordinate Themes
	Consistency in practicing English	
	Giving students constructive criticisms	
	Tagish as a Medium	
	Empower students	
	Create a safe space for students to voice their opinions.	
<b>16. What advice would you give to students like you who are struggling with public speaking because of their anxiety?</b>	Trust yourself and the process	Students must trust themselves.
	Making mistakes is normal and should be performed regularly.	Students must trust the process of learning.
		Students must know that making mistakes is normal and part of learning.
	Relax and be confident	Students must practice regularly to master the language.
		Students must relax and be confident.

Table 2 presents the clustered themes for each interview question. The eighty-three (83) developed meanings and seventy (70) subordinate themes were derived from the translated verbatim statements of the student participants to come up with the main theme.

*Clustering Subordinate Themes to Superordinate Themes*

Table 3 clusters subordinate themes to superordinate themes.

**Table 3.** Clustering Subordinate themes to superordinate themes.

Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some students are inactive due to poor English skills.</li> <li><i>Inactive in class because of low self-confidence</i></li> </ul>	Language Skill Gaps in a Second Language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uncomfortable feelings toward the teacher</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hesitation to speak because of what others may say</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active in class</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses English when necessary and when required.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tend to code switch</li> </ul>	Attitude toward second language learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Fluency in English</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouragement helps students speak.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The use of English as a second language</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher's words of encouragement help students.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher allows the use of Filipino.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reporting tasks are a way for teachers to teach students how to speak.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language choices of students help them to participate in discussion.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students are not prepared for public speaking for various reasons.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nerve-racking due to public speaking anxiety.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fear of judgment by people.</li> </ul>	Hesitant to speak because of low self-confidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Still learning</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Familiarity with people affects comfortability</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unexplainable feelings.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nervousness, Fear of judgment, and being humiliated are causes of anxiety.</li> </ul>	Improved Teaching Strategies in Language Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suitable strategy for students</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved teaching strategies</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performing breathing exercises</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice before facing the audience</li> </ul>	

Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cue cards and role-playing</li> <li>• Positive mindset</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrinsic motivation helps students with their public speaking anxiety.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher factor</li> <li>• Comparison with others</li> <li>• Extrinsic motivation helps students with their public speaking anxiety.</li> <li>• Pressure motivates her</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nervousness is the feeling that students experience</li> <li>• Students are unsure of their answers</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students feel that they are not good enough.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forcing students to speak makes them uncomfortable</li> <li>• Judging what others may say.</li> <li>• The relationship with the audience made them comfortable and uncomfortable.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students learn in a supportive environment</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students prefer a nonjudgmental environment</li> <li>• Students need preparedness before public speaking</li> <li>• Teacher Factor</li> <li>• Students desire a jolly and friendly classroom environment</li> <li>• Relationship with the audience matters to how comfortable they are</li> </ul>	Supportive and nonjudgmental environments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Factor</li> <li>• Stress toys help students</li> <li>• Seeking support system</li> <li>• Self-motivation</li> <li>• Watching television series that teach English</li> <li>• Practice in front of a mirror and with friends may help.</li> <li>• Practice in front of a mirror and with friends may help.</li> <li>• Self-assessment</li> <li>• Making it fun</li> <li>• Practice breathing techniques</li> </ul>	Varied Internal factors
<p>Self-Motivation</p> <p>The Teacher's Word of Encouragement</p> <p>Practice speaking in English</p> <p>Changing the outlook</p>	



Subordinate Themes	Superordinate Themes
Making one comfortable with people Practice breathing to relieve anxiety	Variable External Factor
Teachers should build a foundation of confidence.	
Create a nonjudgmental environment for language teaching-learning.	
Students will be comfortable in class.	
Give them Words of encouragement	
Provide students constructive criticisms Students must trust themselves.	
Students must trust the process of learning.	
Students must know that making mistakes is normal and part of learning.	
Students must practice regularly to master the language.	
Students must relax and be confident.	

In a face-to-face interview with students experiencing language anxiety, 160 significant statements were identified, leading to 83 meanings, 70 themes, and 7 superordinate themes. Key themes included language skill gaps, attitudes toward second language learning, anxiety about speaking because of low self-confidence, improved teaching strategies, a supportive environment, and various internal and external factors.

Participants struggled with language skill gaps, often resorting to code-mixing because of limited vocabulary. Although some participants were motivated by external factors, attitudes negatively impacted performance. Low self-confidence hindered speaking because of the fear of negative feedback from teachers and classmates.

Participants preferred teaching strategies like reporting tasks to enhance public speaking and appreciated the support from peers and teachers. A supportive, nonjudgmental environment was deemed essential for building confidence and encouraging risk-taking.

External factors, such as extra points for participation, motivated students, while internal aspirations for future success fueled their drive. However, participants also felt self-conscious about peer reactions and found it challenging to approach strict teachers, which compounded their anxiety.



**Figure 2.** Thematic Analysis

Figure 2 presents the themes that emerged in this study. Accordingly, the themes were language skill gaps in a second language; attitude toward second language learning; hesitant to speak due to low self-confidence; employed improved teaching strategies in second language learning; supportive and nonjudgmental environment; varied internal factors; and varied external factors. This revealed the relationship between the emerging themes and the challenges encountered by participants who experienced language anxiety. Through these themes, the researcher described the experiences of the participants.

Seven (7) superordinate themes emerged from the participants' lived experiences of language anxiety:

1. **Language Skill Gaps in a Second Language:** A student's performance in class may suffer because of low language proficiency, leading to anxiety and reluctance to participate. Many students reported avoiding participation because of uncertainty about language use and limited reading and speaking practice. As suggested by [Soriano and Co \(2022\)](#), teachers should recognize speaking anxiety and foster a supportive classroom environment that encourages self-expression and participation through varied activities.
2. **Attitude toward Second Language Learning:** A positive attitude toward learning a new language greatly impacts performance. Openness, curiosity, and perseverance create a conducive learning atmosphere, whereas a negative mindset can hinder progress. Some students are motivated to learn for both internal and external reasons, but negative attitudes can affect their academic success. [Oflaz \(2019\)](#) found that group activities enhance student interaction and comfort, particularly for shy students.
3. **Hesitant to Speak Due to Low Self-Confidence:** Using English as a second language can evoke feelings of fear and anxiety, often stemming from past negative experiences in class. Participants reported hesitation due to fear of making mistakes or being judged by peers and teachers. [Giray et al. \(2022\)](#) identified key themes regarding English language anxiety among Filipino students, including lack of skills, personal insecurities, fear of judgment, and negative effects on overall performance.
4. **Improved Teaching Strategies in Second Language Learning:** Enhanced teaching strategies, including interactive methods and technology integration, cater to diverse learning styles and improve engagement and language acquisition.
5. **Supportive and Nonjudgmental Environment:** A nurturing, nonjudgmental environment is crucial for language learning. This approach encourages students to take risks and boosts their confidence. Such settings foster active participation and persistent efforts to

overcome language barriers. Santos and Kunso (2021) noted that speaking anxiety often stems from the fear of negative evaluation, thus emphasizing the need for supportive experiences.

6. Varied External Factors: Participants indicated that external rewards boost motivation because activities linked to rewards, such as extra points, enhance engagement and participation in the learning process.
7. Varied Internal Factors: While some students are enthusiastic about becoming fluent English speakers, others may struggle despite their aspirations.

## CONCLUSIONS

Students can participate actively in class recitations, depending on their motivation. These incentives may be external or inherent. Students are typically more motivated when teachers assign high grades. When peers participate in class, students feel more at ease, which boosts their confidence when their friends express support. Often, students feel anxious when they are called in class to recite because of factors such as fear of being embarrassed, fear of making mistakes, and fear of what their teacher will say. According to the students' comments, they have a difficult time presenting their statements in English because they are concerned about what their teacher or classmates may say if they make a mistake. Based on the students' responses, they were challenged by their lack of skills and knowledge. The respondents were scared to use English because they felt that anything they said could be ridiculed. They also struggled due to tasks assigned by their teachers that were improper for their level or relevant to the topic.

Teachers employ different strategies to motivate and encourage their students, but their attitude toward learning affects their performance. Students preferred engaging and interactive activities in class that helped them speak and build their confidence. They are learners who will participate and speak when encouraged and supported by their teacher and environment. Seven (7) superordinate themes emerged from the participants' lived experiences of language anxiety:

1. Language Skill Gaps in a Second Language;
2. Attitude toward Second Language Learning;
3. Hesitant to Speak Due to Low Self-Confidence;
4. Improved Teaching Strategies in Second Language Learning;
5. Supportive and Non-Judgmental Environment; and
6. Varied external factors; 7. Varied internal factors.

## LIMITATION AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This study offers valuable insights into the experiences of English preservice teachers at City College of Calamba as they navigate public speaking anxiety (PSA). However, some limitations must be recognized. One major point to note is that the findings may not apply to other groups outside the 10 second-year English major students who participated. While a small sample size is suitable for this kind of in-depth exploration, it does mean that we cannot broadly generalize these results to all preservice teachers, even within the same school. This stems from the qualitative nature of the research, which emphasizes understanding personal experiences rather than providing statistically significant data.

Additionally, although the focus group discussions and classroom observations yielded rich insights, some aspects of PSA may not have been fully explored. The study mainly focused on the immediate feelings of anxiety during public speaking in class but did not consider potential long-term effects or how factors like socio-economic background or past educational experiences might shape these anxieties. Future studies could enrich this understanding by including standardized questionnaires alongside qualitative data. Moreover, the research did not investigate the role of

technology in public speaking, which is becoming increasingly important in today's educational context.

To address these gaps in future research, it would be beneficial to include a larger and more diverse group of participants, possibly from different year levels and institutions. Longitudinal studies could track the progression of PSA over time and assess the effectiveness of different speech-enhancement programs in the long run. Exploring how cultural factors influence PSA, particularly within the Philippine context, could also offer valuable insights. Additionally, researchers might look into the effectiveness of various intervention strategies—like cognitive-behavioral therapy or mindfulness practices—in helping reduce PSA among preservice teachers. Lastly, understanding how teacher training programs can better equip future educators with the skills and confidence to speak publicly is an important avenue for further research. Investigating how online learning environments and virtual public speaking experiences impact PSA could also add important perspectives to the field.

### Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations were proposed:

1. Except for Filipino subjects, teachers may help students by using English as a medium of instruction.
2. Teachers may offer improved instructional materials and lessons that will help students become engaged in public speaking with the use of the English language.
3. Teachers can create rules to create a supportive and nonjudgmental learning environment.
4. Teachers can prepare speaking activities and drills to enhance students' confidence in public speaking. Providing a remedy at home may help students feel comfortable using English.
5. Teachers can help students improve their study habits to develop a positive attitude toward learning a second language and boost their confidence in public speaking.
6. Future researchers could conduct an in-depth study of language anxiety. Besides the use of English, what else causes their anxiety?

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