



# A Study of Anxiety on English Speaking in Classroom of Year Four Students at The Faculty of Languages Souphanouvong University

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## Abstract

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The objective of this study was to study anxiety on English speaking in classroom of year 4 students and the main cause of students' anxiety on English speaking at the Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University. It was a quantitative study and the participants were the 36 students in fourth year from department of Foreign Language, Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University. The instrument was a questionnaire, consisting of 22 items about anxiety on English speaking and the main cause of students' anxiety on English speaking. The Mean and Standard Deviation used SPSS Program to analyze the data. The finding of the study:

1. Students have problems in English speaking during class because they get nervous when speaking English as shown in the items of advice and self-report, answering their teachers' questions and students feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of others friends in class, students worry and make mistakes and are afraid that their classmates will laugh at them.

2. The main cause of students' anxiety on English speaking in classroom is that students are anxious to speak English in class, because they have lack of flexibility of words, concerns for their ideas. Also, students have lack of words and experience in pronunciation, with the Mean of 3.86 and S.D of 0.961. Moreover, students are afraid of making mistakes in grammar and structure of sentence.

**Keywords:** Anxiety, English, speaking

## 1. Introduction

English is used as a global language that has played an important role in communicating around the world. Nowadays English is called international language and it is also the second language of many countries. Therefore, we can realize the importance in communication of this

language. When we know English, we can come to and communicate with the citizens of most countries without any confusion in expressing our feeling and thinking, English language has played an important role in communication. Since the 1960s, Lin mentioned that, the faster growing industrial trades from countries in the Asian-

Pacific region have promoted English learning to catch up with worldwide internationalization. Many non-English speaking countries have taken steps to promote their English education as a means of improving national productivity and increasing their ability to compete internationally. English language is necessary in the fields of science, technology, education, tourism and business. Thru, in the present are the important of acquiring the language undeniable. It is important that students master and communicate English language in order to be able to prepare themselves for their future make an effort and contribute to the development of the country. Nevertheless, most student have difficult in communicating with others in English (Wan, 2010: 189).

English language can be used for communication with native-speakers and non-native-speakers in the worldwide, especially in the education section, all university students need it for their studies in order to search information and obtain knowledge; therefore, a lot of the universities throughout the world need to include. English language as one of their educational tool requirements English is often used as the medium of instruction in higher education. On the other hand, obviously the fact of the day-to day the process of teaching and learning of the English language also related to many interrelated with social and political uses. People's demands toward English in many countries in the world make English language is key factors and became the international language that spreads quickly (Khader& Mohammad, 2010: 181).

Nowadays, speaking English is a great problem for students who study English. However, there are many reasons that cause this problem such as student fell that the lack of confidence to speak as the result of not knowing what to say. Some students might report that they have limited words or vocabulary to used conversation, while other might tell the teacher

that the topic of conversation is not interesting, also there are many benefits of people who can understand and be able to communicate in English, such as the opportunity to communicate or work with people from other countries. Therefore, English has been taught in many schools nowadays. However, learning English is not very easy for all learners especially for the students who learn English as foreign or second language, such as in Laos (Souriavongsa & Lai Mei (2013 :181).

Regarding to Lao PDR, it is one of Asian countries that English has been taught as a foreign language in school and institution of education; specially, in higher education institution. For a long period of time, Laos was used by English resided in Laos such as Souphanouvong University is one of the five universities in Lao PDR, which was officially established in November 2003 to develop human resources in eight northern parts of Laos. The University consists of six faculties such as the faculty of education, the faculty of Architecture, the faculty of Agriculture and forestry, the faculty of Economics and tourism, the faculty of engineering and the faculty of languages (Abidin, Souriavongsa, & Lai Mei, 2013: 181).

The faculty of languages is one of the six faculties of Souphanouvong University, which specializes in Languages, it covers English teaching and course development to upgrade its students' knowledge and helps to solve their study problems, because the students are not confident enough to speak English, and they are worried about making mistakes, being criticised and losing face. They are not only unmotivated to express themselves but also shy to pronounce and so can't think of anything to say. It is difficult for many students to respond when their teachers ask them to say something in English because they might have fewer ideas about what to say, which vocabulary to use or how to use the grammar correctly. Therefore, the researcher was interested in how to solve those

problems and decided to conduct a study on speaking. The ultimate aim of this study was to identify the ways to help students who are studying at the Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University become enthusiastic to speak English.

The purposes of research are to find out students' anxiety on English speaking of fourth year students at the Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University and to study of the main cause of fourth year students' anxiety on English speaking in classroom at Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1 Instrument of the study

The questionnaire was adapted based on Horwitz & Cope (1986: 125) there were 33 items, focusing on the students' anxiety on a foreign language classroom. Thus, it was adapted based on Horwitz & Cope, and for 22 items, the researcher focused the item that supported speaking anxiety. There were 2 parts: Part 1 was about students' anxiety on English speaking with 10 items and part 2 was about the main cause of students' anxiety on English speaking in class with 12 items. The data was calculated based on the five scales of score level of Likert: (5) meaning **Strongly agree**, (4) meaning **Agree**, (3) meaning **Undecided**, (2) meaning **Disagree** and (1) meaning **Strongly disagree**.

### 2.2 Data collection

First, the researcher got the suggestion letter from the Dean of the Faculty of Languages and then brought the questionnaires to the supervisor to check. Next, the questionnaire was translated from English to Lao Language to enable the sample group to understand clearly. After that, the researcher asked the 36 students in year 4 to fill in each questionnaire in 30 minutes before it was brought back to analyse. Finally, the researcher collected all of the questionnaires and carefully checked the answers.

### 2.3 Data Analysis

After collecting the questionnaires from the sample, the researcher carefully checked the students' answers to make sure that they were correct because the researcher had to bring the corrected data to analyze to find the main cause of anxiety on speaking English of year 4 students at the Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University and then sent to the advisor to check. After that, the data was analysed and calculated in percentage using Statistical Package of the Social Science (SPSS) Program. The data analysis was based on Mean and Standard Deviation (S.D) that were also analysed.

**The data was calculated based on the five scales of Likert (1982):**

| Level of Score | Meaning        |
|----------------|----------------|
| 5              | Strongly agree |
| 4              | Agree          |
| 3              | Undecided      |
| 2              | Disagree       |
| 1              | Strongly       |

## 3. Result

### 3.1 The results of students' anxiety on English speaking in class

Based on table 1, students get nervous when speaking English, especially when giving advice and self-report, answering questions and this has the Mean of 4.00 and S.D of 0.874 because students haven't prepared their answers in advance and feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of their friends and it has the Mean of 3.97 and S.D of 0.879. They also worry about making mistakes and are afraid that others will laugh at them, with the Mean of 3.69 and S.D of 0.963.

From table 2, it has shown that students have lack of flexibility on words and concerns of ideas, with the Mean of 3.89 and S.D of 1.306. Students do not know many words, they have lack of experience, pronunciation problem, with the Mean of 3.86 and S.D of 0.961 and they are afraid of making mistakes in grammar and

structure of sentence, with the Mean of 3.61 and S.D of 0.964

#### 4. Discussion

This study aimed at studying on students' anxiety on English speaking and the main cause of students' anxiety on English speaking in year four at Faculty of Language, Souphanouvong University. Therefore, the finding of the study can be discussed below.

##### 4.1 Students' anxiety on English speaking

From the research, it was found out that most of the students got nervous when the teacher asked a question which they did not prepare the answer in advance, because students had lack of confidence and worried about making mistakes, they could not think of anything to say and had only few ideas about what to say, and so they were often trembled when the teacher asked something in English, making them anxious and worried about grammatical mistakes, pronunciation. They were shy and afraid of saying wrong words. They did not have much experience in talking to native speakers and so felt scared. It was true that they embarrassed and anxious when talking in English, especially when giving advice and making self-reports, given that their presentation skills were not as competent as they should be and they hardly ever used social media to practice speaking and listening. Furthermore, they had very few ideas about what to say and this was because they were really shy to pronounce. They even had no experience in communicating, and were afraid another students would laugh at them when they speaking English, because they were overly fearful of their performance due to the perceived threat of failure and feel excessively burdened by competition with others to achieve good grades. Some students suffered from a condition known, fears faced by students from other towns and they got nervous and serious when answering a question teacher asked. They felt very self-conscious about speaking English in front of others in class.

The present study supports the theory of Horwitz (1986: 125) said that, anxiety is part of human condition and it has a broad definition and anxiety is a negative way to present human feelings. When we are anxious, we feel nervous, worried, and fearful. We struggle, tremble, perspire, and our hearts beat quickly. In general, anxiety can be defined as a complex concept dependent upon not only on one's feelings of self-efficacy but also appraisals concerning the potential and perceived threats inherent in certain situations and also anxiety in general can be defined as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system.

And also support theory of Tobias (1986: 39) said that anxiety is a negative way to present human feelings. When we are anxious, we feel nervous, worried, and fearful. We struggle, tremble, perspire, and our hearts beat quickly. In general, anxiety can be defined as a complex concept dependent upon not only on one's feelings of self-efficacy but also appraisals concerning the potential and perceived threats inherent in certain situations. By the result of the research, the research found out of year 4 students could not make anxiety and worried when they speaking English and say something in English or answering the teacher. Although some students are good on English speaking because they have as much experience speaking as native speakers or as much exposure to learning English, but many students still worried when they say something in English because of lack of training presentation.

#### 2. The main cause of students' anxiety on English speaking

The finding supports second objective of the study of the research. The researcher found the main cause of English speaking and the main cause of students' anxiety on English speaking was because the students worried when speaking English, such as they were afraid of using wrong

vocabulary, concerns of the ideas. More over, they did not know many words and had very few ideas about what to say, grammar and vocabulary problems, English speaking made them more anxious than reading, writing and listening. They had of lack of speaking practice and presentation skills, their pronunciation was weak, so they could not say any thing. Therefore, these were the results. They hardly ever speak in front of many people, which might cause embarrassment and so on. More over, they did not know many vocabulary, as many of them had problems in background English knowledge, they had short-term memory for words and did not know much vocabulary and so often miss spelt words. They were not couraged, lacked of practice and presentation skills. The other problem was their lack of attention and being shy of pronouncing.

The present study is related to theory of Subaşı (2010: 43), who found 12 main causes of the students' anxiety on English speaking:(1) Limited vocabulary, (2) Inaccurate grammar, (3) Imperfect pronunciation, (4) Lack of active listening, (5) Fear of speaking in public, (6) Fear of expressing certain views, (7) Diminishing confidence, (8) Dominance of hesitation, (9) Lack of group skills, (10) Fear of making mistakes, (11) Lack of exposure practicing platforms and (12) Lack of fluency.

And also to theory of Suzan Hammad Rafada (2017: 60-61), who found 6 main causes of students' anxiety on English speaking: (1) Teachers' Role in Raising or Reducing Anxiety, (2) Lack of Vocabulary, (3) Weak Education at Schools, (4) Test Anxiety and (5) Peer Anxiety.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the main finding shows that the fourth year students were anxious to speak English in class at the Faculty of Languages, Souphanouvong University, Academic Year 2017. Because they were nervous when speaking English, such as when they were giving some advice and making self-reports, answering questions. They were nervous when they gave an

answer to a question, which they did not prepare in advance and felt very self-conscious about speaking English in front of their friends in class and were afraid they would be laughed at.

The finding also indicated that the main cause of students' anxiety on English speaking because English speaking made them worried when speaking English and students had lack of flexibility on words, concerns of ideas, and worried about speaking English. They could not talk about something and also students did not know many words. They had no experience and pronunciation problem. Moreover, students were afraid of making mistakes in grammar and structure of sentence, and rarely used social media to practice speaking and listening.

## 6. Conflict

On behalf of researchers. We swear that all information contain in this journal is not conflict of interest with any party and does not benefit for any party, in case of any breach, we will be solely responsible.

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**Table 1.** The results of students' anxiety on English speaking in class

| No | Items  | Mean | S.D   |
|----|--|------|-------|
| 1  | You are embarrassed when speaking English, especially when giving advice and self-reports.                         | 3.83 | 0.910 |
| 2  | You feel trembled when you know that, you are going to be called to answer a question.                             | 3.78 | 0.989 |
| 3  | You feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of others in class.                                   | 3.97 | 0.879 |
| 4  | You get nervous when the teacher asks questions, which you have not prepared in advance.                           | 4.00 | 0.874 |
| 5  | You get nervous and serious when your teacher asks a question.   | 3.63 | 1.018 |
| 6  | You are trembled when you know that you are going to be the first person to give various reports.                  | 3.79 | 1.098 |
| 7  | When you speak English, you are not anxious to answer questions, offer reports and do activities in the classroom. | 3.28 | 1.186 |
| 8  | You do not worry about making mistakes when you speak English or Lao with your teachers.                           | 2.61 | 1.153 |
| 9  | You always feel that other students speak English better than you do.  | 3.33 | 1.309 |
| 10 | You are afraid that other students will laugh at you when you speak English.                                       | 3.69 | 0.963 |

**Table 2:** The results of the main cause of students' anxiety on English speaking in class

| No | Items | Mean | S.D |
|----|-------|------|-----|
|----|-------|------|-----|

|    |   |      |       |
|----|---|------|-------|
| 1  | English speaking makes you more anxious than reading, writing and listening.  | 4.08 | 0.806 |
| 2  | You are very anxious to speak English because you do not know many words.   | 3.86 | 0.961 |
| 3  | You feel unconfident when speaking English in the classroom, such as when guidance on self-reporting and other talks. | 3.59 | 1.307 |
| 4  | You worry about speaking English because you are afraid of making mistakes in grammar and structure of sentence .     | 3.61 | 0.964 |
| 5  | You get nervous and worry when speaking English because you have lack of flexibility on words and concerns of ideas.  | 3.89 | 1.306 |
| 6  | You worry about speaking English because you cannot pronounce correctly.  | 3.47 | 0.971 |
| 7  | You are nervous about speaking English because you rarely use social media to listen to English.                      | 3.11 | 1.166 |
| 8  | You are anxious to speak English because you do not dare speak in public.   | 3.58 | 1.079 |
| 9  | You are excited about speaking English because you do not have any experience in talking in English.                  | 3.61 | 1.128 |
| 10 | You worry about speaking English because you do not have any ideas to talk.   | 3.64 | 0.899 |
| 11 | You feel unconfident and worry about speaking English because you are not skillful and so might become embarrassed.   | 3.72 | 1.111 |
| 12 | You are nervous while speaking English because you are not brave enough and have lack of presentation skills.         | 3.64 | 1.125 |