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Do Socio-Cultural Factors Affect Speaking Anxiety? A Case Study of Non-English Major Students in West Java

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ABSTRACT

Anxiety in foreign language speaking is a widely studied aspect in EFL contexts. Identifying the factors contributing to students' speaking anxiety is essential for understanding and addressing this issue. A few anxiety students have indicated certain sociocultural factors, among other factors, could be responsible for students' foreign language speaking anxiety. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the social-cultural factors causing English-speaking anxiety in non-English primary undergraduate students. This study used a case study qualitative approach. The data collection used are in-depth semi-structured interviews. The data was collected from four undergraduate non-English majors in West Java. The data was analyzed using an open coding method to examine participants' opinions on the socio-cultural elements that impact English speaking anxiety. The data revealed several social-cultural related sources of speaking anxiety, including social and cultural environment, communicative apprehension, formal classroom environment, social status and self-identity, gender, and dialect. Collectively, these factors increase students' anxiety during speaking activities. Moreover, these sociocultural factors not only undermine students' confidence and willingness to take part in speaking tasks, but also hinder their overall progress in language learning. The results of this research are expected to offer helpful recommendations to enable English teachers or lecturers to react to their students' speaking anxiety and to assist teachers of lecturers in arranging their classes in a way that may reduce their students' speaking anxiety and promote students' speaking skills.

Keywords: English language speaking; foreign language anxiety; speaking anxiety; sociocultural factors

INTRODUCTION

English is widely recognized as one of the dominant global languages of the 21st century, with the number of non-native speakers far outnumbering native speakers (Crystal, 2003). As a core component of language, speaking is essential for human communication, enabling interaction, knowledge sharing, and building connections. However, for many, using English as a second or foreign language in everyday situations remains a significant challenge. In Indonesia, English is generally regarded as a third language, following the national language, Indonesian, and regional languages such as Javanese, Dayaknese, or Sundanese (Kirkpatrick, 2016; Lauder, 2010). Despite being competent in their fields, many professionals around the world experience anxiety when speaking a foreign language, often due to limited communication and speaking abilities (Horwitz et al., 1986). This anxiety can be attributed to various factors, including sociocultural influences like differences in linguistic backgrounds and cultural norms, which

shape how individuals use and view English in professional contexts (Talenta et al., 2023; Adnyani, 2022).

Additionally, the pressure to communicate effectively in English is intensified by the growing globalization of industries and the demand for international collaboration. Given English's critical role in global communication, proficiency in the language is often seen as vital for professional and economic advancement on both national and international stages (Graddol, 2006). Therefore, understanding the sociocultural factors contributing to speaking anxiety among non-native English speakers is critical to developing better language teaching methods and fostering greater confidence in language learners (Kamola, 2023; Purba, 2015; Sadeghi et al., 2013).

Language anxiety is a significant concern for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), characterized by discomfort, nervousness, or fear when engaging with a second language. This anxiety often arises from limited communicative proficiency in the target language, as Smith et al. (1986) indicated. Current research highlights that such anxiety can severely impair speaking performance, negatively influencing EFL learners' communication abilities (Yildiz, 2021; Suparlan, 2021; Rajitha & Alamelu, 2020). EFL learners face various challenges associated with anxiety, which can impede their overall progress (Rachmawati & Jurianto, 2020). The emotional stress linked to language acquisition can create considerable barriers to effective communication. Smith et al. (1986) emphasize that this anxiety frequently originates from a lack of confidence in speaking skills and the fear of negative evaluation.

Furthermore, cultural differences and the pressure to perform in front of peers can intensify these feelings (Joy & Kolb, 2009; Apfelthaler et al., 2006; Yamazaki & Toyama, 2002). To mitigate the impact of language anxiety, educators must identify its sources and foster a supportive learning environment that enhances students' speaking abilities (Tóth, 2011; Young, 1986). Recent studies have explored various strategies to reduce EFL learners' anxiety in different contexts, including online learning environments and culturally responsive teaching methods

Understanding the relationships between language acquisition and socio-cultural factors is essential for addressing students' speaking anxiety effectively. As demonstrated by Yan and Horwitz's (1998) findings, such factors may contribute to students' speaking anxiety. Future research should prioritize exploring sociocultural factors in language acquisition (Purba, 2015; Sadeghi., et al., 2013; Yan & Horwitz, 2008; Scovel, 1991). Lo (2017) further supports this notion, indicating that various sociocultural influences can trigger speaking anxiety alongside other determinants. Consequently, he advocates for an investigation of these factors of anxiety. A comprehensive review of existing anxiety research reveals that the majority of studies have primarily linked anxiety to aspects related to language, the classroom environment, teachers, and students. However, there has been limited focus on assessing anxiety through the lens of socio-cultural dimensions.

Students who learn English as an international language frequently express a feeling of nervousness, stress, or anxiety when learning to speak English due to the differences in the social context and cultural environment in which the second or foreign language learning takes place. They also claim to have a mental block when learning English (Mulyani, 2018; Tanveer, 2007). After careful review, it can be seen that the majority of research on language anxiety has linked language anxiety to classroom, teacher, student, and linguistic issues. To this point, only limited attention has been placed on learners' socio-cultural backgrounds. Specifically, there is a shortage of research in Indonesia that focuses on these aspects of speaking anxiety, mainly when speaking English.

From the above-mentioned phenomenon, this research investigates the socio-cultural factors contributing to English-speaking anxiety among non-English major undergraduates at a university in West Java, Indonesia. This study aims to address the gap by examining the

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socio-cultural factors that contribute to speaking anxiety among undergraduate students. This research is expected to provide important insights into the underlying causes of students' speaking anxiety, so that English teachers or lecturers can better understand and support students in overcoming this challenge. In addition, the findings also offer actionable recommendations for educators to structure their classroom activities in ways that can reduce anxiety, create a more uplifting learning atmosphere, and improve students' confidence and speaking ability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY

Anxiety, characterized by feelings of nervousness and stress, significantly impacts language learning, particularly through a phenomenon known as Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), which includes fear and concern in language classrooms (Horwitz, 2010; Suadnyana & Nova, 2021; Anggraeny et al., 2020). FLA is a context-specific type of anxiety that arises during the language-learning process (Horwitz, 2001). Gardner (1987) emphasized that this anxiety is particular to certain situations. The framework established by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope in 1986 has been instrumental in researching language anxiety, addressing prior inconsistencies in studies related to unclear definitions and measurement issues. They defined FLA as a unique combination of self-perceptions, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors linked to classroom learning. Young (1990) described it as a complex psychological phenomenon, while Nazir et al. (2014) highlighted its multifaceted nature influenced by various factors. Research indicates that FLA is a significant barrier for ESL/EFL learners, affecting around one-third of foreign language students (Ahmad et al., 2019; Wang, 2014), drawing considerable attention from researchers over recent decades.

SPEAKING ANXIETY

Speaking anxiety significantly affects EFL students' fluency and oral performance, with symptoms like trembling hands, sweating, and rapid heartbeat (Akkakoson, 2016; Vicontie et al., 2021). Many learners experience discomfort and stress, leading to mental blocks and feelings of failure during class discussions (Tanveer, 2007). Horwitz et al. (1986) emphasize that anxiety often peaks in testing situations due to the fear of public criticism, identifying three types: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communicative apprehension, often stemming from shyness and hesitation, hinders oral communication and diminishes motivation to engage in speaking activities (McCroskey, 1997; McCroskey & Richmond, 1976; Indrianty, 2016). Therefore, effectively managing speaking anxiety is essential for enhancing language learning and encouraging active participation.

Test anxiety in EFL learners stems from the fear of underperforming and concerns about peer and teacher evaluations, often leading to fears of negative judgment (Price, 1991; Horwitz et al., 1986). This heightened sense of observation can increase insecurity and negatively impact classroom performance. Learners may equate anything less than perfect scores with failure, which masks their true potential (Meijer, 2001).

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) identify the fear of negative evaluation as anxiety related to worries about others' perceptions, which can deter EFL learners from participating in discussions, even in small groups (Ohata, 2005). Khusnia (2016) notes that corrections from peers or teachers can further heighten this anxiety. While traditional views focus on communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation, Horwitz (2017) argues that language anxiety involves a broader range of factors, reflecting its complexity. Research shows that speaking anxiety is prevalent among ESL learners at all levels, and rather than decreasing as students advance, anxiety often increases with higher levels of study (Ahmed

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et al., 2017; Batiha et al., 2016; Elaldı, 2016; Saranraj & Meenakshi, 2016).

SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS CAUSING SPEAKING ANXIETY

Sociolinguistics studies language use in social and cultural contexts, focusing on how different social identities (such as gender, age, race, ethnicity, and class) influence speech patterns, including pronunciation and word choice, and can lead to misunderstandings among communities (Labov, 1966). Language anxiety, often considered a form of social anxiety, arises from the social and communicative aspects of language learning (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1999; MacIntyre, 1995) and is shaped by both individual and sociocultural factors. Yan and Horwitz (2008) found that personal factors significantly influence anxiety, with parents' attitudes and regional differences being crucial socio-cultural elements, alongside other factors like gender, class structure, language proficiency, and teacher characteristics.

Tseng (2012) identifies various psychological and sociocultural factors contributing to language anxiety, including low self-esteem, cultural differences, social environment, self-identity, and the pressure of strict classroom settings. Self-esteem, described by Orth and Robins (2014) as a process through which individuals assess their worth, is particularly relevant in second language learning, where low self-esteem correlates with increased anxiety. Research by Bajaj et al. (2016) highlights those adolescents with co-occurring disorders experience significantly higher anxiety, indicating a strong link between stress and self-esteem.

The social environment is crucial for language acquisition, as interactions with peers and teachers can enhance skills through supportive social learning strategies (Rochecouste et al., 2012). Cultural differences also heighten anxiety, with disparities in accepted beliefs causing discomfort, and unfamiliarity with the target language's cultural context exacerbating anxiety levels (Samad et al., 2021; Tseng, 2012). Furthermore, perceived social distance can impact communication, especially among international students (Giles et al., 1975), and gender differences reveal that females typically experience more anxiety in public speaking than males (Machida, 2019; Sadeghi et al., 2013).

The formal educational environment significantly contributes to language anxiety, as students often feel stressed under structured evaluations of their performance (Suleimenova, 2013). The pressure from teachers and peers in foreign language classrooms can diminish confidence and lead to fears of negative judgment or mistakes when speaking. Young (1990) notes that many students prefer not to be called on in class, and activities that require oral communication, such as presentations or spontaneous discussions, can provoke considerable anxiety. Tseng (2012) highlights students' fears of appearing foolish, while Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) emphasize that anxiety is linked to maintaining a positive self-image among peers and teachers.

This study explored how students perceive the relationship between speaking anxiety and socio-cultural factors. It focused on one research question: What socio-cultural elements do students think contribute to English speaking anxiety among non-English major undergraduates?

METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a qualitative case study approach, allowing for a detailed examination of teachers' activities, materials, and technologies to support students' listening comprehension, ultimately enhancing understanding (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Data were gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews with four final-year non-English students from a private university in West Java. Participants were chosen based on their availability and willingness to discuss their speaking anxiety. Interviews were conducted at convenient times and locations for

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the participants, using Indonesian to ensure comfort and practical communication. Each session lasted approximately 30 to 40 minutes and was recorded with a high-quality digital voice recorder for accuracy and transcription. Following the interviews, recordings were transcribed and analyzed, leading to the identification of several themes.

The open coding method suggested by Corbin and Strauss (1999) was used in the data analysis to examine participant opinions regarding the socio-cultural elements impacting anxiety in English-speaking. The researcher carefully classified each transcript and repeatedly improved the categories based on recurring themes. The researcher carefully reviewed and adjusted the codes and categories to better represent the socio-cultural factors influencing speaking anxiety. Patterns within the participant data were found to verify consistency and alignment with the specified categories, and codes and category names were cross-checked against each other.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

The social environment greatly influences second language acquisition, with participants facing challenges due to living in areas where English is not spoken daily. Indonesian and local languages dominate their communities, limiting exposure to English and reducing learning opportunities. Daily English use needs to be improved, complicating their communication ability. The interaction between their social environment and geographical location thus hinders their English language acquisition.

> P1: "I think the environment where I come from is influential because if for example the people I talk to and the environment are supportive of motivating each other to learn English fluently, I will be encouraged too."

> P3: "In my hometown, people generally lack awareness about the importance of English and being fluent in it. However, in the city where I now live to study, most of my friends are engineering students, and since many of our textbooks are in English, this has become one of the factors motivating me to learn the language. English will also be beneficial for my future career."

Participants emphasized the importance of the learning environment in motivating their English language acquisition, noting that local languages dominate daily communication and public awareness of English's significance is lacking. P1 and P2 highlighted that a supportive, English-speaking environment enhances their learning, while P3 compared her hometown, where English is undervalued, to her city of study, where English is more prevalent and recognized for educational and career benefits. P4 also noted that regular exposure to English positively impacts her language learning.

The passage emphasizes the importance of social relationships and environment in successful language acquisition. Spada and Lightbown (2010) argue that learners need supportive social connections to boost confidence as communicators, as classroom-only practice can increase anxiety. Research by Rochecouste et al. (2012) highlights those social strategies, such as support groups, aid English development. Yan and Horwitz (2008) noted that regional disparities impact speaking abilities and anxiety, with urban areas offering more resources than rural ones (Hossain et al., 2016; Cheung et al., 2021). Krashen (1985) also points out that learning in non-English-speaking contexts limits exposure and practice, which hinders communicative skills and increases anxiety. These findings underscore how the social and geographical environment shapes language acquisition.

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COMMUNICATIVE APPREHENSION

The results show that participants expressed doubts about their ability to communicate effectively in class, often citing the complexity of learning English as a significant barrier. This perception can significantly heighten their speaking anxiety, making them hesitant to engage in conversations. Many participants preferred to stay silent rather than risk making mistakes, fearing negative judgments from peers about their English proficiency. This aligns with the concept of communication apprehension (CA), which refers to the anxiety individuals feel before or during interactions with others.

> P2: "I am afraid of making mistakes when speaking because I lack confidence in my English skills."
> P4: "I feel insecure about my lack of skills. I think English grammar and accent are difficult to learn."

Participants expressed a shared sense of communication apprehension (CA) when speaking English, stemming from their perceived lack of ability and confidence. P1 feels anxious due to his inability to speak or understand English, while P3 attributes his fear to insufficient practice and confidence. P2 strongly believes he cannot speak English, further deepening his anxiety, and P4 experiences similar fears but attempts to communicate despite his disorganized speech. These experiences align with research indicating that CA is particularly intense in foreign language learning (Horwitz et al., 1986), arising from factors like poor speaking skills (Soomro et al., 2019) and the belief that one cannot communicate effectively (Rahmani, 2017). This anxiety escalates when speaking in front of peers or authority figures (Young, 1990; Horwitz et al., 1986), highlighting the need to address CA to encourage active participation and build confidence among language learners.

FEAR OF NEGATIVE EVALUATION

The feeling of being negatively evaluated by peers and friends and observed as an incompetent student by others was also identified as an anxiety-provoking factor in speaking in a second or foreign language. In the interview, the participant confessed that he was always afraid of making mistakes. He did not want to get negative comments from his lecturer and classmates.

> P3: "I don't feel afraid. But I feel like I'm overthinking. It depends on the environment. If, for example, the environment can accept me without requiring my English to be correct, I don't feel scared. But if for example, the environment is too perfectionist, and too has its standards, I would feel scared."
>
> P4: "For me, I have to look at the situation and conditions. If the environment is ignorant, if someone speaks English incorrectly, I will be confident. If the environment is too critical, I feel I have to be more careful and become less confident."

The participants' responses reveal that their fear of speaking English is influenced by their environment and preparedness level. P3 feels confident in non-judgmental settings but becomes anxious in high-standard environments, while P4 loses confidence in critical audiences. P1 and P2 rely on prepared texts to speak fluently, and their confidence drops without it due to limited knowledge. This aligns with the concept of fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz et al., 1986), a significant factor in speaking anxiety (Naudhani et al., 2018; Naser & Nijr, 2019). Research supports these experiences, showing that anxious students often remain silent to avoid embarrassment (Price, 1991) and that fear of judgment from peers and teachers causes anxiety (Perkasa et al., 2022). Additionally, when teachers use fear or humiliation, students may become anxious and withdraw (Daymiel et al., 2022). Both internal factors (like preparedness) and external factors (like environment and teacher behavior) contribute to fear of negative evaluation, affecting students' confidence in speaking English.

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SOCIAL STATUS AND SELF-IDENTITY

The study explores the connection between students' anxiety and their perception of social status, particularly in interactions with authority figures like lecturers. Participants indicated that their social standing affected their self-identity and language skills, with one feeling intimidated to speak English with more proficient speakers due to feelings of inferiority. This dynamic illustrates how language proficiency can serve as a marker of social status, leading to insecurity and anxiety that hinder self-expression, academic engagement, and personal growth.

> P1: "I am quite afraid because I lack confidence because I have not mastered English pronunciation well. Moreover, my lecturers often criticize, which seems to scold me if there are students who have wrong grammar and pronunciation. I have tried to speak but I just lack confidence."
>
> P3: "I feel nervous because of the tense atmosphere when I speak to the lecturer. I'm afraid of choosing the wrong word so that it can be misinterpreted. That's why I'm often afraid to be told to speak English by my lecturer.I also had an unpleasant experience when I was criticized by my lecturer but with unpleasant words."
>
> P4: "I'm quiet so I rarely talk. If the lecturer tells me to, I keep quiet. Because if I speak, I am afraid that my articulation is not clear. Still, I dare to speak only for the basics. Not for long conversations."

The four participants experience anxiety and lack confidence when speaking English to their lecturers for various reasons: P3 feels nervous due to a tense classroom environment and past criticism, P2 doubts their skills and provides short answers, P1 struggles with grammar and pronunciation due to repeated criticism, and P4 avoids speaking out of fear of unclear articulation. Their anxiety is linked to fears of criticism, low confidence, and negative experiences. Research indicates that social status and power dynamics contribute to language anxiety among second and foreign language learners, with Horwitz and Young (1991) highlighting that power relations can induce stress, particularly when speaking to higher-status individuals (Hasmeni, 2011). Linguistic gaps between native and second-language speakers exacerbate intercultural communication anxiety (Khan et al., 2020), while findings by Mulyani (2018) confirm that status differences significantly impact communication, reinforcing how power imbalances heighten students' anxiety in academic settings.

GENDER

Gender influences speaking anxiety and performance, as observed in participant interviews. One participant noted that her female friends were more approachable for conversation, despite her shyness, while another felt no difference between male and female friends. Overall, the participants emphasized that individual experiences and dynamics, such as familiarity, gender-based support, and peer teasing, significantly shape their comfort levels in language use.

> P1: "For me, it depends on the friend. If it's a close and supportive friend, I feel confident. But when it's a new female friend, I tend to feel anxious."
>
> P3: "For me, the level of closeness makes a difference. When talking with a female friend, I speak casually but tend to be shy, so I often use simpler vocabulary. With male friends, the conversation feels different."

Participants in the interviews shared differing views on how speaking English with the opposite sex affects their comfort and confidence. P1 emphasized that familiarity is more crucial than gender for his confidence, while P3 felt casual yet shy with female friends, preferring simpler vocabulary and constructive feedback, although teasing from male friends made those interactions uncomfortable. P2 and P4 did not see gender as significantly affecting their experiences.

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Participants' experiences align with mixed research findings on gender and language anxiety. Zakiya et al. (2022) noted individuals often feel more comfortable speaking with female friends, while Tseng (2012) suggested that cultural differences contribute to gender-related anxiety. Yashima et al. (2009) found that female participants report higher public speaking anxiety, while Cheng Erben (2012) linked this anxiety to cultural factors. Conversely, Gobel and Matsuda (2003) found no significant connection between gender and overall language learning anxiety, and studies by Na (2007) and Kitano (2001) indicated that less proficient male students felt more anxious, a trend not observed in females. Machida (2010) similarly reported that female Japanese students generally experience higher anxiety than their male peers. These findings indicate that while gender can influence language anxiety for some, the relationship is complex and varies across individuals and cultural contexts.

FORMAL CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

The formal classroom environment often induces discomfort and anxiety in students, hindering their engagement and clear thinking as they focus on avoiding mistakes rather than developing language skills. To combat this, lecturers should implement teaching methods that foster a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere, encouraging active participation and reducing stress. By balancing structure with flexibility, educators can enhance students' confidence and creativity, leading to a more effective learning experience.

> P1: "I do not enjoy learning in class much because I am required to speak English and am afraid of making mistakes. Outside of class, I feel more relaxed and can learn without pressure"

> P2: "I feel more pressure in class because I need to get good grades and do my best. Sometimes, I was just a passive listener and did not say anything in English lectures."

> P4: "I feel pressured by the teacher in class, especially in a formal and strict environment, which makes me uncomfortable. However, if the teacher is fun and flexible, I feel more *excited and motivated to learn.*"

Participants noted a significant difference in their comfort when speaking English in class versus outside of it, with many expressing that the formal classroom environment heightened anxiety and reduced motivation. While P2 and P4 found the rigid atmosphere uncomfortable, they believed that more engaging teaching methods could boost enthusiasm.

Research shows that rigid and tense classroom environments can increase speaking anxiety (Effiong, 2016). Hasmeni (2011) suggests that a more informal and friendly atmosphere can alleviate this anxiety, highlighting the essential role of language educators. Positive teacher attitudes and encouragement are crucial for helping students develop practical communication skills (Wu et al., 2021; Tanveer, 2007), and Brown (2007) emphasizes the importance of teacher rapport in enhancing learning. To improve outcomes and reduce anxiety, scholars recommend fostering a collaborative learning community that promotes "optimal motivation" (Alderman, 2013) and encourages active participation (Gregersen et al., 2016). Overall, research underscores the significance of a supportive classroom environment (Brophy, 2004; Dornyei, 2001), indicating that less formal settings are more effective in reducing anxiety compared to strict, formal ones.

ACCENT

The participants' thick accents, stemming from their Sundanese heritage in West Java, contribute to their fear of speaking English. While having a regional accent is not inherently problematic, it makes students anxious and embarrassed, as they worry about being mocked by peers and lecturers. This fear can lead to avoidance of speaking in class or social settings. Additionally, the pressure to conform to a "standard" English accent can overshadow the joy of

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communication, causing students to focus more on how they sound rather than expressing their thoughts freely.

> P3: "In terms of intonation, my local accent carries over when I speak English, and I find it difficult to follow the correct intonation. This is because I am used to using Sundanese. I have also been teased when I accidentally use my Sundanese accent when speaking English. Because they think that if you cannot speak English properly, it is better not to speak it. It was quite a painful experience for me even though I am still learning and need a process to be fluent, especially since English is my third language.

> P1: "I don't think it's too different when I speak English. So, the Sundanese accent has no effect."

The findings show that participants have diverse experiences regarding the influence of their accents on English communication. P1 believes their accent does not hinder their communication, while P3 struggles with his Sundanese accent, which affects his intonation and has led to teasing, increasing the pressure of learning English as a third language. P2 feels his accent has a minor impact and has not faced ridicule, while P4 suggests the Sundanese accent is compatible with English. Research by Malik et al. (2021) underscores the significant role of accents in learning English as a foreign, second, or third language. Adults may resist adopting a new accent due to its connection to their identity (Rabie-Ahmed, 2024). Derwing (2003) and Freed (1995) indicate that learners often do not perceive a loss of identity when using their second language, associating their identity more with their first language. The influence of accents is increasingly important in second language acquisition (Jenkins, 2015) and is shaped by socio-cultural and historical factors. The spread of English has resulted in various English varieties influenced by different mother tongues (Utami & Suprayogi, 2022), with non-native speakers now outnumbering native speakers (Crystal, 2012; Kirkpatrick, 2017), highlighting the complexities of accents and identity in language learning.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study aimed to investigate the socio-cultural factors that contribute to English-speaking anxiety among non-English significant undergraduates. The findings reveal seven key socio-cultural elements that can lead to speaking anxiety, underscoring its prevalence in English language classrooms. These factors include social and cultural environment, communicative apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, social status and self-identity, gender, formal educational environment, and accent. Participants noted that these elements significantly impact their speaking performance during class activities.

Given the influence of these factors, there is an urgent need for English teachers and lecturers to adopt targeted strategies to mitigate these challenges. The study suggests that educators should prioritize effective classroom management techniques, fostering a supportive and inclusive environment that encourages participation and reduces anxiety. Integrating more interactive and engaging teaching methods can help alleviate students' fears and enhance their confidence in speaking English. By addressing these sociocultural issues, educators can be crucial in improving students' speaking skills and overall language proficiency. Ultimately, fostering an environment that acknowledges and addresses these anxieties is essential for promoting effective language learning.

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