GLOSSOPHOBIA IN ACADEMIC SPEAKING CONTEXTS: PERCEIVED COGNITIVE, EMOTIONAL, AND BEHAVIOURAL EFFECTS AMONG EFL PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

Faiza Naurah[1], M. Hadi Dwi Putra[2], Syakila Tusya'Diah[3], Lyra Vierdha Irsyah[4], Intan Tri Mulia[5], Hariswan Putera Jaya[6]*

[1) 2) 3) 4) 5) 6)] Universitas Sriwijaya

[1]06011282328040@student.unsri.ac.id [2]06011282328020@student.unsri.ac.id
[3]06011282328060@student.unsri.ac.id [4]06011282328058@student.unsri.ac.id
[5]06011282328036@student.unsri.ac.id [6]hariswan@unsri.ac.id

Corresponding e-mail : hariswan@unsri.ac.id

Abstract

The college students frequently struggle with glossophobia, also known as public speaking anxiety, particularly those who are in charge of making academic presentations. This study explores the influence of glossophobia on fifth-semester students in the English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University. A 12-item Likert scale questionnaire evaluating four dimensions, physical symptoms, perceived cognitive and emotional effects, perceived performance effects, and behavioural responses that was used to gather data from 50 students using a quantitative approach. According to the findings, students' anxiety levels ranged from moderate to severe, with cognitive and emotional discomfort showing the most effects. Anxiety nevertheless affected presentation delivery, clarity, and fluency even if the effect on performance was only minor. These findings suggest that glossophobia significantly is perceived to influence students' perceived academic performance and underscore the need for supportive pedagogical strategies to reduce anxiety and enhance students' confidence in public speaking.

Keywords: *Academic presentations, English Education students, glossophobia, public speaking anxiety, speaking performance*

Introduction

Public speaking is widely recognized as an indispensable skill in the educational field. Empirically, most of the activities in the EFL classroom require public speaking as a medium to convey and manifest the ideas through academic presentations. Presentations serve as a benevolent medium for pre-service teachers to demonstrate their ideas clearly, dare to express their opinions, and become more engaged in the learning process (Howitt & Wilson, 2015). In addition, as claimed by Raja (2017), public speaking practice also builds confidence and prepares pre-service teachers to face professional challenges, such as the world of work, because they are accustomed to presenting their ideas in front of an audience with confidence. However, speaking skills are not just about oral skills, Purwanto et al. (2023), explain that effective public speaking involves planning and delivering persuasive messages, using appropriate language and body language, and managing anxiety that occurs when people are exposed to unfamiliar situations that fabricates their fear of being in a social situation. Bodie (2009) also argues that public speaking anxiety is not merely nervousness, but emotional and physiological complexity of response influenced by situational factors. In other words, strong presentation skills, also confidence in speaking, are closely tied to positive learning outcomes and student engagement.

Nevertheless, pre-service teachers in EFL classrooms face the major obstacles for delivering ideas because there is a language barrier. They have to tackle the fear of speaking in front of the public or commonly known as Glossophobia. Etymologically, the word "Glossophobia" comes from the Greek words glōssa (tongue) and phobos (fear). Rohilla et al. (2025), describe Glossophobia as a huge

constraint in academic presentation. The triggering factors are coming internally and externally. Utami and Wijaya (2021) explains three factors that contribute to the emergence of glossophobia, which are communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative criticism. In particular, Grieve et al., (2021) uses the term Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD) to describe anxiety that occurs when people are exposed to unfamiliar situations that fabricates their fear of being in a social situation. Bodie (2009) also argues that public speaking anxiety is not merely nervousness, but emotional and physiological complexity of response influenced by situational factors. Therefore, glossophobia is not only just discomfort but also a real barrier for EFL pre-service teachers' participation and success in the EFL classroom.

Among students of English Education at Universitas Sriwijaya, Glossophobia is the issue. Cognitively, students frequently report a phenomenon also known as "brain fog" or the mind going blank (Nasir, 2023). Brain fog is a series of cognitive symptoms such as frequent blanks, slow processing of detail, difficulty in focusing, etc. This symptom hijacked the brain function to be foggy and not able to obtain the memory needed. It happens because the working memory is disrupted by anxious thought and negative self-talk that fibrates stress. It blocks student's capability to organize ideas. Emotionally, the next symptom is intense dread, often starting days or weeks before the actual presentation. Behaviourally, this dread often transfers into procrastination, over-rehearsal, or complete avoidance of the presentation task. Most detrimentally, complete avoidance makes the underlying cognitive belief that public speaking is inherently dangerous and not for them. The pre-service teachers' coping mechanism of letting it go rather than preparing the material beforehand. This patterned response effectively solidifies the anxiety cycle (Sitorus & Jaya, 2024).

Research in the context of English language education in Indonesia shows that students lack confidence in speaking English, especially given limited opportunities to practice. Moreover, according to Wahyuningsih and Afandi (2020), many students in English language education programs in Indonesia do not have the opportunity to speak English outside of class, this situation makes students experience a lack of confidence and even anxiety when giving presentations. This pattern becomes particularly evident in the fifth semester, during which students in the English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University are anxious to speak in front of others during classroom presentations as part of their assignment (for example in education methodology or speaking for academic purposes classes). Students say they feel unprepared and embarrassed when they have to give public presentations in English. Without sufficient speaking practice and adequate support, students may experience glossophobia and disrupt their academic presentations. This is also felt by students in the Sriwijaya English Education Program who face similar challenges.

This study, conducted in the 2025 academic year, focuses on glossophobia among fifth-semester students in the English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University, particularly in relation to Speaking for Academic Purposes (SFA). Although many studies have examined the prevalence and level of public speaking anxiety among college students, most of these studies focus on training interventions or measurable anxiety levels, rather than students' perceived performance effects during academic presentations. There is still a lack of research on how students themselves perceive the cognitive, emotional, behavioural, and perceived performance effects associated with glossophobia during SFA presentations, even though previous studies have confirmed that glossophobia is common and can interfere with perceived academic

performance (Rohilla et al., 2025). In addition, little attention has been paid to this issue in English teacher education programs in Indonesia. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the effect that students perceive glossophobia has on their academic presentation performance at EFL classroom.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the manifestations of glossophobia on academic presentation performance among fifth-semester English Education students as pre-service teachers at Universitas Sriwijaya. By surveying the students' anxiety levels and correlating them with their academic presentation performances, the study seeks to identify patterns and tendencies that characterize students' speaking experiences. Understanding this relationship may help answer why some learners struggle in speaking tasks despite adequate language skills. Therefore, this study will provide the answers of perceived effects from pre-service teachers' point of view while doing academic presentations.

The significance of this study extends beyond Sriwijaya University by contributing directly to EFL speaking pedagogy in academic presentations. Identifying the effects of glossophobia can guide educators and curriculum designers in any English teacher-education program. For learners, reducing glossophobia could lead to higher confidence and better academic achievement, such as a communicative classroom fosters active participation and English fluency. Understanding how speaking anxiety manifests in academic presentation enables instructors to recognize speaking anxiety and pedagogical strategies, such as by integrating peer feedback, creating low-stakes speaking tasks and anxiety-management techniques within EFL classrooms. These strategies are particularly relevant for preparing future English teachers, who are expected to model oral communication for their students. As Wahyuningsih and Afandi (2020) advise, innovative speaking

activities and an English-rich environment outside the classroom can build students' confidence. Purwanto et al. (2023) also argue that teaching students to manage anxiety is part of communication skills. In the long run, this research could encourage programs to implant public-speaking training into teacher-education curricula, such as speech courses or clubs. By doing so, learners would gain not only language proficiency but also the courage and competence to speak up. The ultimate outcome is a stronger cohort of EFL teachers who model effective speaking for their future students, thereby improving English education overall.

Methodology

Research Design

This study applied a descriptive quantitative research design, which is a group of techniques that use numbers to show real-world facts and are based on the idea that the social world can be measured and analyzed statistically (Schutt, 2019). The researchers used a quantitative approach because it allows them to quantify students' levels of glossophobia during academic presentation and examine its effect on their performance. The research was conducted in the Speaking for Academic Purpose (SFA) class in English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University. The SFA class was selected because it is the highest level of speaking instruction, and many students experience anxiety during this course.

Research Site and Participants

This study was conducted in the English Education Study Program at Sriwijaya University, focusing in Speaking for Academic Purpose (SFA) class. The target population consisted of fifth semester students who enrolled in the SFA course at both Indralaya and Palembang campuses. A convenience sampling technique was implied, as the participants were selected based on their availability and accessibility to the researchers. Totally, there are 50

participants that contributed to the study and voluntarily completed the questionnaire.

Data Collection Instrument

Data were collected through a questionnaire adapted from existing studies on speaking anxiety and glossophobia, with modifications to suit the context of academic presentations. As Jenn (2006) stated, a questionnaire is a helpful method for gathering information from a large number of people in a short time. The instrument consisted of 12 items designed to measure students' levels of glossophobia and its perceived effects on their academic presentations. Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used in reliability analysis to make sure the instrument was internally consistent. With a Cronbach's alpha coefficient above the minimum acceptable level of 0.70, the analysis results show that the questionnaire has adequate reliability, suggesting that the instrument can be relied upon to collect data.

Data Collection Procedures

The questionnaires were distributed to the students of the Speaking for Academic Purpose class at both Indralaya and Palembang campuses. Participants were informed about the study and ensured that their responses would remain confidential. The researchers asked participants to complete the questionnaire honestly. After that, the researchers compiled and prepared the data for analysis.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive quantitative analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were employed to describe students' levels of glossophobia and their perceived effects during academic presentations in EFL classrooms. This analysis was conducted to address the research objectives by providing an overview of how glossophobia is manifested among EFL students rather than to establish casual relationships. The results were organized and presented in tables to highlight general patterns and trends in students' responses.

Results And Discussion

Respondent Demographic Description

Table 1. Respondent Demographic Description

No.	Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Gender	Male	15	30%
		Female	35	70%
2.	Age	19 y.o.	10	20%
		20 y.o.	35	70%
		21 y.o.	5	10%
3.	Semester	5	50	100%

Table I summarizes the demographic data of the 50 respondents. The result show that majority of participants in this study were female, with 35 respondents (70%) identifying as female, while 15 respondents (30%) identified as male. This indicates that the sample population was mostly female.

In terms of age, the respondents were categorized into three groups: 19, 20, 21 years old. The majority of the respondents, thirty-five people (70%) were

under 20 years old. Meanwhile, five of the respondents, or 10% were 21 years old, while ten responses, accounting for 20%, were from people age 19 years old.

Regarding the academic characteristic, all respondents (100%) were enrolled in the 5th semester. This similarity indicates that the participants were in the same academic level and academic experience phase, which contributes to a more consistent interpretation of anxiety levels among respondents in similar learning environments.

Descriptive Interpretation of Each Item

Table 2. Descriptive Interpretation of Each Item
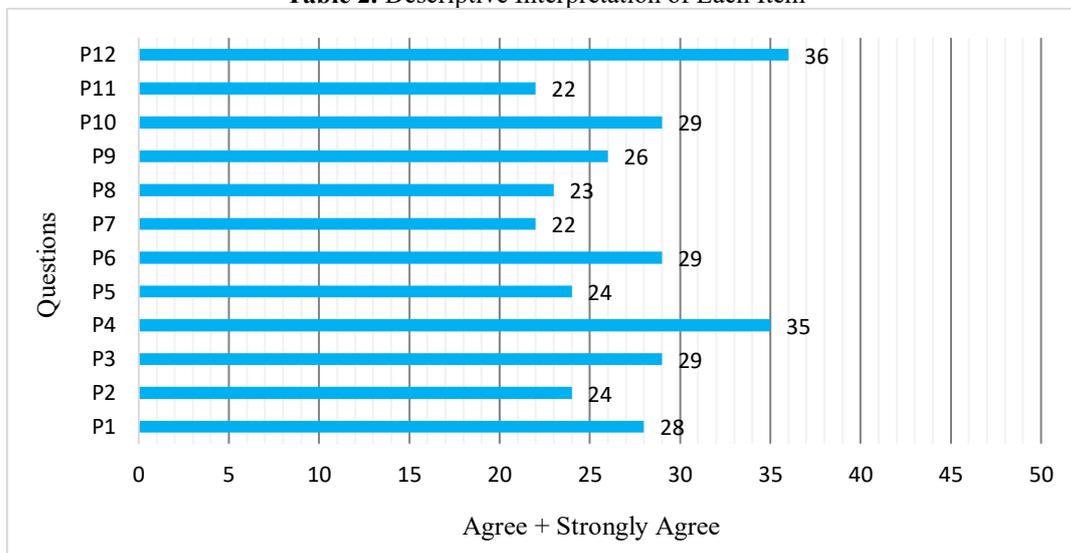
Perceived Anxiety and Physical Symptoms, Perceived Cognitive and Emotional Effects, Perceived Performance Effects, and Behavioural Responses are the four dimensions of the questionnaire. The results of the study show that most respondents experience moderate to high levels of anxiety related to these variables.

Perceived Anxiety and Physical Symptoms, the first dimension, shows how respondents felt tense both physically and emotionally tense during presentations. In particular, anxiety, physical discomfort, and physical reactions to stress. This finding is consistent with Alharbi (2021), who reported that anxious speakers often show clear physical signs of nervousness during oral presentations. These results indicate that speaking anxiety is not only felt emotionally, but also physically, especially in presentation situations. The majority of respondents frequently reported having observable anxiety-related symptoms, as evidenced by high total scores in this area.

The intensity of the scores indicates the interconnectedness between both physically and emotionally tense while doing presentation. The overwhelming state of anxiety is perceived to influence the performance directly because the instability of emotion can create memory interference which prevents students from giving their best during the presentation.

Concentration issues, excessive anxiety, and emotional disturbance are captured by the second dimension, Perceived Cognitive and Emotional Effects (P4-P6). Statements about focus disturbances and emotional instability caused by an inability to control anxiety when speaking in public received strong support from respondents. This indicates that when students are experiencing emotional turbulence, it triggers a disruption of their concentration which can affect the organizing mechanization when giving speech during presentation. This result supports previous ELT studies showing that anxiety can disturb

concentration and emotional stability during speaking activities (Mohamad et al., 2023). This suggests that speaking anxiety can interfere with both cognitive processes and emotional control.

The third dimension, Perceived Performance Effects (P7-P9), describes the extent to which anxiety is perceived to influence perceived task performance, academic presentations in class, and productivity. The results show that many respondents felt overworked and reported perceived difficulties in maintaining optimal performance when completing presentation-related tasks under anxiety-inducing conditions. This finding is in line with Alharbi (2021) and Mohamad et al. (2023), who reported that anxious speakers tend to evaluate their speaking performance negatively. These findings indicate that anxiety mainly affects how pre-service teachers perceive their performance during speaking tasks.

The final dimension, Behavioural Responses (P10-P12), focuses on the respondents' actions prior to the presentation. For example, memorizing the notes and practicing regularly. This finding is consistent with Kenoh (2021), who found that preparation helps teachers feel more confident when speaking. Similarly, this result supports Arifin et al. (2024), who reported that pre-service teachers use planning and self-reflection strategies to manage speaking anxiety. These strategies may help reduce nervousness and support more positive speaking experiences in the classroom. In addition to preparation strategies, some respondents also showed Coping-related behaviors like avoidance, disengagement, restlessness, and sudden emotional outbursts are triggered by the effects of glossophobia. The consistently high answer scores imply that anxiety has a noticeable perceived effect on respondents' behavioural adaptation patterns.

Validity Test

Table 3. Validity Test

R. Value	0,81	0,78	0,84	0,87	0,86	0,76	0,76	0,83	0,74	0,66	0,73	0,70
R. Table	0,279	0,279	0,279	0,279	0,279	0,279	0,279	0,279	0,279	0,279	0,279	0,279
	valid	valid	valid	valid	valid	valid	valid	valid	valid	valid	valid	valid

The validity test showed that all 12 items on the questionnaire were valid. Based on the item-total correlations and a sample of 50 respondents, the R-Table value was identified to be 0.279 at a significance level of 0.05. Each item's R-value ranged from 0.609 to 0.865, thus above the R-Table's crucial value. As a result, it can be concluded that each item shows sufficient construct validity, making it appropriate for the suitable measurement of the variables. No items were excluded from further analysis.

Anxiety scores indicated a diverse variation, ranging from 27 to 55, thefore indicating a range of anxiety levels. The majority of participants showed moderate to high anxiety, as shown by scores between 40 and 55. These findings imply that respondents' anxiety has significant cognitive, emotional, performance, and behavioural effects in addition to physical symptoms. Therefore, it can be said that the anxiety scale utilized in this study has good measuring capabilities, and the results show that the responder group was under a great deal of psychological pressure.

Narrative Interpretation of Descriptive Statistics

Table 4. Narrative Interpretation of Descriptive Statistics

No.	Variable	Mean	Min	Max	Deviation Standard	Category
1	Perceived Anxiety and Physical Symptoms	3.49	1	5	1.05023483	High
2	Perceived Cognitive and Emotional Effects	3.54	1	5	1.01214843	High
3	Perceived Performance Effects	3.35	1	5	0.94751136	Moderate
4	Behavioural Responses	3.59	1	5	0.881376989	Moderate

Based on descriptive statistical analysis of the four variables studied in this study, the results show varying levels of participant response across various dimensions. The Perceived Anxiety and Physical Symptoms variable falls into high category with an average score of 3.49 and a standard deviation of 1.05. This suggests that respondents frequently experienced anxiety-related feelings and physical responses connected to the concept being assessed. Relatively, the Perceived Cognitive and Emotional Effects variable obtained the highest average score of 3.54 (SD = 1.01), which was also categorized as High. This implies that emotional instability and cognitive disorders were commonly mentioned by respondents.

On the other hand, the Perceived Performance Effects variable has an average value of 3.35 and a standard deviation of 0.95, placing it in the Moderate group. This shows that although respondents experience some consequences related to performance, these effects are not as noticeable as those in other dimensions. Finally, the Behavioural Response variable falls into the Moderate group with an average value of 3.59 (SD = 0.88). This indicates that there are moderate changes in the respondents' behavior.

Overall, descriptive data shows that respondents reported relatively high levels of anxiety and emotional cognitive effect, although the perceived performance effects and behavior tended to be less. This pattern may be understood in the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL), particularly related to the demands of academic speaking, which places great pressure on the students' internal processes.

In the context of EFL classes, students are often faced with speaking tasks such as presentations, academic discussion, and spontaneous oral responses that demand linguistic accuracy, fluency, and confidence. These situations can trigger anxiety and a strong cognitive load, although the effect is not yet fully reflected directly in speaking performance or avoidance behavior. Therefore, these findings suggest that students' internal experiences, particularly emotional and cognitive aspects deserve special attention when evaluating speaking challenges in EFL classrooms.

Thus, the results of this study not only describe respondents' perception of the various aspects studied, but also provide an important contextual basis for regression analysis and hypothesis testing in subsequent stages.

Conclusion

This study aims to examine the effect of glossophobia on the academic presentation performance of fifth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Universitas Sriwijaya using a descriptive quantitative research design. Based on the analysis of questionnaires completed by 50 respondents, the research findings indicate that anxiety about public speaking is a fairly dominant experience and is perceived to affect various aspects of students' academic presentations.

The results of the study show that students experience varying levels of glossophobia, ranging from moderate to high, in four dimensions, namely physiological symptoms, perceived cognitive and emotional effects, perceived performance effects, and behavioural

responses. The cognitive and emotional dimensions emerged as the most prominent aspects, characterized by difficulty concentrating, negative thoughts, and emotional instability during presentations. In addition, physical symptoms such as nervousness, trembling hands, and body tension are also often experienced by students. Although the effect on presentation performance is moderate, students admit to having difficulty organizing ideas, delivering material clearly, and maintaining audience engagement. Behavioural responses in the form of a tendency to avoid presentations and the emergence of anxiety were also found in most respondents.

These findings indicate that glossophobia can be a psychological challenge that has the potential to inhibit student participation in academic speaking tasks, especially in Speaking for Academic Purposes (SFAP) courses that require intensive oral communication skills. Although this study does not aim to determine a cause-and-effect connection, the results emphasize the importance of paying attention to students' affective factors in the context of speaking instruction. Therefore, English teachers may consider implementing more supportive learning strategies, such as providing low-risk speaking opportunities, constructive feedback, simple anxiety management exercises, and gradually structured speaking activities to increase students' confidence.

This study has several limitations. The use of questionnaires as the sole data collection instrument limits deeper understanding of students' subjective experiences and does not allow for casual interpretation. Furthermore, the study's limited focus on one study program and small sample size could limit how broadly the results can be applied. Therefore, the results of this study need to be interpreted with caution.

Future research is recommended to use mixed-methods or qualitative approaches, such as interviews and classroom observations, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the experience of glossophobia in academic presentation. In addition, future research may also examine the effectiveness of specific pedagogical interventions in reducing public speaking anxiety in EFL students.

Overall, this study contributes to enriching the study of effective factors in English speaking learning by highlighting the existence and effect of glossophobia on prospective English teachers. Efforts to accommodate students' affective needs through appropriate learning strategies are expected to support the creation of more effective and confident academic communication.

Acknowledgement

References

Alharbi, A. T. (2021). Speaking anxiety during English oral presentations: Investigating Saudi undergraduate EFL learners' behaviors. *Linguistics and Culture Review, 5*(S2), 1548–1564.

Arifin, S., Nurkamto, J., Rochsantiningsih, D., & Gunarhadi, G. (2024). Investigating pre-service EFL teachers' strategies to overcome speaking anxiety during the shift from online to offline learning in the post-COVID-19 era. *rEFLections, 31*(2), 766–790.

Bodie, G. D. (2009). A racing heart, rattling knees, and ruminative thoughts: Defining, explaining, and treating public speaking anxiety. *Communication Education, 59*(1), 70–105.

Dellah, N. F., Zabidin, N., Nordin, N. A., Amanah, F. H., & Atan, M. A. (2020). Glossophobia: Evaluating university students' speaking anxiety in english oral presentations. *Jurnal Ilmi, 10*(1), 116-126.

Grieve, R., Woodley, J., Hunt, S. E., & McKay, A. (2021). Student fears of oral presentations and public speaking in higher education: A qualitative survey. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, *45*(9), 1281–1293.

Howitt, S., & Wilson, A. (2015). Developing, expressing and contesting opinions of science: Encouraging the student voice. *Higher Education Research & Development, 34*(3), 541–553.

Indahsari, M. O., Rahmawati, E., & Baihaqi, A. (2025). Glossophobia and public speaking achievement among Indonesian EFL undergraduate students. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Cultural Studies*, *8*(2), 119–128.

Jenn, N. C. (2006). Designing a questionnaire. *Malaysian Family Physician: The Official Journal of The Academy of Family Physicians of Malaysia, 1*(1), 32–35.

Kenoh, A. R. T. (2021). A qualitative study on speaking anxiety among pre-service teachers. *Journal of Learning and Development Studies, 1*(1), 34–39.

Mohamad, A. R., Fakhruddin, W. F. W. W., & Sazalli, N. A. H. (2023). Investigating speaking anxiety among pre-service ESL teachers in oral presentation. *European Proceedings of Educational Sciences, 7*, 424–434.

Nasir, N. (2023). Public presentation anxiety: Studies cases concerning public presentation anxiety of student's prospective English teacher. *Gema Wiralodra*, *14*(2), 944–951.

Pohan, A., & Kusumawardany, I. N. (2023). Students' perception on speaking anxiety in English classroom: Psychological view. *Inspiring: English Education Journal, 6*(1), 58–67.

Purwanto, E., Shahreza, M., Oktarina, S., El Yana, K., & Rahmah, A. (2023). Developing life skills through effective communication. *International Journal of Progressive Sciences and Arts, 39*(1), 468–474.

Raja, F. U. (2017). Anxiety level in students of public speaking: Causes and remedies. *Journal of Education and Educational Development, 4*(1), 94.

Rohilla, A., Javed, U., Noor, I., Akram, S., Adnan, G., Nizar, N., & Taj, N. (2025). Impact of oral presentation skills training on glossophobia and self-esteem among second-year Allied Health students in Karachi.

Advanced Social Science Archive Journal, 4(1), 1821–1831.

Sahara, N. M., & Nurcholis, I. A. (2022). The causes of glossophobia in the students speaking classroom. *Teaching English and Language Learning English Journal (TELLE)*, *2*(3), 191–198.

Schutt, R. K. (2019). Quantitative methods. *The Wiley Blackwell Companion To Sociology*, 39-56.

Sitorus, R., & Jaya, A. (2024). The vicious cycle: How avoidance behavior maintains speaking anxiety in EFL students. *Journal Of Affective Language Learning*, 15(2), 210–225.

Utami, I., & Wijaya, K. H. (2021). Internal And external factors influencing students' speaking anxiety in EFL classroom. *Linguistics And English Education Journal, 11*(2), 167–178.

Wahyuningsih, S., & Afandi, M. (2020). Investigating English speaking problems: Implications for speaking curriculum development in Indonesia. *European Journal of Educational Research, 9*(3), 967–977.