



STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FACTORS AFFECTING SPEAKING ANXIETY IN THE MICROTEACHING CLASS

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Accepted :

26 January 2026

Published :

26 January 2026

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to examine pre-service English teachers' perceptions of the factors contributing to speaking anxiety in a microteaching classroom context. Specifically, it aims to identify and analyze both internal and external factors that influence students' anxiety during microteaching performances. Employing a descriptive qualitative research design supported by quantitatively described data, the study collected data through a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The participants were fifth-semester students of an English Education program enrolled in a Microteaching course. The findings indicate that speaking anxiety is shaped by a combination of internal and external determinants. Limited vocabulary mastery and emotional responses emerged as the dominant internal factors, whereas classroom atmosphere, peer collaboration, and lecturer evaluation were identified as the most influential external factors. The results of this study offer valuable implications for teacher education programs, particularly within microteaching courses, by highlighting the importance of fostering a supportive learning environment to help reduce students' speaking anxiety during teaching practice. This research contributes a novel perspective to the existing literature by emphasizing the performance-oriented nature of speaking anxiety among pre-service teachers and underscoring the significant role of external contextual factors in shaping their anxiety experiences.

Keywords: *Speaking Anxiety, Microteaching, Internal Factors, External Factors, EFL Students*

1. INTRODUCTION

Skill in speaking is one of the most important yet difficult competencies in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It has been previously noted by numerous researchers that speaking as a productive skill is much more engrossing in terms of language use than listening and reading, due to real-time usage of languages and apprehension for accuracy and fluency (Jaya et al., 2025; Putri et al., 2023; Sujiati et al., 2023). The fear of speaking may hinder learners to avoid doing oral tasks, not eager to contribute in classroom interaction, and the low academic achievement (Asparanita, 2020; Naibaho, 2022; A. R. Putri et al., 2020).

Speaking anxiety takes on a more complex nature in the teacher education

setting, especially in microteaching classes (Vuong thi hai et al., 2025; Sulistyowati, 2023; Pontillas, 2020). In microteaching, students have to show their capability of English and class management from the explanation of materials, which they can speak in an understandable way both for other group members and teachers, that is not all material written on the modules also from giving instructions or taking control when managing a class with his/her friend as students. These two demands combined put students in a high-stress situation, at the intersection of linguistic, psychosocial and sociocultural dimensions, which might lead to rising levels of anxiety (Nurilahi & Suhartono, 2022; Qotrun et al., 2024).

Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM

The research problem examined in this study is the enduring speaking anxiety experienced by pre-service teachers during microteaching activities (Jenny et al., 2013; Na et al., 2024; Sabgini & Triastama Wiraatmaja, 2022). Microteaching is meant to help students get ready for teaching in a real classroom, but many still feel anxious, which can hurt their performance and confidence (Sihite et al., 2024). This situation is worrying because English teachers need to be able to speak well and teach well (Tran et al., 2024; Hermansyah et al., 2021; Akramy, 2020).

This study was motivated by the need to learn more about how students perceive the variables influencing their speaking anxiety in microteaching classes. Knowing how students perceive things is crucial because it reveals what influences them the most from their point of view. These insights could aid instructors and teacher education programs in creating more effective methods for lowering anxiety and fostering a more encouraging learning environment. Thus, the main objective of this study is to investigate how students perceive the variables influencing speaking anxiety in the microteaching class (Tans et al., 2025; Vuong thi hai et al., 2025).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Speaking anxiety in a variety of EFL contexts has been the subject of a large body of research (Asparanita, 2020; A. R. Putri et al., 2020). Students were discouraged from speaking due to a lack of vocabulary, test-related anxiety, and fear of making mistakes; the classroom setting had less of an impact (N.W.S.C, 2021). Similar to this, moderate anxiety levels in online learning environments were linked to peer intimidation, little teacher-student interaction, and lack of eye contact (Anggraini et al., 2022). Speaking anxiety has also been found to be significantly influenced by test anxiety, communication anxiety, and fear of receiving a poor grade (Mulia, 2023; Naibaho, 2022).

High levels of speaking anxiety among students have been documented in a number of studies (Qotrun et al., 2024). Students reported having high to moderate anxiety, mostly as a result of shyness, lack of preparation, fear of being laughed at, and low self-confidence

(Nurilahi & Suhartono, 2022). Additionally, Stressed that conversations and presentations caused situation-specific speaking anxiety (Ardiyansah & Auliya, 2023).

Consistent results are found in Indonesian research. 62% of students had moderate to high speaking anxiety, which was mostly caused by insecurity and fear of receiving a poor grade (Nadia & Hilalina, 2020). Anxiety levels were influenced by demographic factors like gender, proficiency level, and self-perceived ability, with female and less proficient learners reporting higher levels of anxiety (Fındıklı, 2023). Factors that negatively impact students' motivation and fluency at the postgraduate level include limited vocabulary, grammar issues, teacher correction styles, and comparison with native speakers (Sulistyowati, 2023; Vuong thi hai et al., 2025).

The prevalence of speaking anxiety is further supported by research on younger students. Students' participation was discouraged by both external and internal factors, including teacher feedback and peer judgment, as well as internal factors like shyness, fear, and limited vocabulary (Rohmah & Mohammad Kurdi Wijaya, 2025). While the higher anxiety levels were linked to lower speaking achievement (A. R. Putri et al., 2020; Ulla Azizati Rohima & Saputa, 2023).

The cognitive, affective, and physical aspects of anxiety (Puspitasari et al., 2021). The cognitive, performance, and affective factors as significant contributors (Gusti, 2021). Speaking anxiety has been linked to test anxiety, embarrassment, fear of evaluation, and communication anxiety, according to other research (Laia, 2023; Saharani et al., 2022).

Overall, prior research shows that situational contexts, demographic traits, external factors, and internal factors all affect speaking anxiety. However, the majority of current research has concentrated on primary and secondary education levels, online learning, or general EFL classrooms. Microteaching classes, where students must simultaneously demonstrate pedagogical and linguistic competence, have received little attention. In order to close this gap, this study looks at how students perceive the variables influencing their speaking anxiety in the microteaching class. It is guided by the

Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM

following research question: *How do students perceive the factors influencing their speaking anxiety in the microteaching class?*

3. METHODS

The descriptive qualitative design used in this study was backed by descriptive quantitative data. This strategy was deemed suitable since the study's objective was not to test hypotheses or identify causal relationships, but rather to investigate students' perceptions of the factors influencing their speaking anxiety in a microteaching class (Neuman, 2019; Tisdell et al., 2025). While descriptive quantitative data from questionnaires were used to support and elucidate the qualitative findings, the qualitative orientation allowed for a thorough understanding of students' subjective experiences (Naibaho, 2022; Putri et al., 2020).

Twenty-five undergraduate students from Universitas Negeri Semarang's (UNNES) English Education Study Program participated in this study. There were five men and twenty women among these participants. Each participant was enrolled in their first microteaching course and was in their fifth semester. The students had taken speaking courses from the first to fourth semesters prior to enrolling in the microteaching course, which gave them experience using English in classroom-based activities.

Two methods were used to gather data: semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire. In order to get a general picture of how students perceived the factors influencing their speaking anxiety in the microteaching class, the questionnaire was first given out. A five-point Likert scale, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 5 representing "strongly agree," was used to measure the closed-ended statements (Putri et al., 2020; Qotrun et al., 2024).

Previous research on speaking anxiety in EFL contexts was used to modify and improve the questionnaire items (Mulia, 2023; Nurilahi & Suhartono, 2022; A. R. Putri et al., 2020). There were two primary sections to the questionnaire. Demographic data, such as gender, semester, and previous speaking course experience, were gathered in the first section. Statements about internal (like low

self-esteem, a small vocabulary, and pronunciation issues) and external (like peer pressure, instructor criticism, and classroom environment) elements that could affect students' speaking anxiety were included in the second section (Asparanita, 2020; Qotrun et al., 2024). To guarantee accessibility and participation, the final questionnaire was sent to every participant via a link shared in the class WhatsApp group.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out in addition to the questionnaire in order to corroborate and clarify the results (A. R. Putri et al., 2020). Based on their answers to the questionnaire, five respondents were purposefully chosen to represent varying degrees of perceived speaking anxiety. In order to facilitate participants' comfortable and thoughtful responses, the interviews were conducted online via WhatsApp in written form. Students' perceptions and experiences regarding internal and external factors influencing their speaking anxiety during microteaching activities were the main focus of the interview questions. All participants were identified as Respondent 1 through Respondent 5 and anonymized to maintain confidentiality.

A descriptive analytical approach was employed to analyze the data (Naibaho, 2022; A. R. Putri et al., 2020). The responses from the questionnaires were tabulated and analyzed by mean scores that indicate the extent each internal and external factor was perceived to affect students speaking anxiety. Each item was interpreted based on its mean value using a number of predefined interval categories, which made clarity easy to understand when the results were presented in tables. Interview data were analyzed descriptively to identify recurring themes about students' perceptions of speaking anxiety. Quotes from selected interview excerpts were used to support and illustrate the quantitative findings and were integrated into the Results and Discussion section. By using this merged approach, the study has presented a full description of how students perceived the factors affecting their speaking anxiety in the microteaching class.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM

This section highlights the result of the study on students' perceptions of the factors that affect their speaking anxiety in the microteaching class. The findings in this section are based on the data from the questionnaires, while certain semi-structured interview excerpts are also used to clarify and reinforce the quantitative data. The results were then categorized into two major divisions: internal factors and external factors.

To help interpret the quantitative data collected from the questionnaires, this study applied the average score intervals, as indicated in Table 1. Based on these intervals, it was possible to categorize students' responses into five categories: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. This would provide an analytical basis on the interpretation of students' perceptions for each factor that influences speaking anxiety in the microteaching class.

Table 1. Interval Score Interpretation

Interval	Interpretation
1,00 - 1,79	Strongly Disagree
1,80 - 2,59	Disagree
2,60 - 3,39	Neutral
3,40 - 4,19	Agree
4,20 - 5,00	Strongly Agree

Internal Factors**Table 2. The Internal Factors Affecting Students' Speaking Anxiety**

No	Statement	Attitude	f	%	M	I
1	I am afraid of making mistakes while speaking	SA	5	20%	3.00	N
		A	12	48%		
		N	3	12%		
		D	4	16%		
		SD	1	4%		
2	I feel embarrassed when I make mistakes	SA	4	16%	3.56	A
		A	11	44%		
		N	6	24%		
		D	3	12%		
		SD	1	4%		
3	My limited vocabulary makes me anxious when speaking	SA	1	4%	3.56	A
		A	16	64%		

		N	5	20%		
		D	2	8%		
		SD	1	4%		
4	I find it difficult to express ideas due to limited vocabulary.	SA	3	12%	3.60	A
		A	13	52%		
		N	5	20%		
		D	4	16%		
		SD	0	0%		
5	I worry that incorrect pronunciation will affect how others perceive my ability	SA	5	20%	3.36	N
		A	10	40%		
		N	1	4%		
		D	7	28%		
		SD	2	8%		

As shown in Table 2, the list of internal factors that were assessed in the study comprises the lack of vocabulary, feeling embarrassed when making a mistake, vocabulary-induced anxiety, pronunciation-induced anxiety, and the fear of making a mistake. The average scores of the internal factors were recorded to be ranging from 3.00 to 3.60.

The statement “I find it difficult to express ideas due to limited vocabulary” received the highest average score for the internal factors ($M = 3.60$), which belongs to the ‘agree’ category. In percentage, 64% of the students agreed and strongly agreed with the comment. This indicated that the difficulty in trying to express their ideas using limited vocabulary was recognized as the most evident internal dimension that influenced the students’ speech anxiety when participating in the microteaching lessons.

“My limited vocabulary makes me anxious when speaking” recorded a relatively high score with a mean of 3.56, with 68% of the students agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. For instance, the statement “I feel embarrassed when I make mistakes”

received a score of 3.56, with 60% of the students agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement. It is evident from the study that many students experienced the challenge of limited vocabulary and feeling embarrassed, thus affecting their anxiety during speaking. Results from the interviews confirm the findings from the questionnaire evaluation. For example, one respondent had this to say:

“Limited vocabulary and pronunciation difficulties significantly reduce my confidence because I worry that my explanation will not be clear or sound incorrect.” (Respondent 1)

Another respondent expressed a similar perception:

“When I cannot find the right words or pronounce them correctly, I lose confidence and hesitate to continue speaking.” (Respondent 2)

By contrast, the statement “I feel anxious about my pronunciation,” averaging 3.36 on the scale, fell into the “neutral” category. Correspondingly, the statement “I am afraid of making mistakes when speaking,” averaging 3.00 on the scale and featuring the lowest mean score on the internal themes list,

Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM

was also rated as “neutral.” The spread of data on these items indicates that while the concerns of pronunciation anxiety and making

mistakes influenced students differently and were viewed as being less significant than vocabulary-related concerns.

External Factors**Table 3. The External Factors Affecting Students’ Speaking Anxiety**

No	Statement	Attitude	f	%	M	I
1	I feel anxious when my performance is compared with others	SA	4	16%	3.40	A
		A	10	40%		
		N	5	20%		
		D	4	16%		
		SD	2	8%		
2	I worry that my peers judge my speaking ability negatively	SA	3	12%	3.36	N
		A	10	40%		
		N	7	28%		
		D	3	12%		
		SD	2	8%		
3	I worry that my mistakes will affect how the lecturer views my competence	SA	1	4%	3.56	A
		A	16	64%		
		N	5	20%		
		D	2	8%		
		SD	1	4%		
4	I feel calmer when the classroom atmosphere is supportive	SA	14	56%	4.36	SA
		A	7	28%		
		N	3	12%		
		D	1	4%		
		SD	0	0%		
5	I feel more confident when my classmates are cooperative	SA	16	64%	4.44	SA
		A	5	20%		
		N	3	12%		
		D	1	4%		

		SD	0	0%		
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the influence was perceived to be lower compared to the other items.

As shown in Table 3, external factors, which were peer cooperation, class environment, evaluation of the lecturer, peer comparison, and fear of peer disapproval, were also considered in this study. Generally, the mean scores of external factors varied from 3.36 to 4.44, signifying that these external factors had more influence than internal factors in affecting the students' concerns in speaking.

"I feel more confident when my classmates are cooperative" recorded the highest mean score on the list of external factors ($M = 4.44$), which belongs to the strongly agree category. This indicates that the cooperation of the classmates was considered the most significant factor that contributed to the reduction of speaking anxiety.

The statement "I feel calmer when the classroom atmosphere is supportive" also attained a very high mean score ($M = 4.36$), which fell under strongly agree. This result shows that the students found the supportive classroom environment conducive to their emotional relaxation when articulating their speech. This can be justified by the interview excerpt below:

"Positive reactions from classmates help me feel calmer, but negative or silent reactions increase my anxiety." (Respondent 2)

The statement "I worry that my mistakes will affect how the lecturer views my competence" earned an average rating of 3.56. This falls within the agree category. It can be noted that the rating corresponds to the importance given to the lecture evaluation as a source having an affect on speech anxiety. This has been supported by the following extract from the interview:

"Direct correction sometimes makes me more anxious, especially when it happens in front of the class." (Respondent 3)

However, the items involving peer comparison ($M=3.40$) and the fear of negative peer judgment ($M=3.36$) were grouped in the moderate influence scale. It is clear that while the items involving peer comparison occurred,

The results show that even though internal causes such as a limited vocabulary and emotional responses partially influence students' speaking anxieties, external causes, especially class and lecturer learning atmosphere and peer and lecturer co-operative learning, are even more influential for students' speaking anxieties when conducting microteaching classes. For internal variables, a limited vocabulary was seen as having a highly influential effect on speaking anxieties. Although a limited vocabulary has been cited in very many studies before (Nurilahi & Suhartono, 2022) and continues to be a very influential source of speaking anxieties in EFL speaking classes up till now, in these classes, a limited vocabulary was a source of difficulty for students in conveying their ideas effectively.

However, when compared to studies carried out in general English language classes (Gusti, 2021), it seems that the effect of vocabulary limitations in microteaching setting is more complex. Moreover, in addition to using English language as a medium of communication, students are expected to deliver lessons proficiently, applying concepts, providing instructional guidance, and structuring classroom interactions. Therefore, pressure on students tends to become more compounded as students are anticipated to cope with these pressures simultaneously. Something similar has been cited (Ardiyansah & Auliya, 2023), where it was identified that when students were asked to take instructional engagements rather than having regular conversations, public speaking anxiety grew.

Emotional experiences, especially embarrassment in making mistakes, were also identified to be important to internal aspects. This aligns well with research that highlights affective aspects of anxiety related to fear, embarrassment, or lack of confidence (Naibaho, 2022). In this research, embarrassment was seen to be directly related to students' realization that they were not only assessed linguistically but also pedagogically. This supports the notion that speaking anxiety

Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM

in microteaching is performance-related as identified (N.W.S.C, 2021; Ramli et al., 2024).

Worth mentioning is that fear of mistake-making, as well as fear of pronunciation, was viewed as a non-influential aspect of anxiety. This is somewhat contradictory to some secondary-level research, which pointed to fear of mistake-making as a source of predominant anxiety in language learning (Rohmah & Mohammad Kurdi Wijaya, 2025; Saharani et al., 2022). This might be due to the fact that in this research, participants were fifth-semester students of English education. It is possible that these students had already had some experience in speaking classes, so their basic fear of mistake-making was lower, yet their anxieties regarding mistake-making were still high regarding their career as teachers.

The results also show that the external factors have a more prominent effect on students' speech anxiety in the classroom compared to the internal factors. Encouraging class environment and cooperation of students had the highest effect in eliminating speech anxiety. This finding strongly replicates the previous study where the critical factor for speech performance is the encouraging class and co-operation of students (Anggraini et al., 2022; Manuputty, 2025).

In a microteaching learning environment, peer roles stand out due to the involvement of peers or schoolmates on the part of students to observe, critique, and also to some degree, serve as recipients. Collaborative peer observance plays a significant role in minimizing TH perceptions. It supports a safe learning environment. The peer cooperation has a significant influence on minimizing levels of individuals' speaking anxiety. Findings of both studies are supported by findings of this study that peer cooperation is vital within a microteaching setting.

Lecturer evaluation also emerged as an important external source of anxiety. Students expressed concern that their mistakes might negatively influence lecturers' perceptions of their competence. The result is in line with studies indicating that fear of negative evaluation from teachers significantly contributes to speaking anxiety (Findikli, 2023; Nurilahi & Suhartono, 2022). In microteaching classes, lecturer feedback

usually carries the function of formal assessment, which can heighten students' anxiety, especially when corrective feedback is given publicly. A similar pattern was also identified, who reported that feedback style is important in developing students' emotional responses in speaking contexts (Sulistyowati, 2023).

In regard to the factors related to class environment and the lecturer's performance, peer evaluation and fear of negative peer evaluation had only a moderate level of influence. This result contrasts the findings from researches involving lower levels of education. In these researches, the evaluation of the peer was found to be a significant source of anxiety-relating concern (A. R. Putri et al., 2020; Ulla Azizati Rohima & Saputa, 2023). It can be attributed to the students' maturity level and experience in education. Students attuned to university education are expected to be less averse to peer evaluation despite the potential for associated sources of anxiety.

The findings show that students' speech anxiety in the micro-teaching class is affected by a combination of internal and external factors, and the external factors have a relatively more prominent presence. Though limited vocabulary and emotions were recognized as the major internal causes of speech anxiety, the positive classroom environment, cooperation of the students, and lecturer evaluation were found to be the most effective external factors. These results demonstrate that students' speech anxiety in the micro-teaching class is significantly associated with the evaluation and performance-based characteristics of the class, where students are expected to prove their linguistic and teaching capabilities. Thus, it can be acceded that a favorable micro-teaching environment should be developed so that students can have reduced speech anxiety and increased confidence.

5. CONCLUSION

This study investigated students' perceptions of factors that affect speaking anxiety in the microteaching class, which focused on both internal and external factors faced by pre-service English teachers. The results showed that students' anxiety about

Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM

speaking is attributed to a mixture of influences stemming from linguistic, emotional, and environmental factors. Speaking anxiety sources among internal factors were those related to limited vocabulary and emotional responses such as embarrassment. These two factors hindered students from expressing ideas clearly and made them less confident during their microteaching performances.

Nonetheless, the results show that outside influences have a greater influence on students' speaking anxiety. The most important elements in lowering anxiety and boosting confidence were thought to be cooperative peers and a supportive classroom environment. On the other hand, lecturer evaluation was found to be a significant cause of anxiety, especially when students thought their performance was being officially evaluated. These findings demonstrate that speaking anxiety in microteaching is not just a language problem but also a situational and evaluative phenomenon where students must simultaneously exhibit pedagogical competence and language proficiency.

All things considered, this study emphasizes how crucial it is to establish a safe and encouraging microteaching environment. It may be possible to lessen students' speaking anxiety and better prepare them for future teaching practice by promoting positive peer interaction, creating a supportive classroom environment, and using sensitive feedback techniques.

Notwithstanding the above valuable contributions by the study, it has some limitations. The sample for the research consisted of a relatively low number of respondents and the study took place in a single setting, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. In addition, the study collected self-report information, which may be influenced by biases. Future research should be encouraged to conduct the study on a larger sample and in a variety of settings and attempt to measure the efficacy of certain teaching methodologies and/or an anxiolytic intervention.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to express her greatest gratitude to Allah SWT. By His grace and blessing, the author was able to finish this undergraduate thesis with the title "Students' Perceptions of Factors Affecting Speaking Anxiety in the Microteaching Class." During the completion of this thesis, the writer faced some obstacles; however, under the guidance of Allah and the help of many parties, those obstacles were defeated. Special thanks are also given to family and friends for their prayers, motivation, and continuous support, and to the advisor for their guidance and advice throughout the completion of this undergraduate thesis.

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Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM

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Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM

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