



# ENGLISH SPEAKING ANXIETY OF GRADE 4 LEARNERS: BASIS FOR INTERACTIVE SPEAKING PROGRAM

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*Abstract* :This study aimed to identify the English speaking anxiety of Grade 4 learners in Mangaldan II District, Pangasinan Division II. The researcher determined the usefulness of drama to language learners by determining and comparing their oral communication performances before and after the exposure said learning intervention. Also, the extent of anxiety as perceived by the learners in their English class identified. In addition, significant relationship between oral communication performance to the extent of anxiety by the learners and significant difference between the level of communication performance before and after the exposure of drama were determined respectively. Furthermore, proposed interactive program in speaking had been conceptualized to lessen the anxiety of the learners towards English language learning. In view of the salient findings, the following conclusions were drawn; Low grades were more prevailing achieved by the respondents, Language learners are worried about consequences of failing their English class, Performance of the respondents before the intervention is associated with their extent of anxiety in learning English language, There was a progress on the grades of the after drama, Since there was a significant difference before and after the implementation of drama, meaning the said intervention was effective and English language teachers promote positive feelings toward the language learning experiences. Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations are offered for possible course of action; Anxiety in learning language should be discussed with the learners. They are not alone in the feeling of anxiety and might also be told that everybody, even the native speakers, can make a mistake while speaking, The English language learning of elementary learners should be improved with the on the use of drama, that is, teachers should encourage to utilize the said teaching strategy likelihood to continue themselves involve in language training, Effective teaching-learning process suited to the need of the 21st century education should be observed at all times, School principals, head teachers and master teachers are expected to extend technical assistance to all teachers regardless, Appropriate teaching strategies like drama must be inculcated and practiced for language teachers to properly address difficulties in teaching foreign language, Teachers are also creative in their teaching strategies, methods and techniques for them to give quality and relevant education and Similar studies should be conducted in order to improve more the performance of language learners and help them cope with anxieties using linguistic intervention like drama.

*Keywords:* English, speaking anxiety, communication performance

## INTRODUCTION

Anyone who has been around children who are learning to talk knows that the process happens in stages—first understanding, then one-word utterances, then two-word phrases, and so on. Students learning a second language move through five predictable stages: pre-production, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency (Krashen and Terrell, 2013). How quickly students' progress through the stages depends on many factors, including level of formal education, family background, and length of time spent in the country.

It is important that instructions for each student to his or her particular stage of language acquisition. Knowing this information about each student allows you to work within his or her zone of proximal development—that gap between what students can do on their own and what they can with the help of more knowledgeable individuals (Vygotsky,1978). Another reason for all teachers to gain insights into their students' stages of second language acquisition is to meet the requirements of the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, which requires English language learners to progress in their content knowledge and in their English language proficiency. Hill and Bjork (2019)

Zang and Zhong (2012) claim that the main cause of anxiety stems from students unrealistic or erroneous beliefs about language learning. While some of students think they lack the aptitude or gift to learn a new language, some believe that two years or less is sufficient for them to become proficient in another language without estimating the difficulty of the language learning task and therefore, they could possibly experience conflict resulted to anxiety.

Moreover, Arnold and Brown (2009) cited by Daquer (2016), emphasized that the broad understanding of affective factors leads to a more effective language learning because attention will be drawn to how language learners can transform those negative emotions into more positive feelings, and then facilitates the improvement of both educators to pay attention to students feeling and emotional reactions, and they need to be prepared flexibly change their teaching plans based on students need and reactions. Among affective factors, the role of anxiety, which is one of the most negative emotions, is particularly assumed to be more important in determining students' achievement in English language.

Philippines is a linguistically, culturally, socially and religiously diverse country which is composed of 7,107 islands. In 2017, the Philippine Ethnologue reported that the country is the home of 187 individual languages. Of these Philippine languages, 183 are said to be living while the other 4 are already extinct (Lewis, Fennig & Simons, 2017). Additionally, 41 Philippine languages are already institutionalized, 72 are developing, 45 are vigorous, and 14 are sadly in trouble while 11 are already dying. From all these Philippine languages, the Department of Education (DepEd) identified 12 major languages to be used as a medium of instruction in the currently implemented Mother-Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) policy in the educational system of the country particularly in public schools. These languages include Tagalog, Kapampangan, Pangasinense, Iloko, Biko, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Waray, Tausug, Maguindanaon, Maranao, and Chabacano (DepEd, 2013).

Anxiety performs an important role in the success of learning or the lack of it. Over the years, language educators have placed great interest in investigating language anxiety as it is believed to hamper learning (Elaldi, 2016). As claimed by Horwitz (2001), a significant portion of the total population of foreign language learners feels some level of anxiety. This may suggest that even Filipino ESL learners are not exempted from experiencing such anxiety.

Thus, the researcher then has been moved to conduct the study on the speaking anxieties of Grade 4 learners. Likewise, the proponent prompted to identify the certain variables that may be associated with the existing concern and challenges encountered by the aforesaid respondents in learning English language.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The main problem was to assess the English-speaking anxiety of Grade 4 learners Mangaldan II District, Pangasinan Division II during the School Year 2022-2023.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following sub-problems:

1. What is the English performance of the Grade 4 learners?
2. What is the extent of anxiety as perceived by the Grade 4 learners in their English class?
3. Is there a significant relationship in their English performance and extent of anxiety by the Grade 4 learners?
4. What is the level of performance of the Grade 4 learners after the exposure in drama?
5. Is there a significant difference between the level of communication performance of the Grade 4 learners before and after the exposure of drama?
6. Based on the findings, what interactive program in speaking can be proposed to minimize the anxiety of the Grade 4 learners?

## III. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Design

This academic document employed quantitative descriptive correlational survey method of research. In the view of the nature of the descriptive method of research, the researcher deems it appropriate in the pursuit of the study to determine the English-speaking anxiety of the Grade 4 learners. On the other hand, descriptive-correlational method research designed was employed to discover relationships among variables and to allow the prediction of future events from present knowledge. This has chosen by the researcher to determine whether a relationship or association exists between two the aforementioned variables.

Meanwhile, content analysis was utilized by the researcher to properly execute and extract the accuracy of data. Content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data (i.e. text). Using content analysis, researcher can quantify and analyze the presence, meanings and relationships of such certain words, themes, or concepts.

### 3.2 Data and Sources of Data

The respondents of the study comprised of 104 Grade 4 learners from Mangaldan II District, Pangasinan Division II. Thus, they were the most important inputs in fulfilling the purpose of this research. They were chosen for they were involved on the present concise description of the existence to be addressed or a condition to be improved that would serve as the desire state of this study.

Hence, they were scientifically chosen with the use of stratified random sampling. For greater understanding, stratified random sampling technique Stratified random sampling is a method of sampling that involves the division of a population into smaller sub-groups known as strata. In stratified random sampling or stratification, the strata are formed based on members' shared attributes or characteristics such as income or educational attainment.

### 3.3 Instrumentation and Data Collection

Data retrieving started when the researcher secured the necessary documents or proof to show to respondents that the said undertaking is intended for research purposes and part of fulfilling the requirements to complete an academic work. In obtaining relevant sets of data, facts and information for these academic work sets of data gathering procedure will be utilized.

In obtaining relevant sets of data, facts and information for these academic work sets of data gathering procedure will be utilized. By then, to examine how drama affects the speaking anxiety of the language learners, the data is collected through questionnaire and a semi-structured pre post-interviews before the utilization of the said academic intervention - drama. Afterwards, the performance will be assessed and analyzed by the proponent of the study using the content analysis technique. In the content

analysis, the steps used by Zerey (2008) and Atas (2015) are followed throughout the analysis process: transcribing and coding/labeling.

In this case study, qualitative data is collected through student journals, semi-structured pre- and post-interviews, and teacher reflections. The one-group, pretest-posttest design was conducted after the application of the said intervention for the quantitative data.

Meanwhile, as part of the research instrument which has been prepared by the researcher is subjected validation. There are five (5) open-ended questions that were asked to the respondents in order to elicit wide range of information relevant to purpose of research topic. Experts from the agency who have been practicing the said disciplined with required qualifications are chosen as evaluators and give their comments or suggestions to be incorporated in improving the accuracy of the instrument.

### 3.4 Tools for Data Analysis

After the data was gathered, it would be subjected to the corresponding statistical treatment to arrive at answers to the specific problems. In order to come up with valid and reliable results, appropriate statistical tool was utilized. The Statistical Packages for Social Science was used for statistical analysis, and the 0.05 level was used to determine the significant relationships of the results.

For the problem number 1, in relation to the English performance of the learners, the researcher utilized frequency counts and percentage distribution to determine the highness and lowness of the scores.

For the problem number 2, regarding on the extent of anxiety as perceived by the learners in their English classes, the researcher employed average weighted mean.

For problem number 3, regarding on the significant relationship in their oral communication performance and extent of anxiety by the learners, the researcher utilized chi-square.

For problem number 4, in connection to the level of performance of the learners after the exposure in drama, the researcher used frequency counts and percentage distribution to assess the intended effect of the said classroom strategy.

For problem number 5, with regards to the difference between the level of communication performance before and after the exposure of drama, the researcher utilized sample-paired t test

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1 Performance of Learners Before Exposure to Drama**

Grades	Frequency	Percent
81	11	10.50
82	14	13.46
83	12	11.54
84	13	12.50
85	15	14.42
86	15	14.42
87	13	12.50
91	11	10.58
Total	104	100.0

Table 1 clearly reveals that out of 104 learners, 11 respondents obtained the lowest grade of eighty-one (81) with 10.50 percent of the total respondents. Respectively, 11 learners got the highest grade of ninety-one (91) with 10.58 percent respondents. Meanwhile, eighty-five (85) was the grade obtained by the greatest number of respondents (14.42 percent). It further shows that their scores were somewhat below the Department of Education's standard.

On the use of customary physical classroom discussion, it implies that the academic achievement of students only depends on how they only understand some content of the topic facilitated and lectured by the subject teacher without mastery on the said subject.

However, authentic learning or task must be given and practice by most educators by the century for they can easily address the need and fill the gap or knowledge deficiency on the part of learners. This can be attained by thinking of an intervention that will acknowledge academic need and encourage learners' interest to help them increase their performance.

**Table 2 Anxiety as Perceived by the Grade 4 Learners**

INDICATORS	Mean	Description
1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.	3.25	Moderately Agree
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in English class.	3.70	Agree
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.	3.41	Agree
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	3.08	Moderately Agree
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English classes.	3.75	Agree
6. During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	3.58	Agree

7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.	3.54	Agree
8. I am usually at ease during tests in my English class.	3.87	Agree
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.	3.95	Agree
10. I worry about consequences of failing my English class.	4.33	Strongly Agree
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over English classes.	3.83	Agree
12. In English class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	3.50	Agree
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in English class.	3.75	Agree
14. I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers.	3.66	Agree
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	3.66	Agree
16. Even if I am well prepared for English class, I feel anxious about it.	3.50	Agree
17. I often feel like not going to my English class.	3.29	Moderately Agree
18. I feel confident when I speak in my English class.	3.95	Agree
19. I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	3.95	Agree
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in my English class.	4.12	Agree
21. The more I study for an English test, the more confused I get.	3.83	Agree
22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for English class.	3.87	Agree
23. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	3.33	Moderately Agree
24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	3.75	Agree
25. English class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	4.16	Agree
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes.	4.08	Agree
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class.	3.75	Agree
28. When I am on my way to English class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	4.04	Agree
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says.	3.66	Agree
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English.	3.25	Moderately Agree
31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	4.04	Agree
32. I would probably feel comfortable around the native speakers of English.	4.12	Agree
33. I get nervous when the English teacher ask questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	4.20	Agree
<b>WEIGHTED MEAN</b>	<b>3.76</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Anxiety prevents learners from performing successfully particularly in learning a target and foreign language within a classroom situation or in a context. Thus, this study can be an instrument to fill the gap by identifying foreign language anxiety by language teachers as a conceptually distinct variable in learning and interpreting English language.

Moreover, the table clearly indicates the statistics result for the extent of anxiety as perceived by the learners in their English class. It can be observed from the table on the previous page, students never feel quite sure of themselves when they are to speak in English (3.25). In light with this, language learners feel unprepared and unsure, often we forget what going to say, and just want the conversation to end (Ragon, 2012).

In addition, language learners are frightened when they don't understand what the teacher is saying in English (3.08). On this scenario, language teachers should capacitate his/her students of information, experience, and boost their self-confidence; however, aforementioned interventions can reduce speaking apprehension and deliver an effective speech.

As per the Supreme Law of the Land, English is an official language for the purpose of communication and instruction that might give students the feeling of anxiousness and fear that will likely made them uncomfortable, uneasy, and feel like not going to an English class (3.29).

Furthermore, Filipinos are very particular in grammar. Some are called themselves as Grammar Pedant; is an illness or a form of obsessive-compulsive disorder where someone has a compulsive desire to correct any grammatical errors one has made and is obsessed with taking this peculiar and constant (from the target's perspective) action. The very reason why some of language learners are afraid to speak and commit mistakes to any grammatical rule and feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English (3.25).

Finally, students always feel that other students can speak English better than them (3.33). Many of the students are terrified of what others really can do compare to what they have with the use of English language as medium of communication either on an Everyday English class and discourse.

**Table 3 Significant Relationship Between Oral Communication Performance to the Extent of Anxiety**

	Mean	t	t-crit. @.05	Decision
Oral Performance	84.75	-.487	.016	Significant
Extent of Anxiety	3.75			

Synthesis of the data (Table 3) above elucidates the  $t$ -computed =  $-.487$ , which is beyond the  $t$ -critical =  $.016$  at  $.05$  level of significance. Since the computed value is lower than the tabular value, the statement “there is no significant relationship between their oral communication performances to the extent of anxiety by the learners” is rejected. This means there has been an association of the grades before the utilization of drama to the level of anxiety experience by language learners.

It is important to identify, note, and address linguistic gap or illiteracy manifested by most of the Filipino learners of the century which can't even communicate with confidence or success to meet the demand to use English for their future and chosen careers. Some possible reasons for learners' inefficiency in communication are low levels of language proficiency, lack of vocabulary to express ideas, shyness or lack of confidence, lack of an environment for practicing and using English, or simply lack of some necessary strategies to maintain a conversation (Thanh Ha, 2018). As a result, very low achievement test result leading them to low performance of the students particularly in English subjects is indeed a disheartening reality.

**Table 4 Performance of Learners After Exposure to Drama**

Grades	Frequency	Percent
85	11	10.58
86	12	11.54
87	12	11.54
88	17	16.35
89	14	13.46
90	12	11.54
92	15	14.42
93	11	10.58
Total	104	100.0

Table 4 shows that in terms of the performance after the utilization of drama as learning intervention approach, the grades of the learners are higher than their grades from the previous quarter.

It can be gleaned on the table above; there was an increase of number of learners who obtained higher grades. The grades of eighty-five (85) got 11 or 10.58 percent; 86 with 12 or 11.54; 87 with 12 or 11.54 percent; 88 with 17 or 16.35 which is the highest number of learners; 89 with 14 or 13.46 percent; 90 with 12 or 11.54 percent; 90 with 15 or 11.42 percent; and 91 with 11 or 10.58 percent.

In the same view, grades of respondents after the utilization of the aforementioned supplemental intervention -drama- found to be effective and offer a positive impact on the performance of language learners. Furthermore, the table emphasizes that there is an improvement on the knowledge and set of learning competencies as mandated by the Department of Education.

The findings lean and readily supported by the study of Atas (2014) entitled “The Reduction of Speaking Anxiety in English Foreign Language learners through Drama Techniques” that drama changes attitudes and beliefs of students about learning a foreign language as well as speaking it in public or in Foreign Language classroom atmosphere. Language instructors hopefully implied that drama techniques psychologically and physically affect students' language abilities. Students' understanding of drama texts, their verbal knowledge, and communication skills improve. Drama keeps students active in the learning situations. Students' self-confidence and motivation increase. However, their anxiety level, which plays a major role in communicative skills in Foreign Language classes, decreases.

**Table 5 Significant Difference Between the Level of Communication Performance before and after the Exposure to Drama**

	Mean	t	t-crit. @.05	Decision
Before Drama	84.75			
After Drama	88.20	-.19.174	.000	Significant

Results of Sample-paired t-test reveal that there is a significant difference between the performance of the students ( $p=.000$ ) before and after the application of drama as chosen academic intervention for the purpose of increasing the achievement of language learners, and proficiency. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Findings suggest that drama is an effective intervention in helping learners to learn and realize that learning foreign language is challenging yet fulfilling for lifelong learning. In addition, drama can be a tool to enhance learners' oral skills, and researchers have also found that drama lowers anxiety levels of English Foreign Language learners (Gorjian et al. 2010).

### Proposed Interactive Program in Speaking to Minimize The Anxiety Of Learners

1. The teachers should provide more oral activities in the teaching learning process to give opportunity to learners to develop their oral speaking skills and to conquer their communicative fears in speaking.
2. The learners must join/participate in different oral speaking contest to overcome their communicative fears in public speaking. They must also engage in oral reading activities before a group in order to develop their skills and competences in speaking.
4. The administration should conduct/sponsor different activities and programs particularly on developing/improving the speaking skills and abilities for both teachers and learners.
5. Language teachers should be given special education concerning how to create an anxiety free atmosphere in classes and informed language learners about the positive effects of drama on speaking and reducing speaking anxiety supported by results of the present study.
6. Ensure drama as possible and advisable assessment or task to be performed by language learners to lessen the speech anxiety, communication apprehension, communicative difficulty, and fear of public speaking.

### Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations are offered for possible course of action:

1. Anxiety in learning language should be discussed with the students. They are not alone in the feeling of anxiety and might also be told that everybody, even the native speakers, can make a mistake while speaking.
2. The English language learning of elementary learners should be improved with the on the use of drama, that is, teachers should encourage to utilize the said teaching strategy likelihood to continue themselves involve in language training.
3. Effective teaching-learning process suited to the need of the 21st century education should be observed at all times.
4. School principals, head teachers and master teachers are expected to extend technical assistance to all teachers.
5. Appropriate teaching strategies like drama must be inculcated and practiced for language teachers to properly address difficulties in teaching foreign language.
6. Teachers are also creative in their teaching strategies, methods and techniques for them to give quality and relevant education.
7. Similar studies should be conducted in order to improve more the performance of language learners and help them cope with anxieties using linguistic intervention like drama. Thus, to improve the performance of learners in their English language class, language teachers need to be adequately equipped to observe when there is an excessive amount of anxiety attendant to language learning, which prevents students from functioning and from acting on these observations. It is then on this premise that language teachers have to address to gain optimum results on the teaching and learning of English as a second language.
8. Teacher's classroom management strategy to control the anxiety of learners is essential. The strategies that the teachers will utilize must be suited to the sources and causes of anxiety experienced by the learners.
9. Since speaking activities anxiety and communicating with native English speakers are identified sources of high anxiety for the learners, the teacher can give the students varied opportunities to practice speaking in English prior to requiring them to talk in classroom situations.
10. Error correction is also a source of high anxiety; thus, instead of correcting a specific student, the teacher can opt to discuss the appropriate answer generally while addressing the entire class, therefore avoiding placing the spotlight on a particular learner and causing anxiety.
11. In addition, previous studies have also suggested the following as effective strategies in handling learners with language anxiety: sharing language learning experiences and feelings, setting realistic and achievable goals, encouraging and praising learners often.

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