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Internal and External Factors Influencing Oral Communication Performance Among English Education Majors: A Qualitative Study in Indonesian Higher Education

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Abstract

As a critical competency in second-language acquisition, English speaking proficiency is essential for effective communication. While frequently evaluated through oral presentations, many learners encounter significant obstacles that hinder their performance. Consequently, this study aims to identify the internal and external factors influencing the speaking performance of English Education majors within an Indonesian higher education context. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through questionnaires, classroom observations, and document analysis involving 13 second-semester English Education students at Universitas Islam Lamongan. The findings reveal that students' oral communication is hindered by intertwined internal and external variables. Internal factors comprise psychological barriers predominantly fear of errors, embarrassment, and low self-confidence—alongside linguistic challenges, including native language interference, limited vocabulary, and incorrect pronunciation. External factors encompass unsupportive classroom environments and limited English exposure outside formal settings. Participant feedback indicated that addressing these factors through structured pedagogical interventions, such as Vygotskian scaffolding, supportive classroom environments, and constructive feedback, significantly reduces anxiety and enhances overall speaking proficiency.

Keywords: English education; Higher education; Qualitative study; Speaking performance

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of twenty-first-century globalized communication, speaking proficiency represents a critical competency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) acquisition. Effective oral communication demands more than phonetic accuracy; it requires complex, real-time negotiation of meaning, strategic competence, and sociolinguistic adaptability. The primary purpose of language teaching is to equip learners with the ability to use English effectively and accurately in real-world communicative contexts (Putri, 2022). Consequently, speaking performance is

evaluated not merely by grammatical correctness, but by the speaker's ability to convey thoughts and evaluate the communication's impact on the listener.

Within Indonesian higher education, the urgency of mastering speaking skills is heavily driven by institutional internationalization goals and the increasing demand for highly communicative graduates in the professional workforce. However, authentic classroom realities reveal a significant discrepancy between curriculum targets and actual student performance. Despite intensive instructional efforts, a substantial number of EFL learners continue to experience severe obstacles in translating theoretical linguistic knowledge into practical, spontaneous speaking performance (Dewi, 2023).

These communicative obstacles become highly critical during the second semester of university education. This phase serves as a pivotal transitional period where students progress from basic academic adaptation toward more cognitively demanding discourse. During this period, learners are typically characterized by an intermediate proficiency level yet exhibit high susceptibility to speaking hesitancy due to limited prior immersive practice. The shift toward speaking-intensive activities, namely oral presentations and unscripted dialogues, frequently exposes their communicative vulnerabilities (Husna, 2021).

In Indonesian EFL settings, this transitional anxiety is further complicated by specific socio-cultural nuances. Influenced by a high power-distance culture and collectivist values that prioritize group harmony and the avoidance of losing face publicly, students frequently experience heightened reluctance to risk making grammatical or pronunciation errors in front of their peers. This cultural paradigm makes active participation in speaking-intensive activities highly intimidating, leading to passive classroom behaviors and a reluctance to speak English without explicit prompting (Ningsih, 2023).

The barriers to effective speaking performance are fundamentally categorized into internal and external variables. Internally, psychological barriers heavily dictate learner output. Contemporary research on language anxiety highlights that affective filters, specifically the fear of making mistakes, extreme embarrassment, lack of motivation, and low self-confidence, can severely paralyze a learner’s ability to articulate thoughts. A student’s lack of belief in their own capabilities directly dictates their willingness to engage in oral tasks, regardless of their foundational grammatical knowledge (Dewi, 2023).

Alongside these psychological hurdles, linguistic limitations form the second layer of internal factors. Students frequently struggle with native language interference, where the structural habits of their first language disrupt English sentence formation. Furthermore, severe limitations in active vocabulary and persistent difficulties with correct pronunciation exacerbate their psychological barriers. These linguistic deficits create a continuous cycle of hesitation and disfluency during oral performances, making real-time communication highly stressful (Husna, 2021).

Externally, the learning environment and pedagogical interventions play a decisive role in shaping speaking performance. Effective speaking development necessitates supportive scaffolding from educators and peers. The nature of classroom dynamics, specific teaching strategies, and the modality of corrective feedback can

either mitigate or elevate a student's speaking anxiety. Constructive feedback from teachers is crucial to improvement, yet if delivered without considering the learner's affective state, it can hinder rather than facilitate performance (Putri, 2022).

While numerous recent studies have documented the general difficulties EFL learners face (Dewi, 2023; Husna, 2021; Ningsih, 2023; Putri, 2022), the specific interface between internal psychological barriers and external pedagogical interventions remains underexplored in the Indonesian tertiary context. Prior research predominantly lists isolated factors but fails to comprehensively analyze how classroom environments, peer interactions, and specific modalities of teacher feedback collectively impact learner autonomy and speaking anxiety among second-semester students.

Therefore, this study aims to systematically identify and analyze the intertwining internal and external factors affecting the speaking performance of English Education majors at Universitas Islam Lamongan. By employing a qualitative descriptive methodology utilizing questionnaires, classroom observations, and document analysis, this research seeks to address the methodological and contextual gaps in existing literature. To guide this investigation, the study proposes two specific research questions. First, how do internal factors, namely psychological barriers and linguistic limitations, inhibit the speaking performance of second-semester English Education students? Second, what role do external environmental factors, specifically the modalities of corrective feedback from lecturers and peers, play in mitigating or elevating students' speaking anxiety?

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to holistically capture students' lived experiences and nuanced perceptions regarding oral communication barriers. This specific design was selected over other qualitative approaches because it directly addresses the exploratory aims of identifying complex internal and external variables without manipulating the research setting. By utilizing a descriptive methodology, the researchers were able to investigate the specific psychological and environmental factors influencing speaking performance in their natural classroom context. This approach aligns with recent qualitative investigations into language anxiety, which emphasize the necessity of capturing authentic student voices to understand communicative hesitancy (Dewi, 2023).

The research was systematically conducted at the English Education Department of Universitas Islam Lamongan in East Java, Indonesia. This specific institutional context was selected due to its representative demographic of Indonesian tertiary learners who frequently experience high academic pressure to master English despite having limited prior immersive exposure. The classroom environment predominantly reflects traditional teacher-centered pedagogical structures transitioning toward communicative language teaching. Understanding this specific socio-cultural setting is crucial, as the cultural dimensions of high power distance and collectivist values within this institution significantly shape the students' reluctance to participate in public speaking tasks (Ningsih, 2023).

Participant recruitment utilized a purposive sampling strategy designed to select individuals who could provide rich, relevant data regarding speaking obstacles.

The inclusion criteria required participants to be active second-semester English Education majors who self-reported experiencing significant speaking anxiety during oral presentations. Conversely, students with prior international English immersion experience or those holding advanced English certifications were excluded to prevent data skewing. Based on these strict criteria, 13 students were selected. This specific sample size of 13 participants was determined based on the principle of qualitative data saturation, where no new themes regarding speaking barriers emerged during the initial observation cycles (Husna, 2021).

To ensure robust data collection, the study utilized highly validated research instruments, beginning with a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised 15 Likert-scale items ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. These items specifically measured students' perceptions of internal psychological barriers, namely self-confidence and fear of negative evaluation, as well as their reception of different corrective feedback modalities. Prior to the main data collection, the questionnaire underwent rigorous pilot testing involving five non-participating third-semester students. This pilot phase ensured item clarity and established a strong internal consistency reliability, yielding a high Cronbach's alpha coefficient that validated the instrument for this specific demographic (Putri, 2022).

Complementing the questionnaire, the study employed structured classroom observations and documentation analysis as secondary and tertiary data instruments. The observation protocol was specifically designed to track error-correction interactions and non-verbal indicators of anxiety during unscripted speaking tasks. The lead researcher adopted a strict non-participant observer role to minimize the observer effect and prevent interference with natural classroom dynamics. Furthermore, the documentation analysis utilized authentic course syllabi, specific speaking assessment rubrics, and recorded video transcripts of the students' oral presentations. These documents provided objective metrics regarding the pedagogical targets and the actual linguistic output produced by the participants (Ningsih, 2023).

The data collection process followed a strict chronological timeline spanning eight weeks during the academic semester. The systematic workflow is detailed in the Research Procedure Flowchart below:

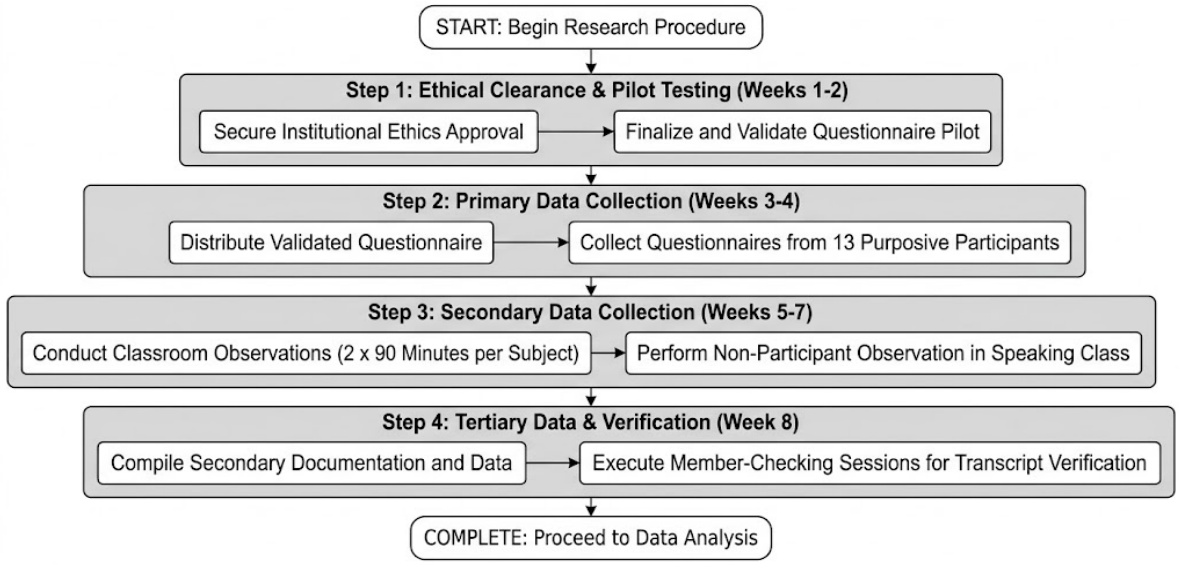


Figure 1. Research procedure.

The qualitative data analysis process was conducted using a rigorous, multi-stage interactive model comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To ensure systematic analysis, the researchers utilized NVivo qualitative data analysis software. The initial data reduction phase employed open coding to sift through the questionnaire responses and observation transcripts, generating initial nodes focused on anxiety triggers and feedback efficacy. Following this, axial coding was applied to group these initial nodes into overarching themes, explicitly categorizing them into internal psychological factors and external environmental factors. The data display phase utilized thematic matrices to visually map the relationships between lecturer feedback modalities and corresponding student anxiety levels (Dewi, 2023).

To guarantee the trustworthiness and methodological integrity of the findings, the researchers implemented strict triangulation and reflexivity protocols. Methodological triangulation was achieved by systematically cross-checking the subjective questionnaire responses against the objective behavioural data recorded during classroom observations. When discordant data arose, such as a student claiming high confidence in the questionnaire but displaying severe physical anxiety during observation, the researchers reconciled this through immediate peer debriefing and transcript review. Furthermore, to address positionality and mitigate potential bias, the research team maintained detailed reflexivity journals throughout the observation period, explicitly acknowledging their dual roles as English educators and independent researchers (Husna, 2021).

Finally, strict ethical considerations were maintained throughout the entirety of the research lifecycle. Formal ethical approval was obtained from the institutional review board of Universitas Islam Lamongan prior to any participant contact. All 13 participants were provided with comprehensive briefing documents detailing the study's purpose, and written informed consent was mandatory for inclusion. To ensure absolute confidentiality and protect the students from potential academic repercussions, all identifiable information was removed, and participants were assigned alphanumeric pseudonyms in all transcripts and final reports. All digital data, including video recordings and analytical project files, are stored on encrypted institutional servers. Acknowledging the limitations of this methodology, the localized sampling at a single institution means the findings should be generalized with caution, specifically regarding populations with fundamentally different socio-cultural learning paradigms (Putri, 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Student Perceptions of Factors Affecting Speaking Performance

The presentation of the results synthesizes quantitative descriptive statistics from the questionnaires with qualitative behavioral data gathered during classroom observations. Based on Figure 2 regarding general opinions on language error correction, nine out of thirteen students, representing 69.2 percent of the sample, stated that continuous error correction is necessary and must be provided regularly to ensure linguistic accuracy. Conversely, four students, comprising 30.8 percent, argued

that while correction is necessary, it should not be administered excessively because it triggers feelings of hopelessness. Synthesizing this with classroom observation data, these four students consistently exhibited severe psychological resistance, namely fear of failure and visible loss of motivation, when their pronunciation was corrected publicly. This indicates that excessive correction directly elevates the affective filter, paralyzing their willingness to speak.



Figure 2. Students' opinion about correction of language errors in speaking class

Further detailing the perception of lecturer feedback in Figure 3, the responses were evenly distributed but highlighted distinct psychological needs. Specifically, 23.1 percent of students emphasized that lecturer corrections are crucial for recognizing personal weaknesses, while another 23.1 percent valued detailed explanations to prevent recurring mistakes. An additional 23.1 percent stressed the need for specific guidance, and 30.8 percent highlighted the role of correction in fostering self-awareness. However, observational data revealed a divergence between these self-reports and actual behavior. While students claimed to value lecturer correction on paper, their physical reactions during oral presentations demonstrated high anxiety, characterized by prolonged silences and avoidance of eye contact immediately after receiving direct corrective feedback.

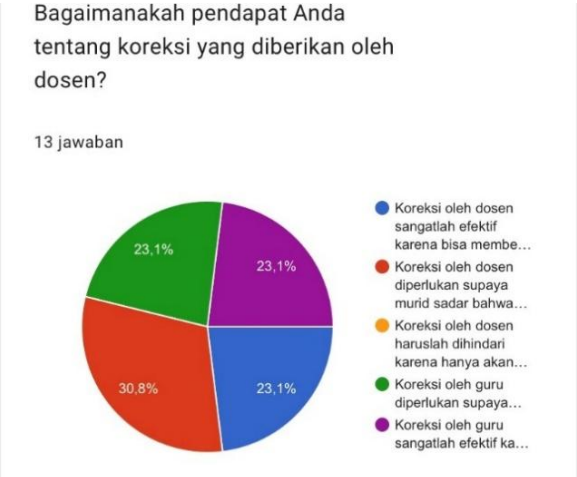


Figure 3. students' opinions on corrections provided by lecturers

Regarding peer correction illustrated in Figure 4, ten students, representing 76.9 percent, perceived peer feedback as highly effective because it fosters a collaborative learning environment free from hierarchical pressure. In contrast, three students, making up 23.1 percent, reported that receiving corrections from classmates significantly lowered their self-confidence. A deeper analysis intersecting these responses with the students' academic records reveals that this resistance correlates strongly with language proficiency levels. Students with lower baseline proficiency felt intimidated by peer correction, perceiving it as a form of social judgment rather than constructive assistance, which highlights the delicate nature of peer-assisted learning in unequal proficiency groupings.

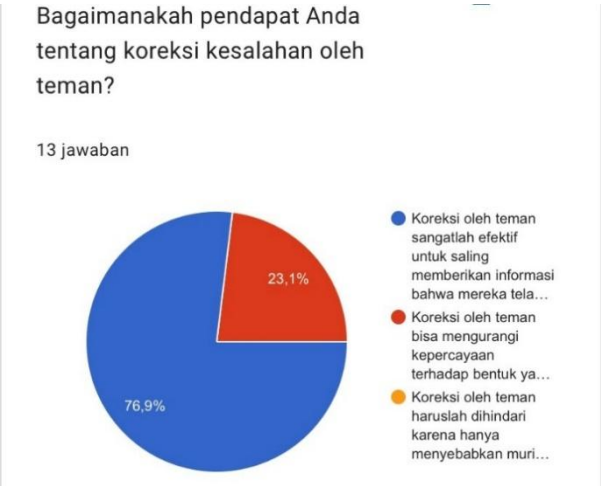


Figure 4. Students' opinions on error correction by friends

When exploring self-correction mediated by the lecturer in Figure 5, six students, comprising 46.2 percent, considered it highly useful for developing self-awareness. Furthermore, five students, representing 38.5 percent, found it effective for avoiding repetitive errors, whereas two students, or 15.4 percent, completely rejected self-correction, citing an absolute inability to identify their own linguistic flaws without direct external intervention. This reliance on the lecturer demonstrates a low level of learner autonomy among a specific subset of the cohort.

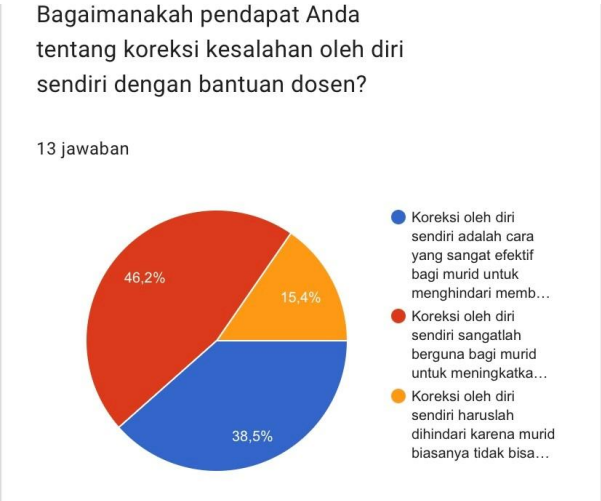


Figure 5. Students' opinions on error correction by friends

Finally, Figure 6 encapsulates the students' overarching preferences for feedback modalities, tying directly into the broader theme of communicative anxiety management. The data shows that 46.2 percent of students identified self-correction guided by the lecturer as the most effective method, followed by 38.5 percent favoring direct lecturer correction, and only 15.4 percent preferring peer correction. This trend clearly illustrates that while students desire autonomy, they still require the authoritative validation of the lecturer. They prefer a scaffolded approach where the lecturer provides indirect hints, allowing the student to correct themselves, thereby saving face and maintaining dignity in front of their peers.



Figure 6. Students' opinions on on what kind of correction is most effective in the classroom

Student Expectancy of Factors Affecting Speaking Performance

Transitioning to students' expectations when committing errors, Figure 7 reveals that six students, representing 46.2 percent, expect the lecturer to point out mistakes while providing specific guidance for self-correction. Five students, or 38.5 percent, prefer immediate and direct correction by the lecturer, while a minority of two students, comprising 15.4 percent, prefer the lecturer to delegate the correction to classmates. This data reinforces the necessity of individualized pedagogical approaches, as students hold divergent expectations regarding the timing and directness of pedagogical interventions.



Figure 7. Students' Expectations of Lecturers when Making Mistakes

Analyzing the emotional responses to lecturer correction in Figure 8, nine students, accounting for 69.2 percent, reported feeling completely fine and receptive. Meanwhile, four students, representing 30.8 percent, admitted to feeling embarrassed, though they claimed it did not negatively affect their overall performance. However, observational data strongly contradicts this self-reported resilience. During core speaking classes, the four students who reported feeling "fine despite embarrassment" were subsequently observed using substantially shorter sentences and avoiding complex vocabulary in subsequent speaking turns, indicating a subconscious retreat into linguistic safety to avoid further correction.



Figure 8. Students' Opinions when the Lecturer gives Corrections for Mistakes made while speaking

Figure 9 shifts the focus to emotional responses regarding peer and self-correction. When corrected by peers, 61.5 percent felt fine, 30.8 percent felt embarrassed but motivated, and 7.7 percent felt so humiliated they avoided future speaking opportunities. When forced to correct their own mistakes, the responses were split: 46.2 percent felt challenged and motivated, another 46.2 percent felt confident, and 7.7 percent felt entirely hopeless. This dichotomy highlights that independent problem-solving in language production is highly polarizing and strictly dependent on the individual learner's pre-existing self-efficacy.



Figure 9. Students' feeling when Classmates provide Corrections on their Mistakes

Regarding students' emotional responses to autonomous self-correction (Figure 10), the data reveals a stark division heavily dependent on intrinsic self-efficacy. Specifically, 46.2 percent of the students reported feeling challenged and motivated to improve when identifying their own errors, while an equal 46.2 percent expressed strong confidence in their independent correction abilities, viewing it as a non-threatening pedagogical process. Conversely, 7.7 percent reported feeling entirely hopeless due to a severe lack of confidence in their autonomous linguistic capabilities. Synthesizing this quantitative data with classroom observations, the students exhibiting hopelessness during self-correction tasks often displayed complete communicative withdrawal, characterized by immediate silence and refusal to continue the oral presentation. This underscores that while self-correction effectively promotes autonomy in high-efficacy learners, it can inadvertently trigger severe affective blockages in those lacking foundational confidence, thereby necessitating guided lecturer scaffolding.

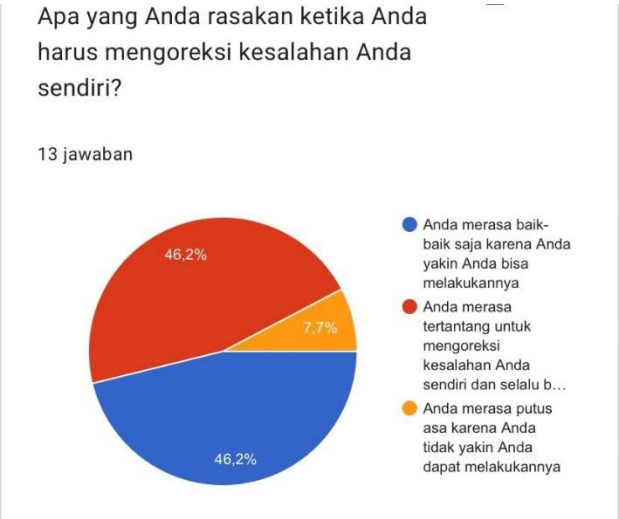


Figure 10. Students' Feelings when they have to correct their Own Mistakes

Finally, Figure 11. examines the expectation of praise as a motivational tool. Five students, representing 38.5 percent, expect praise from the lecturer even when they make mistakes to prevent discouragement. Four students, or 30.8 percent, expect praise exclusively when they speak perfectly, while another 30.8 percent prefer a combination of praise for good attempts and constructive criticism for errors. This validates that positive reinforcement remains a critical psychological requirement for second-semester students, functioning as a necessary buffer against the inherent anxiety of foreign language performance.

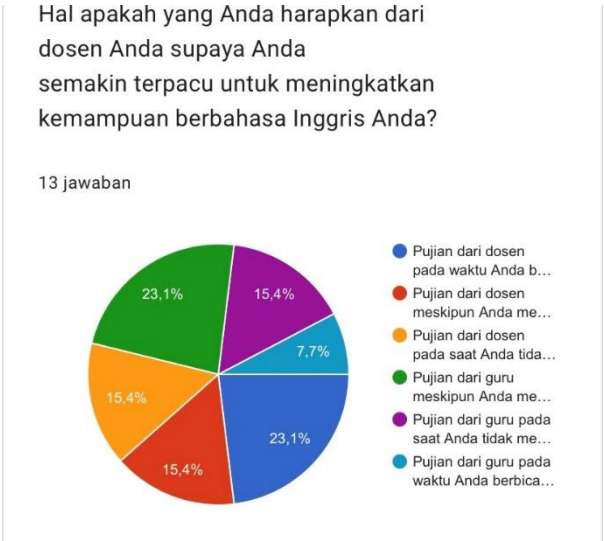


Figure 11. Students' expect praise from the lecturer when they speak English

Discussion

The findings of this study establish a profound connection between the cultural context of the learners and their psychological reception of corrective feedback. Conducted within an Indonesian higher education setting, the study highlights how collectivist cultural values heavily dictate speaking performance. In Indonesian classrooms, preserving social harmony and avoiding public humiliation, commonly

known as saving face, are paramount. Recent empirical studies on cultural willingness to communicate validate that students from collectivist backgrounds frequently view public error correction as a direct threat to their social standing among peers (Rahman & Setiawan, 2024). Consequently, the fear of making mistakes identified in this study is not merely a linguistic deficit, but a complex socio-cultural defense mechanism where silence is utilized to protect self-esteem.

To fully understand these psychological barriers, the findings must be situated within contemporary Second Language Acquisition (SLA) frameworks. The students' simultaneous desire for error correction and their physical anxiety when receiving it aligns with modern interpretations of the affective filter. High levels of language anxiety disrupt the cognitive processing required to transform comprehensible input into spontaneous verbal output. When a lecturer interrupts a student's oral presentation to correct pronunciation, the student's affective filter spikes, effectively blocking their ability to utilize their existing vocabulary (Dewi, 2023). This explains the observational finding where students retreated into using simplistic language immediately following direct public correction.

The emotional spectrum experienced by students when tasked with autonomous self-correction represents a critical intersection of cognitive linguistics and educational psychology. In contemporary English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, self-correction is often championed as the pinnacle of learner autonomy. However, the qualitative data reveals that this pedagogical expectation triggers a highly polarized emotional response among second-semester students, profoundly dictating their subsequent speaking performance and willingness to communicate (Putri, 2022).

A significant portion of the cohort perceives the demand to identify and rectify their own spoken errors as a stimulating academic challenge. For these students, self-correction acts as a catalyst for intrinsic motivation. This dynamic aligns with recent advancements in SLA theories, which posit that autonomous error recognition fosters deeper cognitive engagement and long-term linguistic retention compared to the passive reception of external teacher feedback (Wijaya, 2025).

The psychological foundation for this positive, challenge-seeking reception is heavily rooted in high learner self-efficacy. Students who feel secure in their foundational linguistic knowledge view self-correction not as a penalty, but as a cognitive puzzle to be solved in real-time. This resilient affective mindset allows them to navigate the momentary embarrassment of a mistake and pivot immediately toward active problem-solving, thereby maintaining the flow of oral communication without experiencing severe affective blockages (Dewi, 2023).

Furthermore, the ability to successfully self-correct indicates a high level of functional noticing during speech production. Modern interpretations of the Output Hypothesis emphasize that when learners actively monitor their own verbal output, they develop a heightened metalinguistic awareness. This self-monitoring capability is an essential bridge for transitioning learners from heavily scaffolded classroom exercises to spontaneous, real-world conversational fluency where teacher intervention is completely absent (Saputra & Hakim, 2024).

Conversely, the data also exposes a highly vulnerable subset of students who experience intense feelings of hopelessness and despair when forced to correct their

own mistakes. For learners with low pre-existing self-confidence, the absence of immediate, direct teacher intervention during an error is frequently perceived as pedagogical abandonment. When they stumble during an oral presentation and are expected to self-repair, the compounded academic and emotional pressure frequently leads to complete communicative paralysis (Husna, 2021).

This pervasive sense of hopelessness is inextricably linked to the phenomenon of cognitive overload. Speaking in a foreign language already demands immense working memory to retrieve vocabulary, formulate grammatical structures, and ensure proper phonetics under strict time constraints. Forcing an anxious, low-proficiency student to simultaneously analyze and diagnose their own errors adds an unbearable secondary cognitive load, causing their affective filter to spike and completely shutting down their expressive capabilities (Lestari, 2026).

The socio-cultural context of the Indonesian EFL classroom further exacerbates the anxiety surrounding autonomous self-correction. In educational cultures historically characterized by high power distance, the teacher is traditionally viewed as the sole authoritative source of knowledge and correction. Expecting novice students to suddenly assume this evaluative, critical role contradicts ingrained pedagogical norms, making the act of self-correction feel unnatural, presumptuous, and highly intimidating for many learners (Ningsih, 2023).

Additionally, the collectivist nature of the learning environment plays a significant role in dictating emotional responses to self-correction. Visibly struggling to fix a mistake in front of a silent audience of peers directly threatens the student's social standing. The pervasive cultural fear of losing face publicly heavily outweighs the theoretical academic benefits of the exercise, prompting anxious students to retreat into prolonged silence rather than risk further humiliation during the self-repair process (Rahman & Setiawan, 2024).

These intensely polarized emotional responses necessitate a highly nuanced, differentiated pedagogical approach to self-correction. Educators cannot implement autonomous error repair as a universal, one-size-fits-all strategy. Instead, it requires sophisticated scaffolding, where the lecturer provides subtle, individualized cues, specifically such as a raised eyebrow, a deliberate pause, or a repeated phoneme, that guide the student toward the correct form without leaving them entirely unsupported in their moment of linguistic crisis (Pratama, 2025).

Ultimately, fostering a positive emotional relationship with self-correction requires a deliberate and gradual release of responsibility. Teachers must first build a psychologically safe classroom ecosystem where errors are explicitly normalized as essential, expected components of the language acquisition journey. By pairing incremental self-correction tasks with consistent positive reinforcement and private coaching, educators can slowly transform feelings of hopelessness into resilient, autonomous learning behaviors (Putri & Hasanah, 2026).

Beyond self-correction, the external environment, particularly the dynamics of peer interaction, also plays a critical role in shaping speaking capabilities. The data revealed that students with lower proficiency felt intimidated by peer correction. This indicates that unstructured peer-assisted learning can inadvertently become harmful in diverse classrooms. When group sizes are too large or proficiency levels are highly mismatched, peer feedback transitions from being a collaborative tool to a source of

competitive anxiety. A supportive classroom environment requires educators to carefully curate peer interactions, establishing strict ground rules for constructive, empathetic feedback to ensure psychological safety (Saputra & Hakim, 2023).

Based on these theoretical implications, there are immediate practical applications for language educators. Instructors must transition toward implementing balanced feedback mechanisms. Teaching strategies should prioritize delayed, private corrective feedback over immediate, public interruption during oral presentations. Educators are advised to take notes during a student's speech and provide comprehensive correction privately after the performance concludes, coupled with explicit positive reinforcement. This strategy validates the student's communicative effort while separately addressing their linguistic inaccuracies, effectively lowering the affective filter and maintaining intrinsic motivation (Putri, 2022).

Additionally, these findings must be contextualized within current trends in language education, specifically the rapid integration of digital environments. Recognizing the intense pressure students face during face-to-face speaking activities, institutions should leverage blended learning models. Utilizing artificial intelligence-driven language applications or asynchronous video discussion forums allows students to practice speaking and receive immediate, objective, and private algorithmic feedback. This digital avenue provides a low-stakes environment for students to build foundational confidence before performing in the high-stakes physical classroom (Lestari, 2024).

Despite the depth of these findings, it is crucial to acknowledge the methodological limitations of this study. The research was confined to a purposive sample of thirteen students at a single institution, which restricts the broad generalizability of the results. As noted in recent qualitative explorations of communicative hesitancy, localized socio-cultural dynamics can uniquely skew qualitative data, meaning these specific feedback preferences may differ significantly in institutions with different demographic profiles or more Westernized, individualistic pedagogical traditions (Pratama, 2022).

Therefore, to build upon the findings of this qualitative description, future research must adopt longitudinal approaches with substantially larger, multi-institutional sample sizes. Subsequent studies should specifically investigate the long-term effects of delayed versus immediate feedback on speaking fluency over an entire academic year. Furthermore, empirical investigations into the effectiveness of specific technological interventions, namely utilizing virtual reality or mobile applications for anxiety-free speaking practice outside the classroom, are highly recommended to provide comprehensive solutions for modern EFL pedagogy.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study establishes that the oral communication performance of second-semester English Education majors is profoundly shaped by a complex, deeply intertwined relationship between internal psychological barriers and external pedagogical environments. Moving beyond mere linguistic deficits such as limited vocabulary or pronunciation errors, the findings reveal that psychological variables—most notably severe language anxiety, low self-efficacy, and the culturally ingrained fear of losing face publicly—act as paralyzing affective filters that prevent

spontaneous speech. The investigation into corrective feedback further highlights that pedagogical interventions are not universally beneficial; while autonomous self-correction significantly motivates learners with high pre-existing self-efficacy, it induces severe cognitive overload and communicative withdrawal in highly anxious students. Externally, the modalities of feedback from both peers and lecturers critically dictate the psychological safety of the classroom ecosystem. Unstructured peer correction within a diverse proficiency cohort frequently exacerbates competitive anxiety, whereas delayed, private lecturer feedback effectively mitigates affective blockages. Ultimately, to cultivate functional speaking proficiency within collectivist EFL contexts, educators must transition from traditional, immediate error-correction paradigms to culturally responsive, scaffolded pedagogies. By prioritizing psychological safety and applying differentiated feedback strategies, instructors can successfully guide highly anxious learners toward confident, autonomous oral communication.

RECOMMENDATION

Drawing directly from the empirical findings of this qualitative study, several targeted, evidence-based recommendations are proposed for language educators, institutional policymakers, and future researchers. First, to mitigate the intense language anxiety exacerbated by collectivist cultural norms, educators must actively transition from traditional, immediate error-correction methods toward culturally responsive, delayed feedback mechanisms. Lecturers are strongly advised to provide private, structured corrections accompanied by explicit positive reinforcement after speaking performances conclude. This approach protects students' social dignity, prevents public loss of face, and effectively lowers their affective filters. Furthermore, when implementing self-correction tasks, instructors must provide individualized, subtle scaffolding rather than demanding complete learner autonomy, thereby preventing cognitive overload in low-efficacy learners.

Second, at the institutional level, curriculum designers should systematically integrate blended learning environments to supplement physical speaking classes. Leveraging artificial intelligence-driven language applications or asynchronous video discussion forums can provide highly anxious students with a low-stakes, algorithmically evaluated platform. This allows them to practice oral communication autonomously and build foundational self-confidence before facing the psychological pressure of peer audiences. Additionally, institutions must establish strict pedagogical ground rules for peer-assisted learning to ensure group interactions remain collaborative rather than competitively intimidating.

Finally, to advance the broader academic discourse, future research should expand beyond localized qualitative descriptions. Subsequent empirical studies should employ longitudinal designs with significantly larger, multi-institutional samples to track the long-term efficacy of delayed versus immediate feedback modalities over an entire academic year. Moreover, targeted investigations into the precise impact of specific digital interventions—such as virtual reality immersion—on mitigating speaking anxiety within high power-distance educational contexts will provide crucial insights for modernizing EFL pedagogy.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, Hariyanto and Chusnu Yuli Setyo; **Methodology**, Hariyanto and Husen; **Validation**, Hariyanto, Chusnu Yuli Setyo, and Ariel Sharon; **Formal Analysis**, Hariyanto and Husen; **Investigation**, Ariel Sharon and Husen; **Resources**, Chusnu Yuli Setyo; **Data Curation**, Ariel Sharon; **Writing Original Draft Preparation**, Hariyanto and Husen; **Writing Review and Editing**, Chusnu Yuli Setyo and Ariel Sharon; **Visualization**, Ariel Sharon; **Supervision**, Hariyanto; **Project Administration**, Chusnu Yuli Setyo. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Conflict of interests

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript. The research was conducted in the absence of any commercial, financial, or personal relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest. The authors affirm that the results and interpretations presented are solely based on objective academic analysis.

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