

# Speaking Anxiety: Through The Faces of Students in SPAMAST

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## ABSTRACT

### *Article History*

Received: 18 April 2023  
Revised: 30 September 2023  
Accepted: 10 December 2023  
Published: 30 January 2024

**Keywords**—Linguistics, speaking anxiety, coping mechanisms, qualitative design, Malita, Philippines

This qualitative study explores speaking anxiety among students at the Southern Philippines Agri-Business and Marine and Aquatic School of Technology (SPAMAST). Through interviews, two primary sources of anxiety—lack of self-confidence and fear of negative judgment—were identified. Students cope mainly through self-preparation and systematic exposure. Lessons learned highlight the importance of social interaction and building confidence. The findings

underscore the need for supportive environments and targeted programs to help students manage anxiety and strengthen oral communication skills.

## INTRODUCTION

Speaking is a key language skill for academic achievement and social interaction. Students often experience anxiety, known as glossophobia, which inhibits their participation and performance. Global literature reports high rates of public speaking fear, and this issue is also prevalent in the ASEAN region, including the Philippines. Several studies (Argawati, 2014; Mart, 2012; Maquidato, 2021) and the National Institute of Mental Health highlight both

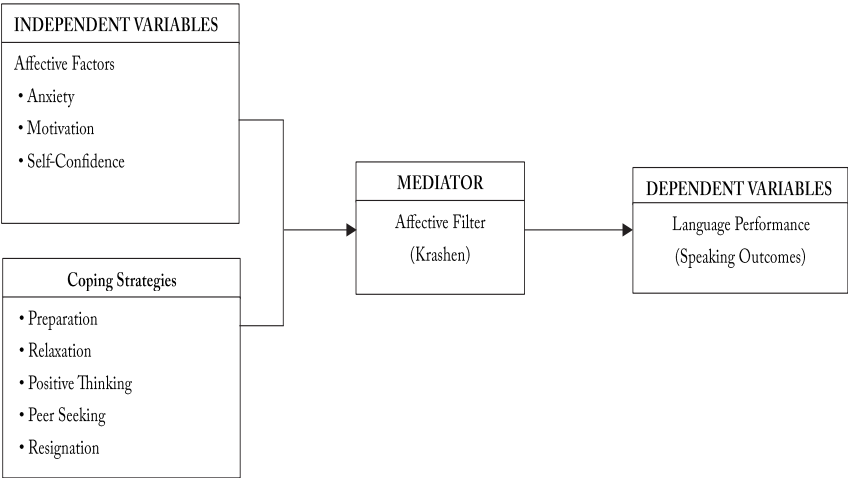


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its prevalence and impacts. While many researchers have tackled this challenge, there has been little focus on the experiences of students in SPAMAST. This study addresses that gap by examining the nature, sources, and management of speaking anxiety among these students, offering region-specific, actionable insights for Philippine and ASEAN educational stakeholders.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

**Figure 1**  
*Conceptual framework based on Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis and Kondo & Young’s coping strategies.*



This study is anchored on Kondo and Young’s (2004) five-dimensional coping strategies and Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis, focusing on how affective factors like anxiety influence language performance and how specific coping mechanisms can moderate these effects.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to (1) describe the specific speaking anxieties experienced by SPAMAST students, (2) identify their coping mechanisms, and (3) determine the lessons they have learned from coping with such challenges.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a phenomenological qualitative approach, specifically transcendental phenomenology (Creswell, 2013), to explore students’ lived experiences of speaking anxiety.

**Research Site**

Conducted at the Southern Philippines Agri-Business and Marine and Aquatic School of Technology (SPAMAST), Municipality of Malita, Davao Occidental, Philippines, the sole state college in the province.

**Participants and Sampling**

Sixteen students from the four academic institutes of SPAMAST were selected through convenience sampling, based on accessibility and willingness to participate.

**Instrumentation**

Data were gathered using a validated, semi-structured interview guide focused on the research objectives.

**Research Ethics**

Ethical procedures included informed consent, assurance of confidentiality, and respectful handling of all participant data.

**Data Collection**

Interviews were transcribed, coded, and thematically analyzed following Leedy and Ormrod’s (2013) and Creswell’s (2014) steps: data categorization, theme identification, and synthesis.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Speaking Anxieties Experienced by Students**

**Table 1.** *Summary of the Experiences about the Speaking Anxiety*

Essential themes	Core ideas
Lack of self-confidence	Self-disappointment, fear, shame, apprehension, intimidation, lack of communication/courage, difficulty, nervousness in public
Afraid of negative judgment	Fear of misinterpretation, being judged, delivering incorrect information, peers’/ instructors’ perceptions, and mistakes in public

**Coping Mechanisms**

When students were asked about their coping mechanisms, two primary themes emerged: self-preparation and exposure.

**Table 2.** *Summary of coping mechanisms*

Essential themes	Core ideas
Self-preparation	Read books, master topics, practice, organize thoughts, relax, drink water, and study current events.
Exposure	Talking with people, participating in class, engaging with friends, and regular social sharing

### Lessons Learned

Students shared that some challenges became manageable by engaging in social interaction and gaining self-confidence.

**Table 3.** *Summary of lessons learned*

Essential themes	Core ideas
Engage in social interaction.	Practice, exposure, releasing negativity, optimism, and surrounding oneself
Gain confidence	Speaking up, inspiration, unafraid of negative judgment.

### Coping Mechanisms and Lessons

Students primarily use detailed preparation and progressive exposure to speaking events. This matches both Kondo and Ying-Ling's (2004) preparation/positive thinking strategies and Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis. Social engagement and increased confidence are crucial for overcoming anxiety, aligning with findings in Argawati (2014), Bandura (1997), and Liu & Jackson (2008). Comparative literature confirms these mechanisms are globally effective and adaptable.

## CONCLUSIONS

SPAMAST students' speaking anxiety is mainly due to a lack of self-confidence and fear of judgment. They cope by preparing thoroughly and exposing themselves to more speaking opportunities, which helps build confidence and social skills. The results highlight the need for educational interventions prioritizing oral skills, the integration of interactive activities, and staff development to recognize and support anxious students. These initiatives are likely to promote not only academic success but also social and career readiness.

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