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The analysis of Korean language learning anxiety levels among intermediate-level students

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ABSTRACT

Speaking anxiety is an important affective factor in foreign language learning, particularly during spontaneous communication and classroom assessment. This study aimed to examine Korean-speaking anxiety levels among intermediate-level students at Universitas Nasional and identify the predominant dimension of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) among communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. A quantitative descriptive design was employed with 50 students from the 2023 cohort who had completed the Listening and Speaking 5 course. Data were collected using 10 speaking-related items adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). The instrument demonstrated high internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.934$). Results showed that 48% of students experienced moderate anxiety, 48% high anxiety, and 4% low anxiety. Thus, 96% experienced moderate or high anxiety, with neither category predominating. Among the three dimensions, test anxiety had the highest mean score ($M = 3.91$), followed by fear of negative evaluation ($M = 3.43$) and communication apprehension ($M = 3.40$). These findings identify test anxiety as the predominant dimension of Korean-speaking anxiety in classroom activities. The study highlights the need for Korean-speaking instruction and assessment that incorporate gradual practice, sufficient preparation, transparent assessment criteria, and constructive feedback to address learners' anxiety in evaluative situations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is an important competence in foreign language learning because it enables learners to express ideas, feelings, and information directly in the target language. Unlike receptive skills, speaking requires learners to process linguistic knowledge and produce utterances relatively spontaneously, involving complex cognitive processes such as conceptualization, formulation, and articulation (Levelt, 1989). These demands may elicit emotional responses, including nervousness, tension, worry, and fear of making mistakes. Previous research has demonstrated that anxiety can interfere with cognitive processing and language performance (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). In foreign language learning contexts, such experiences are associated with foreign language anxiety, a distinct form of anxiety that arises during language learning and use (Horwitz et al., 1986; Horwitz, 2001).

One of the most widely used concepts for explaining anxiety in foreign language learning is *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety* (FLCA), proposed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). FLCA refers to anxiety that specifically occurs in the context of foreign language learning in the classroom and encompasses three main components: *communication apprehension, test anxiety,* and *fear of negative evaluation*. *Communication apprehension* refers to fear or discomfort when communicating in a foreign language; *test anxiety* is associated with anxiety in evaluative situations; and *fear of negative evaluation* refers to concern about being negatively judged by others. Although FLCA may occur across various classroom language-learning activities, the present study focuses specifically on these three components as they are manifested in speaking activities. In speaking contexts, learners are required not only to produce utterances in the target language but also to do so in front of lecturers and classmates and, in certain situations, as part of an assessment. Previous research has also emphasized the importance of classroom practices and learning environments in understanding and addressing foreign language anxiety (Young, 1991).

Foreign language anxiety has been widely investigated across various learning contexts and language skills. Previous studies have shown that anxiety may arise during speaking, listening, and foreign language learning in general and may be associated with learners' language performance and academic achievement (Botes et al., 2020; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). However, research specifically addressing speaking anxiety in Korean language learning remains relatively limited compared with studies focusing on English language learning.

In the Indonesian context, several studies have examined speaking anxiety among learners of Korean. Indrajaya et al. (2024) investigated speaking anxiety among beginner-level Korean language learners and found that, although their overall anxiety was at a moderate level, anxiety was relatively high during classroom speaking activities. The study also identified several contributing factors, including low self-confidence, limited vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, fear of making mistakes, and concern about teachers' evaluations. Similarly, Syafira (2025) examined speaking anxiety among intermediate-level Korean language learners in Indonesia and reported a high level of speaking anxiety. The study identified various factors associated with anxiety, including linguistic, psychological, social, cognitive, demographic, and classroom-related factors.

These studies provide valuable insights into speaking anxiety among Korean language learners in Indonesia. Nevertheless, the present study offers a more specific descriptive perspective by examining the distribution of speaking anxiety levels and comparing the mean scores of three dimensions of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA): communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. This comparison aims to identify the predominant dimension of Korean-speaking anxiety among intermediate-level learners, thereby providing additional empirical evidence concerning the relative prominence of these anxiety dimensions in Korean language classrooms in Indonesia. .

Based on the preceding discussion, this study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. What are the levels of Korean-speaking anxiety experienced by intermediate-level Korean language learners in classroom speaking activities?

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2. Which dimension of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA)—*communication apprehension, test anxiety,* or *fear of negative evaluation*—is the most prominent among intermediate-level Korean language learners, based on the comparison of mean scores?

These research questions focus specifically on anxiety experienced during Korean-speaking activities rather than anxiety associated with other language skills, such as listening, reading, or writing. The findings are expected to provide a clearer understanding of Korean-speaking anxiety among intermediate-level learners, particularly regarding its distribution across anxiety levels and the relative prominence of the three FLCA dimensions.

Based on the preceding discussion, this study aims to (1) describe the level of Korean-speaking anxiety among intermediate-level students in the Korean Language Study Program at Universitas Nasional and (2) identify the dominant FLCA component in classroom speaking activities by comparing the mean scores of *communication apprehension, test anxiety,* and *fear of negative evaluation*. In this study, these three components are examined specifically in relation to speaking anxiety rather than anxiety associated with listening, reading, or writing..

2. METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive research design to examine the level of Korean-speaking anxiety and identify its most dominant component among intermediate-level Korean language learners. The population consisted of intermediate-level students enrolled in the Korean Language Study Program at a private university in Jakarta, Indonesia, who had completed the Listening and Speaking 5 course or were enrolled in Listening and Speaking 6. Participants were selected from the 2023 cohort through non-probability purposive sampling based on their completion of basic-level Korean courses and participation in intermediate-level speaking classes. The study involved 50 respondents and did not include any experimental treatment.

2. Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive research design to examine the level of Korean-speaking anxiety and identify its most dominant component among intermediate-level Korean language learners. The population consisted of intermediate-level students enrolled in the Korean Language Study Program at a private university in Jakarta, Indonesia, who had completed the Listening and Speaking 5 course or were enrolled in Listening and Speaking 6. Participants were selected from the 2023 cohort through non-probability purposive sampling based on their completion of basic-level Korean courses and participation in intermediate-level speaking classes. The study involved 50 respondents and did not include any experimental treatment.

The research instrument was a questionnaire adapted from the *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale* (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). Of the original 33 items, 10 items (1, 3, 9, 13, 18, 20, 24, 27, 31, and 33) were selected and adapted to the context of Korean-speaking activities. These items addressed experiences such as nervousness, lack of confidence, speaking without preparation, and fear of negative evaluation. The adapted statements are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.
Adapted FLCAS Items for Korean-Speaking Anxiety

No.	Original FLCAS Item	Adapted Statement
1	1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking Korean in the Listening and Speaking 5 class.
2	3	I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on to speak Korean in the Listening and Speaking 5 class.

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3	9	I start to panic when I have to speak Korean without preparation in the Listening and Speaking 5 class.
4	13	I feel embarrassed when volunteering answers in Korean in the Listening and Speaking 5 class.
5	18	I feel confident when I speak Korean in the Listening and Speaking 5 class.
6	20	My heart pounds when the lecturer is about to call on me to answer a question or speak Korean in the Listening and Speaking 5 class.
7	24	I feel self-conscious when speaking Korean in front of other students.
8	27	I feel nervous and confused when speaking Korean in the Listening and Speaking 5 class.
9	31	I am afraid that other students will laugh at me when I speak Korean in the Listening and Speaking 5 class.
10	33	I feel nervous when the lecturer asks me a question in Korean that I have not prepared in advance.

Each statement was assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Reverse scoring was applied to the positively worded statement (Item 5) to ensure that higher scores consistently indicated greater speaking anxiety. Data were collected through direct questionnaire administration to students who met the sampling criteria.

The adapted questionnaire was reassessed for validity and reliability because its items and wording had been modified to reflect the Korean-speaking context. Item validity was examined using item-total correlation analysis, while internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha with SPSS version 31. Following Ghozali (2018), a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of at least 0.70 was considered acceptable. The results of these analyses are presented in the instrument validity and reliability subsection.

Descriptive statistical analysis was subsequently conducted to examine students' Korean-speaking anxiety. Total scores across the 10 items were used to assess speaking anxiety levels, while mean scores were calculated to compare the three components of foreign language classroom anxiety: *communication apprehension, test anxiety,* and *fear of negative evaluation*. The component with the highest mean score was identified as the dominant component. In this study, dominance refers to the relative prominence of a component based on its mean score rather than a causal influence on speaking anxiety.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Result

The study involved students from the 2023 cohort of the Korean Language Study Program at Universitas Nasional who had completed the Listening and Speaking 5 course and were classified as intermediate-level learners. Data were collected directly on July 7, 2026, at Universitas Nasional. Of the total population of 64 students, 50 participated in the study and completed the questionnaire, while 14 did not participate because they were absent during data collection. Therefore, the analysis was based on data obtained from 50 respondents.

Of the 50 respondents, 45 (90%) were female and 5 (10%) were male. Their ages ranged from 20 to 35 years. The largest age group consisted of 18 respondents aged 22, followed by 14 respondents aged 21 and 9 respondents aged 20. The remaining respondents included 3 students aged 23, 2 aged 24, 1 aged 25, 2 aged 26, and 1 aged 35. These demographic data were used only to provide an overview of the respondents and were not analyzed as variables in determining either the level or the components of speaking anxiety.

3.1.1. Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Prior to the main data collection, the 10-item questionnaire adapted from the *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale* (FLCAS) was pilot-tested with 50 students from the 2022 cohort who had characteristics similar to those of the main study participants, namely intermediate-level learners of Korean who had completed the Listening and Speaking 5 course. The pilot test was conducted

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to assess the validity and reliability of the instrument after the FLCAS items had been selected and adapted specifically to the context of Korean-speaking anxiety.

The validity analysis was conducted using the *Corrected Item-Total Correlation* to examine the relationship between each questionnaire item and the total score of the remaining items. A correlation coefficient above 0.30 was used as the criterion for acceptable item validity. The results showed that all 10 items exceeded this threshold, with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.588 to 0.896.

Item 3 demonstrated the highest corrected item-total correlation (0.896), followed by Item 10 (0.884) and Item 2 (0.856). These values indicate that the three items had particularly strong relationships with the overall instrument score. In contrast, Item 5 showed the lowest correlation coefficient (0.588). Nevertheless, this value remained above the established threshold of 0.30, indicating that the item was still acceptable. Overall, the results suggest that all 10 items were sufficiently correlated with the construct measured by the questionnaire and could be retained for further analysis.

The reliability analysis of the 10-item instrument yielded a *Cronbach's Alpha* coefficient of 0.934. This value exceeded the commonly accepted reliability threshold of 0.70, indicating excellent internal consistency among the questionnaire items. The result suggests that the items consistently measured the underlying construct of Korean-speaking anxiety. Therefore, all 10 items were retained and considered suitable for use in the main data collection

3.1.2. Descriptive Statistics of Korean-Speaking Anxiety

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to examine the distribution of Korean-speaking anxiety scores among the 50 participants in the main study. The analysis included the mean scores and standard deviations of the 10 items adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). These statistics were used to describe participants' responses to individual questionnaire items and provide an overview of their reported Korean-speaking anxiety. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.
Descriptive Statistics of Korean-Speaking Anxiety

Item	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Item 1	50	3.36	1.12
Item 2	50	3.46	1.20
Item 3	50	3.88	0.94
Item 4	50	3.42	0.97
Item 5	50	3.06	0.91
Item 6	50	3.88	0.80
Item 7	50	3.56	1.07
Item 8	50	3.54	1.01
Item 9	50	3.44	1.25
Item 10	50	3.98	0.77
Overall Mean	50	3.56	0.72

As presented in Table 3, the descriptive statistical analysis of the 50 respondents showed an overall mean score of 3.56 (SD = 0.72) on a five-point Likert scale. Among the 10 questionnaire items, Item 10 recorded the highest mean score (M = 3.98, SD = 0.77), followed by Items 3 and 6, both with a mean score of 3.88. These findings suggest that respondents experienced relatively greater anxiety when faced with unexpected questions from the lecturer, speaking Korean without prior preparation, and anticipating being called upon to speak in class. In contrast, Item 5, which was reverse-scored to maintain consistency in the direction of measurement, showed the lowest mean score (M = 3.06, SD = 0.91). This indicates that anxiety associated with self-confidence was

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relatively less pronounced than anxiety related to other classroom speaking situations. The overall standard deviation of 0.72 indicates some variation in anxiety scores among respondents. Overall, the findings suggest that Korean-speaking anxiety varied across different classroom speaking situations, with unexpected speaking demands and lack of preparation emerging as particularly prominent sources of anxiety.

3.1.3. Level of Korean-Speaking Anxiety

The first objective of the study was to describe the level of Korean-speaking anxiety among intermediate-level students. The level of anxiety was determined based on the total scores of the 10 FLCAS items selected specifically to represent anxiety in speaking activities. With each item scored on a scale from 1 to 5, the possible total scores ranged from 10 to 50.

Based on the categorization using the hypothetical mean and hypothetical standard deviation (Azwar, 2012), speaking anxiety was classified into three levels: low for scores ranging from 10 to 23, moderate for scores ranging from 24 to 36, and high for scores ranging from 37 to 50. The distribution of Korean-speaking anxiety levels among the 50 respondents is presented in Table 4.

Table 4.
Levels of Korean-Speaking Anxiety

Anxiety Level	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
Low	10-23	2	4%
Moderate	24-36	24	48%
High	37-50	24	48%
Total		**502**	**100%**

The results showed that of the 50 respondents (4%) were classified as having a low level of speaking anxiety, 24 respondents (48%) were classified as having a moderate level, and 24 respondents (48%) were classified as having a high level. Thus, no single anxiety level was dominant, as the moderate and high categories accounted for equal proportions of the respondents. When the two categories were considered together, 48 of the 50 respondents (96%) were classified as having moderate or high levels of speaking anxiety, whereas only 4% were classified as having a low level.

These results demonstrate that the respondents experienced varying levels of Korean-speaking anxiety, with the distribution heavily concentrated in the moderate and high categories. This finding addresses the first objective of the study by describing the levels of anxiety experienced by intermediate-level students when using Korean orally in classroom speaking activities.

3.1.4. Dominant FLCA Component in Speaking Anxiety

The second objective of the study was to identify the dominant FLCA component in the context of classroom speaking anxiety. In accordance with the scope of the study, the analysis did not address anxiety related to listening, reading, or writing. Instead, it focused on the three FLCA components represented by items related specifically to speaking activities: *communication apprehension, test anxiety,* and *fear of negative evaluation*.

The 10 questionnaire items were grouped according to these three components. *Communication apprehension* was represented by five items (Items 1, 2, 5, 7, and 8), *test anxiety* by three items (Items 3, 6, and 10), and *fear of negative evaluation* by two items (Items 4 and 9). Because the number of items differed across the three components, the comparison was based on mean scores rather than total scores. The results are presented in Table 5.

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Table 5.
Mean Scores of the Three FLCA Components in Speaking Anxiety

FLCA Component	Number of Items	Mean	Category
Communication Apprehension	5	3.40	Moderate
Test Anxiety	3	3.91	High
Fear of Negative Evaluation	2	3.43	High

As shown in Table 5, test anxiety obtained the highest mean score (M = 3.91), indicating that anxiety associated with evaluative speaking situations was the most prominent dimension among the respondents. This dimension was represented by three items concerning speaking without preparation, being called on by the lecturer to respond, and answering unexpected questions in Korean. Fear of negative evaluation ranked second (M = 3.43) and was represented by two items addressing embarrassment when volunteering answers and concerns about being laughed at by classmates. Communication apprehension had the lowest mean score (M = 3.40), although it remained evident in items related to uncertainty, nervousness, self-consciousness, and confidence when speaking Korean. These findings describe the relative prominence of the three dimensions based on their mean scores; possible explanations for these patterns are discussed in Section 3.2.

3.2. Discussion

The findings showed that Korean-speaking anxiety among intermediate-level students in the Korean Language Study Program at Universitas Nasional was distributed primarily across the moderate and high categories. Of the 50 respondents, 24 students (48%) were classified as having a moderate level of anxiety, 24 students (48%) as having a high level, and only 2 students (4%) as having a low level. Thus, no single category was dominant because the moderate and high categories accounted for equal proportions of the respondents. However, when these two categories were considered together, 96% of the respondents experienced moderate or high levels of speaking anxiety. This finding indicates that speaking anxiety remains a relatively prominent experience among intermediate-level students when using Korean orally in classroom activities. This can be understood within the framework of *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety* (FLCA) proposed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), which explains that foreign language use in the classroom may involve anxiety related to communication, evaluative situations, and the possibility of receiving negative evaluation from others. The descriptive statistics further support the finding that Korean-speaking anxiety was relatively prominent among the respondents. As presented in Table 3, the overall mean score was 3.56 (SD = 0.72) on a five-point Likert scale. Item 10, which concerns anxiety when responding to unexpected questions from the lecturer, obtained the highest mean score (M = 3.98), followed by Items 3 and 6 (M = 3.88). These results suggest that speaking situations requiring immediate responses or involving anticipation of being called upon by the lecturer were associated with relatively higher anxiety scores. This pattern provides additional context for understanding the substantial proportions of respondents classified as experiencing moderate and high levels of speaking anxiety.

This finding is partly consistent with Jee (2019), who found that intermediate-level learners of Korean as a foreign language experienced a moderate level of language anxiety. In the present study, the moderate category also accounted for a substantial proportion of the respondents (48%). However, the present findings reveal a different pattern because an equal proportion of respondents (48%) was also classified in the high-anxiety category. This indicates that speaking anxiety among intermediate-level learners is not concentrated at a single level. At the intermediate level, students are no longer limited to using basic structures and expressions but are increasingly expected to express more complex ideas, respond to questions spontaneously, give presentations,

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and complete various speaking activities. These characteristics place students in situations that require them to process linguistic knowledge and produce utterances relatively spontaneously, as discussed in the background of this study.

The distribution found in the present study also differs from the findings of Syafira (2025), who reported a high level of speaking anxiety among intermediate-level students of Korean language education. The difference suggests that learners at relatively similar proficiency levels do not necessarily exhibit the same distribution of speaking anxiety. However, because the present study employed a descriptive design and did not examine variables that may cause anxiety, these differences cannot be directly attributed to learning conditions, teaching methods, learning experiences, language proficiency, or individual learner characteristics. Such factors may be considered possible variables for further investigation. Therefore, the present findings specifically describe the distribution of speaking anxiety among the respondents examined in this study and are not intended to explain the causes of differences in anxiety levels among learners.

The findings can also be compared with those of Indrajaya et al. (2024), who showed that learners' anxiety may increase in particular situations, especially when students are required to answer questions directly or face learning conditions that demand an immediate response. This pattern is relevant to the context of the present study because several FLCAS items selected specifically to measure speaking anxiety involve situations in which students are required to speak without preparation, are called on to answer questions, or have to respond in Korean. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) explain that language anxiety may be associated with the cognitive processes involved in foreign language use. In speaking contexts, the demand to process information and produce an immediate response may therefore be relevant to understanding the experience of anxiety. Nevertheless, the present study did not directly measure these cognitive processes; therefore, this relationship is used as a framework for interpreting the findings rather than as a relationship empirically demonstrated by the data.

In addition to describing the level of speaking anxiety, this study compared three FLCA components represented by items specifically related to classroom speaking activities: *communication apprehension, test anxiety,* and *fear of negative evaluation*. The analysis showed that *test anxiety* had the highest mean score (M = 3.91), followed by *fear of negative evaluation* (M = 3.43) and *communication apprehension* (M = 3.40). Thus, *test anxiety* was identified as the dominant FLCA component in the context of speaking anxiety among the respondents in this study. As specified in the research method, the term "dominant" refers to the component with the highest mean score and does not indicate that the component causally influences or causes speaking anxiety.

The higher mean score for *test anxiety* indicates that anxiety associated with evaluative situations was relatively more prominent than the other two FLCA components in the speaking activities examined in this study. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) describe *test anxiety* as anxiety associated with evaluative situations and concerns about performance. In the present instrument, *test anxiety* was represented by three items concerning speaking without preparation, situations in which the lecturer was about to call on a student to answer a question or speak, and questions for which students had not prepared in advance. Therefore, the mean score of 3.91 can be interpreted as indicating that anxiety in speaking situations involving an evaluative element was relatively more prominent among the respondents. This finding does not mean that *test anxiety* was the primary cause of speaking anxiety; rather, it indicates that this component received a relatively higher anxiety score than the other two components.

The finding regarding *test anxiety* can be compared with Diner (2023), who reported evaluation-related anxiety among learners of Japanese, including concerns about lecturers' evaluations and the academic outcomes received by students. Although the target language and institutional context differ, both studies demonstrate the relevance of evaluative situations to experiences of anxiety in foreign language learning. The present finding can also be interpreted through Krashen's (1985) concept of the *affective filter*, which proposes that affective conditions, including anxiety, may be associated with language learning and use. However, because the present study did not measure

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the *affective filter*, speaking performance, or the effects of anxiety on language acquisition, this concept is used to provide a possible theoretical interpretation of the finding rather than to claim an effect that was empirically tested in this study.

The *fear of negative evaluation* component obtained a mean score of 3.43, slightly higher than that of *communication apprehension*. In this study, this component was represented by items related to feeling embarrassed when volunteering answers and being afraid that other students would laugh at the respondent when speaking Korean. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) associate *fear of negative evaluation* with concerns about receiving negative judgments from others. The present results indicate that this aspect was also evident in the respondents' speaking anxiety, although its mean score was lower than that of *test anxiety*. This finding is also related to the findings of Syafira (2025), Indrajaya et al. (2024), and Diner (2023), who reported concerns about making mistakes or being evaluated by others in foreign language learning contexts. Thus, in addition to formal or immediate evaluative situations, the social dimension of speaking activities, particularly how language performance may be perceived by others, is also relevant to understanding students' speaking anxiety.

Meanwhile, *communication apprehension* obtained a mean score of 3.40, the lowest of the three components. Nevertheless, this result does not mean that *communication apprehension* was absent among the respondents. The five items representing this component included uncertainty about oneself when speaking, nervousness and confusion, self-consciousness when speaking in front of other students, and confidence in using Korean. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) associate *communication apprehension* with fear or discomfort when communicating in a foreign language. This finding can also be related to Jee (2019), who reported various difficulties experienced by intermediate-level learners of Korean in oral language use. However, based on the data from the present study, it can only be concluded that *communication apprehension* had a relatively lower mean score than *test anxiety* and *fear of negative evaluation*, rather than that it had less "influence" on speaking anxiety.

The comparison of these three components provides a more specific picture of the characteristics of speaking anxiety among the respondents. Although all three are part of the FLCA framework, this study did not use all 33 FLCAS items to measure general foreign language anxiety. Instead, 10 items were selected and adapted because they specifically represented experiences of anxiety in Korean-speaking activities. Therefore, the findings concerning *communication apprehension, test anxiety,* and *fear of negative evaluation* should be interpreted within the specific context of classroom speaking anxiety, rather than as a representation of the respondents' anxiety in listening, reading, or writing. Within this scope, the findings indicate that anxiety associated with evaluative situations was the relatively most prominent component.

This study provides two main findings regarding speaking anxiety among intermediate-level learners of Korean. First, the distribution of anxiety levels showed equal proportions of moderate and high anxiety, each accounting for 48% of the respondents; therefore, no single anxiety level was dominant. Second, when the three FLCA components were compared based on their mean scores, *test anxiety* had the highest mean score. Thus, the study extends the description of speaking anxiety beyond the categorization of overall anxiety levels by providing a more specific picture of the FLCA component that was relatively more prominent in speaking activities. The use of mean scores also allowed the three components to be compared proportionally despite differences in the number of items representing each component.

Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted in light of several limitations. The respondents were drawn from only one cohort, one study program, and one university; therefore, the findings cannot be directly generalized to all intermediate-level learners of Korean. The gender distribution of the respondents was also unequal, while demographic characteristics were described only and were not analyzed as research variables. In addition, the study employed a questionnaire-based descriptive quantitative approach and therefore did not explore students' individual experiences or specific classroom conditions that might be associated with speaking anxiety in depth. The

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instrument also consisted of 10 selected items from the original 33-item FLCAS, specifically adapted to the context of speaking anxiety. Accordingly, the findings should be interpreted as a description of speaking anxiety based on the selected FLCAS items rather than as a measurement of FLCA in its entirety. Future studies may involve learners from different proficiency levels and institutions, employ mixed methods incorporating interviews or classroom observations, and examine the relationships between speaking anxiety and other variables such as speaking proficiency, self-confidence, learning experience, and academic achievement.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine Korean-speaking anxiety levels among intermediate-level learners and identify the predominant dimension of foreign language classroom anxiety in speaking activities. The findings indicate that speaking anxiety was primarily distributed across moderate and high levels, suggesting that anxiety remains a relevant concern in Korean language learning. Among the examined dimensions, test anxiety emerged as the most prominent, highlighting the importance of evaluative speaking situations in learners' experiences of anxiety. These findings suggest that Korean language instruction should incorporate gradual speaking practice, adequate preparation opportunities, clear assessment criteria, and constructive feedback to support learners' confidence during speaking activities. Future research should involve learners from different proficiency levels and institutions, employ mixed-methods approaches to explore individual experiences, and investigate the relationships between speaking anxiety, language proficiency, and other learner-related factors. .

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