# Analyzing The Reluctance Of English As A Foreign Language Students To Engage In Spoken English Communication

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

This quantitative research study explores the factors contributing to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' fear of making mistakes when speaking English. The research involved 81 fifth-semester students from the English Education study program at Universitas Nias, who responded to a Likert scale-based questionnaire. The findings reveal that while a majority of students exhibit a neutral level of confidence and comfort when speaking English, they experience anxiety, worry, and embarrassment related to making mistakes. However, most students do not perceive making mistakes as a negative aspect of English language learning. Furthermore, they do not express significant concerns about being criticized or ridiculed by others. The study also highlights that students often strive for perfection when speaking English, putting pressure on themselves. These findings shed light on the complex interplay of emotions and perceptions in EFL students' language acquisition process. Understanding the factors influencing students' reluctance to speak English can inform educators and institutions in designing more supportive and effective language learning environments.

## Introduction

Language is an arbitrary sound-symbol system, which is used by all people or community members to cooperate, interact, and identify themselves in the form of good conversations, good behaviour, and good manners (Hasanah et al., 2019 as cited in Ofudu & Adenity, 2008). This statement is also reinforced by the Merriam Webster Dictionary which states that language is defined as a human system of words or signs that people use to express thoughts or feelings to each other (Mwakapina, 2021). Language is also defined as the system of conventional spoken or written symbols used by people in a shared culture to communicate with each other (Maharsi, 2012). From the definition above, it can be concluded that language is a structured system of sounds or symbols employed by individuals or communities for communication, cooperation, and self-identification through conversation, behaviour, and manners.

One form of expression in language use is speaking. Speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in a variety of context (Maisara, 2017 as cited in Channey & Burk, 1998). Speaking seems to be the most important skill of all the four skills of language (listening, speaking, reading and writing) because people who know a language are usually referred to as speakers of that language (Januariza & Hendriani, 2016). In this globalizing world, speaking has become a priority for many people and receives more attention due to its importance in daily life (Dincer, 2017). Furthermore, effective speaking skills can greatly enhance one's ability to communicate and connect with others, both personally and professionally.

Language, serving as an organized framework of sounds and symbols utilized for communication, collaboration, and self-recognition through dialogue, conduct, and etiquette, embraces a range of expressive avenues. Among the quartet of language proficiencies, speaking emerges as the paramount skill. In the contemporary globalized milieu, the importance of adept speaking capabilities has intensified, given their pivotal role in fostering connections with others and enhancing both personal and career accomplishments.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, speaking has been recognized as an essential component with tremendous significance to students' communication development. EFL students' success in speaking English reflects not only their understanding of language structures, but also their ability to contextually apply that knowledge in everyday interactions.

Speaking skills play a crucial role in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) for students. Developing effective speaking abilities in English is essential for clear communication, confidence building, and overall language proficiency. Strong speaking skills not only facilitate effective communication but also open doors to academic and professional opportunities. Students who can express themselves fluently and confidently in English are better equipped to participate actively in class discussions, excel in oral exams, and succeed in job interviews or presentations. As such, honing these skills should be a top priority in any EFL curriculum, as they serve as a foundation for language mastery and real-world application.

For English Foreign Language (EFL) students, mastering speaking is a must. They use speaking to present their works in front of the class, when the teacher conducts group discussions, when they are asked to give a speech in a competition, and others (Rizki et al., 2021). The EFL students are expected to speak English fluency and accurately. They can express themselves naturally by using English (Safitri, 2021).

Nonetheless, the majority of students struggle to communicate effectively and with precision as mastering spoken language is a complex endeavor. EFL learners often find speaking is difficult (Normawati et al., 2023). For most foreign language learners, speaking the target language is not an easy thing to undertake because learning to speak a foreign language requires more than knowing its grammatical and semantic rules (Heriansyah, 2012). The students who are learning speaking skills have difficulties in learning to speak because they rarely practice speaking. It means that if students rarely practice speaking, they do not develop their speaking skill (Andriani et al., 2019).

In the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, one of the most significant challenges often encountered is how to enhance students' speaking proficiency in the English language. This subject matter, in particular, has garnered considerable attention within academic research, as scholars seek to comprehend why certain EFL students exhibit a reluctance to speak English, even after years of intensive study.

Like others, EFL students in the fifth semester of the English Education study program at Universitas Nias also have difficulties speaking English, which results in their reluctance to speak English. It is often observed by researcher that some students exhibit a reluctance to speak English. Despite several years of intensive language study, there are cases where students still lack confidence in using English in various everyday communication contexts.

EFL students in the fifth semester of the English Education program at Universitas Nias commonly encounter challenges when it comes to speaking English fluently. This difficulty often leads to a noticeable reluctance among these students when it comes to engaging in spoken English interactions. The researcher has consistently observed that a significant portion of these students hesitate or avoid speaking English altogether. Despite dedicating several years to intensive language studies, there are instances where these students continue to struggle with self-assurance when it comes to utilizing English in their everyday communication scenarios. This phenomenon highlights the complexity of language acquisition and the importance of recognizing the challenges of spoken English among EFL students.

Several prior studies have delved deeper into the phenomenon of EFL students' reluctance to speak English. Reluctance to speak English means the condition when the students are unwilling to speak in class which is provoked by several factors (Ariyanti, 2019 as cited in Jackson, 2003). Most problems that make students were reluctance to speak English are nervous, shy, and shaking, less practice in speaking, lack of vocabulary, lack of self-confidence, and afraid in making mistake (Nety, 2022). Other research has

also found that the students are more comfortable with speaking to natives rather than non-natives (Savaşçı, 2014).

Also, most of the students are less motivated in speaking. Some of the students really want to express their ideas and feelings but they do not know how to express their ideas. Some of the students know how to construct sentences but they are reluctant to speak. They are afraid of making mistakes. They are also afraid of being laughed at by other students, so they just keep silent and keep their ideas and feelings in their mind (Iswardati, 2016).

In addition, sometimes students are ashamed to speak English as it takes time to find the right structures at the right time (Tsybaneva, 2014). The students with speaking problems are more likely to attribute failure to a lack of personal ability and the things that make them hard to recognize their true skill (Inayah & Lisdawati, 2017). Mostly students of English as Foreign Language (EFL) are still not able to speak grammatically and fluently just because they lack of the Indonesia language proficiency and comprehension (Arung, 2015).

From the phenomenon of EFL students' reluctance to speak English, as well as the supporting theories and previous research that have been explained, there is a gap in research that needs to be filled. There seems to be no previous research that specifically focuses on the reasons why EFL students are afraid of making mistakes when speaking English. Therefore, this study will attempt to fill this gap by delving deeper into the factors that drive EFL students' fear of making mistakes when speaking English.

**Method**

The research method used in the research is quantitative approach. Quantitative approach is a research method that emphasize objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys, or by manipulating pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques (Apuke, 2017). The method used to collect and analyse data is the survey method. The survey method is defined as collecting information from a sample through respondents' responses to questions or statements (Fitri et al., 2022 as cited in Check & Schutt, 2012; Uma Sekaran, 2014). The participants in this study were fifth semester students of the English Education study program at Universitas Nias with the total number were 81 persons. To achieve the research objective, the researcher designed a questionnaire as the main instrument to collect data. Questionnaire is defined as a document containing questions and other types of items designed to solicit information appropriate to analysis (Ali, 2022 as cited in Babbie, 1990, p. 337).

The main source of data in this study was a questionnaire distributed to fifth semester students of the English Education study program at Universitas Nias. The context of this study is highly relevant to the participants chosen because of its focus on students' fear of making mistakes when speaking English. As such, the participants are a group who have first-hand experience of learning English, and the data obtained from them will provide valuable insights into the issue.

The data collection process in this study involved the use of a Likert scale-based questionnaire. Likert scale is the scale used to measure perception, attitude or opinion of a person or group about an event or social phenomenon (Febtriko & Puspitasari, 2018). To calculate the Likert scale for the given data, researcher assigned values to each reponse category of questionnaire, namely Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Neutral = 3, Agree = 4, and Strongly Agree = 5. The data collection process began with the distribution of questionnaires to respondents of fifth semester students of the English Education study program at Universitas Nias. Each questionnaire was carefully designed to cover questions relevant to the research topic, such as the factors that led to their fear of making mistake in speaking English.

After the data was collected, the data analysis process was carried out using descriptive statistics analysis. Descriptive statistics analysis is analysis that provides description of data for all independent and dependent variables (Damayanti & Al Musadieq, 2017). Descriptive statistics analysis was used to identify general patterns in the data, such as the mean, median, and mode. Next, the researcher determined the factors that cause students' fear of making mistakes in speaking English, thus allowing the author to delve deeper into the aspects that influence this phenomenon.

Therefore, this research used quantitative methods. Data was collected using a survey method with a questionnaire as the main instrument for collecting data from fifth semester students of the Nias University English Language Education study program. Data analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics analysis to identify patterns and factors related to their fear of making mistakes in speaking English. This method was carefully chosen to ensure that the data obtained can provide an in-depth understanding of the research topic.

**Finding and Discussion**

**Findings**

The research instrument used wherein the researcher provided 10 statements in Bahasa Indonesia to be responded by the participants in 5 options, among 81 persons, 76 students only who gave responses through the link of Google Form. The result showed some data as in following.

From the first statement about confidence when speaking English, it is found that 55.3% (42 persons) are neutral, 30.3% (23 persons) agree, 9.2% (7 persons) strongly agree, and 5.3% (4 persons) disagree. The following table presents the results of data calculations. Respondents are grouped by percentage, with categories and associated values reflecting the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement.

**Table 1. The results of data calculations of the first statement.**

| Category | Value | Percentage | Responses | Total | Mean | Median | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 0% | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Disagree | 2 | 5.3% | 4 | 8 | 3.43 | 7 | 3 |
| Neutral | 3 | 55.3% | 42 | 126 | | | |
| Agree | 4 | 30.3% | 23 | 92 | | | |

| Category | Value | Percentage | Responses | Total | Mean | Median | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 5 | 9.2% | 7 | 35 | | | |

Most respondents felt neutral about their English-speaking confidence, suggesting a lack of strong positive or negative feelings. Some were moderately confident, while a few expressed high confidences, and a small proportion felt unconfident, indicating a range of confidence levels among students.

From the second statement about the comfort of looking at other people when speaking English, it is found that 53.9% (41 persons) are neutral, 31.6% (24 persons) agree, 9.2% (7 persons) strongly agree, and 5.3% (4 persons) disagree. The following table presents the results of data calculations. Respondents are grouped by percentage, with categories and associated values reflecting the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement.

**Table 2. The results of data calculations of the second statement**

| Category | Value | Percentage | Responses | Total | Mean | Median | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 0% | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Disagree | 2 | 5.3% | 4 | 8 | | | |
| Neutral | 3 | 53.9% | 41 | 123 | 3.44 | 7 | 3 |
| Agree | 4 | 31.6% | 24 | 96 | | | |
| Strongly Agree | 5 | 9.2% | 7 | 35 | | | |

Most respondents felt neutral about their comfort while speaking English with others, indicating a lack of strong positive or negative feelings. Some were moderately comfortable, while a few expressed high comforts levels. Conversely, a small proportion felt uncomfortable in this situation, suggesting varying degrees of comfort among students.

From the third statement about feeling anxious, worried, and embarrassed when making mistakes when speaking English in English, it is found that 52.6% agree (40 persons), 25% (19 persons) are neutral, 11.8% (9 persons) strongly agree, and 10.5% (8 persons) disagree. The following table presents the results of data calculations. Respondents are grouped by percentage, with categories and associated values reflecting the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement.

**Table 3. The results of data calculations of the third statement**

| Category | Value | Percentage | Responses | Total | Mean | Median | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 0% | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Disagree | 2 | 10.5% | 8 | 16 | | | |
| Neutral | 3 | 25% | 19 | 57 | 3.65 | 9 | 4 |
| Agree | 4 | 52.6% | 40 | 160 | | | |
| Strongly Agree | 5 | 11.8% | 9 | 45 | | | |

Most respondents experienced anxiety, worry, and embarrassment when making mistakes in English, indicating prevalent negative emotions. Some felt neutral, suggesting

mixed feelings or a lesser impact of these fears. A small number expressed high levels of anxiety and embarrassment, highlighting significant discomfort. Conversely, a small proportion felt confident and unaffected by mistakes, indicating a range of responses among students.

From the fourth statement about the opinion that making mistakes when speaking English is a bad thing, it is found that 46.1% (35 persons) disagree, 22.4% (17 persons) are neutral, 19.7% (15 persons) agree, 7.9% (6 persons) strongly agree, and 3.9% (3 persons) strongly disagree. The following table presents the results of data calculations. Respondents are grouped by percentage, with categories and associated values reflecting the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement.

**Table 4. The results of data calculations of the fourth statement**

| Category | Value | Percentage | Responses | Total | Mean | Median | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 3.9% | 3 | 3 | | | |
| Disagree | 2 | 46.1% | 35 | 70 | | | |
| Neutral | 3 | 22.4% | 17 | 51 | 2.88 | 15 | 2 |
| Agree | 4 | 19.7% | 15 | 60 | | | |
| Strongly Agree | 5 | 7.9% | 7 | 35 | | | |

Most respondents disagreed with the notion that making mistakes when speaking English is a bad thing, indicating a generally positive attitude towards errors in language learning. Some were neutral, suggesting a lack of strong opinions on the matter. However, a portion of students agreed or strongly agreed that making mistakes is negative, highlighting differing perspectives. Conversely, a small proportion strongly disagreed, emphasizing a belief that mistakes are not inherently bad in the context of speaking English.

From the fifth statement about the fear of being criticized and ridiculed when making mistakes when speaking English, it is found that 36.8% (28 persons) disagree, 27.6% (21 persons) are neutral, 22.4% (17 persons) agree, 7.9% (6 persons) strongly agree, and 5.3% (4 persons) strongly disagree. The following table presents the results of data calculations. Respondents are grouped by percentage, with categories and associated values reflecting the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement.

**Table 5. The results of data calculations of the fifth statement**

| Category | Value | Percentage | Responses | Total | Mean | Median | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 5.3% | 4 | 4 | | | |
| Disagree | 2 | 36.8% | 28 | 56 | | | |
| Neutral | 3 | 27.6% | 21 | 63 | 2.90 | 17 | 2 |
| Agree | 4 | 22.4% | 17 | 68 | | | |
| Strongly Agree | 5 | 7.9% | 6 | 30 | | | |

Most respondents disagreed with the fear of criticism and ridicule when making mistakes in English, indicating that the majority don't view these reactions as significant

threats. Some felt neutral about this fear, suggesting mixed feelings or a lack of strong opinions. However, a portion of students expressed concern about criticism and ridicule, with some strongly agreeing, revealing heightened anxiety about others' reactions. Conversely, a small proportion strongly disagreed, indicating a belief that they won't face criticism or ridicule when making mistakes in English.

From the sixth statement about the experience of being criticized and ridiculed for making mistakes when speaking English, it is found that 38.2% (29 persons) agree, 30.3% (23 persons) are neutral, 19.7% (15 persons) disagree, 10.5% (8 persons) strongly agree, and 1.3% (1 person) strongly disagree. The following table presents the results of data calculations. Respondents are grouped by percentage, with categories and associated values reflecting the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement.

**Table 6. The results of data calculations of the sixth statement**

| Category | Value | Percentage | Responses | Total | Mean | Median | Mode |
|----------|-------|------------|-----------|-------|------|--------|------|
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 1.3% | 1 | 1 | | | |
| Disagree | 2 | 19.7% | 15 | 30 | | | |
| Neutral | 3 | 30.3% | 23 | 69 | 3.36 | 15 | 4 |
| Agree | 4 | 38.2% | 29 | 116 | | | |
| Strongly Agree | 5 | 10.5% | 8 | 40 | | | |

A substantial number of respondents agreed that they've faced criticism and ridicule for speaking mistakes in English, indicating prevalent negative experiences. Some were neutral, possibly reflecting mixed or indifferent experiences. Conversely, a portion disagreed, suggesting that some students have not encountered such negative situations. A small number strongly agreed, highlighting intense experiences of criticism and ridicule, while only a few strongly disagreed, indicating that a minority have not faced such negative reactions to English-speaking mistakes.

From the seventh statement about pressure from the surrounding environment to speak in English, it is found that 36.8% (28 persons) disagree, 27.6% (21 persons) neutral, 25% (19 persons) agree, 7.9% (6 persons) strongly disagree, and 2.6% (2 persons) strongly agree. The following table presents the results of data calculations. Respondents are grouped by percentage, with categories and associated values reflecting the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement.

**Table 7. The results of data calculations of the seventh statement**

| Category | Value | Percentage | Responses | Total | Mean | Median | Mode |
|----------|-------|------------|-----------|-------|------|--------|------|
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 7.9% | 6 | 6 | | | |
| Disagree | 2 | 36.8% | 28 | 56 | | | |
| Neutral | 3 | 27.6% | 21 | 63 | 2.77 | 19 | 2 |
| Agree | 4 | 25% | 19 | 76 | | | |
| Strongly Agree | 5 | 2.6% | 2 | 10 | | | |

A significant number of respondents disagreed with feeling pressure to speak in English from their surroundings, suggesting that most students do not experience substantial pressure in this regard. Some felt neutral, indicating mixed feelings or indifference. Conversely, a portion agreed, revealing that some students feel pressure or expectations regarding English usage. A small number strongly disagreed, emphasizing that only a few strongly believe there is no pressure from their environment to speak English. Similarly, only a small number strongly agreed, indicating that some students find the pressure to be significant.

From the eighth statement about fear that other people will misunderstand or not understand what is being said if they make mistakes when speaking English, it is found that 43.4% (33 persons) agree, 28.9% (22 persons) are neutral, 15.8% (12 persons) disagree, and 11.8% (9 persons) strongly agree. The following table presents the results of data calculations. Respondents are grouped by percentage, with categories and associated values reflecting the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement.

**Table 8. The results of data calculations of the eighth statement**

| Category | Value | Percentage | Responses | Total | Mean | Median | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 0% | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Disagree | 2 | 15.8% | 12 | 24 | | | |
| Neutral | 3 | 28.9% | 22 | 66 | 3.51 | 12 | 4 |
| Agree | 4 | 43.4% | 33 | 132 | | | |
| Strongly Agree | 5 | 11.8% | 9 | 45 | | | |

A significant number of respondents agreed that they feared being misunderstood or not understood when making mistakes in English, indicating a prevalent concern among students. Some felt neutral about this fear, suggesting mixed feelings or indifference. Conversely, a portion disagreed, highlighting a group of students who feel more confident in handling potential mistakes and are less anxious about others' understanding. A small number strongly agreed, underscoring that some students experience a high level of fear in this context.

From the ninth statement about being concerned about other people's opinions when speaking English, it is found that 44.7% (34 persons) agree, 38.2% (29 persons) strongly agree, 13.2% (10 persons) neutral, 2.6% (2 persons) strongly disagree, and 1.3% (1 person) disagree. The following table presents the results of data calculations. Respondents are grouped by percentage, with categories and associated values reflecting the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement.

**Table 9. The results of data calculations of the ninth statement**

| Category | Value | Percentage | Responses | Total | Mean | Median | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 2.6% | 2 | 2 | | | |
| Disagree | 2 | 1.3% | 1 | 2 | 4.14 | 10 | 4 |
| Neutral | 3 | 13.2% | 10 | 30 | | | |
| Agree | 4 | 44.7% | 34 | 136 | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Agree | 5 | 38.2% | 29 | 145 | | | |

A significant number of respondents agreed that they have a high level of concern about others' opinions when speaking English, indicating widespread unease. Additionally, a large number strongly agreed, revealing a substantial proportion with a very high level of concern. Some felt neutral, suggesting mixed feelings or indifference. Conversely, only a small number strongly disagreed, indicating a minority indifferent to others' perceptions. Similarly, a small proportion disagreed, suggesting that few students feel unconcerned about how others perceive them when speaking English.

From the tenth statement about strive to reach the point of perfection when speaking English, it is found that 56.6% (43 persons) strongly agree, 31.6% (24 persons) agree, 10.5% (8 persons) neutral, and 1.3% (1 person) disagree. Most respondents strongly agreed that they always strive to reach the point of perfection when speaking English. The following table presents the results of data calculations. Respondents are grouped by percentage, with categories and associated values reflecting the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statement.

**Table 10. The results of data calculations of the tenth statement**

| Category | Value | Percentage | Responses | Total | Mean | Median | Mode |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly Disagree | 1 | 0% | 0 | 0 | | | |
| Disagree | 2 | 1.3% | 1 | 2 | | | |
| Neutral | 3 | 10.5% | 8 | 24 | 4.43 | 8 | 5 |
| Agree | 4 | 31.6% | 24 | 96 | | | |
| Strongly Agree | 5 | 56.6% | 43 | 215 | | | |

This indicates that the majority of students are highly motivated to speak English perfectly. A number of students actively strive for excellence in their English speaking, reflecting a good level of motivation. Some felt neutral about reaching perfection, suggesting mixed feelings or indifference. Conversely, only a small number disagreed with the statement, indicating that few students do not feel the need to achieve perfection in speaking English.

**Discussion**

From the first statement, a low level of confidence, as indicated by some students feeling "Disagree" or "Neutral," could be the result of their fear of making mistakes when speaking English. They may worry that their mistakes will make them look incompetent or embarrassed in front of others. In this case, the relationship between confidence and speaking English is important (Wayan & Parmita, 2022). The confidence that has been owned by people can help people create good communication (Nadiah & Arina, 2019). In contrast, students who feel "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" may be more confident in speaking English and more prepared to cope with possible mistakes. They may be bolder in speaking and more open to practicing English without fear of making mistakes.

From the second statement, the low comfort level, as indicated by some students feeling "Disagree" or "Neutral," could be related to their fear of making mistakes when speaking English with others. They may worry that their mistakes will make them feel embarrassed or uncomfortable in the presence of others. In this case, the ability to be able to look at the other person is important to be able to create effective communication (Maitala et al., 2023). In contrast, students who feel "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" may be more comfortable when speaking English with others and more prepared to cope with possible mistakes. They may be more confident in communicating with others in English.

From the third statement, the data shows that most students experience feelings of anxiety, worry, and embarrassment when making mistakes in speaking English. This could be one of the reasons why students are reluctant to speak in English. They may be afraid that their mistakes will be perceived as failures or will make them feel embarrassed in front of others. This shows that anxiety is one of the factors that prevents students from speaking English (Fadhilah, 2022). Students who feel very anxious or very worried may experience higher levels of fear than others. This can hinder their ability to speak in English confidently.

From the fourth statement, the data indicates that the majority of students do not see making mistakes as a bad thing in the context of speaking English. This may reduce students' level of fear in making mistakes when speaking English, as they may find it easier to attempt to speak without fear of being judged or negatively evaluated. In contrast, a small number of students believe that making mistakes is a very bad or damaging thing. For these students, the fear of making mistakes when speaking English may be higher, as they may feel more pressure not to make mistakes (Zulfitri & Nurlaili, 2020).

From the fifth statement, the data shows that most students are not too worried about being criticized and ridiculed when making mistakes in speaking English. This could make them feel more comfortable speaking English without fear of being belittled or ridiculed by others. In contrast, a small number of students were very worried about others' negative reactions to their mistakes. For these students, the fear of criticism and ridicule may be one of the factors leading to their reluctance to speak in English (Sundari & Perdana, 2020).

From the sixth statement, the data shows that most students have experienced criticism and ridicule due to mistakes in speaking English. These negative experiences can be one of the factors that cause students' fear of making mistakes when speaking English, as they may feel worried that they will be criticized or ridiculed again. The experience of being criticized and ridiculed has a big influence on students' fear of speaking English (Krismanti & Siregar, 2017). For students who strongly agree that they have experienced criticism and ridicule, the level of fear in speaking English may be higher, as their negative experiences have been quite intense.

From the seventh statement, the data shows that the majority of students do not feel any significant pressure from their surroundings to speak in English. This could help reduce students' fear of making mistakes when speaking English, as they may feel freer to speak without fear of being evaluated or pressured by others. For students who strongly agree that they feel pressure from their surroundings to speak in English, their fear level of making mistakes may be higher, as they may feel more pressure to speak correctly. This indicates that the surrounding environment also has an influence on students' courage in speaking English (Rahmah & Sodiq, 2021).

From the eighth statement, the data shows that most students feel afraid that their mistakes in speaking English will cause others to misunderstand or not understand them. This fear can be one of the factors that cause students' reluctance to speak in English, as they worry that their mistakes will disrupt communication and affect the way others see them (Nadila et al., 2020). For those students who strongly agree that they feel very afraid if others misunderstand or do not understand them because of mistakes in speaking English, the level of fear in speaking English may be higher. This may hinder their ability to speak in English confidently.

From the ninth statement, this data shows that most students are very concerned about what others think of them when speaking English. This high level of concern could be one of the factors leading to students' fear of making mistakes when speaking English, as they worry that their mistakes will affect the way others see them (Hermaniar & Azkiya, 2021). For students who care deeply about the opinions of others, the level of fear in speaking English may be higher, as they may feel more pressure to speak correctly and fear negative judgment from others.

From the tenth statement, the data shows that most students put of effort to reach the point of perfection when speaking English. This high motivation to achieve perfection could be one of the factors leading to students' fear of making mistakes when speaking English, as they may feel too pressured to speak correctly. For students who agree that they strive for perfection, the level of fear in speaking English may also be quite high, as they may feel the need to reach a very high standard in speaking. This is the reason why students fear making mistakes when speaking English as they often place unrealistic demands on themselves and feel that anything less than a perfect test result is a failure (Ningsih, 2017).

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this research sheds light on the significant challenges faced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in developing their speaking skills. The study highlights the prevalence of reluctance among EFL students to speak English, despite years of language study. Factors contributing to this reluctance include feelings of anxiety, fear of criticism, and a strong concern for others' opinions. The research also reveals that while many students do not view making mistakes as a negative aspect of language learning, some still hold the belief that mistakes are detrimental. Additionally, the study underscores the role of confidence, comfort, and pressure from the

environment in shaping students' willingness to engage in spoken English. Ultimately, the findings emphasize the complex interplay of psychological and external factors in EFL students' fear of making mistakes when speaking English, highlighting the need for targeted interventions and pedagogical approaches to address these challenges and promote effective speaking skills in EFL contexts.

## Acknowledgements

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