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The Negative Impact of Speaking Anxiety Among Nigerian Secondary School Students in Sokoto South Local Government Area Sokoto State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT
This paper attempts to investigate the negative impact of Speaking anxiety among Nigerian Secondary school students in Sokoto South Local Government area Sokoto State, Nigeria. This paper presents the causes, effects and the way out of public speaking anxiety among Students of Sokoto South Local Government Area, Sokoto State, Nigeria.
Keywords: speaking anxiety, students, Secondary school

INTRODUCTION

Speaking anxiety is a common problem among Secondary School students, especially when they are expected to speak in class, answer questions, or participate in presentation. In Sokoto South Local Government Area, Sokoto State, Nigeria, many students may struggle with fear, lack of confidence, and concern about making mistakes while Speaking English. This anxiety can negatively affect their classroom participation, oral performance, and overall academic progress.

Definitions of Speaking Anxiety

(Zhang as cited in Trang, 2011) defined speaking anxiety as the psychological tension that the learner goes through in performing a learning task

- Scholars at the University of Wisconsin-Stout ("Public speaking anxiety," 2015) explain that anxiety in public speaking can result from one of several misperceptions.

On other hand, anxiety is a general term used for several disorders that cause nervousness, fear, apprehension and worrying. It can vary from day to day and throughout the day.

Speaking anxiety is about the feeling of uncomfortable, not confidence and worry when someone does speaking in the target language in front of the audience. The foreign language learners commonly experience it.

According to Suleimenova (2013). Anxiety describes as distress or discomfort of the mind caused by fear of danger or misfortune.

Mayer(2008) says that anxiety is normal aspect of life and it has a positive side too.

Similarly, Brown (2000) associated anxiety with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension and worry.

Speech anxiety

Speaking can be interpreted as production of words that have a meaning as a means of communication. This kind of communication is important for people to complete their needs to transfer ideas, messages, opinion & information. As a result Most people experience Some level of speech anxiety when they have to speak in front of a group; in fact, public speaking is many people's greatest fear. Speech anxiety can range from a slight feeling of "nerves" to a nearly incapacitating fear. Some of the most Common Symptoms of speech anxiety are: shaking, Sweating, butterflies in the Stomach, dry mouth, rapid heartbeat, and Squeaky voice. Although it is impossible to Completely eliminate Speech anxiety particularly among Nigerian Secondary school students

Similarly, experiencing speech anxiety is normal. Nearly everyone gets nervous when they have to give a speech or a presentation, even experienced speakers.

CAUSES OF SPEAKING ANXIETY

- **Lack of Knowledge:** Defintely lack of knowledge or mastering a subject in a particular speech can make speaker to be fear as a result of that anxiety or nervousness occur because the speaker is not well-educated on the subject matter.
- **Low preparation:** The situation whereby the speaker is not well-prepared or has a little or inadequate preparation, he/she will defintely be affected by anxiety
- **Fear of making Mistakes:** Many students do not have self confidence when it comes to public speaking as a result of this, they have fear of making many mistakes or to be criticised Negatively.
- **Limited vocabulary**: When learners do not know enough words, they struggle to express ideas clearly, which increases nervouness and hesitation during speaking.
- **Lack of preparation**: When speaking tasks are unexpected or students have little time to prepare, anxiety increases because they feel unready to perform. Dewi(2024)
- **Time pressure and Spontaneous Speaking:** Tasks that require immidiate answers, impromptu Speeches, or fast responses often trigger anxiety because learners have Less time to organize their thoughts. (Suratin and Sribayak, 2025)
- **Past negative experiences**: If a student has previously been Laughed at, Corrected harshly, or failed in speaking tasks, that memory can increase Later anxiety Hanake(2024)
- **Fear of Negative evaluation**: Anxious speakers often fear that Listeners will criticize, Laugh at, reject, or negatively Judge them.
- **Reduce educational and professional opportunities:** Individuals who avoid speaking may miss opportunities such as Class participation, interviews or Leadership roles as well as Social interaction

The negative effects of Speaking anxiety

- Anxiety limits speaking fluency among students.
- Anxiety makes many learners to become under presure during presentation either in Class or public.
- Anxiety decreases oral performances and Self-confidence to many learners or make a mistake while speaking in public (Venkatesh, 2020)
- It makes many students to be discomfort or forgetting something they knew or are about to say.
- Anxiety makes most of learners to be in the habit of trembling, shaking, cold clammy hands & shaky voice, racing thought and a sense of panic (Pierini, 2020)
- It also promotes rapid heartbeat, Sweating, blushing, dizziness shortness of breath, dry mouth and even memory loss.
- You might suddenly need the toilet & feel sick
- Reduced fluency

Speaking anxiety can cause hesitation, repetition, Long pauses, incorrect pronunciation and difficulty recalling words.

How to Overcome public speaking anxiety

- **Be Yourself:**
  While keeping your body Language and humor Professional, be your most authentic self and stick with what feels comfortable. Imitating others' speaking style could make you overthink each gesture or appear unnatural & insincere. The more you step into your authenticity at work, the more comfortable you'll feel being yourself in every area of your life.
- **Remember your purpose:**
  In any presentation, as a speaker, so addressing people in a gathering, you are speaking for a reason. Think about why you are there be it to share your experience or teach others and focus on this core purpose. Doing so might get you out of your head and into the situation at hand so you can concentrate less on your anxiety
- **Do some Deep Breathing :**
  This can be very calming. Take two or more deep, slow breaths before you get up to the podium and during your speech.
- **Prepare & practice**:
  The best way to feel comfortable speaking in front of others is to practice. Speech anxiety often focuses on the unknown, like audience questions or complex presentation materials. The Subject-matter familiarity quiets some of these question & offers answers.
- **Make eye contact**:
  If you fear public speaking, you may instinctively avoid eye contact because it feels intimate or intimidating. But chances are everyone wants to encourage you, and you can feed off the room's energy by looking your audience in the eye
- **Get organized :**
  Ahead of time, carefully plan out the information you want to present, including any props, audio or visual aids. The more organized you are, the less nervous you'll be, if possible, visit the place where you will be speaking & review available equipment before your presentation.
- **Know your topic:**
  The better you understand what you are talking about and the more you care about the topic- the less likely you'll make a mistake or get off track. And if you do get lost, you will be able to recover quickly. Take some times to consider what questions the audience may ask and have your responses ready.
- **Begin with pair & small-Group:**
  Pair and small-group activities are less threatening than whole-class presentation.
- **improve Language & Speaking Skills**

CONCLUSION

Speaking anxiety has a serious negative impact on Nigerian Secondary School students in Sokoto South Local Government Area. It can reduce students' confidence, limit their willingness to speak, and weaken their communication skills, if not addressed.

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