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Faculty of Foreign Languages
Department of English**

**The Impact of Anxiety on EFL
Learners in Oral Presentations**

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fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Linguistics**

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Dedication

Talbi Imad Eddine

I dedicate my dissertation work to Allah Almighty my creator, my source of
patience, strength, inspiration, knowledge, and understanding.

As I dedicate this work with a big love to my family members who stood by my
side with their continuous support and infinite hope.

I also dedicate this project to my teachers and colleagues,
To my partner, the symbol of will, challenge, perseverance and determination
“Belhachi Abdelhakem”

Special gratitude to all the extraordinary people who helped me overcoming the
hard moments I passed through
“Brahim Abdelhak”, “Najib”, “Hadj”

Belhachi Abdelhakem

Thank you, Allah, for helping me to reach this moment.

Thank you for giving me power and patience to finish this work.

This work is dedicated to the candles of my life; my lovely parents.

To my lovely brother Hamo and sisters,

To my wife and my children Abdo Basmala, Alaa, and Soujoud,

To my brother in law Zoheir, and my nephew Hako Adam and Yesser.

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Abstract

English as a foreign language has become the desire of the current learners regarding its significant role over the world as it is being used in various fields, precisely in education. During the learning process, EFL learners are suffering from several psychological variables namely anxiety which is regarded as the main barrier that impedes their learning process. Based on the existence of anxiety in oral presentations among EFL learners at Naama University Center, the present study attempts to investigate the impact of anxiety on EFL learners in oral presentations. The highlighted sample was concerned with thirty-eight EFL learners from the first-year master and eight EFL teachers. Henceforth, the researchers relied on a questionnaire administered to learners and an interview designed for teachers to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The analysis and the interpretation of the collected data from both of the research instruments have confirmed the suggested hypotheses in which anxiety impacts negatively EFL learners' oral presentations due to several factors mainly the lack of self-regulation. Besides, the findings have revealed plenty and diverse strategies that learners and teachers can base on to reduce foreign language anxiety and thus enhancing EFL learners' skills in oral presentations.

Key words: anxiety, oral presentations, EFL learners, EFL teachers.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

FLA	Foreign Language Anxiety
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
OP	Oral Presentation
OPs	Oral Presentations
OHP	Overhead Projectors
PPT	PowerPoint

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Nowadays the English language becomes everyone's interest, in which it is considered as the world's widely spoken language and approximately it has taken a great part among all the fields especially the educational one. With the increasing number of learners who are eagerly in need to learn English as a foreign language to better their skills, precisely in oral presentations which often assessed and also counted as a significant means by which learning could take place. However, it is really necessary to highlight the factors which may impede or negatively affect the EFL learning process. The most known obstacles that scholars confirmed as hinders to EFL learners' oral presentations are strongly concerned with psychological variables such as shyness, phobias, panic attacks, depression, and anxiety.

Anxiety, for example, is an independent psychological variable that comes with degrees in which the majority of learners encounter in their oral presentations. In fact, when they feel anxious, they are unable to present orally and cannot show their full potential of performance even though most of them have many ideas and thoughts but they cannot express them as they intended. The present study aims at investigating the issue of learners' anxiety in their oral presentations, more accurately; it is trying to seek for the impacts of anxiety on EFL learners' oral tasks, the causes that lead them to an anxious state and find out some of the strategies that teachers should include:

To reach the research objectives, two main questions are raised:

- 1) How does anxiety affect EFL learners' oral presentations?
- 2) What are the causes that make EFL learners anxious during oral presentations?

Thus, the suggested hypotheses for the sub research questions are as follows:

- 1) Anxiety is a psychological independent variable that is hypothesized to affect EFL learners' oral performance negatively.
- 2) The lack of self-regulation is said to be the main reason behind EFL learners' anxiety when presenting orally.
with their learners to reduce anxiety.

General Introduction

The research paper is divided into two chapters, the first chapter contains the literature review which includes anxiety definition in general, its types, symptoms, and factors. It also identifies oral presentation, its types, elements, importance, and advantages ending by the impact of anxiety on EFL learners' oral presentations. The second chapter deals with the objectives of this research by describing both the questionnaire and the interview as research instruments to gather the data needed and then identifying the sample which consists of thirty-eight EFL learners from the first-year master and eight teachers at Naama University Center, to examine the research hypotheses.

Under the exacerbation of the impact of anxiety on EFL learners in their oral presentations that strongly weakens their learning process and make it even harder to achieve. This study attempts to dive a bit on this psychological variable and diagnose some of the factors that lead to such phenomenon, as well as to propose the most effective strategies that learners and teachers should apply at least to reduce the problem. In other words, this study aims to supply the EFL departments with thoughts and ideas that may contribute to diminish the severity of anxiety precisely in oral presentations.

Chapter One

Literature Review

1.1. Introduction

One of the important independent variables that stand as an obstacle to EFL learners' OPs is anxiety. Teachers usually provide their learners with a wide range of activities to enhance their speaking skills as well as self-regulation. Nevertheless, learners avoid speaking in front of their classmates because they believe that speaking is only a source of shame, embarrassment, and fear especially for those who are suffering from a high level of anxiety in which they encounter many difficulties when they are given a chance to show up their speaking skills and present themselves in the target language. In addition, the impacts of anxiety on EFL learners can be seen clearly through different symptoms such as lack of concentration, stammering, shivering, and being not able to respond appropriately nor correctly. These impacts of anxiety on learners may exceed to become a serious psychological barrier that impedes their OPs in different situations.

This chapter is dedicated mainly to investigate anxiety from different perspectives, starting with the definition of the term, which is a very common psychological variable within foreign language learning. Then, we will deal with its various types, symptoms, and factors. Furthermore, we will tackle OP definition which is a dependent variable that differs among EFL learners. Moreover, we will cover its types, elements, as well as its importance in foreign language learning. In addition, we will shed the light on its advantages, ending with the discussion of the impact of anxiety on EFL learners' OPs.

1.2. Learning Psychological Variables

In recent years, in terms of learning factors, many linguistic theoretical researchers and foreign language teachers have paid more attention to the influence of psychological variables on EFL learning and have also made in-depth researches and explorations from different angles and aspects. In addition, many psychological variables have a direct impact on learners such as stress, anxiety, depression, lack of motivation, helplessness, and phobias. These phenomena are considered as the main psychological factors which vary among ELF learners and strongly affect their academic achievements in different aspects and thus, they may suffer from various

issues such as test anxiety, poor performance, low self-confidence, unrealistic worry, and fear or uneasiness that interfere with their ability to function normally.

Nevertheless, anxiety is regarded as the most common psychological variable that frequently affects the EFL learning process, especially in OPs. In his point of view, Horwitz (2001) argued that a lot of EFL learners have some levels of anxiety. Moreover, Riasati (2011) explained that many learners have high levels of stress when learning a foreign language. He recommended that English language teachers should be careful about language anxiety inside the classroom, and they should find solutions to simplify the language learning process.

1.3. Anxiety Defined

Anxiety is an individual's physical response to threats. It is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes. This phenomenon is classified as a normal part of life, people experience stress and anxiety at some point in their lives. Therefore, they may avoid places or situations to prevent these feelings of fear, worry, and uneasiness, which can cause physical feelings such as nausea, stomach upset, dizziness, dry mouth, and tension. Consequently, living with anxiety or panic can affect at different degrees some or all of the things that people do. This natural human reaction works as an important psychological function, which is felt by many people regardless of age and gender.

As an alarm system, anxiety is activated whenever people perceive the situation as dangerous, embarrassing, or stressful. In these situations, anxiety can help them to better manage the events, while the low and controllable level of anxiety can be beneficial, high level of anxiety may negatively affect one's social and personal relationships, and cause physical and emotional problems (Herrero, Sandi, & Venero, 2006). This psychological variable is considered as an emotional and behavioural disorder that is processed internally, and it is related to phobia, mood disorders, and depression (Westwood, 2004).

In the learning context, anxiety can affect the ability to receive information, its processing, and retrieving it when it is necessary (Tobias, 1985). Learners with anxiety often experience high and uncontrollable worry about events that accrued in past or might happen in the future, they experience extreme worry about performing

completely well, meanwhile, they are so self-consciousness and often misinterpreted or overstated the importance of the condition (Vanin, 2008). All of these can negatively affect learning and information processing, leading to poorer academic performances, school dropout, or underachievement in school. Meanwhile, emotions have a strong effect on an individual's motivation, abilities and improve the process of learning in various fields, especially among EFL learners, which have a strong link with anxiety. Understanding the effect of anxiety on EFL learners' OPs is crucial for teachers to increase their awareness about the effect of anxiety on this important skill.

1.4. Foreign Language Anxiety

Anxiety is one of the most negatively influential affective variables, which is a psychological barrier that prevents learners from successfully learning a foreign language and makes them nervous and afraid. Language researchers almost agree that anxiety emerged from the language learning process, which is one of the most primary obstacles that EFL learners encounter when learning English as a foreign language.

In terms of definition, several researchers have offered definitions of FLA. Clement (1980) defined FLA as a complex construct that deals with learners' psychology in terms of their feelings, self-esteem, and self-confidence. Emphasizing the distinctive features of anxiety, Young (1992) defined it as a complicated psychological phenomenon peculiar to language learning. More specifically, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) defined FLA as the feeling of tension and apprehension associated with second or foreign language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning, or the worry and negative emotional reaction arousal when learning or using a second or foreign language

In their well-known article, Horwitz and Cope (1986) defined FLA as "a distinct complex construct of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of language learning process" (Horwitz and Cope, 1986, p. 128).

1.5. Types of Foreign Language Anxiety

Anxiety, as perceived by many English language learners, negatively influences language learning, and is one of the most highly examined variables in all of

psychology and education (Horwitz, 2001). Furthermore, anxiety is usually not seen as a unitary factor but a complex made up of constituents that have different characteristics. Three important anxiety distinctions are usually mentioned: State Anxiety, trait anxiety, and Situation-Specific Anxiety.

1.5.1. State Anxiety

State anxiety as the name implies arises in a particular moment and it is not permanent. According to Spielberger (1983), state anxiety is defined as apprehension that is experienced at a particular moment in time as a response to a definite situation. Additionally, it refers to the “moment-to-moment experience of anxiety” (MacIntyre 1999, p.28). This type of anxiety occurs because the learners are exposed to a particular instance that is stressful for them, which affects the emotions, cognition, and learners’ behaviours. Frequently, learners who experienced state anxiety are more likely to feel stress and nervousness or unable to confront any event. Test anxiety distinctly exemplifies the state anxiety whereby students experience anxiety from a particular test, but this feeling can change over time

1.5.2. Trait Anxiety

According to Scovel, trait anxiety is a continual feeling; it is seen to be an aspect of personality. Unlike other types of anxiety, trait anxiety is not related to a specific situation, it has no time limitation, it refers to individual differences in reaction toward perceive threat in the environment in general. Furthermore, this idea is likely to be relevant to what Spielberger (1983) states that trait anxiety is defined as an individual tendency to be anxious in any situation. In addition, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991, p. 87) described it as the most permanent feeling of anxiety, i.e., a learner who had this type of anxiety tends to be highly apprehensive in several objectively non-threatening situations. Indeed, such anxiety is a part of a learner’s character and hence is permanent and difficult, if not impossible, to get rid of. A learner who is suffering from such type of anxiety is likely to feel anxious in a variety of situations. Once anxiety becomes a trait one, it will hinder language learning.

1.5.3. Situation-Specific Anxiety

Situation-specific anxiety refers to the apprehension experienced by EFL learners in oral expression skills in some learning contexts. In their perspective,

MacIntyre and Gardner defined situation-specific anxiety as the probability of becoming anxious in a particular type of situation, such as during tests (labelled test anxiety), when solving mathematics problems (math anxiety), or when speaking a second language (language anxiety).

Moreover, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) state that situation-specific anxiety is a unique anxiety form that happens invariably over time within a given situation. The situation-specific perspective occurs at a particular point of time because of a specific situation Spielberg (1983). Besides, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) claim that a situation-specific perspective is the best research approach for FLA because language learners experience anxiety in different aspects of the situation in a language class. In sum, situation-specific anxiety focuses on the particular forms of anxiety that occur systematically over time.

1.6. Anxiety Symptoms

When presenting orally usually EFL learners encounter a high level of anxiety. Consequently, they are affected physically, emotionally, behaviourally, and of course, cognitively. They might not always be aware of it at the time they are anxious, but in an anxious state they think, feel, and behave differently than when they are not anxious. The most common symptoms of anxiety are classified into four main categories:

<i>Physical Symptoms</i>	<i>Emotional Symptoms</i>	<i>Behavioural Symptoms</i>	<i>Cognitive symptoms</i>
• Increased heart rate, palpitations • Shortness of breath • Chest pain or pressure • Choking sensation • Dizziness, light headedness • Sweating, hot flashes, chills • Nausea, upset stomach, diarrhoea • Trembling, shaking • Tingling or numbness in arms, legs • Weakness, unsteadiness, faintness • Tense muscles, rigidity • Dry mouth	• Feeling nervous, tense, wound up • Feeling frightened, fearful, terrified • Being edgy, jumpy, jittery • impatient, frustrated	• Avoidance of threat cues or situations • Escape, flight • Pursuit of safety, reassurance • Restlessness, agitation, pacing • Hyperventilation • Freezing, motionlessness • Speaking difficulty	• Fear of losing control, being unable to cope • Fear of physical injury or death • Fear of “going crazy” • Fear of negative evaluation by others • Frightening thoughts, images, or memories • Perceptions of unreality or detachment • Poor concentration, confusion, distractibility • Narrowing of attention, hypervigilance for threat • Poor memory • Difficulty in reasoning, loss of objectivity

Table 1.1. Anxiety Symptoms

1.7. Anxiety Factors

Researches have shown different factors that contribute to provoking learners' anxiety during their OPs. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) have proposed three factors that influence learners' OPs, namely: communications apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of a negative evaluation. As the first anxiety factor, communication apprehension is a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people. This anxiety very often plagues EFL learners in English classes, in which they feel embarrassed to talk to the teacher, and/or their peers in English. Thus, they usually sense like someone is observing them watching out for them to make mistakes in their grammar, this causes the learners to be anxious when asked to speak English because they believe that their English language is not as good as the ability of their peers.

Meanwhile, test anxiety usually occurs when learners face an English language test, especially an oral test. Learners feel pressured and uncomfortable in this situation. Even those who have prepared themselves perfectly for an oral English test can make errors in the test, also they seem to lose their ability during the test. According to Yamashiro and McLaughlin (2001), test anxiety is a form of anxiety that is like a motivating factor to study harder and perform better. On the contrary, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) reveal that frequently learners who prepared themselves before their OPs experience forgetfulness because of their nervousness that causes them to lose memory power so that they perform negatively in their tests.

Thirdly, fear of negative evaluation is defined as apprehension about the evaluations of peers, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that teachers will evaluate their learners negatively (Watson & Friend, 1969, as cited in Horwitz, et al., 1986). From the corner of Ayres (1986) learners of English feel anxious while speaking due to their negative perception of their capacities. Thus, the fear of performing badly in front of an audience makes learners stressed when delivering a speech. In other words, anxious learners care a lot about what their teacher and mates think when listening to their speech. They view the audience as observers of all what they say and do and thus the latter is noticing all the weaknesses of the speakers and may judge them negatively and consider them as learners with low abilities in speaking English. These negative self-talks arise learners' anxiety when presenting orally.

1.8. Oral Presentation Defined

Oral presentations, known as public speaking or simply presentations, consisting of an individual or group verbally addressing an audience on a particular topic. The aim of this is to educate, inform, entertain or present an argument. An OP at a university assesses the presenter's ability to communicate relevant information effectively, interestingly, and engagingly. According to Baker (2000), an OP is like a formal conversation, speaking to a group as a natural activity, which means delivering an address to a public audience, i.e., it is a brief discussion of a defined topic delivered to the public to impart knowledge or to stimulate discussion.

Moreover, it has to be distinguished from normal or natural speech since it is formal and needs preparation and effort. OPs generally take place in formal and organizational settings with time limits and thus, they should be prepared, structured, and guided to be interesting and beneficial for both learners and teachers (Melion & Thompson, 1980). They are characterized by spoken language and not written one.

Likewise, Ming (2005) believes that OPs are typically and partly spoken, partly visual forms of communication, and they are normally limited in time and occurs in organizational settings. Mallete and Clare (2011) claimed that OPs are the most common method for presenting information and are usually done with a computer and a projector.

1.8.1. Types of Oral Presentation

Oral presentation projects in EFL classrooms can take different forms, and they can be prepared in different ways depending on many factors such as the teacher's objective and learners' proficiency level. They can be prepared individually, in pairs, or in groups. Besides, OP is categorized into three types: controlled, guided, and free presentations (Al-Issa & Redha, 2010).

1.8.1.1. Controlled Oral Presentation.

In a controlled OP, the learners' language proficiency level is usually from beginner to elementary. The teacher has to control the learner's activities; confine the topic and choose the ones that make the learners feel comfortable. The teacher, indeed, should not expect something perfect from the learners since they are not even supposed to give long presentations. The aim is to allow learners to gain self-confidence and practice the target language in context (Al-Issa & Redha, 2010).

It is also recommended not to assess the learners' performance, and errors should be expected due to the limited knowledge of the presenters. Moreover, with this type of OP, the learners may accompany their presentations with simple tools such as a paper to read since learners at this language level are young and have no knowledge about technological equipment.

1.8.1.2. Guided Oral Presentation.

The learners have already acquired some language background and developed some competencies. Therefore, the guided OP should be relevant for them. They do

not need to be controlled but just guided to make sure they use relevant grammatical structures and lexical items (Al-Issa & Redha, 2010). Even at this stage, learners are expected to make language errors, so they should be guided to the appropriate level of grammar and lexical items and time allotment. The instructor can guide his learners to prepare their projects, using PowerPoint and Overhead Projectors (PPT, OHP) if such materials are available.

1.8.1.3. Free Oral Presentation.

In this type of presentation, learners are expected to have an advanced level of proficiency. Learners at this level should be given the freedom to choose the topic they would like to tackle, plan the topic the way they consider most appropriate, and use any kind of language level. At this stage, they can use complex language and deliver a longer presentation as long as they were exposed enough to guided practice. Learners gained confidence and can tackle wider subjects by collecting data from different sources. Another key feature of free OP is certainly the debate generated once the presentation is over. There is a question-answer process triggered over the topic and learners are expected to answer the questions asked either by the teacher or by their peers (Al-Issa & Redha, 2010).

1.8.2. Elements of Oral Presentation

The oral presentation involves five different elements. According to Duddley-Evans, and Maggie (1998), an academic course looks at structuring, visuals, voice, and advance signalling as well as delivering a presentation. These are considered the most important characteristics of a good OP.

1.8.2.1. Structuring a Presentation.

Structuring is considered the most important element and the cornerstone of a presentation. The one will decide the impact of the presentation because the audience is only able to listen and they must have a clearly defined structure as a map to follow with a start, middle, and end. In addition, when preparing a presentation, the presenter needs to consider both content and language. When presenting there is a limited range of moves in the introduction, yet situations that are more complex occur in the middle where the moves rely on the type and purpose of the presentation. Whereas, the

conclusion consists of a summary of the main points and recommendations. Moves in the introduction and conclusion contain:

In this vein, Anderson, Juan, and Tony (2004) affirmed that an ideal structure for a presentation includes:

- A welcoming and informative introduction
- The chronological sequence of the main points
- Most important to least important
- General to particular
- One point of view compared with another point of view
- A lucid and purposeful conclusion

1.8.2.2. Visuals

Visual aids are significant elements of an effective OP. Using visuals can be a very powerful tool to enhance the impact of the presentation, and help to communicate ideas. Ming (2005) argued that because we live in a time where communication is visual and verbal, visual aids are as important to oral communication as they are to written communication. Anderson et al. (2004) defined visuals as anything that can be seen and help listeners to follow, pay attention, and interest in the OP. Besides, Research has shown that the use of visuals in OPs is more persuasive, more interesting, more credible, and more professional.

There are many types of visual aids; these include whiteboard, flip charts, tables, Overhead Projector (OHP), PowerPoint, diagrams, videos, etc. visual aids help listeners understand abstract concepts and allow complex data to be organized and reduced to make a point clearly and concisely. Furthermore, Remond and Vrchota (2007) proved that visuals help in reducing nervousness in the sense that they lead the presenter towards making warming-up before beginning the presentation as a way to psych the self to start the presentation. However, King (2002) believed that the basic rule is to use visual aids to support the presentation, not to dominate it. In addition, visuals are appealing in classes of different learning styles where the interest is to bring a variety to the learning process.

1.8.2.3. Voice.

In any OP, the voice is an extremely important element to be considered, since it gives various perceptions to the listener, and is more influential on credibility than the presenter's face in communicative contexts. Furthermore, Duddley-Evans and Maggie (1998) insisted on putting more attention on the important role played by phrasing, pausing, speed of delivery, volume, and tone variation in OPs, in addition, it is argued that as a presenter, the ability to pace your speech and use your voice to create impact is the single most important skill you need. The presenters will be more effective if they are in control of their voice by the use of stress, pausing, intonation, volume, and silence (Powell, 2002)

However, peaking too softly, mumbling, or trailing off at the ends of sentences can suggest uncertainty or timidity and will undercut the strength of a presentation.

1.8.2.4. Advance Signalling

One of the key elements of a successful presentation is the smooth and clear linking of ideas. It helps the listener to follow the structure of the information and arguments; also, it leads to recognizing visuals' significance. To achieve this, a presenter needs to know the appropriate language and effective strategies for signalling transitions. For example, using advance signalling to introduce the talk as in (I'd like to talk about....) or to conclude the talk, as (I'd like to finish by saying that....) Meanwhile, the lack of advance signalling may confuse the listener to follow the presenter's discussion. Kane (1988) divided advance signalling, or what she called signposts into two types: Intrinsic signposts that are a part of the presenters' text, or extrinsic signposts which clue the listener to the text's organization, however, they stand outside the actual text, for instance, a table of contents.

1.8.2.5. Delivering a Presentation

Oral presentations can be extremely positive experiences; however, a well-planned and well-structured presentation can be ineffective because of the delivery. The delivery phase can either make or ruin a presentation. Delivering an OP can be a challenging task for many learners. Thus, the way of presenting should be well organized to make the audience understand the objective of the work, and keep them engaged from the start to the end of the presentation.

Accordingly, there are different factors that the presenter needs to consider when presenting. The most important part is to make an emotional connection with the audience because without it the presenter's message will not be fully heard. Also, the presenter should know how to organize his/her presentation, this includes knowing how to begin, introduce, and conclude the presentation, using signposts when moving from one point to another, etc. Furthermore, the presenter should use proper verbal communication and keep an appropriate tone of voice. Besides, he/she needs to have proper non-verbal communication and be aware of his/her body movement; this includes maintaining eye contact with the audience because it helps the presenter to show interest in them and keep their attention.

Likewise, and to achieve their goals, the presenters should deal appropriately with the time allocated for delivering the presentation, since good presenters are the ones who know how to use the time allocated in informing. In this vein, Chivers and Shoolbred (2007) explained that the use of time during the presentation has a relation with the content. Moreover, oral communication is an important and effective factor when delivering a presentation. Thus, to run the presentation smoothly, the presenter must be well prepared and well-organized and must have some knowledge of how to deliver an OP which is the role of the teachers.

1.8.3. The Importance of Designing Effective Oral Presentations

Oral presentations are significant when they are designed and prepared effectively. They are a good example of learner-centeredness. Hence, teaching learners how to design successful presentations will not just prepare them for possible future academic careers but also help them function well in their professional setting (Živković, 2014). Thus, OPs are beneficial for EFL learners to be communicatively competent. Moreover, learners need a lot of practice and guided instruction through implementing OP in their classrooms because it allows learners to participate in the learning process through demonstrating their ability to communicate ideas, interact with others and convey meaning. Consequently, it allows learners to gain insights, knowledge, and language skills through interacting with others; constructively sharing information with structured planning and good organization (Živković, 2014). Indeed, teaching EFL learners to design and prepare effective presentations

implies developing their insightful and well-trained thinking strategies that can produce clarity in communication. Furthermore, effective OPs are very significant to get learners' attention, encourage curiosity, and create challenges (King, 2002).

In designing an effective OP, learners must know how to prepare and structure their presentation and how to deliver it because this will make its content more and more effective. Chivers and Shoolbred (2007) claim that to prepare and deliver the presentation, there are some characteristics, which are important to make it effective:

- Careful planning and preparation
- Good time management
- Relevant and interesting content
- Good communication skills
- Appropriate use of technologies
- Clear supporting documentation
- A suitable audience participation

1.8.4. Advantages of Using Oral Presentation Projects

Many scholars have written about the advantages of conducting OPs in the language classroom. According to Girard and Trapp (2011), the potential benefits of learners' OPs include:

- Classroom interaction, learners' participation, and involvement in language learning.
- Increase in learners' motivation and interest in foreign language learning.
- Remarkable improvements in presentation skills and communication performance.
- Allowing for new perspectives not covered elsewhere.

As far as King (2002) is concerned, she considers that OPs are an opportunity for developing real-world communication and leadership skills. She summarizes the advantages of presentations in the following:

- Allowing for the use of the four language skills in a natural and integrated way.
- Helping to reduce the gap between language study and language use.

- Reinforcing pair and teamwork and enhancing collaborative work.
- Helping learners gather, inquire, organize and construct information.
- Promote active learning and develop learner's autonomy.

Moreover, OPs allow learners to get involved in the learning process through being active participants and getting engaged in real-world experiences. They also help develop problem-solving skills and critical thinking competence (Gerard & Trapp, 2011). Furthermore, OPs promote learner-centeredness to have direct control of the content and the flow of the classroom (Apple & Kikuchi, 2007). Learners are called to use the target language in a natural way to present and communicate the content of the topic. Besides, according to Hovane (2009), OPs provide learners with additional motivation to learn English.

1.9. The Impact of Anxiety on EFL Learners' Oral Presentations

The main purpose of EFL learners is to achieve a successful OP and unleash their oral capacities for better performance, whilst, some presenters encounter anxiety as a very common obstacle that prevents them to reach their goals. Anxiety is originated from the great diversity of the learners within the same class. This phenomenon happens when learners try to present orally in front of their classmates, as they suffer from a negative feeling about the probability of failing the performance.

According to Littlewood (1999, p. 93), "it is too easy for a foreign language classroom to create inhibition and anxiety". Likewise, anxiety can inhibit EFL learners from achieving their goals and impedes their abilities to present successfully because they are all the time fearful, worry, and unsure of themselves in what they are saying. Thus, this psychological variable has a strong effect on their achievement and stands out as one of the main blocking factors for an effective OP.

Anxiety, therefore, has a strong impact on EFL learner's OP, it can either play a positive role or a negative one. Alpert and Haber (1960) as cited in Ellis (1994) that anxiety can be shaped into two distinctive elements, facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety. Facilitating anxiety (helpful) motivates learners to do things more efficiently and to make an extra effort in overcoming feelings of anxiety. On the other hand, debilitating anxiety (harmful) is the opposite.

According to Simpson, Parker, and Harrison (1995), debilitating anxiety refers to excessive amounts of anxiety which could lead to poor response or could even inhibit it. Debilitating anxiety will cause learners to avoid the learning process to suppress the feeling of anxiety. To understand the distinction between the two concepts, Scovel noted that:

“Facilitating anxiety motivates the learner to ‘fight’ the new learning task; it gears the learner emotionally for approval behavior. Debilitating suppress anxiety, in contrast, motivates the learner to ‘flee’ the new learning task; it stimulates the individual emotionally to adopt avoidance behavior” (Scovel, T., 1978, p. 139).

1.10. Conclusion

The anxiety phenomenon was and still the concern of many researchers since it strongly affects the EFL learner’s OP. In this chapter anxiety is explored from different perspectives, starting with its definitions with the clarification of FLA concept, then dealing with its types and symptoms, moving to factors and some strategies to overcome it. Besides, this chapter has also covered OP by tackling its definitions, types, and elements, in addition to its importance and advantages, ending with the impact of anxiety on EFL learners’ OPs.

The second chapter will shed the light on the research design procedure by mentioning the case study design, the research approach, and the sample population. Furthermore, the collected data will be analysed and interpreted based on the questionnaire and interview findings compared to the previous investigations.

Chapter Two

Research Design

& Procedure

2.1. Introduction

1. This chapter aims to investigate the impact of anxiety on EFL learners in OPs at the English Department of Naama University Center. Since teachers and learners are the main sources of this study, their answers and opinions have very significant contributions to test our hypothesis, and the most appropriate tool to get responses to the research questions. For the sake of that, a questionnaire is administrated to the first-year master EFL learners and an interview is conducted with EFL teachers.

2.2. Research Design and Procedure

2. This chapter is devoted to the explanation of the methodology used for the investigation of the impact of anxiety on EFL learners' OPs, including the design of the case study, the selection of the research approach, and the sample population.

2.2.1. Case Study Design

The case study is a research strategy, which investigates a particular phenomenon in its real context to give a detailed description of the situation and explain it in depth by the use of several techniques. According to Sturman (1997): "a case study is a general term for the exploration of an individual, group or phenomenon" (Sturman, p. 61). In other words, Case studies are the analysis of persons, groups, events, decisions, periods, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods. Thus, the current study is an exploratory case study aiming at exploring the phenomenon of anxiety within EFL learners while presenting orally.

2.2.2. The Research Approach

Research approaches are plans and procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. They are, therefore, based on the nature of the research problem being addressed. Additionally, there are three collecting data approaches including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods.

The quantitative approach involves data collection that is typically numeric and the researcher tends to use mathematical models as the methodology of data analysis. On the contrary, qualitative research is a holistic approach that is described as an

unfolding model that occurs in a natural setting that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from high involvement in the actual experiences (Creswell, 1994).

The mixed-methods approach to research is an extension of rather than a replacement for the quantitative and qualitative approaches to research, as the latter two research approaches will continue to be useful and important (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The goal for researchers using the mixed-methods approach to research is to draw from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of the quantitative and qualitative research approaches. In this sense, quantitative data are collected through the learners' questionnaires and qualitative data are collected from the teachers' interviews. Therefore, it is the selected approach for the current investigation.

2.2.3. Sample Population

The sample is an operation of picking up a representative category from the studied population. Consequently, for this investigation, the researchers have dealt with eight EFL teachers and a sample of thirty-eight EFL learners from the first-year master students who were selected randomly from the wider population at Naama University Center in Algeria.

2.3. Data Analysis

This part will provide the analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaire and the interview followed by their interpretations.

2.3.1. Analysis of the Learners' Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a research instrument that consists of a set of questions or other types of prompts that aims to collect information from a respondent. Furthermore, a research questionnaire is typically providing structured and quantitative data that can be administrated without the presence of the researcher.

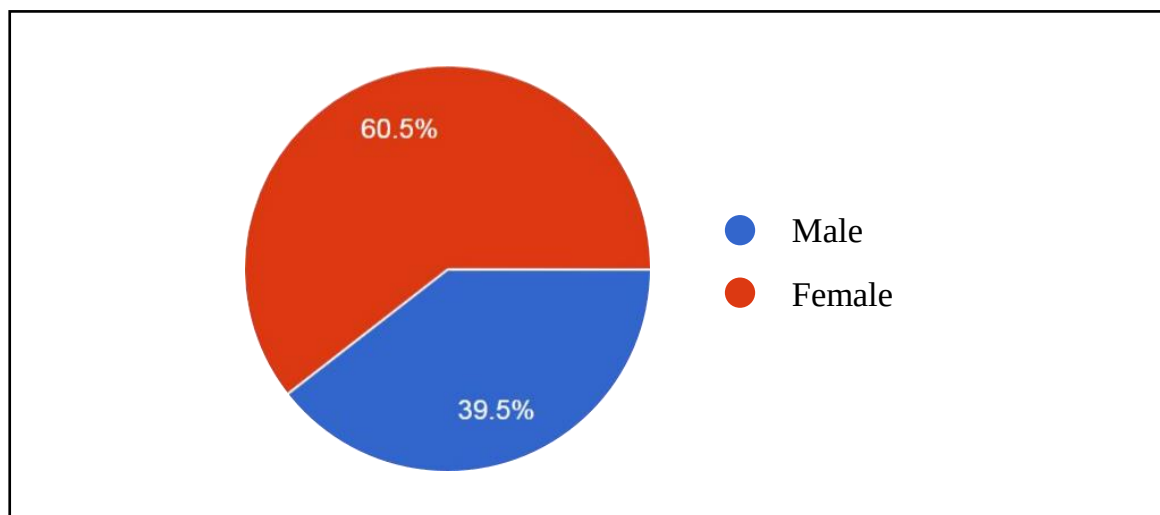
As it is mentioned above, the questionnaire was answered by thirty-eight participants from the first-year EFL Master's at Naama University Center. The questionnaire involved twelve questions with four sections.

Section 01: Demographic Questions**Item 01: Age**

Age	Participants	Percentages
21 - 24	25	65.7%
25 - 27	9	23.6%
30 - 42	4	10.4%
Total	38	99.7%

Table 2.1.: The Variety of Ages Among the Sample Population

As it is shown in Table 2.1. (65.7%) represents the majority of participants with the age of 21 to 24, while (23.6%) refers to those who are in age 25 to 27. The last percentage 10.4% indicates the oldest learners in the sample population with the age of 30 to 42.

Item 02: Gender**Figure 2.1.** Gender Distribution Among the Pie Chart

From the above Figure 2.1. the distribution shows obviously that females' contribution with a percentage of (60,5%) is more than males (39,5%).

Section 02: Dichotomous questions

Item 03: Have you ever presented orally in front of your colleagues?

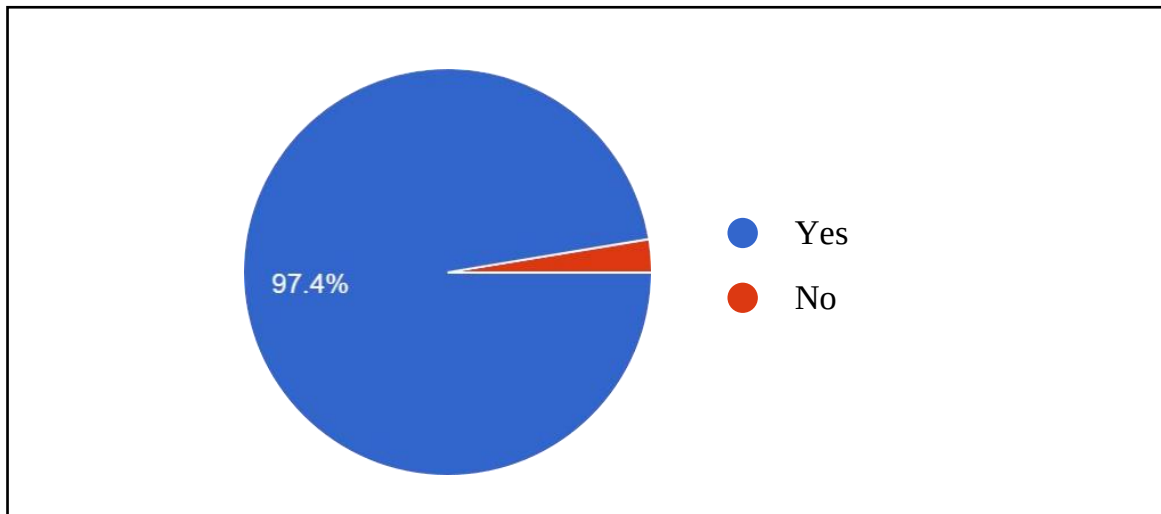


Figure 2.2. The Learners' Participation in Oral Presentations

This Figure 2.2. shows that most of the participants (97,4%) answered with yes in presenting orally, whilst the rest of them (2,6%) responded with no.

Item 04: Have you ever felt anxious during oral presentations?

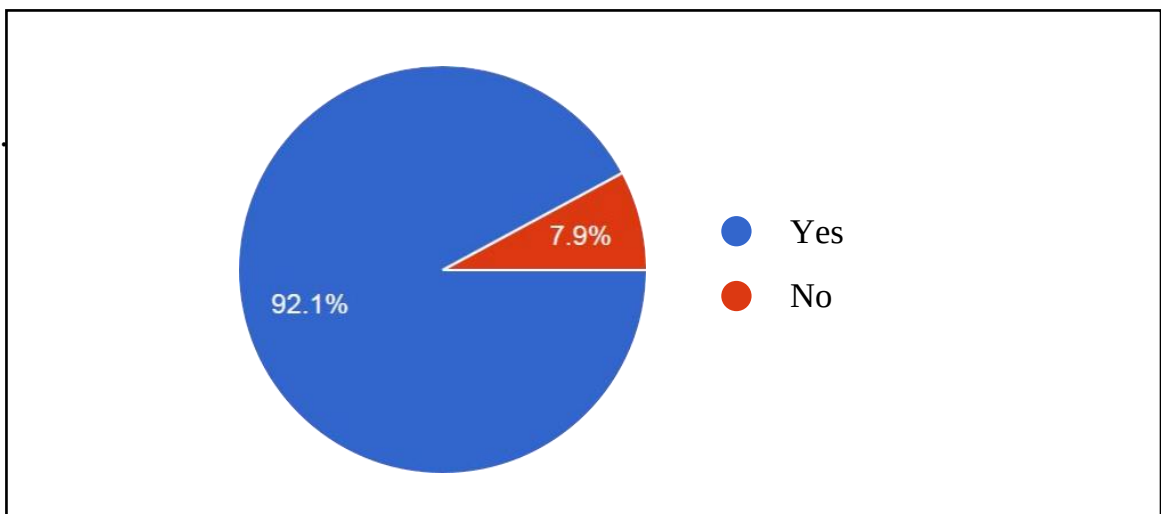


Figure 2.3. The Learners' Anxiety When Presenting Orally

The above Figure indicates that the majority of the participants (92,1%) experienced anxiety, whereas the rest (7,9%) did not.

Item 05: Do you have the ability to control your anxiousness?

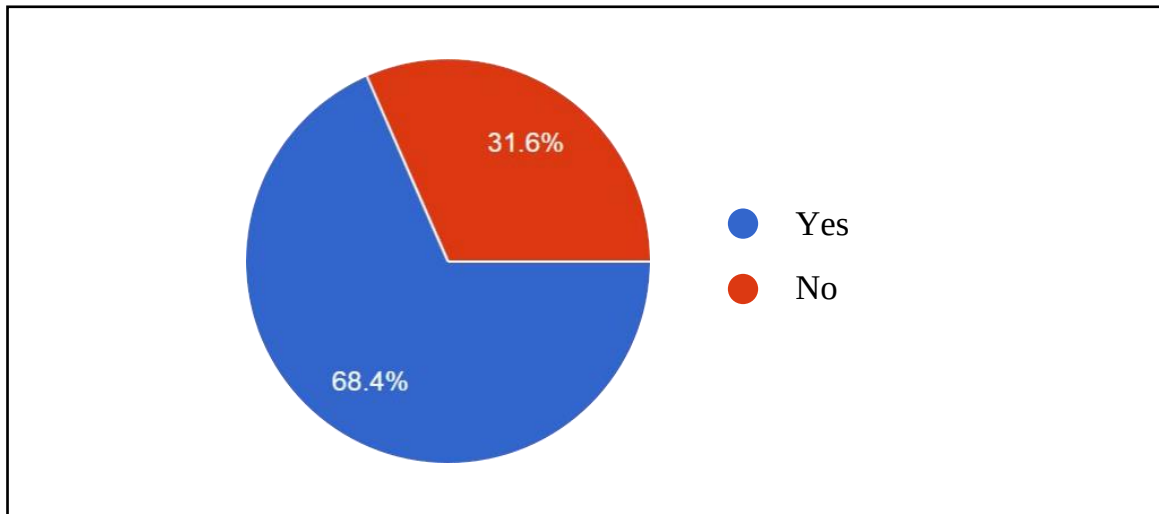


Figure 2.4. The Learners' Ability to Control Anxiety When Presenting Orally

This Figure 2.4. reveals that (68,4%) of the sample can control their anxiousness, whereas (31,6%) of the participants are unable to manage their anxiety.

Item 06: According to you presenting orally is?

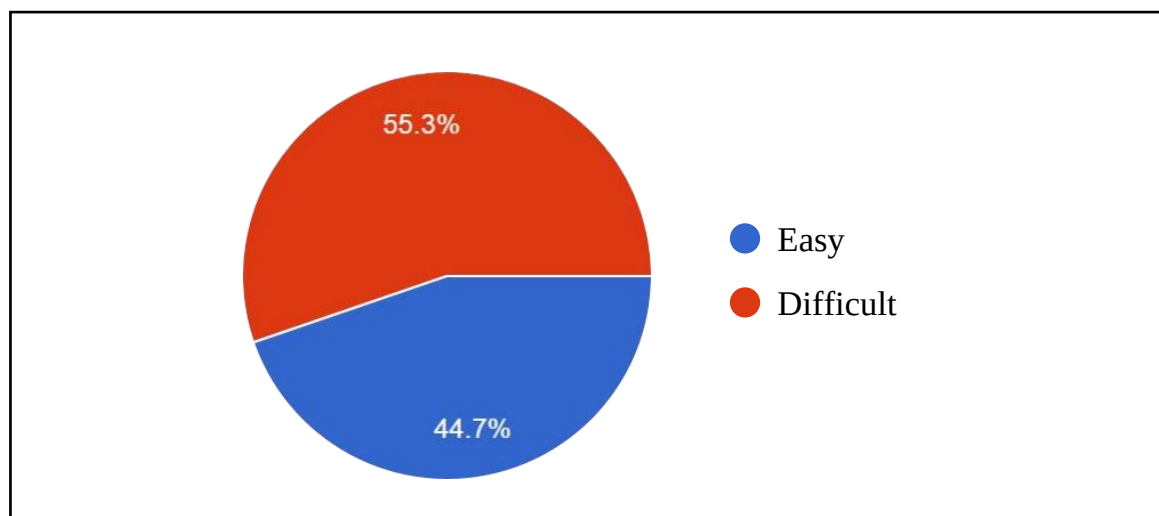


Figure 2.5. The Learners' Consideration of Oral Presentations

From the above Figure 2.5. (44,7%) of the sample have answered that presenting orally is an easy task, while the others (55,3%) consider it as a difficult skill.

Section 03: Rating Scales

Item 07: Anxiety stands as an obstacle to your oral presentations.

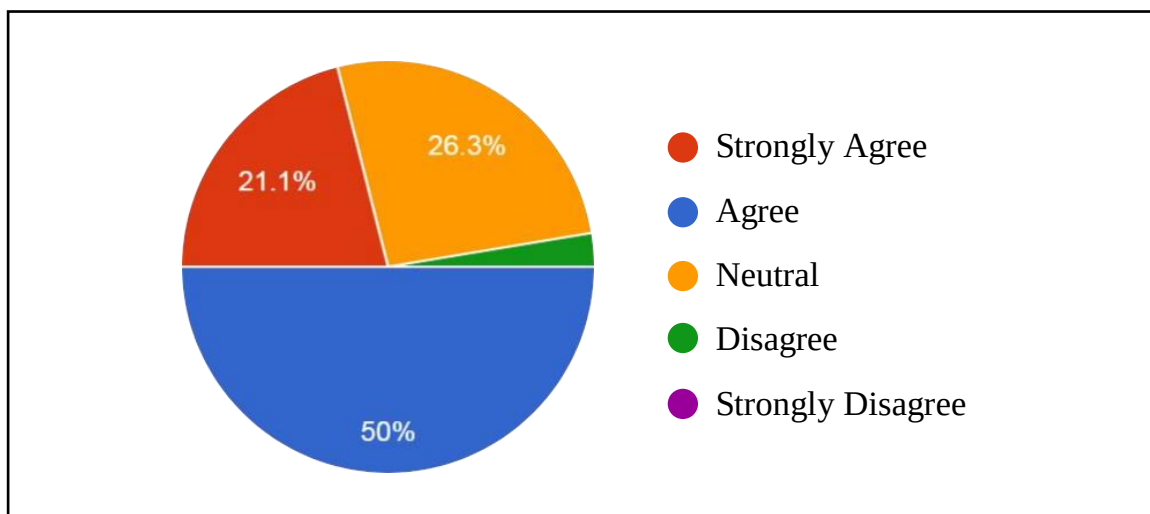


Figure 2.6. The Learners' Consideration of Anxiety When Presenting Orally

This Figure 2.6. reveals that (21.1%) of the participants strongly agreed that anxiety stands as an obstacle to their OPs, in the same vein (50%) agreed, and (26.3%) decided to take the neutral choice. In contrast, (2.6%) disagreed with the majority while the strongly disagree choice did not take place.

Item 08: Your anxiousness during oral presentations is:

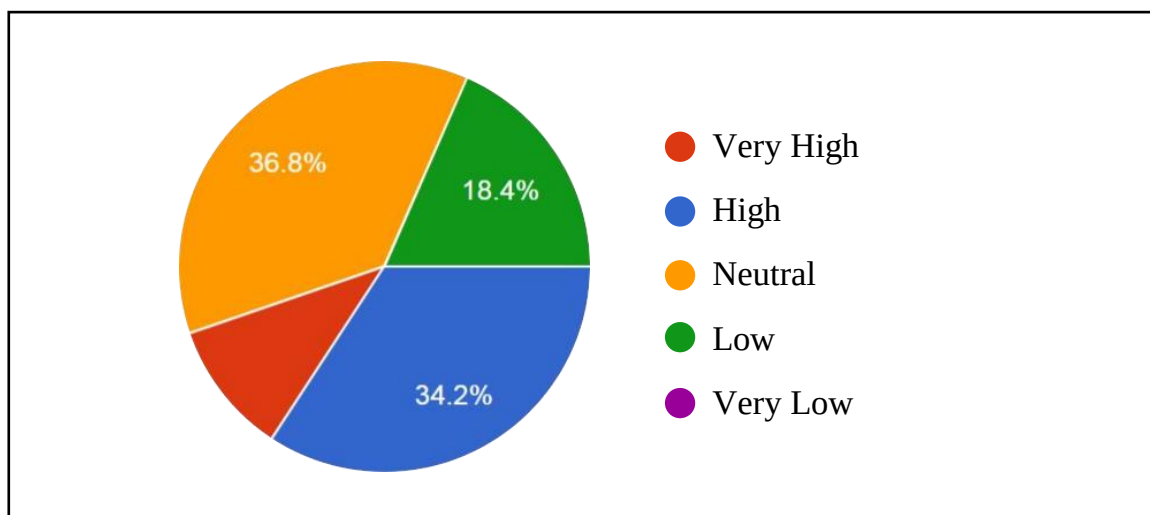


Figure 2.7. The Learners' Anxiety During Oral Presentations

The above Figure 2.7. denotes that (10.6%) of the informers have a very high level of anxiety, while (34.2%) have a high level, however, (36.8%) preferred to be neutral. On the other hand, (18.4%) have a low level of anxiety, whereas the very low level was not chosen by the sample.

Item 09: How often do you encounter anxiety in your oral presentations?

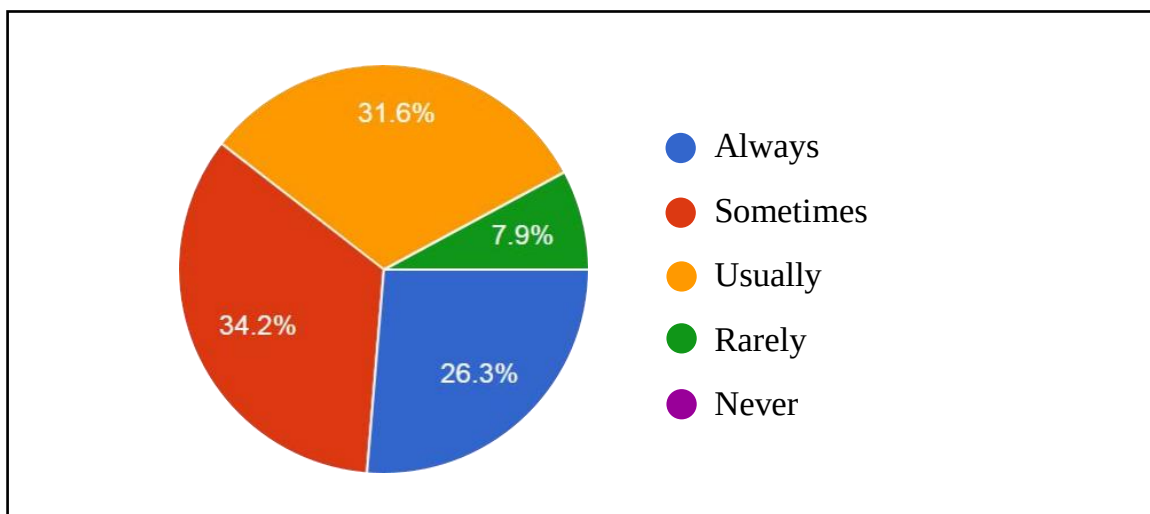


Figure 2.8. The Frequency of Anxiety During Oral Presentations

This Figure 2.8. shows that (26.3%) of the participants always encounter anxiety in their OPs, (34.2%) sometimes face the problem, meanwhile (31.6%) usually struggle with such phenomenon, nevertheless, the rest of them (7.9%) rarely deal with anxiety and the last choice “Never” did not take place.

Item 10: In which kind of oral presentations you feel more anxious about?

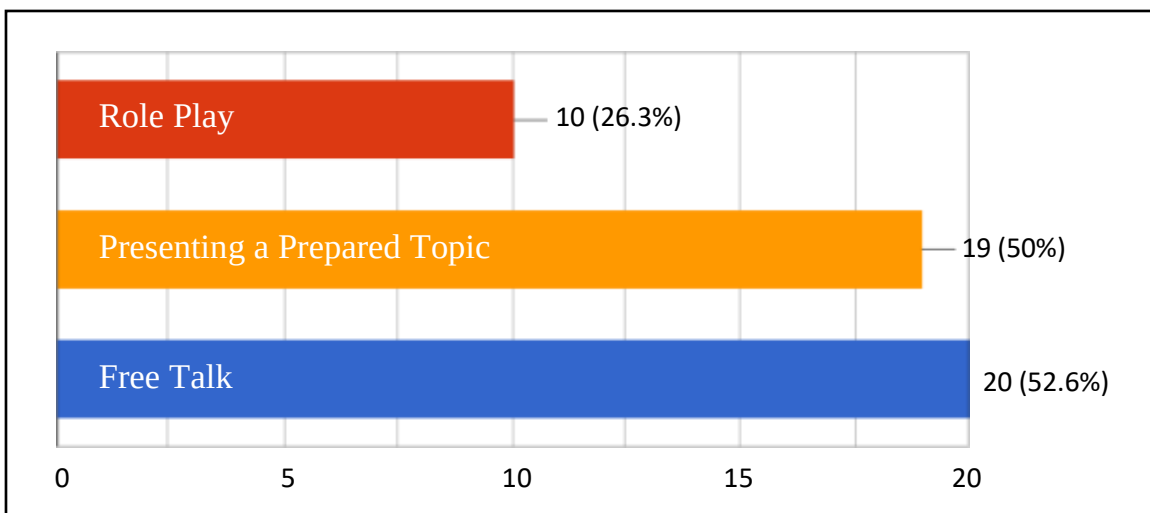


Figure 2.9. The kinds of Oral Presentations that Stimulate the Participants' Anxiety

This Figure 2.9. indicates that 10 learners which represent (26.3%) from the sample experience anxiety in role plays, while 19 participants which denote (50%) feel anxious in presenting prepared topics, whereas 20 of them that signify (52.6%) feel more anxious in free talks.

Item 11: According to you, the reasons behind anxiousness in oral presentations are

Anxiety Reasons	Participants	Percentages
Gender	3	7.9%
Fear of making mistakes	30	78.9%
Mispronunciation	15	39.5%
Fear of negative evaluation	15	39.5%
Lack of preparation	10	26.3%
Teacher's interruption	11	28.9%

Table 2.2. Anxiety reasons in oral presentations

The above Table 2.2. denotes the anxiety reasons according to learners' choices. the majority (78.9%) of the sample pointed their fingers at the fear of making mistakes, (39.5%) encounter anxiety due to mispronunciation, and another (39.5%) face the latter because of the fear of negative evaluation. In addition, (28.9%) their anxiousness is stimulated by the teacher's interruption, while (26.3%) believed that their anxiety is caused by the lack of preparation, others (7.9%) draw it back to gender.

Item 12: From the options below, what are the best strategies that work better to reduce anxiety?

Anxiety Strategies	Participants	Percentages
Know your audience	14	36.8%
Practice your talk	29	76.3%
Use humour as needed	13	34.2%
Expect positive reactions	11	28.9%
Interpret anxiety symptoms as excitement	6	15.8%
Use tools to reduce audience attention to you	17	44.7%

Table 2.3. Workable Strategies to Deal with Anxiety in oral presentations

Table 2.3. represents some of the strategies to reduce anxiety in OPs in which (36.8%) preferred to know their audience, whereas the majority (76.3%) favoured practicing their talk, another (44.7%) has selected the use of tools to reduce audience attention. Whilst (34.2%) picked the choice of using humour as needed, (28.9%) based on the

expectation of positive reactions. Moreover (15.8%) focused on the strategy of interpreting anxiety symptoms as excitement.

Section 04: Open-Ended Questions

Item 13: If you have experienced anxiety in your oral presentations, demonstrate how it did affect your performance?

According to the answers of the participants, most of them considered anxiety as an uncomfortable feeling in which they claimed that it causes them to forget their words, making pronunciation mistakes, losing self-confidence, and struggling with panic attacks. Others simply mentioned some of the anxiety symptoms such as body shake, turning red, and feeling nauseated. In addition, the majority of the informers unanimously agreed that anxiety affects badly their OPs.

Item 14: many strategies can reduce anxiety before and during the oral presentations, mention some of yours.

Based on the respondents' answers they proposed some of the strategies they use to reduce their anxiety before and during OPs, as an illustration, they used to train on their presentations priorly, knowing the audience, using presentation materials, avoiding paying attention to mistakes, drinking enough water, using small cards and humour. Additionally, a great part of the sample emphasized strongly the role of self-confidence in which they linked it with the encouragement of the teacher to them.

2.3.2. Analysis of the Teachers' Interviews

An interview is an appropriate method when there is a need to collect in-depth information on people's opinions, thoughts, experiences, and feelings. Therefore, the latter is projected to eight teachers from the department of foreign languages, precisely the English Section at the Naama University Center. The selection of such sample was based on the employment of OPs in EFL classes which are considered as the main source of anxiety.

The interview consists of six questions that are concerned with the reasons behind such difficulties learners encounter in their OPs, as well as to seek for the way anxiety impacts learners. Furthermore, to determine the degrees, symptoms, and factors of anxiety among them. The interview ends with some of the strategies suggested by teachers to reduce this phenomenon.

Item 01: Why do learners consider oral presentations as a difficult task?

Generally, the answers of all the teachers revealed that presenting orally is a hard task in which it appears clearly from their perspectives that there are several reasons behind such difficulties including the lack of self-confidence, lack of preparation, lack of vocabulary, shyness, and anxiety. However, one of the teachers suggested that the main factors that make EFL learners avoid such situations are related to the unfamiliarity with the session itself as well as the fear of being criticized by their classmates.

Item 02: How does anxiety affect EFL learners' oral presentations?

When teachers were asked about the effect of anxiety on EFL learners' OPs, some of them listed several symptoms that appeared on their learners, for example, hands trembling, voice stuttering, pronunciation mistakes, and repetition. While others declared that anxiety is a serious obstacle that leads learners to lose their self-confidence as they believe that oral presentation is an over-skill and anxiety-provoking. In addition, they stated that anxiety affects their performance in the classroom, grades, motivation, attitudes, and development. Besides, they claimed that anxiety affects negatively their OPs.

Item 03: Does this phenomenon vary from one learner to another? How?

The majority of the participants have agreed that anxiety varies from one learner to another, in addition, they linked anxiety degrees to different factors for instance the effect of the environment, gender, learner's level, and self-confidence. Moreover, they pointed the variation of this phenomenon depending on learners' personalities. However, one of the teachers stressed that a low degree of anxiety can play a positive role in motivating learners.

Item 04: What are the symptoms of anxiety you observed on your learners?

All the interviewees have stated that they noticed some of the anxiety symptoms on their learners during their OPs, confirming the latter by a list of signs manifested in sweating, trembling, squeaky voice, heart beating, uncontrolled gestures, shivering, and a lot of pauses. Other teachers observed extra more symptoms shaped in silence, being nervous, a disorder in speech or in uttering a complete sentence, and avoiding eye contact with the audience.

Item 05: In your perspective what are the main causes that lead learners to an anxious state during their oral presentations?

According to teachers, there are many reasons behind learners' anxiety while presenting orally. They have said that anxious learners did not have enough experience in this skill and thus they face a lot of obstacles such as the lack of vocabulary, lack of self-confidence, lack of self-esteem, weak personality. They added other reasons like shyness, lack of preparation, and lack of habit to present orally during their middle and high education.

Item 06: What are your strategies to reduce learners' anxiety?

Teachers have suggested some solutions and strategies that may reduce learners' anxiety represented in motivation, encouraging learners to speak in class, integrating them in the lesson, avoiding immediate correction of learners' mistakes. Others pointed to the role of the teacher in reducing learners' anxiety through the selection of topics that suits their needs, in addition to being friendly with them.

2.4. Data Interpretation

From the analysis of learners' questionnaires and teacher's interview, we conclude that the existence of anxiety among EFL learners has been confirmed in which it is considered as the main obstacle to their OPs. Besides, we have noticed that learners are suffering from this psychological variable at different levels shaped in some of the symptoms that were observed by their teachers such as nervousness, speech disorder, nausea, sweating, trembling, squeaky voice, heart beating, uncontrolled gestures, shivering, and a lot of pauses.

Additionally, we assert that anxiety impacts EFL learners' OPs negatively and hinders their accomplishments, as we believe that the causes which provoke learners' anxiety in OPs are generally correlated with communication apprehension, insufficient preparation, lack of self-confidence, shyness, lack of self-esteem, fear of negative evaluation, peers' criticism, mispronunciation, and fear of making mistakes.

As a result of the collected data interpretation, the suggested hypotheses are successfully confirmed, i.e., anxiety is a psychological independent variable that is hypothesized to affect EFL learners' OPs negatively due to the lack of self-regulation that is said to be the main reason behind EFL learners' anxiety when presenting

orally. Therefore, EFL teachers should include some of the strategies to reduce learners' anxiety as an instance encouraging learners to present in class, integrating them in the lesson, avoiding immediate correction of learners' mistakes, selecting suitable topics that satisfy learners' needs, as well as being friendly with them.

2.5. Research Limitations

- Our research was conducted under special circumstances due to the coronavirus pandemic outbreak.
- Lack of book sources was one of the main obstacles that we encountered in the research process.
- Learner answers were somehow contradicted especially between the third and the eleventh questions.
- Some of the teachers that have been interviewed had some kind of confusion in the second question when they were asked about the impact of anxiety on EFL learners' OPs, they have listed some of the symptoms instead.
- Most of the original articles that contain significant information were not easy to access in which there are only partials available on websites.

2.6. Recommendations and Suggestions

After the analysis of the learners' questionnaires and teachers' interviews, it would be better if we propose the following pedagogical recommendations to help both EFL teachers and learners of Naama University Center to enhance EFL learners' oral presentations and reduce anxiety:

- Learners should know that presenting orally is an important task in learning a foreign language.
- Learners should know that feeling anxious is a normal aspect while presenting orally in front of others, and making mistakes is part of the learning process.
- Learners should know how to control anxiety, to ameliorate their skills in OPs.
- Teachers should motivate learners to work in groups and create a competitive atmosphere to develop their oral presentation skills.
- Teachers should stimulate their learners to talk about the problems that are concerned with anxiety-provoking.

- Teachers should allow all learners to present and avoid favouritism.
- The department should provide learners with all needed materials to help them in their OPs.
- The department should include a psychological session that deals mainly with learners' anxiety.

2.7. Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the practical part through analyzing and interpreting the data gathered from both EFL learners' questionnaires and teachers' interviews at Naama University Center. The results of both instruments were carefully analyzed, interpreted, and represented statistically and descriptively in tables, figures, and charts.

The outcomes revealed that teachers are aware of the impact of anxiety on their learners' OPs, and thus they agreed that their learners require effective strategies to reduce the phenomenon. We conclude that this chapter confirmed the hypotheses suggested at the beginning of the research in which anxiety affects negatively EFL learners' OPs due to several factors mainly the lack of self-regulation in provoking this psychological variable.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Oral presentations are significant when they are designed and prepared effectively as they reflect learner-centeredness. Hence, teaching learners how to work on successful oral presentations will not just prepare them for possible future academic careers but also help them function well in their professional setting. However, the majority of EFL learners are under the threat of anxiety that is considered as the most common psychological variable which prevents them from successful oral presentations.

Moreover, studies have shown that anxiety is a hard feeling that requires more consideration and interest from psychologists, teachers, as well as learners. Thus, this scientific research aimed to investigate the impact of anxiety on EFL learners' oral presentations as well as to determine the factors that lead to such a phenomenon.

The current research consists of two chapters, the first one dealt with the theoretical investigation of the correlation between anxiety and EFL learners' oral presentations. Hence, this part has covered anxiety from different corners starting with its definition, types, symptoms, and factors. In addition, this section also tackled EFL learners' oral presentations through the provision of its definition, types, elements, importance, advantages, and ending by the impact of anxiety on it.

For the second chapter, the main focus was on the practical aspect that is concerned with the target population which is composed of thirty-eight EFL learners and eight EFL teachers. The collection of data was based on the mixed method approach through the use of two research instruments EFL learners' questionnaires and EFL teachers' interviews at Naama University Center.

From the analysis of EFL learners' questionnaires and EFL teachers' interviews, the researchers noticed that learners' anxiety negatively impacts their oral presentations. This anxiety is provoked due to many factors such as lack of self-confidence, lack of self-esteem, lack of motivation, teachers' immediate correction, peers' criticism, and gender. Thus, the suggested hypotheses were successfully confirmed. Indeed, the analysis revealed that most of the teachers are aware of this problem, and they tried to help their learners in reducing anxiety during their oral presentations.

General Conclusion

It is also interesting to say that the findings confirmed what has been provided in the theoretical part about the impact of anxiety on EFL learners' oral presentations and successfully answered our research questions. Henceforth, both teachers and learners have to take into consideration the correlation between EFL learners' anxiety and oral presentations to determine the right solution and approach somehow in overcoming the anxiety phenomenon. Eventually, to develop this study even further, other studies can be conducted by suggesting other solutions to the phenomenon of anxiety in foreign language learning.

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Appendices

Questionnaire

Dear informant,

For the sake of collecting data about the impact of anxiety on EFL learners' performance in oral presentations, you are kindly requested to answer the following questions by putting a tick (✓) on the appropriate answer or expressing your comments where necessary.

Thank you for your collaboration.

Part 01: Factual Information

Age:

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Part 02:

1. Have you ever presented orally in front of your colleagues?

Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Have you ever felt anxious during oral presentations?

Yes ☐ No ☐

3. Do you have the ability to control your anxiousness?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4. According to you presenting orally is?

Easy ☐ Difficult ☐

5. Anxiety stands as an obstacle to your oral presentations.

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐

Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

6. Your anxiousness during oral presentations is

Very high ☐ High ☐ Neutral ☐

Low ☐ Very low ☐

7. How often do you encounter anxiety in your oral presentations?

Always	☐	Sometimes	☐	Never	☐
Usually	☐	Rarely	☐		

8. In which kind of oral presentations you feel more anxious?

Role play	☐	Presenting a prepared topic	☐	Free talk	☐
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9. According to you the reasons behind anxiousness in oral presentations are

Gender	☐	Fear of negative evaluation	☐
Fear of making mistakes	☐	Lack of preparation	☐
Mispronunciation	☐	Teacher's interruption	☐

10. From the options below select the best strategies that work better to reduce anxiety?

Know your audience	☐	Expect positive reactions	☐
Practice your talk	☐	Interpret anxiety symptoms as excitement	☐
Use humor as needed	☐	Use tools to reduce audience attention on you	☐

11. If you have experienced anxiety in your oral presentations, demonstrate how it did affect your performance?

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12. There are many strategies that can reduce anxiety before and during the oral presentations, mention some of yours.

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Teacher's Interview

Dear teacher,

You are kindly requested to answer the following questions which serve our research entitled “The Impact of Anxiety on EFL Learners’ Oral Presentations”. We would be pleased to help us get the appropriate answers to our suggested questions. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and the given information will be used for academic purposes. Your contribution is highly appreciated and valuable for our research.

Thank you for your collaboration.

Questions

- 1 – Why do learners consider oral presentations as a difficult task?
- 2 – How does anxiety affect EFL learners’ oral presentations?
- 3 – Does this phenomenon vary from one learner to another?
- 4 – What are the symptoms of anxiety you observed on your learners?
- 5 – In your perspective what are the main causes that lead learners to an anxious situation during their oral presentations?
- 6 – What are your strategies to reduce learners’ anxiety?