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## FOREIGN LANGUAGE SPEAKING ANXIETY as a HINDRANCE for STAGE PERFORMANCE

The case of first year Master Linguistics students at
Belhadj Bouchaib University Centre

*An Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement*

*for a Master's Degree in Linguistics*

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## *<u>Dedications</u>*

*To my dear mother "Fatiha"*

*And*

*My beloved father "Tayeb"*

*Thank you for all your love, encouragement, and confidence*

*May Allah bless you now, and forever*

*To my brothers Khaled Chams Eddine and Mohamed Abdullah*

*To my sister Noor El-houda*

*To my cousins, uncles, and aunts*

*To my family for their care*

*To all my friends especially*

*My dear friend Touidjine Mohamed Amine*

*and*

*My dearest and best  friend Benchama Hanane*

*for their unconditional help*

*Whom I wish the best to them*

*This humble work is a sign to my love to you!*

**Abstract**

As learners of a foreign language, students experience stage performance anxiety which is one of the most serious factors in a foreign language learning process because it hampers the flow of a successful oral presentation. The present study attempts to investigate what causes students' stage performance anxiety and sheds light on some useful ways that both teachers and students can employ to overcome this state. Furthermore, it tends to recognize three main objectives. Firstly, the researcher tends to expose and understand the reasons behind this phenomenon. Secondly, she aims at demonstrating how master students undergo anxiety while performing academic tasks. Thirdly, she attempts to provide some strategies that can help students alleviate anxiety. The researcher has adopted a descriptive method because it is concerned with understanding a human behaviour from the informants' perspective. She has applied both qualitative and quantitative method so as to analyze the data with validity. In addition, the researcher has used a questionnaire and an interview as instruments for collecting data. The questionnaire has been devoted to first year linguistics Master students of Belhadj Bouchaib university centre, and the interview has been addressed to five teachers from the department of English. This research paper consists of three chapters. The first chapter is concerned with the literature review. The second chapter is devoted to methodology and data analysis. Then, the third chapter reveals the interpretations of the data collected, in addition to some recommendations and suggestions about the issue investigated. The outcomes suggest that students' preoccupation is making mistakes and information gap. Therefore, we have attempted to provide useful strategies in order to help them overcome stage performance anxiety and encourage them to speak and interact at ease with the audience.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

**CA**        **:** Communication Apprehension

**CUBBAT**  **:** Centre Universitaire Belhadj Bouchaib Ain Temouchent

**EFL**        **:** English as a Foreign Language

**FNE**       **:** Fear of Negative Evaluation

**LMD**       **:** Licence Master Doctorate

**TA**        **:** Test Anxiety

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# GENERAL

# INTRODUCTION

**General Introduction**

It is generally assumed that students experience and come across a wide range of obstacles and difficulties, especially when performing the language in front of an audience. This may due to the lack of speaking skill because students think that they should sound as natives. In fact, the first and main aim behind learning a language is the ability to express in a correct way so that people understand you, even if you do not have a good pronunciation. For instance, some people do not master speaking skill but still they can express themselves. Therefore, students must recognize that mastering speaking is very significant but yet, it does not reflect their level. Hence, the goal of any English teacher is to ensure that the student is able to construct meaningful sentences in order to use them when speaking.

Foreign language anxiety or speaking anxiety which is the feeling of tension and apprehension occurs due to a number of psychological and linguistic reasons depending on the personality of each student and how he/she perceives the situation involved in. When students encounter anxiety, they experience different symptoms which make the level of their oral presentation goes down and their potentials would be unpredictable for teachers; therefore, they find difficulties when evaluating their students.

The aim of conducting such area of research is to investigate the nature of stage performance anxiety and its main sources. This study attempts to show the strong impact of speaking anxiety on students' stage performance. Besides, it tries to reveal possible tricks for students to attenuate the level of this psychological problem.

This study attempts to shed light on a number of key elements related to stage performance anxiety. For this, one main research question and two subquestions are raised as follows:

1. What are the features leading to stage performance anxiety?
   - How can anxiety affect students' stage performance?
   - What are the measures to be taken to cope with this phenomenon?

   The suggested hypotheses to these questions are:

1. Many features can lead to stage performance anxiety as the fear of making mistakes, facing the audience, and information gap.
   - Anxiety is a double-edged weapon; it can affect students' stage performance negatively and positively.

- Raising stress awareness can be one of the strategies that can help to alleviate this problem.

In the present research, the researcher proceeds through a descriptive method in order to define and understand the nature of stage performance anxiety. The researcher has adopted both qualitative and quantitative method using a questionnaire and an interview performed with five teachers in the department of English at Belhadj Bouchaib university centre to evoke different perspectives and standpoints about this research; and so as to provide solutions and strategies for learners to overcome this phenomenon.

This extended essay is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter is theoretical where we expose the literature review. In the literature review, we will show the importance of speaking skill to foster students' oral presentation besides other language skills. Then, we will present the different types of anxiety, and conceptualize foreign language anxiety and its sources. Afterwards, we will underline the strong impact of anxiety on students' stage performance.

The second chapter is practical where the methodology and data analysis of both students' questionnaire and teachers' interview are exhibited. We will analyze the data collected qualitatively and quantitatively in order to reveal the participants' viewpoints concerning stage performance anxiety.

In the third chapter, the role of motivation and self-confidence in increasing students' stage performance is revealed. Some suggestions and strategies for master learners to overcome anxiety when presenting are at the core of this chapter. Some recommendations are prescribed for teachers to support their students dealing with anxiety phenomenon, besides the teachers' strategies used to promote speaking.

Foreign language learners encounter many psychological barriers that hamper the process of learning particularly in achieving academic tasks, where most of the physical symptoms appear at once. Anxiety is one of the most serious problems that interfere with the achievement of learners' oral presentation. Therefore, it is important to consider this phenomenon and assist the learners to step forward and face this barrier to achieve their learning goals.

# CHAPTER ONE: Literature Review

# LITERATURE REVIEW

**1.1 Introduction**

Stage performance is considered as the most difficult academic task because most students feel very anxious whenever there is an oral presentation task. Some researchers have argued that anxiety is the most ordinary difficulty that hampers students developing their speaking proficiency.

In this chapter, we attempt to draw a clear picture about stage performance anxiety in a foreign language atmosphere. For this purpose, we start by delineating how language skills (receptive and productive) enhance foreign language learning. We focus on speaking skill which fosters and strengthens oral presentations. Then, we conceptualize Foreign Language Anxiety, its types, its effect on students' stage performances, in addition to its main sources as communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Finally, we will try to shed light on the role of self-confidence and motivation in improving the level of students' competency on the stage.

**1.2 Language Skills and Language Learning**

Language is definitely the basic element in learning, without it one is as ineffectual as a carpenter without his kit of tools. In fact, language skills are the basic features of any foreign language. Hence, proficiency in foreign language learning cannot be achieved without the mastery of the four language skills (i.e., the receptive and productive skills). According to widdowson (1978: 57) "*speaking and writing are said to be active, or productive skills whereas listening and reading are said to be passive, or receptive skills*". This means that we need to receive the language in order to produce it.

Actually, language skills can only be taught integrally and tackled spontaneously within the language teaching process. For this, many researchers agreed on the fact that none of these four skills is complete without the other i.e., to promote writing one needs extensive reading and likewise, developing speaking skill requires interacting in real situations.

**1.3 The Receptive Skills**

The receptive skills are reading and listening because to produce a language, students need to have access to samples of a natural language firstly. Sadiku (2015) points out the importance of reading and listening in which the most salient language

skill is reading because through it students can increase their potentials in using the language appropriately and effectively since it helps gaining large amount of vocabulary, enhances understanding and thus promotes good communication. She also indicates that listening is of a paramount importance too, and effective learning is due to effective listening.

### 1.3.1 Reading

Reading is the vital energetic stimulator supplying the brain with a greater illumination of the pathway; in fact it is a source of information and knowledge. (Baiche, 2015: 437) claims that "*reading in order to understand, speak and write…is an opportunity for students to develop '3in1'*". In other words, with reading foreign language learners can gain knowledge, animate and nourish their thought, they can also raise the consciousness to clearly view the world from different angles. Besides, they would have the ability to express themselves orally; then, increase their level in writing. Books and journals are of great help. Hence, reading promotes their abilities to reach the peak potential in learning any foreign language effortlessly; and the best evidence of this, is the verse: "**Al-Alaq**"[1].

### 1.3.2 Listening

Many scholars view the listening skill as an art that is neglected. Anderson and Lynch (1988) supported this idea when they state that only when listening to native speakers of a foreign language, we become aware and understand the value of listening as an important skill that we used to take it for granted. Students spend too much time attempting to speak the language fluently neglecting listening which is the first step before speaking because they think it is less important than speaking. Listening is the basic of effective communication; it includes more than sounds. In fact, we listen to build relationships, understand others, learn, show empathy, and gather information.

Rivers (1966) claims that the two basic skills for effective communication is listening at first hand then speaking which means that if we do not comprehend what people are saying, we may fail at passing on our ideas. In other words, listening attentively and attempting to understand others, provide the chance to give the right feedback the interlocutors are expecting; otherwise the communication will not process and breaks down. Therefore, the first aim of teachers in teaching communication is

teaching the comprehension of the spoken speech. Consequently, interest and respect for the others need to be conveyed.

**1.4 The Productive Skills**

Learners do not only receive and understand language; they also need to produce it. Sadiku (2015) mentions that one's level in a foreign language can be examined through his writing and the way he communicates the language. So, writing provides the learner with physical evidence of his achievements, while speaking decides how expressive the learner is.

**1.4.1 Writing**

Writing indicates one's creativity through which he can show the beauty of language. According to Arco (2007: 4) "*writing is a process, like a recipe for a special meal*". This means that in order to have an artistic way of writing, you should plan ahead and follow the procedure. Swick (2009) and Foster (2005) both agree that the most laborious skill is writing. Sadiku (2015) also views the process of writing as a reflection of one's mental level of a language in which he will have the ability to express himself successfully.

**1.4.2 Speaking**

Speaking is the act of conveying messages so that we fulfill our needs. It is an everyday activity. In fact, we speak when conversing, telling stories, thinking, and when expressing happiness, or anger etc… Basically we do speak in different situations and for many reasons. Lindsay and knight (2006: 58) note:

> **We speak for many reasons- to be sociable, because we want something, because we want other people to do something, to do something for someone else, to respond to someone else, to express our feelings or opinion about something, to exchange information, to refer to an action or event in the past, present, or future, the responsibility of something happening, and so on.**

However, speaking is a complex skill in the sense that it involves more than just producing sounds, and unique in the sense that it is specific to all human beings. It is absolutely necessary, which explains the reason behind students' intensive attempt to be competent in. In addition, Richards (2008: 19) reveals that:

**The mastery of speaking skills in English is a priority for many second-language or foreign-language learners. Consequently, learners often evaluate their success in language learning as well as the effectiveness of their English course on the basis of how much they feel they have improved in their spoken language proficiency.**

Actually, most EFL students consider speaking as the most difficult skill because it requires much effort which makes it even more challenging. Bygate (1987) states that the big attention should be drawn on speaking skill similarly as literary skills in both first and second language acquisition. Therefore, and for the sake of fulfilling their requirements, students should recognize a certain amount of linguistic patterns and lexicon for the simple reason that speaking is the skill students are most commonly evaluated through, and over which they convey their messages in the appropriate way.

## 1.5 The Role of Speaking for EFL Students

Generally, foreign language students choose to learn English for the sake of communicating and having the ability to use the language inside and outside the classroom environment. They tend to use the language accurately and fluently especially when presenting in front of an audience which is the reason why they consider it as the most difficult task when learning English.

Actually, English language is the dominant lingua franca; this makes it more demanding and raises the need to master it. In other words, to do business you require speaking English, to study abroad you need to have a good mastery of English, to travel around the world you need English as well. Therefore, English has become a 'necessity'. In spite of that, we constantly ask people the common question 'Do you speak English?' instead of 'Do you master writing/reading?' this demonstrates the importance of speaking. However, most of the time we emphasize on speaking skill, but this does not necessary mean that the other language skills are needless; on the contrary, they are the core of language. Additionally, eloquence can be seen through the way in which an intelligent individual transfers his message. Therefore, students who are competent in using English appropriately must be accurate (i.e., without making mistakes) and fluent (i.e., expressing with high self-confidence) because both terms determine the learners' level (Baker & Westrup, 2003).

Indeed, speaking can be reinforced with some paralinguistic elements such as the body language including: gestures, facial expression, postures etc…, all of these help and boost students' opportunities in using a foreign language, particularly when giving a presentation. Therefore, they need to be smart enough when using English in front of an audience.

## 1.6 Speaking Skill Tasks

Students can participate in many activities involving speaking in foreign language environment where they can share and express their ideas on a given lecture, and the main classroom activities in which speaking is the most frequently involved are debates and presentations.

### 1.6.1 Debates

The common classroom activities used by teachers are debates and discussions because of their effectiveness on enhancing students' ability to speak. Usually, the teacher suggests a particular topic, in which the chance is equally given to students to express themselves orally through commenting and negotiating the given topic (give their perspectives). Indeed, this activity is very useful due to the fact that it encourages students to talk and use the vocabulary they acquired; thus, much attention will be focused on the language itself (what they say). Additionally, discussion helps promoting participation and interest among the learners and grows the spirit of competitiveness because they all want to some extent prove themselves.

In fact, debating is part of the classroom interaction. Therefore, when a student interacts with a teacher or his peers he develops certain degree of communicative ability and when there is an interaction, there is a debating, as there is communication. As a result, there will be what some researchers call 'caring and sharing' kind of relationship because teachers' interest affects students' attitudes, boosts participation in the classroom, then raises their self-confidence and the willingness to learn more. However, teacher-student relationship should be given too much emphasis from both sides.

### 1.6.2 Presentations

Presentation is another effective classroom activity for the main reason that it fosters students' speaking skill and most importantly their fluency which has been viewed as an obstacle for EFL learners when speaking in front of their mates. Furthermore, everyday presentations lessen hesitation, stuttering, and shyness. There are

some learners who dare when it comes to giving a presentation because they are courageous and confident enough to speak; they take risks to show their language potentials or to prove that they are competent. Some others would prefer to stay in their comfort zone (corner), rather than being in the spot light. Brooks and Wilson (2014) claim the importance of oral presentation in enhancing students' oral proficiency and language learning in general.

According to them oral presentations encourage self-directed learning in which learners take the initiative to diagnose their learning needs because they play two roles; they can be teachers where they have to explain to their classmates and take control of the whole classroom, and they can also be learners who will be evaluated through the way of the presentation they give. In fact, classroom presentation is a good opportunity for learners to use more English and this is through the interaction with the teacher or their classmates which is an advantage for them. They also claim that oral presentations encourage the use of the four language skills integrally in which the learner reads, writes, listens, and speaks which is another advantage. Therefore, the constant use of this activity is very effective in that it provides the learners with great opportunities to speak English and leads them towards success because practice makes perfect.

Teachers usually restrict students by suggesting several topics or let them feel free to select the topic that suits their abilities. Therefore, this can improve their speaking skill and encourage communicating their thoughts using their own style and stage performance strategies.

## 1.7 Tools Used in Presentations

There are various tools that can support oral presentations, and that students are expected to use when giving an academic presentation taking particularly: the chalk, handouts, and PowerPoint. Students can make use of these tools in order to reinforce their presentations and show their capacities in a practical way which is a plus for their evaluation mark.

### 1.7.1 Chalk

A very common and traditional tool for giving a classroom presentation is the use of the chalk and blackboard. This tool was much shared among teachers because they all worked with; as there was no other choice. Though, this tool can be boring, it is at the same time good for active learners especially when they want to explain a theory

by drawing it so as to facilitate understanding. But today's technology has paved the way to use more creative tools.

### 1.7.2 Handouts

Using handouts for classroom presentations is a modern tool for facilitating and improving learners' ability to present in front of their teachers and classmates. Students can adopt this tool to support their presentations where they can use photos, well-structured papers and organized, instead of wasting time in writing or trying to explain a concept, or a theory or events of a historical event in the case of literature and civilization. For instance the Mayflower adventure that is hard to be explained using a chalk, especially when it is written in one's own words; as it is easier for them to print the papers and distribute them. However, handouts are beneficial for learners for the reason that they back up their oral presentation.

### 1.7.3 PowerPoint Presentations

Visual aids are much appropriate for caring out a more practical and effective presentation. Many students learn better visually. PowerPoint presentation is very useful especially when using clear and precise concepts, colorful slides with vivid examples because students understand better with illustrations; you can even add images, graphics, music, animation, etc. Consequently, it is '2in1' i.e., facilitates understanding and encourages creativity. Additionally, it strengthens the presentation and augments the level of proficiency. But if the presenter himself does not have the right conditions that qualify him to be a good presenter, then the use of PowerPoint would be of no value. In other words, good pronunciation and self-confidence attract the audience's attention and make them feel eager to attend whenever a presenter of this type performs. As a matter of fact, a good presenter is the one who knows how to involve his peers in the presentation and engage them in speaking English through asking some questions to attract their attention towards a particular topic or a social phenomenon. Consequently, these help the audience better understand, encourage them to interact, and most importantly motivate them and make them feel comfortable. Wallwork (2010: 103) notes:

**A good presentation of a paper can be a delightful experience, an elegant performance, a memorable show for its audience. During the course of my scientific career I have seen thousands of presentations. Most go into oblivion at once, but some stay in the memory for a lifetime. There is no doubt about it: good speaking skills are more important than dazzling PowerPoint slides.**

This quotation shows exactly that the use of PowerPoint without mastering good communication skills cannot guarantee or prove that the presenter is skillful; even if he does it in a professional way. Actually, good presentation goes hand-in-hand with good speaking skills; otherwise, one is likely to have a lackluster performance. Besides language skills and tools, the psychological side is of a great importance.

In fact, there are some psychological symptoms that contribute to a successful presentation or the contrary. Many learners are afraid of facing the audience and perform at ease. This is what we call anxiety.

## 1.8 Anxiety Definition

Anxiety is a complex and unique phenomenon and the most highly examined variable in both areas psychology and education. According to Brantley and Kabat-zinn (2007: 15) "*the word 'anxiety' comes from the Latin word anxius, which means a condition of agitation and distress*". This means that an anxious person experiences the feelings of uneasiness towards a particular task. Therefore, many researchers intensified the efforts and investigations particularly in language learning so as to determine the causes of anxiety and find solutions for its consequences. Since it hampers students' most important goal to learn a language which is the ability to speak, they experience it in three distinctive levels: trait, state, and situation-specific. These main categories of anxiety are coined by a whole bunch of psychologists and researchers such as McIntyre and Gardner (1989), Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986), and Spielberger (1983).

### 1.8.1 Trait Anxiety

Trait anxiety is when people get anxious no matter what the situation is, so it is a part of their personality character. For instance, people with a high level of trait anxiety experience anxious feelings in many different situations that do not evoke anxiety in most people; this could be better illustrated by parents' feeling towards their children or fear of death. Ellis (1994: 480) views trait anxiety as "*an aspect of personality*". Pappamihiel (2002) also views this type of anxiety as an aspect of a more serious

disorder; that is people who are anxious in nature are likely to become more and more anxious disregarding the situation. Moreover, MacIntyre (1995: 93) determines trait anxiety as "*the tendency to react in an anxious manner*".

In the same vein Spielberger (1966) describes this type as a motive that comes from within which inclines an individual to recognize danger in particular situations that may not be dangerous even and reacts to these specific situations in an anxious way because he thinks they are precarious. As for Brown (2000: 148) it is "*a more permanent predisposition to be anxious*". However, students who do experience this type of anxiety are more likely to fail in their exams and tests.

### 1.8.2 State Anxiety

A second type of anxiety refers to a temporary feeling which is a tendency to become anxious. According to Brown (2000: 148), state anxiety "*is experienced in relation to some particular event or act*". For Pappamihiel (2002: 330), this anxiety is "*a social type of anxiety that occurs under certain conditions*". In other words, state anxiety appears when the person makes a mental assessment of some type of threat (i.e., negative thoughts). When the situation perceived as threatening goes away, the person no longer experiences anxiety. Unlike trait anxiety, state anxiety is not an individual's personality character; it can be reduced over time. Though it prevents students' speaking ability achievement, it is not as harmful as trait anxiety. This means that it is momentary; it goes as far as the situation goes. For instance, a student may not typically feel anxious but because his teacher asks him to give a presentation, he feels so. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) define it as that experience of anxiety that is concerned with the "here" and "now" (i.e., moment and time), and they note that the suitable question that should be asked to individuals is 'Are you anxious now?' which explains the above. Additionally, it occurs particularly when a student appraises or values the task that is stressful for him like an important oral test (the viva).

### 1.8.3 Situation-Specific Anxiety

Situation-specific is the third type and as the name suggests, it refers to the persistent nature of anxiety that is related to some specific situations or events, and when certain reasons are present an individual may feel anxious continuously. In fact both MacIntyre and MacDonald (1998) and Horwitz et al (1986) consider Foreign

Language Anxiety as a situation-specific anxiety. However, many researchers provide several definitions for this kind of anxiety.

According to Ellis (1994: 480), test anxiety "*consists of the anxiety which is aroused by a specific type of situation or event such as public speaking, examinations, or class participation*". Similarly, Huang (2012: 1520) defines it as "*is intrigued by a specific situation or event over time, such as taking a test, public speaking, class participation, talking with a foreigner in a foreign language, solving physical problem*".

In the same vein, test anxiety is conceptualized by Sarason (1978: 214) as "*the tendency to view with alarm the consequences of inadequate performance in an evaluative situation*". As a matter of fact, individuals in everyday life tend to think negatively of things that continuously happen in a wrong way with them. Thus, students also perceive some learning situations in the same way and they keep asking "Why whenever I have a presentation this and this and that happens? Why me? ". But the thing is that, just because they have had a negative experience before with stage performance for example, they keep regarding and repeating that idea about stage performance which is of no originality. Sarason (1978: 195) also views it as "*a type of cognitive response marked by self-doubt, feelings of inadequacy, and self-blame*", that is to say, when feeling unable to accomplish a task or a challenge as it is expected, a student may interpret the situation as stressful and may blame himself or herself for the bad results that are likely to occur. Consequently, test anxiety arises habitually every time students come across the same situation i.e., whenever they have a presentation, they become anxious.

Besides anxiety related to situation, it is necessary to deal with anxiety related to foreign language use as it will be amply explained forward.

## 1.9 Foreign Language Anxiety as a Hindrance for Stage Performance

Anxiety is known as one of the most common mental health problems that students suffer from. For this, foreign language anxiety is considered as the main hindrance in language learning due to its effect on students' learning process.

### 1.9.1 Definition of Foreign Language Anxiety

Foreign language anxiety has been defined by many scholars as the feeling of fear and uneasiness. This fear inhibits students' speaking ability to process, hampers them from improving their academic level, harms their stage performances, and

language learning achievement. The state of being nervous is common among students whenever they are about to perform in front of their classmates for different reasons. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986: 128) define anxiety as "*a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process*".

According to Spielberger et al (1971: 146) anxiety "*consists of feeling of tension and apprehension and heightened autonomic nervous system activity*". Moreover, Gardner and MacIntyre (1994: 284) view language anxiety as "*the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language texts, including speaking, listening, and learning*".

In the same vein, Oxford (1999: 59) highlights, "*this anxiety is linked directly to performing in the target language, and it is not a general performance anxiety*", which means that it occurs particularly when students perform in English for instance, a student may feel anxious when giving a presentation in English but may not feel it when giving the same presentation in French or Arabic i.e., not all the performances provoke anxiety, but English specifically.

### 1.9.2 Sources of Foreign Language Anxiety

Foreign language learners struggle a lot with anxiety when learning English especially when giving an oral task in front of their classmates and according to Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986), the sources behind this problem are communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Moreover, these three main factors are associated with foreign language anxiety.

### 1.9.2.1 Communication Apprehension (CA)

Communication apprehension is that kind of anxiety that is raised when having to communicate with others (McCroskey, 1977), particularly in the language classroom where students have to use the language in interaction with teacher and peers, in participation, and presentations. Similarly, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986: 127) define CA as "*a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people*". MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) report that the inability to communicate one's ideas and make others understand, make students perceive themselves in a negative way (i.e., as being incompetent or so), lessen their self-confidence, and hence raises anxiety to a high level.

McCroskey (1977: 78) define CA as "*an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons*". This can be manifested in language classrooms because it is the only place where students are obliged to speak the target language and express their thoughts. Thus, in order not to be in an anxiety-provoking situation they avoid it, especially when speaking in public.

### 1.9.2.2 Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE)

This fear of being negatively evaluated by either the teacher or by peers often go along with communication apprehension because when there is a fear of communicating with a person, there is a fear of being negatively evaluated by him. This concept is first described by Watson and Friend (1969: 449) as "*apprehension about others' evaluations, distress over their negative evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectations that others would evaluate oneself negatively*". That is to say students who fear of being evaluated usually tend to avoid the situations that involve any kind of evaluation, like for example that of their peers because they think they will underestimate them, ridicule them and laugh at them, and then perceive them as weak students if they make mistakes in pronunciation or in grammar etc...Likewise, the teachers' evaluation has a strong impact on their students too. Aida (1994) notes that students who suffer from the fear of negative evaluation prefer keeping silent, sitting in the classroom without participating, or just being absent so as to avoid these stressful situations.

### 1.9.2.3 Test Anxiety (TA)

Test anxious students usually fear of failure originated from their perfectionist tendencies because they think they have to prove themselves either to the teacher, their family, or even to themselves. Consequently, they do whatever it takes them to do just to give a high level of performance and not be perceived as failures. Moreover, when it comes to having a poor performance, these test anxious students get angry and frustrated especially if they get used to perform perfectly well in language test. As a result, mistakes are likely to be present, so they either forget what they were supposed to say, or have a mental block and forget the words or start stuttering due to the fact that they give too much attention to the test and do not easily accept failure (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994). Additionally, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) view that test-anxious

students have a negative belief about learning a language that if they give a poor performance or simply make errors, is then perceived as failures because they keep that idea of being perfect in every performance which is not necessary true. However, anxiety is that affective filter factor that affects students' proficiency when performing an academic task.

## 1.10 Anxiety Effects on Learners' Performance

Foreign language anxiety has a big effect on students' learning process; researchers determined two peculiarities of anxiety that strongly influence students' performances in using English as a foreign language and as well their grades. One improves the learners' level, and the other impairs their level of proficiency when performing on the stage.

Williams (1991: 21) advocates that:

> **[T]he emotional state of facilitating anxiety may be equivalent to a low-anxiety state that diverts the student's attention only slightly from the learning task. On the other hand, debilitating anxiety would present a high-anxiety state that diverts a substantial amount of the student's attention.**

The above quotation reveals that low level of anxiety can help students succeed in learning, whereas, high level of anxiety distracts them and lead them to failure. Therefore, students should realize that anxiety cannot be harmful all the time; it can also be useful because it motivates the individual to do something for him to achieve a certain goal or succeed in learning.

### 1.10.1 Facilitating Anxiety

Students encounter a lot of struggles when learning a foreign language; some of them know how to deal in tough situations. Although anxiety which is one of the affective filter factors as Krashen (1982) calls it, is something that is not easy to deal with. This kind of anxiety helps and encourages the student to work hard, that is why it is termed facilitating anxiety. As it pushes and motivates him from within to fight so as to succeed in learning (Steinberg, Nagata and Aline, 2001). MacIntyre (1995) claims that when the learner perceives the task given to him as simple, he would make too much effort; hence, anxiety would have a little negative effect on his performance. This means that facilitating anxiety stimulates the student to the point that he feels the need to do the best he can do in order to give a good performance. With this type, even

though the student may feel anxious but it will not affect his performance because he may be determined and fully ready to succeed in the task.

To sum up, those students whose performance is high, experience facilitative anxiety in which they feel little anxious about what they present. However, a low level of anxiety enhances learning and promotes stage performance in which students feel happiness and enthusiastic to perform in front of their mates.

### 1.10.2 Debilitating Anxiety

Unlike facilitating anxiety, debilitating anxiety demotivates the student and lessens his self-confidence, as it encourages him to easily give up and 'flee' the task. As a result, the student prefers staying in his corner rather than 'fighting' the learning challenges and succeeds the task (Akkakoson 2016). Habitually students whose performance is low experience high level of anxiety because they allow their fear controls them which will result in failure. According to MacIntyre (1995), when the teacher gives an activity which might be difficult for the learner, only then anxiety will impair performance; which is the reason why students sometimes prefer free topics instead of guided ones. Zheng (2008: 2) points that "*too much anxiety can lead to a debilitating effect, which may lead to avoidance of work or inefficient work performance*". It means that a student with a high level of anxiety tends to avoid being in anxiety-provoking situation, for instance: a student who suffers from a debilitating anxiety usually waits till the very last minute to prepare for the presentation, or arriving to the presentation late etc. Moreover, he may suffer from both psychological and physical symptoms that lead to a bad performance and perceived as a weakness. Consequently, anxiety affects students' performances negatively and leads them to depression if it really exceeds. This can be illustrated in what the two psychologists Yerkes and Dodson (1908) describe. The well-known "Yerkes-Dodson law" describes the relationship between the level of anxiety and learners' performance which states that the two kinds of anxiety affect students' performances. One affects it positively, and the other one negatively. In other words, facilitating anxiety boosts the level of performance; whereas, debilitating anxiety hinders the level of performance as it is illustrated in the figure below.
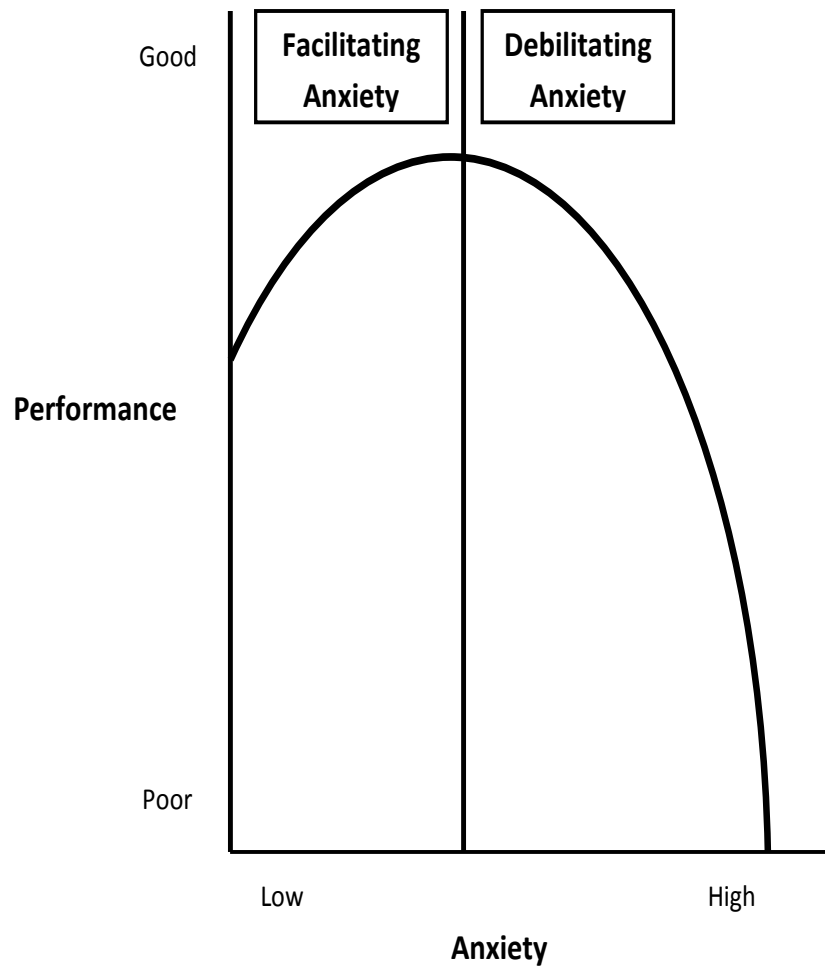
**Figure 1.1: Inverted "U" relation between anxiety and performance.**

(MacIntyre, 1995, p.92)

## 1.11 Conclusion

Difficulties and obstacles are frequently appearing in the process of learning. Foreign Language Anxiety is the most common, because learners' main aim is speaking effectively and appropriately which determine their self-confidence at first hand. In fact, it is known that this obstacle hinders their ability to express themselves without hesitation, harms their oral performances, and influences their grades. Therefore, teachers and learners as well should be aware of this detrimental phenomenon.

In conclusion, in this chapter we have attempted to explain some related concepts concerning foreign language anxiety. Firstly, we have started by illustrating the importance of language skills particularly speaking that fosters oral performance. Additionally, we have tried to present the different classroom activities where speaking skill is involved in which we have focused our attention to oral presentation. Besides, we have revealed the tools that contribute to a successful presentation. Then, we have introduced the types of anxiety in which we have developed the concept of foreign language anxiety and have presented the main reasons behind this phenomenon. Finally, we have attempted to shed light on the positive and negative impact of anxiety on students' stage performance.

**Chapter One Notes**

1. Al-Alaq

<div dir="rtl">

# سورة العلق
## أعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم

بِسْمِ ‍ اللّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

ٱقْرَأْ بِٱسْمِ رَبِّكَ ٱلَّذِي خَلَقَ ١ خَلَقَ ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ مِنْ عَلَقٍ ٢ ٱقْرَأْ وَرَبُّكَ ٱلْأَكْرَمُ ٣ ٱلَّذِي عَلَّمَ بِٱلْقَلَمِ ٤ عَلَّمَ ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ ٥ كَلَّا إِنَّ ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ لَيَطْغَىٰ ٦ أَن رَّءَاهُ ٱسْتَغْنَىٰ ٧ إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ ٱلرُّجْعَىٰ ٨ أَرَءَيْتَ ٱلَّذِي يَنْهَىٰ ٩ عَبْدًا إِذَا صَلَّىٰ ١٠ أَرَءَيْتَ إِن كَانَ عَلَى ٱلْهُدَىٰ ١١ أَوْ أَمَرَ بِٱلتَّقْوَىٰ ١٢ أَرَءَيْتَ إِن كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ ١٣ أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَرَىٰ ١٤ كَلَّا لَئِن لَّمْ يَنتَهِ لَنَسْفَعًا بِٱلنَّاصِيَةِ ١٥ نَاصِيَةٍ كَٰذِبَةٍ خَاطِئَةٍ ١٦ فَلْيَدْعُ نَادِيَهُ ١٧ سَنَدْعُ ٱلزَّبَانِيَةَ ١٨ كَلَّا لَا تُطِعْهُ وَٱسْجُدْ وَٱقْتَرِب ۩ ١٩

## صدق الله العظيم

</div>

The Clot

In the name of Allah,

The Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

(1) In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful (2) He created man from a clot (3) Read and your Lord is Most Honorable (4) Who taught (to write) with the pen (5) Taught man what he knew not (6) Nay! man is most surely inordinate (7) Because he sees himself free from want (8) Surely to your Lord is the return (9) Have you seen him who forbids (10) A servant when he prays? (11) Have you considered if he were on the right way (12) Or enjoined guarding (against evil)? (13) Have you considered if he gives the lie to the truth and turns (his) back? (14) Does he not know that Allah does see? (15) Nay! if he desist not, We would certainly smite his forehead, (16) A lying, sinful forehead (17) Then let him summon his council (18) We too would summon the braves of the army (19) Nay! obey him not, and make obeisance and draw nigh (to Allah).

A translated version of the verse 'Al-Alaq'.

# METHODOLOGY

# AND

# DATA ANALYSIS

## CHAPTER TWO: Methodology and Data Analysis

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to methodology and data analysis. It aims at finding concrete answers to the research questions; this would confirm or disconfirm the hypotheses. The data is mainly obtained from the primary sources we have used in our study. First, we have introduced the setting where the research is performed, besides the sample population under investigation. Then, we have focused on the methodology undertaken to reveal stage performance anxiety, causes and effects. Finally, the data analysis is provided to exhibit the outcome reached through the students' questionnaire and teachers' interview.

## 2.2 The Setting

The study under investigation has taken place at Belhadj Bouchaib university centre, Ain Temouchent. This centre has been inaugurated in 2009. It is composed of four (4) institutions, nine (9) departments, and a central library where students can get access to different materials including books and dissertations of all streams maintaining there. In 2012, the institute of letters and languages added the English department under the LMD system. Obtaining the licence degree in English requires three years of studies and two years for master degree. Three new master specialties have been introduced in 2015: English in two fields of speciality: Linguistics and the British Literature and Civilization, Electromechanical and Law. This brings the number of master specialties to 26, covering 13 streams and 6 areas.

## 2.3 The Population

The sample population used in this study is composed of forty-two (42) first year master linguistics students at Belhadj Bouchaib university center, Ain Temouchent. This sample has been chosen on purpose not randomly because master linguistics students use oral presentations rigidly and experience anxiety more frequently. We have also chosen a sample of five (5) teachers of English whom we think they can provide us with the information we are seeking for to fulfil our study.

## 2.4 Methodology

The researcher intends to adopt a descriptive method to describe the situation which is the most adequate scientific method in order to investigate this phenomenon. Since this method is naturalistic, the researcher seeks to understand, observe, describe, and explain the "how" and "why" the participants behave in a certain manner in a

natural environment (setting). It is both quantitative and qualitative method to reach as many information as possible. The researcher has relied on a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview as tools for this research, in addition to a classroom observation to confirm the hypotheses.

### 2.4.1 Tools of Research

To collect the data of this study, the researcher opts for using three effective methods. The data are collected through students' questionnaire and teachers' interview as well as the classroom observation for its significance for the study but before, a pilot study has been conducted so as to check the effectiveness of the question and to reformulate it if it is necessary.

### 2.4.1.1 The Pilot Study

The researcher has conducted the pilot study which is a pre-tested questionnaire but on a small scale, just to test if the questions are adequate for gathering the amount of information she seeks about the topic of investigation, and lead to the expected answers or need to be reformulated again. This pilot study is submitted to a sample of fifteen (15) informants who were supposed to fill in the questionnaire in the classroom with the presence of their teacher. Indeed, all the questions were accurate and relevant except for the two last questions that have been reformulated as follows:

Q9: Do you think stress can lead to success? Why?

Q10: Why should stress awareness be taught at the university?

### 2.4.1.2 The Questionnaire

We have used the questionnaire to obtain different perspectives and opinions about this topic through the participants' experience of stage performance anxiety. This questionnaire is submitted to first year linguistics master students at CUBBAT. Since, it is one of the most effective methods; it has been conceptualized according to Walliman (2001: 236) as "*a method of data collection which is very flexible, but it must be used carefully in order to fulfil the requirements of a particular piece of research*" which means that the questions can be changed but the researcher should know how to use them so as to fit the research paper in hand.

### 2.4.1.3 The Interview

The second instrument used in this research is the interview which is submitted to five teachers from the department of English at Belhadj Bouchaib university center. Actually, the researcher has conducted a semi-structured interview in which three of them have been done face-to-face and the two others have been sent to the interviewees via e-mail. In the same vein, Walliman (2001: 238) asserts that "*while interviewing is suitable for quantitative data collection, it is particularly useful when qualitative data are required*". This shows its importance for collecting in-depth information on individuals' opinions and experiences.

### 2.4.1.4 The Observation

The third and the most effective method in conducting a descriptive type of research is observation method. According to Walliman (2001: 241) "*observation is a method of recording conditions, events and activities through the non-inquisitorial involvement of the researcher*". This would provide authentic situations.

### 2.4.2 The Students' Questionnaire

A sample of (42) students from the department of English have been chosen on purpose because they are at the core of our interest. Actually, they are convenient for our study for two reasons. First of all, these respondents commonly experience foreign language anxiety when presenting on the stage which is the main aim behind the selection of this sample in particular. The second aim is that next year, they will be asked to perform an academic task (the viva), where feelings of anxiety are much more experienced. Indeed, we are expecting to elicit more information about the topic of our concern.

### 2.4.3 The Teachers' Interview

We have dealt with a sample of (5) teachers to obtain as much data as we can about students' anxiety on the stage when they are about to perform. Classroom presentation is adopted by almost all the teachers and in all the subjects in master1 linguistics. In fact, it is an academic task which has the lion share among others. This is due to its crucial role in enhancing students' oral performances. Indeed, these teachers must have noticed that anxiety have been perceived among their students as a hindrance for stage performance; thus, it affects their grades. However, they are aware of the

phenomenon under study. Therefore, a semi-structured interview is adopted to collect as much information as possible.

## 2.5 Description of the Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is submitted to a sample population of forty-two students studying linguistics. It consists of ten (10) multiple choice questions, mainly nine closed-ended questions and one open-ended question. The questionnaire contains three parts.

The first part is devoted to "general information", it consists of three (3) closed-ended questions and they have been asked in order to have an overview about the respondents.

The second part is devoted to "foreign language speaking anxiety", it consists of five (5) closed-ended questions but since we have not restricted our respondents ("others" option), we can call them partially open-ended questions, and they have been asked to allow the respondents to select what fit their feelings about the situation and find out some specific information concerning our topic, as well as to provide us with other options that we might not think about.

The third part is devoted to "students' attitude towards stress"; it comprises two (2) distinctive questions, open-ended and partially open-ended. These two questions have been chosen to obtain detailed information on respondents' opinion about anxiety.

## 2.6 The Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is submitted to first year linguistics master students.

**Question 01:** Participants' gender

This question is to see if there is any difference between males and females in terms of anxiety experience.

**Table 2.1: Participants' gender distribution**

| Option | Participants | Percentage |
|--------|--------------|------------|
| Male | 4 | 9.52% |
| Female | 38 | 90.48% |
| **Total** | **42** | **100%** |
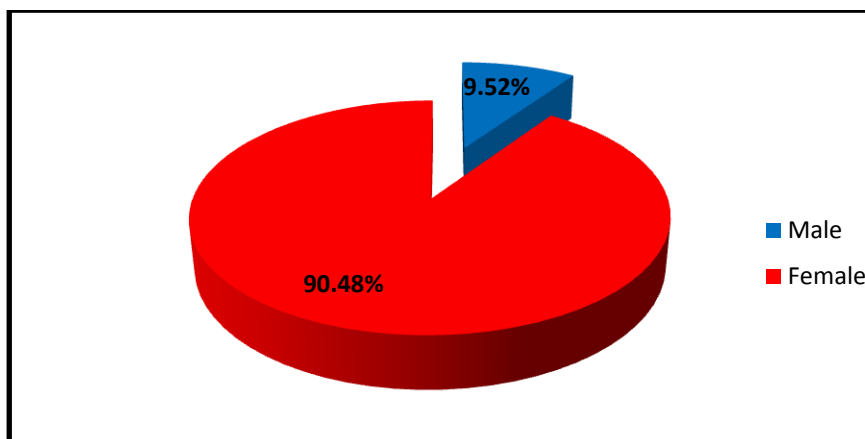
**Figure 2.1: Participants' gender distribution**

The figure above shows the rate of males and females at the English section. As we can see from the pie chart, female students represent the vast majority of our sample (38) participants and they rate (90.48%), whereas, the males rate only (9.52%).

**Question 02:** Do you feel motivated when learning English?

This question aims at showing students' willingness to learn English.

**Table 2.2: Students' willingness to learn English**

| Option | Number | Percentage |
|--------|--------|------------|
| Yes | 37 | 88.10% |
| No | 5 | 11.90% |
| **Total** | **42** | **100%** |
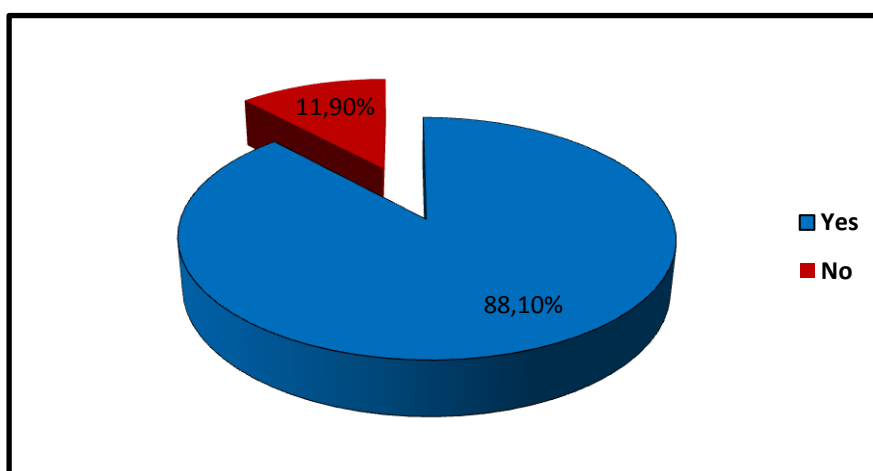


**Figure 2.2: Students' willingness to learn English**

The outcome of the question reveals that (88.10%) students are highly motivated to learn the language and (11.90%) who have declared that they are not really interested in learning English.

**Question 03:** Do you like speaking English?

The aim of this question is to know the students' attitude towards speaking English as a foreign language.

**Table 2.3: Students' attitude towards speaking English**

| Yes | No | Total |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 40 | 2 | **42** |
| 95.24% | 4.76% | **100%** |
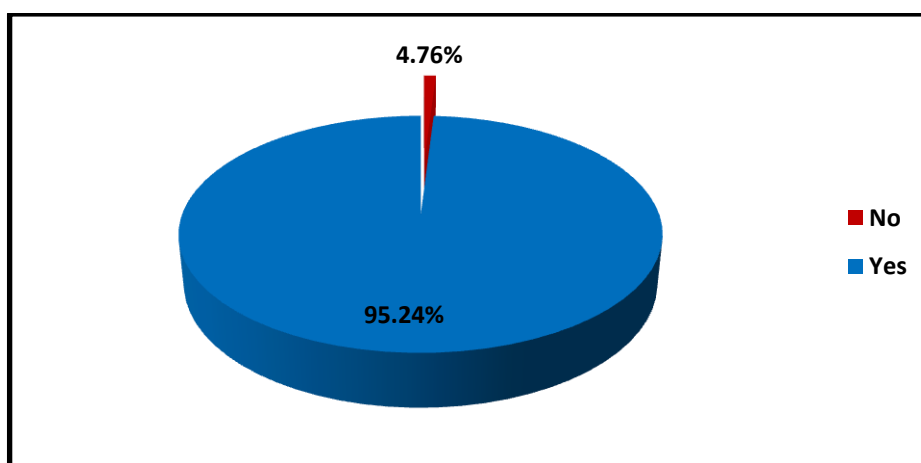


**Figure 2.3: Students' attitude towards speaking English**

The results of this question show that almost all the sample population said yes (90.24%) which represents (40) positive answers; except for two students who said no (4.76%). In an informal interview students have revealed that they do not participate in speaking activities because of shyness and the fear of making mistakes in front of their classmates in which they laugh at them, in addition to the lack of self-confidence.

**Question 04:** How often do you experience stage performance?

This question aims to figure out how often the participants perform in front of their classmates.

**Table 2.4: Students' stage performance frequency**

| Option | Number | Percentage |
|--------|--------|------------|
| Always | 9 | 21.43% |
| Sometimes | 27 | 64.29% |
| Rarely | 5 | 11.90% |
| Never | 0 | 0% |
| No answer | 1 | 2.38% |
| **Total** | **42** | **100%** |
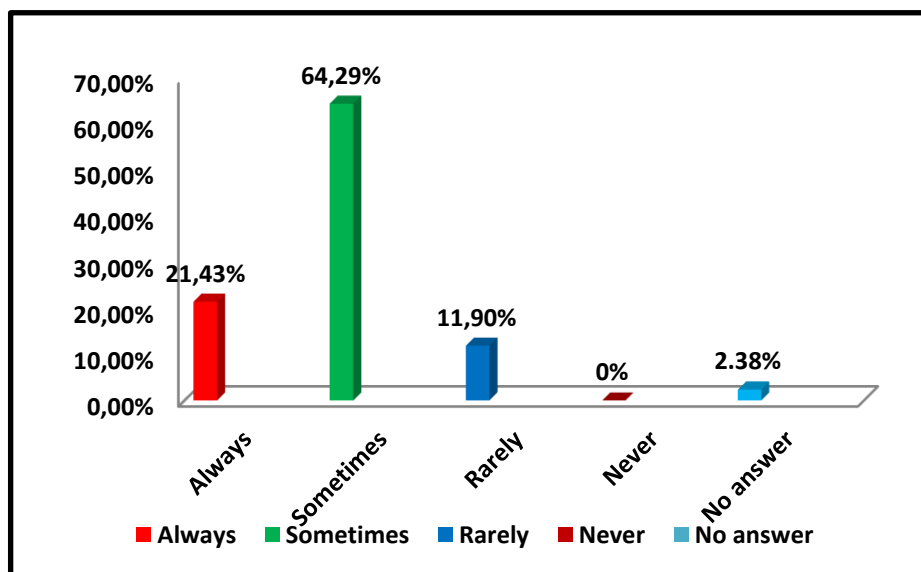


**Figure 2.4: Students' stage performance frequency**

Results show that nine participants (21.43%) said that they always perform and (64.29%) said that they sometimes perform in front of their classmates. 11.90% of our sample claimed that they rarely perform; whereas, never frequency has not been selected. However, one respondent has not provided any answer.

**Question 05:** How do you feel when performing orally?

This question has a specific aim which is to know if anxiety interferes in master students' stage performances.

**Table 2.5: Students' attitude towards oral presentations**

| Option | Number | % |
|---|---|---|
| Confident | 17 | 40.48% |
| Anxious | 25 | 59.52% |
| **Total** | **42** | **100%** |
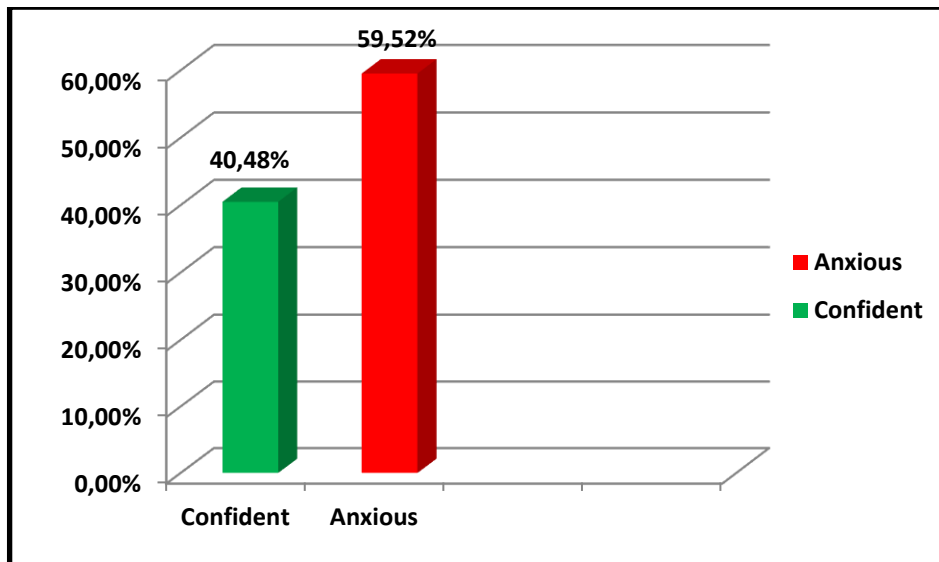


**Figure 2.5: Students' attitude towards oral presentations**

We notice from this bar graph above that 40.48% of our sample population feels confident enough to perform on the stage without being anxious at all. More than half of the respondents (59.52%) do feel anxious while performing orally which might be an obstacle for their stage proficiency.

**Question 06:** If you feel anxious, what are the symptoms? (See appendix II, p. 62)

We have asked this question to know what students experience under stress. Indeed in section two, our sample picked more than one answer just because we did not restrict them.

**Table 2.6: Symptoms of stage performance anxiety**

| Option | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Trembling | 12 | 28.57% |
| Palpitation | 5 | 11.91% |
| Headache | 1 | 2.38% |
| Stuttering | 2 | 4.77% |
| Trembling+ Palpitation+ Stuttering | 1 | 2.38% |
| Trembling+ Palpitation | 3 | 7.14% |
| Trembling+ Stuttering | 4 | 9.52% |
| Palpitation+ Stuttering | 1 | 2.38% |
| No answer | 13 | 30.95% |
| **Total** | **42** | **100%** |
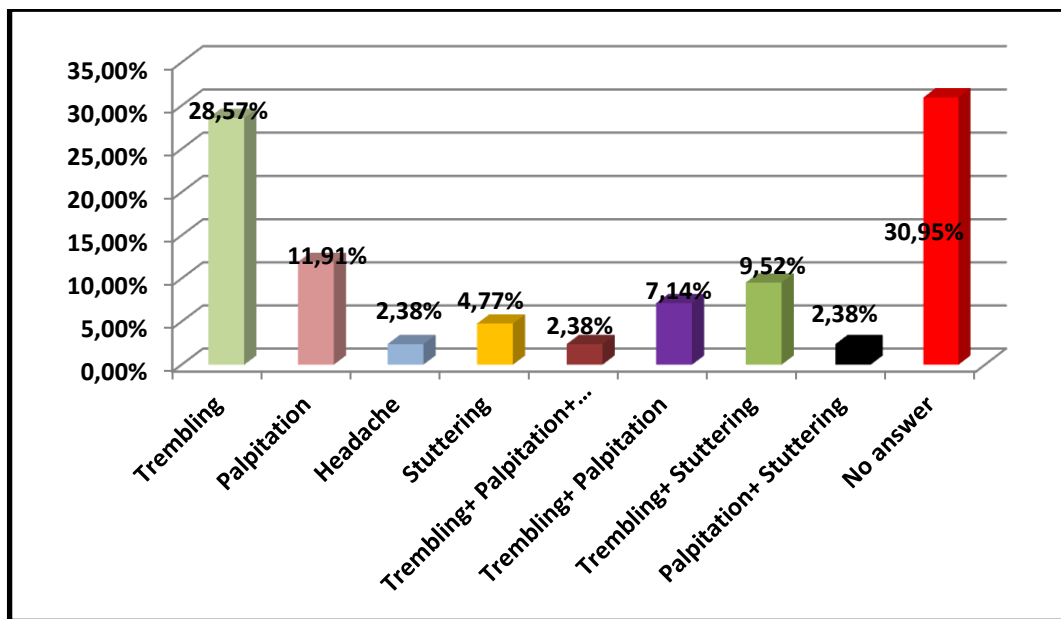


**Figure 2.6: Symptoms of stage performance anxiety**

The results show that our respondents have revealed two most common symptoms they share whenever they give presentations which are trembling with a rate of 28.57% and palpitation with a rate of 11.91%; whereas, only one student suffers from a headache (2.38%) and two students stammer (4.77%). Indeed, we can notice from the graph that the respondents may exhibit more than one symptom. However, only one student (2.38%) has revealed that he suffers from trembling, palpitation, and stuttering.

Furthermore, three students with a rate of 7.14% have stated that trembling and palpitation are what they suffer from; whereas four students with a rate of 9.52% said that they tremble and stutter. In addition to only one student, 2.38% has admitted that he stutters and his heart beats too much. Then, thirteen participants (30.95%) have left this question without an answer. In addition to the symptoms suggested in the questionnaire, the respondents have referred to different symptoms: as the rate of speaking, they tend to speak rapidly and keep moving, besides stomachache. In fact, the results reinforce what we have noticed through the session of observation that we have adopted as an additional method.

Actually, we have noticed that students lack self-confidence when they perform on the stage and they do not concentrate on what they say i.e., they focus on which words to say rather than on the meaning of the message. They also tend to rely on their papers rather than the presentation itself which leads to misleading the audience and making mistakes. For instance, through an informal interview a candidate declared that her feet are shaking and her heart beats too fast, this reveals that students are really suffering from a high level of anxiety. On the other hand, we have noticed another student who was very confident, she started her presentation very well but at a moment of time she stopped twice which created an awkward situation, and when we asked her why this has occurred she said: "I blocked", which means that even confident students feel little anxious when performing and may even make mistakes which again support what have been mentioned in the literature review about the facilitative effect of anxiety.

**Question 07:** What do you bother about while performing? (See appendix II, p. 63)

The aim of this question is to know the causes of anxiety.

**Table 2.7: Causes of anxiety**

| Option | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Fear of the audience | 6 | 14.29% |
| Teacher feedback | 2 | 4.76% |
| Fear of making mistakes | 12 | 28.57% |
| Information gap | 7 | 16.67% |
| Teacher feedback+ Fear of making mistakes+ Information gap | 1 | 2.38% |
| Fear of the audience+ Fear of making mistakes | 6 | 14.29% |
| Teacher feedback+ Fear of making mistakes | 2 | 4.76% |
| Fear of making mistakes+ Information gap | 4 | 9.52% |
| Teacher feedback+ Information gap | 1 | 2.38% |
| No answer | 1 | 2.38% |
| **Total** | **42** | **100%** |
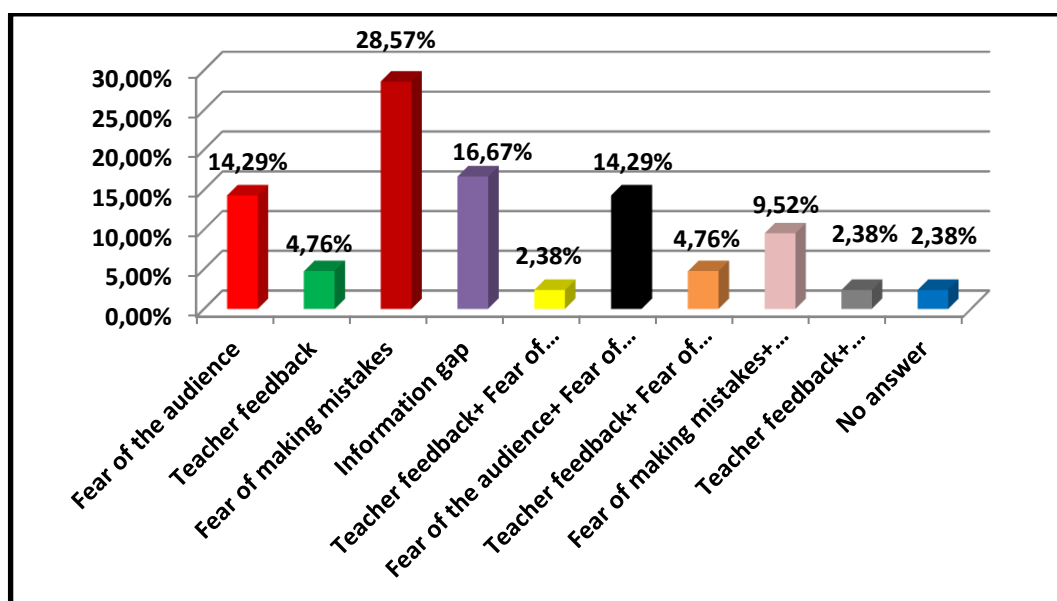


**Figure 2.7: Causes of anxiety**

The bar graph above shows the causes which induce students to feel anxious. In fact, 14.24% of the respondents said that they fear when they face the audience. 4.76% claimed that they feel anxious when the teacher gives his feedback at the end of the presentation. The majority (28.57%) said that they bother about making mistakes, while 16.67% stated that the fear of forgetting information is what raises their level of anxiety. Furthermore, six students (14.29%) said that what bother them the most are the fear of the audience and the fear of making mistakes as well. Four students with a rate of 9.52% have said that the fear of making mistakes and information gap are their biggest preoccupation; whereas, two other students have stated that the teacher feedback and the fear of making mistakes are the reasons behind their anxiety which rate 4.76%. Actually, two students (2.38%) have revealed that two things make them feel stressed which are the teacher's feedback and information gap, where one of them also bothers about the fear of making mistakes. Only one student has left the answer blank. Actually, some students provided us with more information and have suggested that teacher/classmates' interruption during the presentation and shyness are other reasons that make them feel anxious.

**Question 08:** What do you do to handle stress before being on the stage? (See appendix II, p. 63)

The aim is to know the strategies students' follow to cope with anxiety on the stage.

**Table 2.8: Students' strategies to cope with anxiety**

| Option | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Breathing slowly and deeply | 6 | 14.29% |
| Relax your muscles | 0 | 0% |
| Think positively | 8 | 19.05% |
| Forget the audience | 7 | 16.67% |
| Breathing slowly and deeply+ Relax your muscles+ Think positively+ Forget the audience | 1 | 2.38% |
| Breathing slowly and deeply+ Think positively+ Forget the audience | 2 | 4.76% |
| Breathing slowly and deeply+ Relax your muscles | 1 | 2.38% |
| Breathing slowly and deeply+ Think positively | 7 | 16.67% |
| Relax your muscles+ Think positively | 1 | 2.38% |
| Breathing slowly and deeply+ Forget the audience | 4 | 9.52% |
| Relax your muscles+ Forget the audience | 1 | 2.38% |
| Think positively+ Forget the audience | 3 | 7.14% |
| No answer | 1 | 2.38% |
| **Total** | **42** | **100%** |
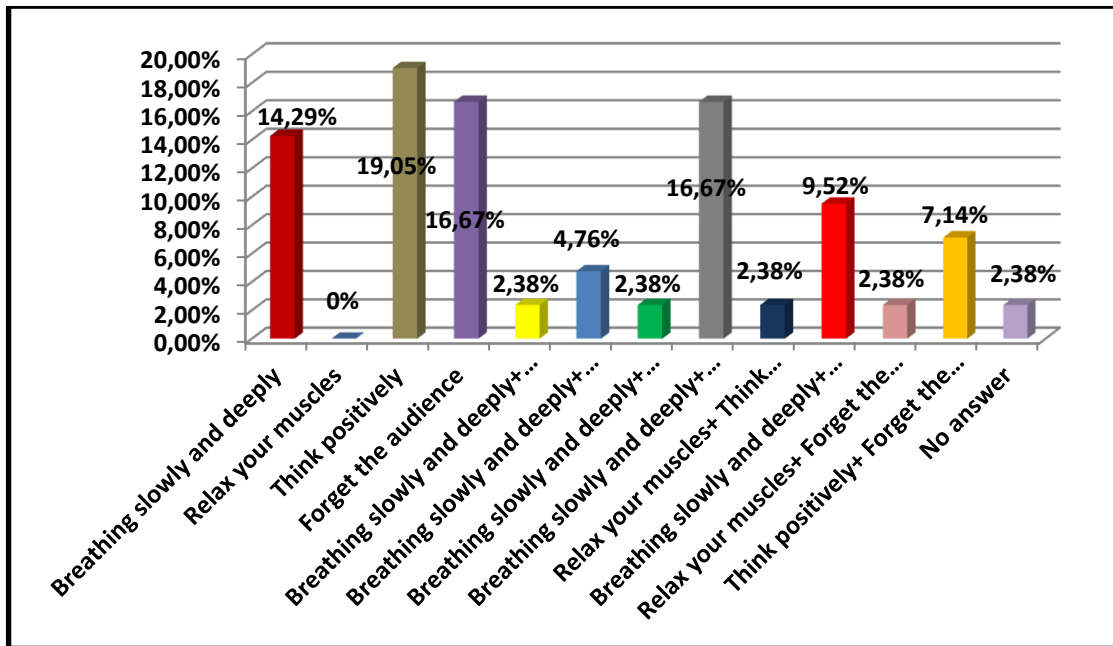
**Figure 2.8: Students' strategies to cope with anxiety**

The results clearly demonstrate that 14.29% of the students practise breathing deeply and slowly, but none of them has relaxed his muscles to calm his nerves. Indeed, the most frequent strategy is thinking positively before being on the stage with a percentage of 19.05%. Then, the second strategy used by students is forgetting the audience which rates 16.67%. Additionally, students rely on more than one strategy where four of them have revealed that they practise breathing slowly and deeply, relaxing muscles, thinking positively and forgetting about the audience. Then, two students have selected breathing slowly and deeply, think positively and forget the audience which rate 4.76%. We also notice that seven students practise breathing slowly and deeply and think positively which rate 16.67%. Furthermore, four students with a rate of 9.52% have revealed that they forget the audience and practise breathing slowly and deeply. Only one student (2.38%) has left this question without an answer.

Expectedly, some students have revealed other strategies that they use and think they are helpful to overcome this fear before the presentation starts such as: preparing in advance, rehearsing in front of the classmates so as to create an appropriate atmosphere, dancing and singing, and walking in the classroom, as well as pretending in front of the audience being relaxed so as to feel comfortable.

**Question 09:** Do you think stress can lead to success? Justify you answer?

The aim of this question is to see how students perceive the effect of stress.

**Table 2.9: Students' perception about stress**

| Yes | No | Total |
|---|---|---|
| 11 | 31 | **42** |
| 26.19% | 73.81% | **100%** |
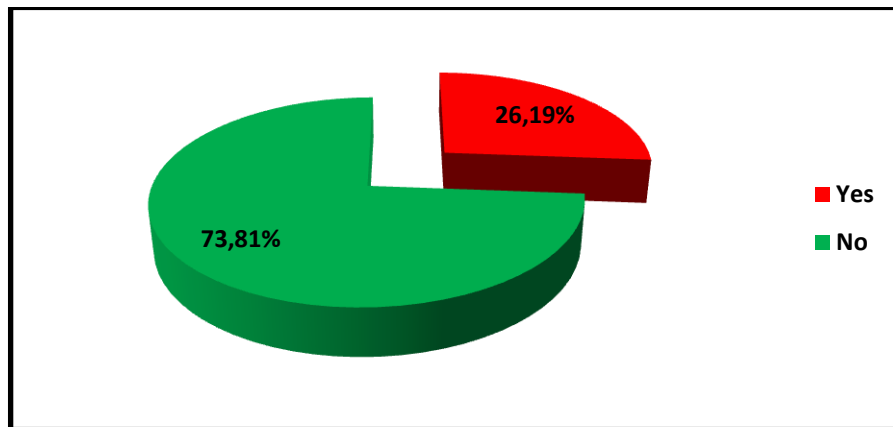


**Figure 2.9: Students' perception about stress**

Question nine determines students' opinion about stress. It is clear from the pie chart that eleven students (26.19%) think that stress can lead them to success; nine (9) of them have said yes for a distinct set of reasons, whereas only two said yes with no justification.

As a matter of fact, few students consider stress as an open door towards success because they think that stress is a natural phenomenon that motivates them to provide more effort and work harder to show their capacities especially in front of their peers and teacher. As they also revealed that it helps them to prepare themselves very well to perform, thus improves their stage performances, as when they practise and face their fear, this can lead to alleviating it. On the other hand, thirty-one (31) students which represent the majority of our sample population with a very high rate of 73.81% has agreed that stress can never lead to success, eleven (11) of them said no without any justification, but twenty-one (21) have revealed several reasons behind their attitude. Indeed, the common reason and the most shared between these twenty-one students is that stress can lead to failure (i.e., a wall between a student and success). Then, come other important reasons such as the tendency to forget what you have planned before

which leads to failing at expressing oneself and one's opinions and main points, as well as committing grammar and pronunciation mistakes which are much more likely to happen under anxiety. In fact, this might be because of the fear of either the audience or the teacher, and sometimes the feeling of being less proficient than others. The students also have revealed that stress lessens their self-confidence which is the most important affective factor that is necessary for good stage performance; however, bad results are also likely to exist, since the respondents claimed that it does not make them feel at ease and comfortable which is the result of their constant negative thinking.

**Question 10:** Why should stress awareness be taught at the university?

This question intends to emphasize the importance of stress awareness in enhancing students 'stage performances.

In this open-ended question, we have attempted to open the path for students to express themselves and elicit the information we need to cover all the angles in this topic. In fact, six of our sample has not answered, and we have noticed some similarities in the responses we have received. Most of them claimed that since stress is the main problem facing first year master students, stress awareness is very useful to make them know and understand that this feeling of uneasiness is something that is very natural and everyone experiences it. They also added that since stress is perceived as an obstacle for stage performances, it is important to help them decrease its effects and show them how to control it by providing some strategies. Other reasons students have stated as stress awareness can help developing self-confidence, motivate, and reduce shyness. They also think if they become aware of stress, they can face their fears. Consequently, they will be able to face the audience and give a high level of performance, and most importantly not to let this feeling become a serious problem and affects their grades.

**2.7 Description of the Teachers' Interview**

A semi-structured interview is submitted to five teachers from the department of English. The interview contains two parts that are mainly open-ended questions except for the last question which is partially open-ended. However, the first part contains three open-ended questions devoted to revealing the importance of speaking skill to enhance students' stage performances.

The second part is devoted to the core of the study entitled "anxiety in EFL classes", it includes six open-ended questions and one partially open-ended question. The questions are asked to collect in-depth information concerning our topic of investigation.

## 2.8 The Analysis of the Teachers' Interview

The interview is submitted to five teachers from the English department because the researcher thinks they are appropriate to provide the amount of data about the topic under investigation.

**Question 01:** Are both productive and receptive skills necessary to perform on the stage?

The aim of this question is to know if all of the four language skills are of equal importance or only one skill is enough to give a good presentation.

In this question three teachers have agreed that what students need the most is mainly the productive skills; whereas, the other two teachers declared that both productive and receptive skills are essential for the same reason, and both teachers believe that the four language skills are complementary and intertwined (i.e., one cannot be without the existence of the other).

**Question 02:** Do you think that speaking skill in particular is the most important?

This question is intended to reveal the importance of speaking as a skill to enhance stage performance.

Most of the respondents have agreed that speaking is the most important skill because without this skill, one cannot start even the conversation; except for one teacher only who gave us a different point of view. According to this teacher, speaking helps the student better perform but cannot stand alone; that is to say, speaking skill goes hand-in-hand with the other language skills (listening, reading, and writing) which confirm what has been already tackled in the first chapter. This teacher also affirmed that speaking can be the mirror for a student to reflect whether the other skills have been used in the correct way or not. In other words, the more a student reads, the better he can write; then the more he writes, the more he can be able to think and produce language.

**Question 03:** To what extent does the degree of the mastery of speaking skill affect the students' oral performance?

The main reason behind such question is to know if the student requires a good mastery of speaking skill to better perform.

The third question is much targeted because it seeks to demonstrate if a good mastery of speaking results in good performance (i.e., leads to a good performance). In fact, all the five teachers have given us different responses and they have all agreed to some extent that speaking is of a certain importance since it takes a big place in what a real stage performance requires, but each one has explained this point differently. Actually one of the teachers stated that in order to convey a message, we have to master speaking skill; otherwise, this message may not be transmitted the way we want and the audience may misunderstand us. In addition, another teacher said that a student with such ability needs to be confident enough because confident students tend to express their ideas freely and without any obstructions. Two other teachers have given us different explanation in which the first teacher said that speaking is very necessary if supported with audio-visual aids, because he thinks that it gives 80% of their performance in addition to the preparation and the structure of the presentation, the transitions and so on; while the second teacher believes that speaking correctly with good accent and pronunciation is a plus for students, unless they are conscious about their topic, i.e., how much you master the content of your topic determines your performance; otherwise, the student may seem confused not knowing what to say, then the audience will realize that he did a hasty work.

**Question 04:** How do your students feel before performing?

The question's aim is to see if the students feel ready or uncomfortable to perform.

Most of the participants have revealed that their students do feel anxious when they are about to present something on the stage but two teachers have revealed that this still differs from one student to another depending on their personalities, self-confidence, and speaking abilities. In fact, this outcome endorses (question 05) in the questionnaire.

**Question 05:** Does this feature last till the end?

This question intends to reveal if the feeling of anxiety is permanent or temporally.

The responses taken from three teachers have revealed that anxiety usually appears at the very beginning of the presentation (the first few minutes) once they start, it disappears. Moreover, one teacher has stated that sometimes anxiety continues even after; whereas, another teacher has said that it depends on each student. This means that anxiety attacks the most anxious ones; otherwise, it appears only at the beginning.

**Question 06:** How do you support students to overcome speaking anxiety?

The reason of this question is to reveal the kind of relationship teachers have with their students.

Our entire sample revealed that they attempt to create an appropriate atmosphere to make the students feel at ease through rephrasing or explaining what they say so as to help them to be understood and attract the audience to what they are saying, and thus reduce the noise. One of them has revealed that she advises them to forget about the audience and act as if nobody is there, and another one believes that humour is of a paramount importance to help students feel relaxed.

**Question 07:** What are the strategies students should follow in order to be good stage performers?

The aim behind such question is to help us provide some tricks to help students improve their performances.

The respondents have some common and other points different, in fact the common point that our participants share is that the learners should choose the topic that suits their abilities (easy) and master its content i.e., know what they talk about when they present; additionally, their responses suggest that preparing and rehearsing before helps a lot especially in front of their family members. They also believe that students should develop their self-confidence which is the key to success, and improve language skills through practice. As they should work on their pronunciation and cover all language analysis in order to be able to construct correct sentences.

**Question 08:** To what extent does stage anxiety affect the stream of evaluation?

It aims at figuring out the effects of anxiety on students' grades.

We have noticed that the participants have different perspectives, where two of them said that students may fail if they lose control; one has said that she does not give anxiety too much attention which means that she does not take it into consideration in evaluation. Additionally, another teacher said that he understands and usually supports those who take the initiative (those who present the first) but severe with the others. Whereas, the fifth teacher has a totally different perspective and she thinks that learners' performance does not stop at the time when the learners stop speaking but rather the performance continues, thus the evaluation continues, and this means that if the student could be able to answer the questions correctly or offer the adequate argument, he could get a good mark which is a positive thing. Therefore, anxiety should not be viewed as a barrier for success, it can be reduced.

**Question 09:** Do you think stress can lead to success? How?

The purpose of this question is to detect how teachers' perceive anxiety.

Most of them agree that stress can lead to success since it can be a source of motivation and incite students to work hard (i.e., a bit of it will not harm) but only if students know how to get rid of it; as it may become dangerous (prevents them from working hard), if it exceeds.

**Question 10:** Should stress awareness be taught at the university? Why?

This question intends to shed light on the importance of stress awareness to alleviate students' stage performance anxiety.

The five teachers have said yes. In fact, we have noticed a clear agreement among our sample that stress awareness can be helpful to prepare the learners for future performances, and they all believe that students should be aware of anxiety, understand it, and accept it as a natural feeling that can be reduced. Therefore, they should realize that stress helps them to face their fears and can be used as a motive which brings persistence.

**2.9 Conclusion**

Stage performance anxiety is an obstacle for every learner of English as a foreign language because it requires speaking skill. Actually, this investigation is performed through the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview. This implies that a quantitative and a qualitative methodology have been adopted. An ample description of the tools of research is provided besides the setting, the population and the pilot study. Furthermore, the students' questionnaire results have been exhibited besides the outcome of the teachers' interview. These results will be amply analysed and interpreted in the following chapter.

# DATA

# INTERPRETATION

# AND

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## CHAPTER THREE: Data Interpretation and Recommendations

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the interpretation of the results obtained from the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview. Consequently, we have attempted to provide some recommendations for students, in which we afforded some strategies for teachers to promote speaking because of its essential role in communicating ideas and conveying messages in the appropriate way. Moreover, we have tried to recommend some strategies for teachers that we think may help students attenuate this feeling of anxiety, since they have a strong impact on them. Then, we also tried to shed light on some solutions for students to be aware of anxiety as something positive that can lead to success rather than to failure, only if they know how to deal with it to better perform in front of their teachers and classmates with a very high self-confidence. Hence, we prepare them for future experiences.

## 3.2 Interpretation of the Students' Questionnaire

The findings of students' questionnaire clearly show that anxiety has a strong impact on master students' ability to better perform. The results out of the first question demonstrate that female students are much more interested in continuing master studies than male students, and this could be due to some circumstances such as work, travelling, or other concerns, but there is no difference between males and females in terms of anxiety experience because even males do feel anxious and sometimes confident. In question (02), the majority of our sample has revealed that they do feel motivated to learn English which means that they are proud being in master level.

In question (03), most of the students show a positive attitude towards speaking English and this can be understood as a sign of their awareness of the importance of mastering speaking skill to enhance their learning level, except for two students that they do not like speaking in English and this is may be because they do not feel competent enough to speak the language which can be manifested in lack of self-confidence. Furthermore, when we asked the forth question to know how often the participants do perform in front of their classmates; the majority of them said that they sometimes perform, which means that they do participate in oral presentations and they must have experienced some feelings.

The following question reveals what kind of feeling the respondents have experienced. The sample population do experience two kinds of feelings; either confidence or anxiety, but the results have revealed that most of them experience the feelings of anxiety much more than confidence.

When we asked the participants about the symptoms of their anxiety, we have got many responses which means that each one of them reacts differently, and some of them must have experienced high level of anxiety because they revealed more than one symptom; but the main symptoms that students have revealed are trembling and palpitation especially trembling i.e., students tend to shake a lot and their heart beats hastily which leads to the feeling of discomfort and may even provoke hesitation when speaking in front of an audience or just quit so as to avoid confronting such situation. Indeed our sample have revealed that what they bother about while performing on the stage is the fear of making mistakes, and this means that grammar and pronunciation mistakes are the first preoccupation. In addition to their fear of forgetting words and facing the audience, actually this raises their anxiety level. In addition to these features, the teacher feedback is also perceived as an obstacle for their stage performance progress.

In order to overcome the problem of anxiety, most of the students believe that thinking positively is the key to success; whereas, the other respondents think that forgetting the audience and breathing slowly and deeply are very useful for giving a good stage performance which is a positive side that can help in increasing their level.

Concerning students' perception about stress, the majority of the students have agreed that anxiety cannot lead to success, since it has never affected their performances positively. Besides, they have revealed different reasons for believing in such thing. From the questionnaire outcome, we can deduce that they are determined that if they feel anxious, they would fail. This negative thinking is due to the lack of self-confidence. Where the others believe that anxiety is a natural phenomenon which means that they are aware enough that anxiety is not that big deal and it can be reduced.

These responses illustrate that unfortunately the problem of anxiety touches a very few students positively and most of them negatively, since they are not aware that it can be beneficial and used as a motive to better perform. Therefore, we have attempted to raise question (10) to help us find solutions and thus, provide master

students with some recommendations to deal with this problem, because students have clearly declared that stress awareness is very helpful to alleviate the effect of anxiety on their performances and their grades.

### 3.3 Interpretation of the Teachers' Interview

The results obtained from the interview we have conducted with five teachers from the department of English gave us the opportunity to interpret the data and deduce that the four language skills are of equal importance, since they are integrally taught; though, most teachers agreed that what students require while giving a classroom presentation is mainly speaking, in the sense that it is the skill in which they can express and communicate their thoughts but the matter is that, if students do not master the other skills, the ability to speak alone is not enough. In other words, reading, listening, and writing help organizing ideas and then enhance speaking properly, thus the presentation goes well. In addition to the topic chosen, the structure of the presentation is essential in this academic task. Moreover, the use of audio-visual aids provides illustration which endorses the presentation content, and therefore reaches a good mark. In fact, a good mastery of speaking determines how self-confident the student is on the stage; but still it does not determine his/her level (i.e., it does not imply that the performance is going to be bad or perfect).

Additionally, we deduce from the teachers' feedback that anxiety feeling depends on the personality of students i.e., students with a strong personality perceive anxiety differently compared to those with a weak personality. In other words, anxiety does not harm students with a strong personality as it affects weak personality students. In fact, this can also be interpreted in another manner, where self-confident students are able to deal with stress in tough circumstances, whereas students who lack self-confidence seem to struggle a lot under stress. Therefore, the effect of anxiety has to do primarily with the students themselves because of their distinctive personalities.

The results also suggest that the teachers are very supportive because they help their students explaining the content of their presentations in which they provide them with the appropriate vocabulary that they might miss or forget, and this helps making the student feels comfortable, confident, motivated, and ready to give more. As they have suggested that what students require to boost their performances is to prepare a lot in advance and give much attention to the topic they choose which can reflect their

personalities (i.e., if they master the topic very well, they can be able to express easily and show their real potentials). On the other hand, we could notice that the teachers are very aware of what the students are confronting, this could be seen through the way they have answered; as they suggested that anxiety does affect the performance and may even affect the stream of evaluation if it exceeds; but after all, the evaluation also has to do with the way students answer the questions asked by their peers or the teacher, and the way they negotiate and provide concrete arguments. However, anxiety should not be perceived as a barrier in learning, and it can lead to success only if students overcome this situation. Additionally, the results show that all the interviewees agreed on the fact that stress awareness is very helpful.

All in all, the gathered data from both students' questionnaire and teachers' interview support the hypotheses and particularly reveal that stage performance anxiety can be defeated through raising stress awareness among students to help them understand that this fear is natural and that even confident students are likely to feel it. However, both teachers and students think that stress awareness should be taught at the university.

## 3.4 Recommendations

The current studies as well as the results taken from both the questionnaire and interview have paved the way to think of some solutions for students to deal with the problem of anxiety. In fact, anxiety can only be reduced through time but if we resolve to do something about it, we can succeed, because it is high time to think of the necessary procedures to help students' get over stage performance anxiety.

### 3.4.1 Teachers' Strategies to Promote Speaking

Students are in need for speaking skill in order to have the ability to convey their messages the way they expect, and make people understand them. Therefore, teachers should apply the following activities extensively to motivate and encourage students to speak, and then enhance their speaking abilities. The most important aim is to prepare them for real-life circumstances; in addition to some tips that we think may help as well.

### 3.4.1.1 Oral Presentations

This classroom activity is among the strategies we should insert to promote speaking due to its effectiveness. This task help students lessen hesitation, reduce anxiety, eliminate shyness, dare, and most importantly challenge themselves to show their capacities on the stage. Thornbury (2005) views that if students stand up in front of their peers, they will prepare themselves for real-life speaking situations, and hence this will lessen their anxiety and increase their speaking competency. In fact, Master learners are in a level where they should fight with all their weapons, and oral presentation is an opportunity for them not only to increase their level in speaking, but also to enable themselves to function successfully in the future professional settings. Besides preparing them for their further academic career especially if they know how to benefit from their body language, since speaking is about the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols. Indeed, extensive use of oral presentations involves and motivates the learner to practice more to get better where he will realize his mistakes and try to correct them spontaneously.

### 3.4.1.2 Open-Discussion

Discussions have already been dealt with in the first chapter. We have referred to their importance in the classroom, in fact they are considered as activities that encourage and help students to speak in English. When students discuss, they interact with one another i.e., they learn from each other's perspectives, and as they pay attention to their peers or teacher's pronunciation, they develop their communicative competencies; hence, imitate to correct themselves and promote speaking. Additionally, classroom discussions get students thinking more critically about the point discussed; they allow them to evaluate their opinions with those of their peers, and keep them involved and busy with the interaction (i.e., raises their interest), as they encourage creativity because they make them reflect and use their brain to see things they have not thought of them before which creates a sense of consciousness. This activity also fosters quick decision making and students learn how to justify and defend their statements.

However, we think that if the teacher motivates the students to take the initiative to open a discussion about the lecture being taught, or right after one of the student's presentation is done, it will be beneficial for them to give a voice for their mind and talk especially if the topic is interesting.

### 3.4.1.3 Reading Sessions

Reading promotes eloquence i.e., it diminishes stuttering and makes the learner produce the language without hesitation because basically, it is agreed that through reading that we become fluent. Indeed, reading develops vocabulary especially if it is aloud, and mainly what we need to produce language is the ability to construct meaningful words because it is through them we communicate our ideas. In fact, reading aloud is very important because it helps remembering the words; it develops writing (grammar, punctuation) as well as pronunciation (Harmer, 1998). Therefore, if teachers devote only ten minutes in each session, there would be a kind of improvement in terms of speaking which would enhance students' performances.

### 3.4.1.4 Group Work

Another effective activity to engage students to use English in the classroom is group work. This activity allows the teacher to divide the students into groups of four or five students in which he provides different topics where they can expose their opinions and share knowledge. Group work is essential because it gives the opportunity for the teacher to involve the whole class and make them busy instead of noisy, it enhances learner autonomy, and teaches them how to manage and share the work between them. It also motivates silent students to contribute and use their voice. Group work is a good method that teachers can rely on to promote students' speaking ability, as it is effective to manage large classes with different abilities in which talented students work with less talented students, thus this can boost students' desire to work and use English with classmates (Baker and Westrup, 2000).

In addition to the activities above, we suggest the following tips that we believe they are helpful to improve students' speaking skill:

➢ Reduce teacher talking time and this is through asking some questions to test students' understanding; hence, increase student talking time.

➢ Ask "wh" questions instead of "yes/no" questions in order to encourage students to speak and explain their statements.

➢ Avoid direct corrections, this will annoy the students and encourage them not to speak just to avoid being in the same situation where you correct them each time, instead let them talk freely and feel at ease, and sooner or later they will recognize their mistakes alone.

> ➢ Praise them for speaking through using words such as: good, excellent because these words motivate them, make them feel they are important, and raise their self-confidence.

As a matter of fact, the above strategies and tips are deduced from the investigation we have conducted with master students and English department teachers. If students develop their speaking skill far from fear and stress, they will enhance self-confidence, and their stage performance proficiency will develop.

## 3.5 The Teacher's Role

Many students today are coming to the university with notebooks and pencils in their backpacks, besides learning challenges, behaviour problems, socio-emotional issues, family issues, and more. Due to these challenges or issues, teachers have more than the role of an educator. In fact, they act as social workers, behavioural counsellors, and surrogate parents too, which make the job of a teacher even more challenging. Actually, it is argued that the teacher assumes many roles; therefore, we will shed light on two main roles forward.

### 3.5.1 The Teacher as a Stimulator

To stimulate is to attract, motivate, and push the individual to do a certain task; and a stimulator teacher is the one who makes his students feel important, and enthusiastic; he is the one who can get them involved in participation, is the one who can share with them his experiences, he can also be the one who draw connections to real life situations in order to show the importance of learning (i.e., make students feel the content of the lecture) which would facilitate learning. Harmer (2001) calls him a prompter, in which encouragement is needed for the student and it is the teacher's responsibility to provide it. He states that a prompter teacher can help the student with some vocabulary rather than taking charge of everything, and he also states that too much prompting may cause an over reliance on the teacher i.e., the student may rely on his teacher rather than thinking creatively to solve learning issues. However, all of the above characteristics give the teacher the honour to be called an amazing human being that is why it is tough to be a teacher.

### 3.5.2 The Teacher as a Guider

Many learners perceive the teacher as the ultimate learning giver. In fact at the university level, the teacher is no more the source of knowledge, he is only a facilitator where he guides his students. Yet, the learners' role is to clarify and synthesize the obtained data. In other words, the teacher should encourage active and student-centre learning; he should assume the role of a manager of the learning experience rather than the ultimate learning giver. Learners on the other hand, have to take responsibility for their learning i.e., diagnose their learning needs, formulate learning goals, identify resources for learning, etc… Therefore, giving students the freedom to learn creates an energized environment; this could be interpreted in simple words, teach them how to swim and let them dive.

## 3.6 The Teacher-Student Relationship

Many studies have emphasized the essential role of a supportive student-teacher relationship in which a tight and a positive relationship enhance students' academic achievement and motivate them to give more in the learning process. Since the teacher is viewed as an important factor, his relationship with the learners plays a significant role for successful language learning. Pianta (1999) supports this idea where she states that enhancing student-teacher relationship can increase students' competence level and help reduce the rates of their failure. This means that students are more engaged in learning when they have a good relationship with their teacher which reduces failure. She also claimed that psychologically a learner with a close relationship with his teacher feels secure, comfortable, and motivated which attenuates the level of cortisol (stress) and leads to success. In other words, if students make a supportive relationship with teachers, they tend to work hard, pay attention to the teacher, accept criticism, and cope better with stress which is the main point to focus on when developing this positive relationship.

## 3.7 Strategies Used to Overcome Stage Performance Anxiety

Most EFL students perceive anxiety as the main factor that prevent them from presenting well on the stage, and teachers can make a difference if they help their students deal with this fear of tension and apprehension because they can influence and affect learners' achievement. For that we suggest some ways that we think will help learners cope with it to better perform and succeed in their learning process.

### 3.7.1 Teachers' Strategies to Overcome Students' Anxiety

Teachers play a vital role in helping their students to decrease their anxiety by applying certain strategies that are significant and effective. Since teachers are the source of inspiration, they should not be anxiety-provoking; therefore, overcoming foreign language anxiety and developing students' stage performances, require the help of the teachers to fulfil this responsibility. According to the investigation held with first year linguistic master students, we recommend the following:

- ➢ Teachers should build good relationship with students to make them feel as one family which leads to the feeling of security and belonging.
- ➢ Teachers should support students through creating a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere, and believe in their abilities so that they feel confident.
- ➢ Teachers have to be aware of anxious students, and encourage them to take part in speaking activities through involving them by asking simple questions on an open topic.
- ➢ Teachers should encourage group work to create an interaction and a debate between students where each one states his point and defends it.
- ➢ They have to provide maximum opportunity for students to participate in oral presentations through allowing them to select the topic they feel comfortable with.
- ➢ Teachers should not interrupt and comment a lot on pronunciation mistakes, this disturb the students and make them remain silent.
- ➢ They should correct their students in a relaxed manner.
- ➢ They have to encourage students to use positive self-talk as a substitution to negative thoughts about their perceived ability.
- ➢ They have to share experience with their students, this will make them recognize that they are not the only one who experienced the feeling of tension.
- ➢ Teachers can invite other teachers to attend students' classroom presentations in order to prepare them for future stage performance situation. This task is beneficial to get used to the hard circumstances and correct the mistakes. They can also invite talented students to present in front of the audience, this may motivate them.

> Teachers should elevate stress awareness within their subjects or within the psychology subject in order to teach students to be aware of something named stress that they can master and get rid of while performing, and raise their self-confidence.

In addition to the above recommendations, Wilson (1999) suggested 16 strategies teachers can do in class to reduce anxiety, we can benefit from few of them:

> Instructor's positive attitude.
> Instructor's reassurance that "We Can Do It!"
> Instructor's use of humour in the classroom.
> Working with a partner on in-class assignments.
> Working with a group on a research project.

These strategies are strategies that can be implanted in every classroom, particularly once teachers are aware of their impact in reducing anxiety.

### 3.7.2 Students' Strategies to Overcome Anxiety

Since anxiety is considered as the main obstacle for master students that prevent them from giving a successful stage performance and affects their learning process, they must do their best to alleviate it. For that we highly recommend the following strategies:

> Students should be aware that anxiety is a natural feeling that everyone feels it no matter who he is and most importantly accept its fact in order not to feel different and unable to control it.
> They should figure out the reason behind their fear because when they know the reason, it becomes easier for them to eliminate it, and thus they can perform successfully.
> They should develop good relationships with their teachers and their classmates to avoid shyness.
> Students must increase their self-esteem, and self-confidence.
> Students should perceive their teachers as models because they have had many similar experiences too.
> Students should rehearse in front of classmates or family members before getting on the stage.
> Students should know how to think positively and learn how to not let the negative thoughts control their mind and this can be through using

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inspirational and motivational quotes like "*I am thankful for all of those who said NO to me. It is because of them I am doing it myself.*" Albert Einstein

➢ They should not seek perfection in their performances because perfectionism is the result of their high expectations and it can lead to failure sometimes.

➢ Students must breath slowly and deeply when starting a presentation.

➢ They should not give too much attention to grammar or pronunciation mistakes, the audience may not even notice; and mistakes are part of the learning process, rather they should care about the meaning of the message they are conveying (the content of the presentation).

➢ They should accept teachers' correctness in a positive way and try to understand their intentions behind correctness.

Actually, even the administration should consider anxiety as a serious problem that EFL students are suffering from and since anxiety is a psychological phenomenon, they should create psychology subject particularly for raising stress awareness among students because they require their teachers help at first hand; where they teach them how to deal under stress when giving a presentation on the stage. However, psychology is very necessary for students to enhance their stage performances as well as to foster their learning achievement. Besides teaching how to use the slides in a PowerPoint presentation, academic presentation teachers should help the students know how to talk, when to talk, how to walk, how to use gestures, how to use their posture etc…This will make them reach the peak potential.

## 3.8 The Role of Motivation and Self-confidence in Improving Students' Performances

To increase students' oral performances, two important variables are necessary to be taken into account, motivation and self-confidence. Both of them provide many ideas and approaches that can enhance teaching and increase the opportunity for successful                                                                                               learning.

### 3.8.1 Motivation

Many scholars agreed that motivation is an important affective filter that improves learners' proficiency in performing. Harmer (2001: 51) defines motivation as "*some kind of internal drives which pushes someone to do things in order to achieve something*". In other words, motivation is the desire and willingness to do a required task; that is to say, if a student does not want to do a certain task, he cannot succeed. Indeed, to perform well on the stage, to succeed in learning, or to achieve a goal, desire and insistency is needed. Therefore, with motivated students, communication flows, anxiety decreases, and their classroom performances increase because they feel comfortable, active and enthusiastic, and most importantly they want to do the task; that is why teachers and even family members have to motivate students to help them give the best they can.

### 3.8.2 Self-confidence

Similarly, self-confidence is much more important too because it gives you the power to conquer the world. Self-confidence can be learned through strongly believing in one's self and one's potentials. A student can only trust himself when he feels secure, and it is the role of the teacher to raise that trust through showing some interest (i.e., sharing and caring). As a result, the learner's willingness and engagement in communication increases which may lead to effective language performance, even if anxiety interferes. In addition, if students experience the classroom as a caring, supportive place where there is a sense of belonging and everyone is valued and respected they will tend to appreciate more fully in the process of learning. Consequently, the student will have the ability to take risks, challenge, dare, and volunteer's answers whatever the situation is. Therefore, these two affective factors are required and need to be taken into consideration so as to succeed in teaching as well as in learning.

## 3.9 Requirements of a Good Stage Performer

Being a good stage performer requires much energy from the person himself, being a student or even a teacher. Generally speaking, it is necessary to take what you do on the stage as a serious task because when doing that, you will sacrifice all your effort to make it goes well and succeed as a performer, thus you will feel the satisfaction. Moreover, the stage is the place where students should show their

potentials (i.e., their linguistic competencies) under the spotlight which is one of the problems that students are struggling with, in which it is the reason behind their frequent feeling of anxiety. Anxiety sometimes comes from too much negative thinking which can harm the performance because our brain accepts everything he perceives. That is to say when the performer thinks that his performance is going to be a disaster and he cannot make it, his brain acts based on what the person says; whereas, if the performer thinks his performance is going to be good, his brain sends some positive signals to his body to act positively and give a good performance. Hence, positive thinking is a way that every performer should benefit from to work well. A good stage performer should have the following characteristics:

➢ He should start the presentation with a high self-esteem, motivation, self-confidence, and expectation.

➢ A good stage performer should know how to attract and involve his audience with the choice of the topic that interests them.

➢ He should master his topic very well so that he can be able to support himself with appropriate arguments.

➢ He should expect anything from the audience i.e., they might not be interested in the topic.

➢ A good stage performer should be active, enthusiastic, and funny (i.e., knows when/how to use jokes so that the audience does not get bored).

➢ He should use his tone cleverly i.e., plays with the intonation as well as his gestures so that the audience understand what he is conveying.

➢ He should focus on what he is doing rather than on the audience but must not neglect them completely otherwise he would seem arrogant.

## 3.10 Conclusion

The researcher has devoted the third chapter to the interpretation of the data and recommendations. She has attempted to provide some strategies and ways that are convenient to the data collected from the participants' responses and the recent studies in which she has provided the most appropriate classroom activities that can help teachers boost students' ability to speak and use English constantly inside and outside the classroom. This would prepare the students for future oral performances, and improve their academic and professional experiences. Moreover, the researcher has suggested some strategies for teachers and master students to alleviate the level of anxiety when giving a stage performance in front of their classmates. Additionally, she has revealed the essential role of motivation and self-confidence in elevating students' presentations to a professional level, and then she has recommended some tips for students on how to be good stage performers. Hopefully, these recommendations and tips will be taken into account to remedy this phenomenon.

# GENERAL

# CONCLUSION

**General Conclusion**

This extended essay is undertaken to investigate the nature of speaking anxiety as a hindrance for stage performance. It has dealt with the impact of anxiety on students' oral presentation because most EFL students encounter this feeling when giving a presentation in front of their teachers and classmates. The fundamental purpose of our study is to investigate the reason behind this issue and to be able to find suitable solutions that can help students alleviate this phenomenon.

This research has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter has been devoted to the importance of the four language skills (receptive and productive) in enhancing the learners' stage performance. In fact, the mastery of speaking skill may reduce anxiety rate and help the learner to cope with the situation. Therefore, we have dealt with the different classroom activities designed for speaking skill. We have also shed light on anxiety phenomenon, its different types, causes and symptoms. A special attention has been devoted to foreign language anxiety and the different sources of this kind of anxiety.

In the second chapter, the researcher has analysed the data collected based on the respondents' opinions and responses. It seeks to see if the hypotheses are confirmed or rejected, that is through this practical chapter in which both master students and teachers of Belhadj Bouchaib university centre provided us with the amount of information relevant to this investigation. The outcomes of this chapter revealed that the most symptom shared is trembling. They are anxious about committing mistakes and forgetting words. The results also showed that their common strategy to overcome anxiety is thinking positively; in fact, this would reduce the level of students' anxiety while performing academic tasks. On the other hand, the results reached out of the interview clearly showed that raising stress awareness is very important to help students reduce anxiety.

The third chapter is devoted to data interpretation and recommendations where the researcher has suggested a number of recommendations for teachers to enhance students' speaking skill; in addition to some ways for both students and teachers to overcome stage performance anxiety.

Finally and based on the outcomes revealed from the instruments the researcher has chosen to undertake this study, the hypotheses has been proved about the sources of anxiety, its effects on students' stage performance and the different strategies suggested to cope with this phenomenon.

Anxiety is a psychological component that may interfere in learning process and inhibit learners to acquire knowledge and perform academic tasks successfully. Therefore, it is necessary to consider this phenomenon and support the learners to overcome such hindrance and make use of a positive anxiety that may enhance and reinforce learning achievements.

All in all, our recent study is limited because of the small sample we investigated our topic with. However, if we have had enough time we could have enlarged the sample population, we could also have investigate this area of research more scientifically, where we could included how the human mind processes under stress. Thus, we could have provided other strategies to help the learners get rid of this psychological problem.

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# APPENDICES

**Appendix I**

## <u>Glossary</u>

**Cortisol** : The hormone associated with stress.

**Lacklustre** : Lacking energy, effort and enthusiasm.

**Lingua franca:** Any language that is widely used as a means of communication among speakers of other languages.

**Appendix II**

## Questionnaire for students

> **Dear students,**
>
> This questionnaire is designed to collect data about students' stage performance anxiety. It aims to understand the reasons behind this phenomenon. Read the questions **carefully** and put a **tick** (√) in the appropriate box. **Please give your answers sincerely because it will be very useful in our research.**
>
> **Thank you for your cooperation**

### Section one: General information

1. Gender:      a. Male ☐      b. Female ☐

2. Do you feel motivated when learning English?    a. Yes ☐    b. No ☐

3. Do you like speaking English?    a. Yes ☐    b. No ☐

### Section two: Foreign language speaking anxiety

4. How often do you perform in front of your classmates?

a. Always ☐    b. Sometimes ☐    c. Rarely ☐    d. Never ☐

5. How do you feel when performing orally?    a. Confident ☐    b. Anxious ☐

6. If you feel anxious, what are the symptoms?

a. Trembling ☐    b. Palpitation ☐

c. Headache ☐    d. Stuttering ☐

e. Others

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7. What do you bother about while performing?

a. Fear of the audience ☐    b. Teacher feedback ☐

c. Fear of making mistakes ☐    d. Information gap ☐

e. Others

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8. What do you do to handle stress before being on the stage?

a. Breathing slowly and deeply ☐    b. Relax your muscles ☐

c. Think positively ☐    d. Forget the audience ☐

e. Others

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**Section three: Students' attitude towards stress**

9. Do you think stress can lead to success?    a. Yes ☐    b. No ☐

Why?

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10. Why should stress awareness be taught at the university?

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**Appendix III**

## Interview for teachers

## Section one: The importance of speaking skill

1. Are both productive and receptive skills necessary to perform on the stage?

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2. Do you think speaking skill in particular is the most important?

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3. To what extent does the degree of mastery of speaking skill affect the students' oral performance?

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## Section two: Anxiety in EFL classes

4. How do your students feel before performing?

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5. Do these features last till the end?

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6. How do you support students to overcome speaking anxiety?

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7. What are the strategies students should follow in order to be good stage performers?

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8. To what extent does stage anxiety affect the stream of evaluation?

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9. Do you think that stress can lead to success? Why?

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10. Should stress awareness be taught at the university?

a. Yes ☐              b. No ☐

Why?

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**ملخص**

في عملية تعلم أي لغة، يختبر طلاب اللغة الأجنبية القلق و هو شعور شائع بين الطلاب خاصة أثناء أدائهم على خشبة المسرح، حيث انـه يعيقهم عن تقديم عرض شفهي ناجح. تحاول الدراسة الحالية توضيح مـا يسبب القلق في أداء الطلاب و يكشف عن بعض الطرق المفيدة التي يمكن للمدرسين والطلاب استخدامها للتغلب على هذه الحالة. اعتمدت الباحثة طريقة وصفية لأنها تتضمن فهم السلوك البشري من وجهة نظر المخبرين. طبقت طريقة النوعية والكمية لتحليل البيانات. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، استخدمت استبيانا ومقابلة كأدوات لجمع البيانات. خصص الاستبيان لطلاب السنة الأولى ماستير في مركز جامعة بلحاج بوشعيب ، وتم إرسال المقابلة إلى خمسة أساتذة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية. أظهرت النتـائج أن قلق الطلاب نـاتج عن ارتكاب الأخطاء ونسيان المعلومات. أخيرا، حاولنا تقديم استراتيجيات أكثر تطورا ومفيدة لمساعدتهم بشكل أفضل على التغلب على قلقهم بشـأن الأداء على خشبة المسرح والتغلب عليه. أيضا، تشجيعهم على التعبير عن أنفسهم بسهولة والتفاعل مع جمهور أكثر يقظة.

**الكلمات الرئيسية: القلق، الأداء، العرض الشفوي.**

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**Résumé**

Dans le processus d'apprentissage de n'importe quelle langue, les apprenants de langue étrangère éprouvent l'inquiétude qui est un sentiment commun parmi les étudiants; en particulier lors de performances sur scène, car il entrave le déroulement d'une présentation orale réussie. La présente étude une tentative d'élucider ce qui provoque l'anxiété dans la performance chez les étudiants et révèle certains moyens utiles, que peuvent mettre en valeur les enseignants et les étudiants pour surmonter cet état. La chercheuse a adopté une méthode descriptive car, il s'agit de comprendre un comportement humain du point de vue des informateurs. Elle a appliqué une méthode à la fois qualitative et quantitative afin d'analyser les données. En outre, elle a utilisé un questionnaire et un interview comme outils de collecte de données. Le questionnaire a été consacré aux étudiants de Master en linguistique de première année du centre universitaire de Belhadj Bouchaib, et l'interview a été adressée à cinq enseignants du département d'anglais. Les résultats ont systématiquement démontrés que la préoccupation des étudiants était de commettre des erreurs et des lacunes d'informations. Finalement, nous avons essayé d'introduire des stratégies plus développées et utiles afin de mieux les aider à faire face et à surmonter leur anxiété liée à la performance sur scène. Aussi, les encourager à s'exprimer aisément et à interagir avec autant de facilité face à un public très attentif.

**Mots clés : anxiété, performance, présentation orale.**

**Summary**

In the process of learning any language, foreign language learners experience anxiety which is a common feeling among students; particularly while performing on the stage because it hinders the flow of a successful presentation. The present study attempts to investigate what causes students' stage performance anxiety and sheds light on some useful ways that both teachers and students can employ to overcome this state. The researcher has adopted a descriptive method because it is concerned with understanding a human behaviour from the informants' perspective. She has applied both qualitative and quantitative method so as to analyze the data. In addition, the researcher has used a questionnaire and an interview as instruments for collecting data. The questionnaire has been devoted to first year linguistics Master students of Belhadj Bouchaib university centre, and the interview has been addressed to five teachers from the department of English. The outcomes suggest that students' preoccupation is making mistakes and information gap. Therefore, we have attempted to provide useful strategies in order to help them overcome stage performance anxiety and encourage them to speak and interact at ease with the audience.

**Key words: anxiety, stage performance, successful presentation.**