

Reviewer 1 Report

Manuscript title: English Language Anxiety and Factors Influencing Speaking Performance in Relation to English Speaking Skills among Grade 11 Students in Davao City

Version: 1

Comments:

This manuscript addresses a familiar but still policy-relevant concern in senior high school English instruction: whether anxiety and classroom-related speaking conditions meaningfully relate to students' speaking competence. The paper is readable, the problem statement is anchored on established work on foreign language anxiety, and the study design aligns with the stated purpose of testing associations rather than causal effects. The abstract accurately mirrors the key results, including the central finding that neither anxiety nor the measured performance-related factors show a significant relationship with self-reported speaking skills.

What stands out empirically is the “high–high–high” descriptive profile across major constructs, followed by near-zero correlations. English language anxiety is high overall ($M = 3.43$), factors influencing speaking performance are high ($M = 3.82$), and speaking skills are also high ($M = 3.71$), yet the relationships are not significant (anxiety with speaking skills $r = -0.030$, $p = 0.614$; performance factors with speaking skills $r = -0.080$, $p = 0.182$). This pattern can be meaningful, but the manuscript should treat it as a measurement-and-variance problem as much as a substantive phenomenon. When most respondents cluster toward the upper range, correlations will naturally attenuate, and the paper already hints at restricted variance as a plausible explanation; this argument should be strengthened in the results/discussion by briefly noting distribution spread, possible ceiling effects, and whether the SD values and item-level dispersion suggest limited differentiation in the dependent variable.

A second issue is construct alignment. “English speaking skills” are measured through self-reported competence in pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and vocabulary, which is not equivalent to performance-based speaking proficiency. The discussion correctly acknowledges that self-perceived competence can diverge from objective performance, but the paper still uses language that can be read as “competence maintained despite anxiety” in a stronger sense than the instrument allows. The manuscript will be more defensible if it consistently labels the outcome as perceived speaking competence, then reserves stronger claims for future work that uses teacher ratings, rubric-scored oral tasks, or standardized oral proficiency measures. This is not a minor semantics issue; it changes the interpretation of the null findings and protects the paper from predictable reviewer criticism in language assessment.

The instrumentation section also needs more reporting detail for psychometric confidence. The manuscript states that instruments were validated and underwent reliability procedures, yet it does not provide enough specifics for replication or evaluation (for

example, item counts per subscale, alpha coefficients per subscale, sample items or source instruments, and the nature of the validation - expert review, factor structure checks, or pilot statistics). Because all measures are self-report collected at one time point, common method variance and social desirability are plausible threats; a short, explicit acknowledgment and a suggestion for procedural remedies (multi-source measurement, temporal separation, or inclusion of objective measures) would strengthen the limitations section and explain why the null correlations may not reflect the true relationship in classroom performance.

The discussion is generally grounded and cites relevant scholarship, but it would benefit from a more disciplined “interpretation ladder”: first, interpret the descriptive findings (anxiety concentrated in communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation), then interpret the null correlations through measurement and variance considerations, and only then propose substantive explanations such as coping strategies, supportive classroom routines, or peer norms. Right now, the manuscript contains many reasonable explanations, yet the reader is left uncertain which explanation is most consistent with the design and the operational definitions. Tightening that logic would make the paper feel more decisive and less speculative.

Overall recommendation: Major revision. The dataset is usable and the topic is relevant, but the manuscript needs clearer construct labeling, stronger psychometric reporting, and a more method-centered interpretation of the null correlations before it can be considered for publication.

Reviewer 2 Report

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Version: 1

Comments:

I read this as a paper with a potentially interesting message, but the manuscript needs to make that message sharper and more credible to a speaking-assessment audience. The paper argues that Grade 11 students can report high speaking skills even while anxiety remains high, and it frames anxiety as a parallel classroom experience rather than a direct determinant of competence. That is a plausible claim, and the introduction sets it up well by citing work that shows mixed anxiety–performance relationships across contexts. The problem is not the direction of the argument; it is that the study currently leans heavily on perception measures for both predictors and outcome, which makes the core claim easy to challenge unless the manuscript explicitly constrains what it means by “speaking skills.”

The strongest empirical point in the paper is actually the mismatch between strong perceived support and weak statistical linkage to the perceived outcome. Students rated “strategies to teach speaking skills” particularly high ($M = 4.17$), while “difficulties and needs” stayed moderate ($M = 3.37$), yet these performance-factor scores do not relate to the speaking-skill score in a meaningful way. If the authors want this to be a contribution rather than an awkward null result, they need to confront a basic interpretive issue: the “factors influencing speaking performance” scale appears to mix different levels of analysis, including instructional strategies, learner internal/external conditions, and perceived difficulties. Those are not all the same kind of variable, and combining them may wash out relationships that would emerge if the constructs were separated and modeled more cleanly. At minimum, the manuscript should justify why these components form one composite, and it should consider reporting correlations at the subscale level rather than only the overall composite.

A second concern is that the paper treats “speaking skills” as a stable competence measure, yet it is self-reported and may reflect confidence, classroom norms, and peer comparison more than actual oral performance. The manuscript already acknowledges this in the discussion, which is good, but it should make the consequence explicit: the non-significant relationship between anxiety and “speaking skills” may simply indicate that anxious students still believe they speak adequately, especially in settings where classroom speaking tasks are familiar and predictable. If the authors keep the current measures, the paper should shift toward an interpretation about perceived competence and perceived constraints, then propose objective performance assessment as the next step rather than as a generic limitation. That move would align conclusions with the design and reduce overreach.

I also suggest strengthening the pedagogy implications by tying them to the most pronounced anxiety components. Communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation are the highest anxiety dimensions, which points directly to interventions like low-stakes rehearsal routines, structured peer feedback norms, teacher response strategies that reduce public correction pressure, and task design that builds incremental exposure to audience demands. The paper gestures toward supportive climate and low-stakes practice, but it can be more concrete while staying within the study's scope. Readers in classroom speaking research want to see implications that match the mechanisms implied by the measured constructs, not only a general call to "address anxiety."

Finally, the manuscript will benefit from tighter methodological detail in the Methods section. "Validated self-report instruments" is not enough; the source of each instrument, the structure of the scales, and the reliability indices should be reported clearly so the reader can judge whether the measures are sensitive enough to detect relationships in a relatively homogeneous population. With these improvements, the paper can credibly present its main contribution as a context-specific finding about the coexistence of anxiety and perceived competence in senior high school speaking.

Overall recommendation: Minor revision. The manuscript is close, but it must re-scope claims to perceived competence, clarify and possibly disaggregate the "performance factors" construct, and improve instrument transparency to meet journal expectations.

Reviewer 1 Report

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Version: 2

Comments:

The manuscript has met the revision criteria and is now recommended for publication.

Reviewer 2 Report

Manuscript title: English Language Anxiety and Factors Influencing Speaking Performance in Relation to English Speaking Skills among Grade 11 Students in Davao City

Version: 2

Comments:

The authors have complied with the review comments, making the paper ready for publication.