



## Assessing Students' Speaking Anxiety: Basis for Enhancing Oral Communication Skills at an Omani HEI

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### Abstract

Foreign language learning encompasses affective factors of students' psychology, with anxiety being one of its most significant barriers. This study investigates the specific construct of speaking anxiety among students from the picked higher education institution to contribute to the enhancement of the Foreign Language English Learning Program. Employing a descriptive-factorial design, researchers utilized descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to analyze data from 212 college students. An 18-item questionnaire, assessing social, linguistic, and psychological factors on a Likert scale, measured the level of speaking anxiety. Results show the questionnaire's reliability and internal consistency, revealing three component factors (Fear of Negative Evaluation and Confidence, Linguistic Skill, and Social Factors) explaining 54.52% of the variability in the data. Although overall speaking anxiety levels were uncertain, students exhibited a positive attitude towards learning English and a willingness to participate in classes. Notably, male students displayed greater confidence, while female students had less fear of negative evaluation. Variations in the anxiety levels of students across different courses were also observed; English Literature students reported lower anxiety compared to students from Human Development and Family Studies. In conclusion, while students have a positive attitude towards learning English, gender differences in confidence and course-specific contexts influence speaking anxiety levels. These findings suggest that educators and administrators can enhance English language learning by tailoring support and teaching methodologies to address students' various needs.

**Keywords:** speaking anxiety, oral communication, communication skills, foreign language learning, EFL

## Introduction

Good speakers are not born, they are trained (Raja, 2017). To become one, you must equip yourself with indispensable qualities necessary for effecting change in society. One of the most observed affective domains that impede students' foreign language learning is anxiety. Horwitz et al. (1986) asserted that 'anxiety is the feeling of apprehension, tension, worry, and nervousness dealing with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system'. According to Bashosh, Nejad and Marzban (2013), students who manifest a low level of anxiety can actively share their ideas and perform better in the classroom. This only implies that students with a high level of anxiety exhibit a certain level of pressure which hinders their learning and acquisition of speaking skills in English as an ESL or EFL.

Assessing students' level of public speaking anxiety is highly recommended as it can guide the students to gauge the degree of their anxiety and to determine the major causes that influenced their anxiety (Sugiyati & Indriani, 2021). Additionally, it provides teachers with valuable data to devise effective strategies and programs to help students overcome public speaking anxiety (Sugiyati & Indriani, 2021). For example, Naser and Isa (2021) identified the level of public speaking anxiety and the correlation between English-speaking classroom performance and oral presentation class among UiTM Shah Alam undergraduates. The findings revealed that most of the respondents recorded a moderate level of anxiety. Meanwhile, empirical evidence showed that despite having good academic results, the majority of the participants experienced public speaking anxiety during public speaking presentations. Accordingly, the results of prior studies which were conducted in the same area of language skill were consistent. Therefore, it was recommended that speaking strategies to hurdle speaking anxiety should be developed and utilized.

At this chosen private college, the English language is used as a medium of instruction for all courses, including Journalism, English Literature, English Professional Writing, Public Relations and Communications, Broadcasting, Advertising and Human Development and Family Studies. Consequently, students are expected to exemplify a high level of proficiency in English. However, it has been observed that a number of students battle with anxiety when speaking. One of the major reasons for this is their hesitance to articulate their thoughts in front of audience and teachers due to the apprehension of making mistakes and negative evaluation. Therefore, it is crucial to assess their level of speaking anxiety to determine the factors causing their anxiety and to develop potential strategies to help them overcome it.

This study focused on speaking anxiety in Oman context. Given the importance of assessing this issue in enhancing English language competence, the existing journal of this chosen college institution published a research study related to English Language Teaching (ELT) (Shokri & Mousavi, 2024). However, there are no known studies that deal with the assessment of speaking anxiety of students. If remained unexamined, this problem will expand and create negative impacts on the part of students. This can be expressed in the form of habitual absenteeism, unresponsiveness during class recitation and group discussion. That said, speaking anxiety is a recurring problem for many students in the college. It may have detrimental effects on their overall performance in English speaking classes. Hence, this study will investigate the specific construct of speaking anxiety among students from the picked higher education institution to contribute to the enhancement of Foreign Language English Learning Program.

## Review of Related Literature

### The Nature of Speaking Anxiety

Levitt (1980) articulated in his book *The Psychology of Anxiety: Second Edition* that

"anxiety is timeless". He further pointed out that anxiety has a significant impact on human life and that almost every facet of human undertakings is perceived to be influenced by anxiety. Furthermore, he elaborated that anxiety does not only refer to our "official emotion", but it is in fact the main focal point of a "concerted effort" for the improvement of human life. To that end, a voluminous number of research studies and reports have been made to provide viable solutions for the purpose of improving quality of life.

Although the concept of anxiety is usually studied in the field of psychology, this current study focuses on specific constructs of anxiety particularly in speaking anxiety. People with anxiety experience destructive human feelings such as apprehension, frustration, tension, worry and nervousness (Alnahidh and Altalhab (2020). Anxiety is a phenomenon that comprises "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous human system" (Horwitz et al. 1986, as cited in Alnahidh and Altalhab (2020). Leary (1983, p. 15, as cited in Crozier and Alden, 2005) defined anxiety as: "a cognitive-affective syndrome that is characterized by physiological arousal (indicative of sympathetic nervous system arousal) and apprehension or dread regarding an impending, potentially negative outcome that the person believes he or she is unable to avert".

Khan (2015) defined speaking anxiety as the apprehension manifested in individuals when asked to articulate their thoughts in either their first language (L1) or second language (L2). Friedman, 1980 (as cited in Khan, 2015 and Taylor, 198) believes that speaking anxiety may be limited to just a few situations such as public speaking or may occur in most everyday oral communication settings. Furthermore, he believes that speaking anxiety may be part of "general anxiety trait" that exists in many areas of human life. Khan (2015) exemplified that

speaking is perhaps the most "anxiety-provoking skill" among the four language skills.

Based on the given insights on speaking anxiety, there has been a multitude of studies conducted to explore the alternatives or strategies to alleviate speaking anxiety. For example, Erikson (2020) studied "teachers' awareness, experiences and specific strategies" employed when faced with "Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety" in English subjects in "Swedish Upper Secondary Schools". There were five teachers interviewed in this study which aimed to find out the factors that contribute to "Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety" and the manifestations students experience when dealing with it. Also, the teachers' interview was intended to reveal potential strategies they use to mitigate the level of "Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety". The results showed that students become anxious due to some factors such as "fear of being embarrassed in front of others, and the emotional aspect of self-confidence or self-esteem". It was also found out that the most blatant sign of "Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety" proved to be the strategy of avoidance, becoming silent and no show during speaking activities. To address this problem, they suggested the use of group work to make students feel more comfortable speaking English.

Similarly, Arola and Karkoukli (2020) explored the potential strategies to alleviate the speaking anxiety among second language learners in two different upper secondary schools in Halmstad, Sweden. The participants were asked to answer two online surveys. The first survey aimed to measure participants' anxiety level in speaking English in class. The results revealed that working in groups would mitigate speaking anxiety the most. The second survey aimed to measure the level of their achievement during the group discussion and if such a strategy would help them reduce their speaking anxiety. The findings strongly indicated that group discussions made

participants feel less anxious about how their peers would assess their speaking skills. Surprisingly, the findings showed that even if the participants believed they had good working knowledge in English, they were still anxious about being unable to perform communicative tasks well.

In addition, Suparlan. (2021) identified the factors that contribute to students' speaking anxiety at MTs. Darul Ishlah Ireng Lauq Lombok Barat. According to the results of the study, there were 10 (ten) factors that contribute to students' speaking anxiety e.g. "Being afraid of teacher's consequence, lack of self-confidence, fear of being less competent than other students, embarrassment, insufficient preparation, fear of making mistakes, limited vocabulary, habit in using the English language, and language tests."

Meanwhile, Maharyadin et al. (2022) examined the level of speaking anxiety among pre-service English teachers within the gender-based English Department of Mulawarman University. The participants of the study were 274 of pre-service English teachers, 84 males and 190 females. The results indicated that participants had moderate levels of speaking anxiety. Further, it was found out that male students had "lower language anxiety" than the females. This study was corroborated by Mohtasham and Farnia (2017) who examined the level of anxiety among Iranian EFL university students during communicative tasks and the possible causes of their anxiety. Further, they investigated whether or not gender differences would affect their "perceptions of foreign language speaking anxiety". The findings revealed that female students' level of anxiety was significantly higher than that of males in impromptu speaking tasks. Conversely, Amelia (2022) studied the role of gender difference in students' speaking anxiety at University of Islam Malang. The findings showed that male students had a higher level of foreign language anxiety in speaking than that of female students.

Moreover, she affirmed that male students were more passive than the females.

Based on the differing results of the studies (Mohtasham and Farnia, 2017; Maharyadin et al. 2022; Amelia, 2022), it can be concluded that such manifestation of speaking anxiety is due to students' learning strategies and cognitive ability in speaking class (Amelia, 2022).

### **Factors of Speaking Anxiety**

Ortega (2014) states that, 'foreign language speaking anxiety is made up of various symptoms, for example freezing up and being in a confused state despite preparation.' Speaking anxiety may include students' complex situations and confusion in learning and developing speaking skills.

One of the factors of students' speaking anxiety is being afraid of making mistakes (Wahyudi et al., 2015, as cited in Daud, Novitri & Audia, 2019). Students want to avoid making mistakes in learning a foreign language. This inhibits their ability to communicate and develop their speaking skills in English language learning. Meanwhile, a previous study by Hanna and Gibson (1992) indicated that, 'public speaking anxiety is exhibited in various ways such as blood pressure, trembled hands, weakness, anxiousness, forgetting the prepared material, and avoiding eye contact with the audience.'

There are several factors that can contribute to ESL or EFL speaking anxiety which may include the social, linguistic, psychological, and personal factors.

### **Social Factor of Speaking Anxiety**

First factor can be social-related aspect. Students are anxious when others are around them in ESL or EFL learning context in the classroom. A study by Ahmed, Pathan and Khan (2017) pointed out that speaking class brings students to a dilemmatic situation. This social aspect in the classroom can make students anxious in speaking ESL or EFL in context.

### **Linguistic Factor of Speaking Anxiety**

The second factor is 'low linguistic capabilities' of students. Ellis (2015) found out that, 'the learner with inadequate linguistic knowledge (grammar, pronunciation, and lexis) has the tendency to have high anxiety levels.' Low level or lack of sufficient linguistic skills can impact students' learning of ESL or EFL in the classroom.

A previous study corroborated that lack of linguistic skills can be a factor in ESL or EFL learning due to language learning complications. Tanveer (2007) found out by utilizing semi-structured interviews and found that, 'speaking anxiety among 20 EFL/ESL learners was caused by language learning complications.' However, other studies by Mahmoodzadeh (2012) and Azizifar, Faryadian and Gowhary (2014) found out that, 'language anxiety influenced EFL students' language achievement'. Language anxiety and students' achievement are correlated. But, it remains a puzzle whether speaking anxiety and linguistic competencies of students are correlated.

### **Psychological Factor of Speaking Anxiety**

Another factor is psychological. (Minghe & Yuan, 2013) indicates that, 'there is a close association between personality traits and Second Language (L2) learning.' For instance, extrovert students have inclinations in connecting with other students. Meanwhile, Gregersen & Horwitz (2002) found out that, 'perfectionists and nervous learners share features for higher performance standards and higher levels of worries over errors.'

More so, Horwitz et al., (1986) indicated that, 'the contributors to language anxiety communication apprehension are fear of communicating with people, fear of negative assessment, apprehension about others' assessment, and test anxiety (anxiety originating from fear of failure).'

On the other hand, a study by Liu (2006) found out that, 'students experience moderate

to high level of speaking anxiety especially when they responded to their teachers or were called on to speak English in class.' Liu and Jackson's study (2008) corroborated evidence that revealed, 'students are afraid of being evaluated, self-assessed and behaving negatively towards English classrooms, among 547 Chinese ESL university students.'

Similarly, Ohata (2005) scrutinized that, 'language anxiety as observed in 5 Japanese ESL college learners.' The results of the study revealed the 'negative assessment and absence of self-confidence instigated the participants' language anxiety.'

Moreover, Zhiping and Paramasivam's (2013) observations and interviews data revealed 'negative assessment and apprehensiveness towards communication instigated anxiety amongst 8 EFL international postgraduate students studying in a Malaysian university.' In addition, several external sources can also contribute to learners' language anxiety, such as 'lack of teacher support, insensitive personality, dearth of personal attention' (Day & Gu, 2013; Siyli & Kafes, 2015). Students speaking anxiety are affected by the lack of teachers' support system and lack of diverse teaching strategies in classroom management for ESL/EFL learners.

Students' anxiety increases when teaching styles and students' learning styles do not fit in the ESL or EFL learning process in the classroom. (Zia & Sulan, 2015). A previous study by Riasati (2011) revealed that, 'the grounds for language anxiety as observed by three Iranian EFL adult learners included absence of preparation and implementation of the types of activities.' Hence, it is important to consider that teaching preparation and execution or implementation of the ESL or EFL lessons must suit the learners' learning styles to mitigate increasing language anxiety in the classroom.

### Sources of Foreign Language Anxiety

Hortwiz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) pointed out three major factors that can trigger foreign language anxiety; these are “communication apprehension (CA), fear of negative evaluation (FNE), and test anxiety (TA)”. Communication apprehension is one source of anxiety that triggers a speaker’s fear of communication situations (DeVito, 1986; Horwitz et al., 1986). This is not only limited to speaking, but also in other skills such as listening to or learning the spoken messages (Horwitz et al., 1986). Fear of negative evaluation refers to students’ apprehension of others’ evaluation (Horwitz et al., 1986). According to Sugiyati and Indriani (2021), they get rid of evaluation for the reason that others may evaluate them negatively. Furthermore, this source of anxiety is not experienced during “test-taking situations”, but also during job interviews or engaging in EFL or ESL class (Sugiyati & Indriani, 2021). Lastly, test anxiety refers to performance anxiety rooted from a fear of failure. Similarly, Toubot et al. (2017) underscored that students perceive “evaluative circumstances”, particularly in test situations, as menacing to their personalities. They pointed out that students who experience test anxiety usually demand more beyond their abilities and consequently feel apprehensive about their performance.

### Communication Apprehension

Previous studies such as Tsui (1996), Leary (2013) and Daly (1997) perceived communication apprehension as introversion, diffidence and social phobia. In fact, anxiety occurs when an individual desires to impress his audience, but his self-confidence level is low, which impedes him from doing his best. Such a problem might stem from poor grammar, pronunciation and L2 lexicon skills. Notably, Horwitz (2001) pointed out that CA may influence learners ability to practice L1 and L2. Apparently, an individual who is chatty and spontaneous when using his L1 might display

an introverted attitude while utilizing L2. On the other hand, an individual who is not into speaking L1 might display more positive attitude when using L2. In the event of using a foreign language, the speaker might encounter a feeling of detachment from their words with the thought that somebody else is speaking.

### Test Anxiety

Test anxiety refers to the fear towards “academic evaluation”, and is described as an apprehension of failing in tests (Horwitz & Young, 1991: as cited in Aydin, 2009). In other words, students who manifest a certain level of test anxiety lose their focus and their ability to organize their thoughts during the test. As a result, they bear the consequence of getting terrible marks in examinations.

More so, Toubot et al. (2017) articulated that students tend to perceive “evaluative circumstances”, particularly in test situations, “an intimidation to their personalities”. They asserted that students who manifest test anxiety usually demand more beyond their capabilities and then feel anxious about their performance. They also stated that time limitation is a strong indicator of test anxiety, which affects quality of performance. For example, Ohata (2005, as cited in Toubot et al., 2017) conducted a study relevant to time constraints and the results of his study confirmed that learners occasionally are apprehensive about how their ideas could be organized in a short span of time.

### Fear of Negative Evaluation

Fear of negative evaluation (FNE) is related to test anxiety, but it differs in that FNE refers to overall evaluation by others in many circumstance, while test anxiety is clear-cut to testing situations. In particular, learners who exhibit a high level of apprehension regarding negative evaluation are not always diffident rather they often evasive of interaction by avoiding participation or providing only short answers when interacting with others (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993). As articulated by Gregersen and Horwitz (2002), FNE directly impacts

learners' attitude in discussion centered situations, restricting their participation in tasks that might expose them to evaluation by peers or teachers. A learner's control of oral interaction in L2 can shape others' impression, possibly stimulates a negative perspective of the learner, even if he excels in another language skills. Consequently, problems with speaking skills can profoundly influence a learner's overall character among peers.

### **English Language Learning in Oman**

The late Sultan Qaboos bin Said was truly an exceptional leader for his great contributions to the economic development and progress of Oman during his reign. It was through his initiative that this country paid special attention to the development of advanced formal education, as he believed that quality education can produce globally competitive citizens who will in turn hold the responsibility of putting the country in the frontline of progress (Alhadrami & Amzat, 2019).

Considering the global importance of English, Oman recognized it as the official foreign language and implemented it in education. Despite its rigorous implementation, it was found out that students' fluency and proficiency level remain very low (Al Marooqi, 2012; Al-Saadi, Towananik & Al-Harthy, 2013). For instance, Alhadrami and Amzat (2019) investigated the students' challenges and the level of their usage of the English language at Sultan Qaboos University. They found out that the lack of practice outside the classroom emerged to be the major reason behind students' low improvement of English. In addition, "lack of classroom expression and presentation" was found to have an impact on the overall weak performance of students. More so, students experience a high level of anxiety when asked to use the language in public speaking tasks. Ibrahim (2019) examined the effect of public speaking anxiety on the "employability of Omani graduates". The results revealed that

public speaking anxiety is pervasive among Higher Education learners in Oman, with a 55% prevalence rate. Accordingly, this result is significantly higher compared to the percentage reported worldwide. The study indicated main factors causing public speaking anxiety such as "lack of self-confidence, foreign language anxiety, being unprepared in, or fear of, talking in a foreign language, lack of experience, or forgetfulness/loss of memory".

In addition, in the study conducted by Al-Mahrooqi (2012; as cited in Al-Abri, 2021) it revealed that all participants agreed on the crucial role of English communication skills in Oman since English is one of the requirements for success in education and employment. To them, their ability to communicate in English corresponds to their linguistic competence, develops their confidence, earns them respect, and saves them from being perceived as rude or impolite whenever they fall back on their native language and resort to translating Arabic expressions which in their culture are appropriate but deemed unacceptable in English. However, Al-Mahrooqi (2013) claims that there are no courses devoted exclusively to teaching pragmatics and communication skills. Hence, most of the participants expressed that their communications skills were poor. Students who were candidates for graduation felt bad about this fact. Based on these alarming results, there is a dire need to implement more focused, effective and feasible programs that can develop students' skills in English and public speaking.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

This study utilized quantitative descriptive-factorial research. This study used a quantitative approach. It employed descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to analyze the data collected. A total of 212 Omani college students participated in the study. The target participants were from first year to fourth year college levels. It utilized the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

(FLCAS) – an 18-item Likert-type adapted from Horwitz et al (1986) to assess the speaking anxiety of Omani college students. It used SPSS version 26 for statistical data analysis. An online survey with informed consent was administered to participants. It employed a simple random sampling technique. FLCAS scale employed a five-point Likert scale, 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree and 5-strongly agree to measure students’ speaking anxiety. FLCAS is reflective of the anxieties related to FLA: communication apprehension (“a form of shyness characterized by anxiety about engaging in communication with other people,” Horwitz et al. 1986: 127), fear of negative evaluation (“apprehension about people’s evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively,” Horwitz et al. 1986: 128), and test anxiety (“a type of performance anxiety

stemming from a fear of failure,” Horwitz et al. 1986: 127).

**Procedure**

The online survey was administered to 212 participants during their English class by the end of the fall semester of 2023-2024 academic year. A google link form was shared with the participants. Prior to administering the online survey, the teachers elucidated the objective and the significance of the study to the students, and assured them that the responses would be treated with utmost confidentiality for research purposes only. FLCAS has undergone five (5) stages of development: 1) modification based on FLCAS model, 2) content validity from experts, 3) approval from research office to conduct and administer online survey questionnaire among 212 Omani college students, 4) use of SPSS statistical analysis on scale reliability test and, 5) validity of exploratory factorial analysis.

*Discussion*

**gender**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	196	92.5	92.5	92.5
	Male	16	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	212	100.0	100.0	

**age**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
age	212	17	43	18.43	2.120
Valid N (listwise)	212				

**course**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Advertising	6	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Broadcasting	42	19.8	19.8	22.6
	English Literature	46	21.7	21.7	44.3
	Journalism	7	3.3	3.3	47.6
	Public Relations	89	42.0	42.0	89.6
	The Human Development and18 Family Studies	18	8.5	8.5	98.1



Visual Design	Communication4	1.9	1.9	100.0
Total	212	100.0	100.0	

The research sample consisted of a total of 212 respondents, majority of which were female (92.5%) from different major courses. The average age of respondents was 18.43 with the

youngest being 17 years old and the oldest being 43 years old. The largest group came from Public Relations (42%), followed by English Literature (21.7%) and Broadcasting (19.8%)

### Descriptive

	Mean	Median	SD	Interpretation
I am never quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.	2.80	3	1.22	Not Sure
I am afraid of making mistakes in English classes.	3.22	3	1.29	Not Sure
I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in English classes.	3.04	3	1.43	Not Sure
I get frightened when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	3.00	3	1.35	Not Sure
I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English classes.	3.02	3	1.41	Not Sure
I get embarrassed to volunteer answers in English classes.	2.49	2	1.34	Disagree
I feel nervous while speaking English with native speakers.	3.15	3	1.37	Not Sure
I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	3.03	3	1.28	Not Sure
I don't feel confident when I speak English in classes.	2.71	3	1.31	Not Sure
I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	2.55	3	1.30	Not Sure
I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in English classes.	3.12	3	1.39	Not Sure
I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	2.83	3	1.34	Not Sure
I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	2.89	3	1.27	Not Sure
I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in English classes.	2.77	3	1.29	Not Sure
I get nervous when I don't understand every word my English teacher says.	2.92	3	1.26	Not Sure
I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.	2.90	3	1.29	Not Sure
I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	2.59	2	1.43	Disagree

I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	3.21	3	1.35	Not Sure
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Based on the results, it is uncertain whether the students exhibit any signs of speaking anxiety when learning English. However, they generally disagree with feeling embarrassed about volunteering answers in

English classes and are not afraid of being laughed at by their peers when they speak English, indicating a positive attitude towards learning the language.

#### By Gender

	Male			Female		
	Mean	Median	Interpretation	Mean	Median	Interpretation
I am never quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.	2.38	2	Disagree	2.83	3	Not Sure
I am afraid of making mistakes in English classes.	2.69	3	Not Sure	3.27	3	Not Sure
I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in English classes.	3.13	3	Not Sure	3.04	3	Not Sure
I get frightened when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	2.81	3	Not Sure	3.01	3	Not Sure
I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English classes.	3.31	3	Not Sure	2.99	3	Not Sure
I get embarrassed to volunteer answers in English classes.	2.25	2	Disagree	2.51	2	Disagree
I feel nervous while speaking English with native speakers.	2.88	3	Not Sure	3.17	3	Not Sure
I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	2.63	3	Not Sure	3.07	3	Not Sure
I don't feel confident when I speak English in classes.	2.44	2.5	Disagree	2.73	3	Not Sure
I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	2.81	3	Not Sure	2.53	2.5	Somewhat Disagree
I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in English classes.	2.63	3	Not Sure	3.16	3	Not Sure

I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	2.50	2	Disagree	2.86	3	Not Sure
I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	2.69	3	Not Sure	2.91	3	Not Sure
I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in English classes.	2.69	2.5	Somewhat Disagree	2.78	3	Not Sure
I get nervous when I don't understand every word my English teacher says.	3.00	3	Not Sure	2.91	3	Not Sure
I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.	3.19	3	Not Sure	2.87	3	Not Sure
I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	2.63	2.5	Somewhat Disagree	2.59	2	Disagree
I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	3.19	3	Not Sure	3.21	3	Not Sure

Comparing both genders, male students typically feel more confident when learning English than female students. This is evidenced by their responses to questions about their self-assurance while speaking English and their confidence in English classes. This result is consistent with Mohtasham and Farnia (2017) and Maharyadin's et al. (2022) study that male students had "lower language anxiety" than the females.

On the other hand, female students are generally not afraid of being laughed at by their peers when they speak English, nor are they concerned about their teacher correcting every mistake they make. This result was corroborated by Amelia's (2022) study that male students had a higher level of foreign language anxiety in speaking than that of female students. Based on the results, students from Public Relations are unsure about experiencing speaking anxiety when studying English.

### By Course

#### Public Relations

	Mean	Median	SD	Interpretation
I am never quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.	2.83	3	1.18	Not Sure
I am afraid of making mistakes in English classes.	3.20	3	1.34	Not Sure
I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in English classes.	3.27	3	1.36	Not Sure

I get frightened when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	3.27	3	1.35	Not Sure
I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English classes.	3.02	3	1.47	Not Sure
I get embarrassed to volunteer answers in English classes.	2.89	3	1.39	Not Sure
I feel nervous while speaking English with native speakers.	3.19	3	1.37	Not Sure
I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	3.03	3	1.34	Not Sure
I don't feel confident when I speak English in classes.	2.83	3	1.22	Not Sure
I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	2.62	3	1.19	Not Sure
I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in English classes.	3.17	3	1.39	Not Sure
I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	3.15	3	1.34	Not Sure
I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	3.08	3	1.24	Not Sure
I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in English classes.	2.96	3	1.29	Not Sure
I get nervous when I don't understand every word my English teacher says.	2.99	3	1.27	Not Sure
I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.	2.96	3	1.20	Not Sure
I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	2.92	3	1.39	Not Sure
I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	3.38	3	1.30	Not Sure

English Literature

	Mean	Median	SD	Interpretation
I am never quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.	2.50	2	1.24	Disagree
I am afraid of making mistakes in English classes.	3.11	3	1.39	Not Sure
I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in English classes.	2.93	3	1.47	Not Sure
I get frightened when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	2.59	2	1.27	Disagree
I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English classes.	2.72	2	1.52	Somewhat Disagree
I get embarrassed to volunteer answers in English classes.	2.07	1	1.31	Disagree
I feel nervous while speaking English with native speakers.	2.85	3	1.44	Not Sure
I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	2.87	3	1.24	Not Sure
I don't feel confident when I speak English in classes.	2.39	2	1.44	Disagree
I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	1.98	2	1.22	Disagree
I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in English classes.	2.87	3	1.56	Not Sure
I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	2.37	2	1.27	Disagree
I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	2.70	3	1.26	Not Sure
I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in English classes.	2.37	2	1.25	Disagree
I get nervous when I don't understand every word my English teacher says.	2.72	3	1.31	Not Sure
I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.	2.24	2	1.10	Disagree
I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	2.02	2	1.18	Disagree
I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	3.09	3	1.43	Not Sure

Students from the English Literature course exhibit low levels of speaking anxiety, as indicated by their confidence when speaking English and their disregard for social factors that might inhibit their English speaking. Given

the course's primary focus on English Literature studies, the substantial number of rules they need to learn to speak English does not seem to significantly bother them.

**Broadcasting**

	Mean	Median	SD	Interpretation
I am never quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.	3.02	3	1.24	Not Sure
I am afraid of making mistakes in English classes.	3.36	3	1.16	Not Sure
I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in English classes.	2.76	3	1.48	Not Sure
I get frightened when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	2.79	3	1.24	Not Sure
I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English classes.	3.17	3	1.34	Not Sure
I get embarrassed to volunteer answers in English classes.	2.29	2	1.22	Disagree
I feel nervous while speaking English with native speakers.	3.14	3	1.34	Not Sure
I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	3.14	3	1.24	Not Sure
I don't feel confident when I speak English in classes.	2.76	3	1.38	Not Sure
I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	2.83	3	1.34	Not Sure
I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in English classes.	3.00	3	1.38	Not Sure
I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	2.93	3	1.31	Not Sure
I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	2.60	3	1.23	Not Sure
I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in English classes.	2.74	3	1.29	Not Sure
I get nervous when I don't understand every word my English teacher says.	2.90	3	1.19	Not Sure
I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.	3.19	3	1.40	Not Sure
I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	2.74	2	1.50	Somewhat Disagree
I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	3.17	3	1.38	Not Sure

Students from Broadcasting course follow the general trend of students studying English where they generally disagree with feeling embarrassed about volunteering answers in English classes and are not afraid of

being laughed at by their peers when they speak English.

Human Development and Family Studies

	Mean	Median	SD	Interpretation
I am never quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.	2.50	2.5	1.38	Somewhat Disagree
I am afraid of making mistakes in English classes.	3.33	3	1.14	Not Sure
I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in English classes.	2.89	3	1.64	Not Sure
I get frightened when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	3.11	3.5	1.53	Not Sure
I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English classes.	3.33	3	1.14	Not Sure
I get embarrassed to volunteer answers in English classes.	2.17	2	1.25	Disagree
I feel nervous while speaking English with native speakers.	3.50	4	1.42	Agree
I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	3.33	3.5	1.46	Somewhat Agree
I don't feel confident when I speak English in classes.	2.39	2	1.24	Not Sure
I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	2.89	3	1.57	Not Sure
I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in English classes.	3.44	3.5	1.20	Somewhat Agree
I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	2.11	1.5	1.28	Disagree
I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	2.72	3	1.36	Not Sure
I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in English classes.	2.67	3	1.37	Not Sure
I get nervous when I don't understand every word my English teacher says.	3.06	3	1.43	Not Sure
I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.	3.61	4	1.38	Agree
I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	2.00	1	1.46	Disagree
I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	2.83	3	1.34	Not Sure

Students from the Human Development and Family Studies course exhibit speaking anxiety when learning English. They feel nervous when speaking with native English speakers, get disappointed when they don't

understand what the teacher is correcting, feel their heart beating when they are about to participate in class, and feel overwhelmed by the number of rules they have to learn to speak English.

*Internal Consistency and Reliability*

The questionnaire has 3 demographic variables (sex, age, and course) and 18 questions aiming to assess the speaking anxiety of English learners. Answers are evaluated by a Likert Scale from 1 to 5 (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree). The higher the rating, the more the respondents exhibit speaking anxiety.

The reliability and internal consistency of the questionnaire was evaluated using the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient. As seen on the table below, Cronbach Alpha Coefficient is 0.917, which shows that the questionnaire has an excellent level of internal consistency and reliability.

*Reliability Statistics*

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.917	.917	18

Furthermore, our questionnaire shows significant weak to moderate positive correlations between each assessed item. The lowest is between question 9 and 10 (0.166) while the highest is between question 4 and 15 (0.591).

*Correlation Matrix<sup>a</sup>*

	q1	q2	q3	q4	q5	q6	q7	q8	q9	q10	q11	q12	q13	q14	q15	q16	q17	q18
Correlationq1	1.000	.478	.391	.350	.469	.288	.436	.264	.286	.175	.414	.442	.285	.413	.275	.375	.443	.359
q2	.478	1.000	.468	.447	.455	.235	.427	.453	.292	.253	.464	.369	.300	.423	.339	.356	.389	.484
q3	.391	.468	1.000	.526	.464	.391	.431	.339	.431	.179	.521	.399	.381	.538	.371	.221	.379	.489
q4	.350	.447	.526	1.000	.466	.374	.521	.447	.402	.324	.427	.389	.352	.497	.591	.299	.453	.486
q5	.469	.455	.464	.466	1.000	.268	.454	.393	.437	.206	.469	.348	.264	.517	.416	.344	.468	.534
q6	.288	.235	.391	.374	.268	1.000	.435	.222	.369	.294	.348	.408	.341	.366	.290	.248	.454	.363
q7	.436	.427	.431	.521	.454	.435	1.000	.453	.420	.368	.417	.450	.280	.490	.418	.425	.422	.441
q8	.264	.453	.339	.447	.393	.222	.453	1.000	.266	.242	.342	.338	.230	.421	.462	.245	.409	.465
q9	.286	.292	.431	.402	.437	.369	.420	.266	1.000	.166	.312	.491	.338	.502	.333	.198	.431	.419
q10	.175	.253	.179	.324	.206	.294	.368	.242	.166	1.000	.205	.261	.172	.259	.247	.364	.322	.220
q11	.414	.464	.521	.427	.469	.348	.417	.342	.312	.205	1.000	.362	.329	.489	.353	.375	.386	.514
q12	.442	.369	.399	.389	.348	.408	.450	.338	.491	.261	.362	1.000	.350	.520	.301	.299	.534	.454
q13	.285	.300	.381	.352	.264	.341	.280	.230	.338	.172	.329	.350	1.000	.404	.345	.184	.392	.302
q14	.413	.423	.538	.497	.517	.366	.490	.421	.502	.259	.489	.520	.404	1.000	.442	.276	.479	.528
q15	.275	.339	.371	.591	.416	.290	.418	.462	.333	.247	.353	.301	.345	.442	1.000	.375	.501	.545
q16	.375	.356	.221	.299	.344	.248	.425	.245	.198	.364	.375	.299	.184	.276	.375	1.000	.382	.363
q17	.443	.389	.379	.453	.468	.454	.422	.409	.431	.322	.386	.534	.392	.479	.501	.382	1.000	.539
q18	.359	.484	.489	.486	.534	.363	.441	.465	.419	.220	.514	.454	.302	.528	.545	.363	.539	1.000
q1	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.006	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000



Sig. tailed)	(1-q2	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
q3	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.005	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000
q4	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
q5	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
q6	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
q7	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
q8	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
q9	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.008	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.002	.000	.000
q10	.006	.000	.005	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.008	.001	.000	.006	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001
q11	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
q12	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
q13	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.006	.000	.000	.000	.000	.004	.000	.000	.000
q14	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
q15	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
q16	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.002	.000	.000	.000	.004	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
q17	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
q18	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

a. Determinant = .000

Additionally, deleting any question would not improve the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient significantly. Thus, we can retain our

18-item questionnaire as is for its reliability and internal consistency.

**Item-Total Statistics**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Total Correlation	Item-Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
q1	49.44	217.524	.560	.422	.914
q2	49.01	214.786	.605	.450	.913
q3	49.19	210.976	.633	.490	.912
q4	49.24	210.994	.675	.533	.911
q5	49.22	211.076	.638	.480	.912
q6	49.75	217.034	.517	.357	.915
q7	49.09	210.745	.667	.500	.911
q8	49.20	217.039	.544	.392	.914
q9	49.53	216.146	.555	.408	.914
q10	49.69	222.787	.381	.248	.918
q11	49.11	212.482	.615	.444	.912
q12	49.41	213.471	.613	.472	.912

q13	49.35	219.837	.474	.283	.916
q14	49.46	211.507	.696	.528	.910
q15	49.32	215.323	.603	.511	.913
q16	49.34	219.150	.480	.355	.916
q17	49.65	209.267	.676	.527	.911
q18	49.02	210.385	.691	.545	.910

*Validity*

**KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.934
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1574.167
	df	153
	Sig.	.000

Based on Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy coefficient value of 0.934, the degree of information among our variable overlap greatly which indicates a presence of a

strong partial correlation. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity also indicates that our correlation matrix (seen in table above) is indeed not an identity matrix ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Communalities**

	Initial	Extraction
q1	1.000	.389
q2	1.000	.560
q3	1.000	.587
q4	1.000	.532
q5	1.000	.567
q6	1.000	.597
q7	1.000	.556
q8	1.000	.471
q9	1.000	.565
q10	1.000	.673
q11	1.000	.498
q12	1.000	.558
q13	1.000	.431
q14	1.000	.607

q15	1.000	.470
q16	1.000	.594
q17	1.000	.566
q18	1.000	.592

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Total Variance Explained							
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings <sup>a</sup>
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	7.582	42.125	42.125	7.582	42.125	42.125	6.758
2	1.150	6.391	48.515	1.150	6.391	48.515	2.200
3	1.081	6.003	54.518	1.081	6.003	54.518	5.089
4	.977	5.427	59.945				
5	.789	4.384	64.330				
6	.759	4.214	68.543				
7	.708	3.932	72.475				
8	.638	3.543	76.019				
9	.605	3.361	79.380				
10	.554	3.077	82.457				
11	.512	2.843	85.300				
12	.499	2.772	88.072				
13	.403	2.240	90.311				
14	.392	2.176	92.487				
15	.371	2.062	94.548				
16	.357	1.985	96.534				
17	.334	1.853	98.387				
18	.290	1.613	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. When components are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

There are no communalities less than 0.3 which indicates that our variables will adequately load into our factors. Factor analysis using Principal Components result into 3 component factors explaining 54.52% of the total variance of the data. Based on the table below, component 1 explains 42.125% of the total

variance of the data / can explain most about the speaking anxiety of English learners.

An Oblimin oblique rotation of the factors results in the following table below which shows each variable's factor loading in each component.

#### Pattern Matrix<sup>a</sup>

	Component		
	1	2	3
q2	.804		
q5	.756		
q8	.718		
q18	.699		

q11	.668		
q15	.591		
q4	.568		
q3	.558		.341
q1	.525		
q14	.491		.418
q7	.420	.323	
q10		.781	
q16	.403	.599	
q6			.758
q9			.680
q12			.636
q13			.623
q17			.443

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 11 iterations.

The following variables have significant loadings for each of the components extracted in our principal components analysis. Higher

loadings indicate that the item has a stronger correlation or influence on the factor.

#### Factor 1

- q1 I am never quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.
- q2 I am afraid of making mistakes in English classes.
- q3 I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in English classes.
- q4 I get frightened when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.
- q5 I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English classes.
- q7 I feel nervous while speaking English with native speakers.
- q8 I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.
- q11 I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in English classes.
- q14 I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in English classes.
- q15 I get nervous when I don't understand every word my English teacher says.
- q16 I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.
- q18 I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.

#### Factor 2

- q7 I feel nervous while speaking English with native speakers.
- q10 I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.
- q16 I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.

#### Factor 3

- q3 I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in English classes.
- q6 I get embarrassed to volunteer answers in English classes.
- q9 I don't feel confident when I speak English in classes.
- q12 I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.

- 
- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| q13 | I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students. |
| q14 | I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in English classes.             |
| q17 | I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.    |
- 

Factor 1: This factor explains 42.125% of the variability in our data which would be a major component to analyze speaking anxiety of our English Learners. It showed seven items with moderate loadings (within 0.3 - 0.6) and five items with high loadings which are indicative of the student's fear of negative evaluation and confidence when speaking English (items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 14, 15, 16, and 18).

Factor 2: This factor explains 6.391% of the variability in our data. It includes two items with moderate loadings (within 0.3-0.6) and one item with a high loading. These items indicate that students feel nervous while speaking English with native speakers, are afraid that their English teacher will correct every mistake they make and feel overwhelmed by the number of rules they must learn to speak English. Students with lower linguistic skills may feel overwhelmed by the number of rules they still need to learn, compare their skill level to that of native speakers, and worry about making mistakes that lead to corrections from their teacher, thereby increasing their anxiety (items 7, 10 and 16).

Factor 3: This factor describes 6.003% of the variability in our data. It includes 2 items with moderate loadings (within 0.3-0.6) and four items with high loadings. These items indicate social factors contributing to speaking anxiety, such as being self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students, feeling that other students speak English better than they do, being embarrassed to volunteer answers in English classes, and lacking confidence when speaking in English classes.

### Questionnaire Reliability and Validity

- 1.) Using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient, we have found out that our 18-item questionnaire is reliable and internally consistent in measuring the speaking anxiety of English learners.
- 2.) From our 18-item questionnaire, we came up with 3 component factors that explain 54.52% of the total variability in the data. This means we are adequately able to assess the speaking anxiety of English learners through this measurement tool. The 3 component factors explain/assess the following factors in the student's speaking anxiety: Fear of Negative Evaluation and Confidence, Linguistic Skill, and Social Factor.

### Conclusion

Overall, it is uncertain whether the students from the picked higher education institution exhibit speaking anxiety when learning English. However, it is noteworthy that they exhibit a positive attitude towards learning the language. They are willing to participate in English classes without feeling embarrassed and are not afraid of potential laughter from peers. This suggests a supportive environment that fosters language learning and communication.

The researcher also observed that male students typically display greater confidence in learning English compared to female students. Conversely, female students express less fear of negative evaluation from both teachers and peers compared to their male counterparts.

Students from the English Literature Course show low levels of speaking anxiety when learning the English Language. This could be attributed to their immersion in English texts and literature, which likely enhances their confidence and familiarity with the language.

Conversely, it is concerning that students from the Human Development and family Studies course exhibit symptoms of speaking anxiety while learning English. This suggests that factors specific to this course may contribute to higher levels of anxiety when using English, which could include the nature of the subject matter or teaching methods.

In summary, while there is a positive overall attitude towards learning English among students, gender differences in confidence and specific course contexts may influence levels of speaking anxiety. Understanding these dynamics can help educators and administrators tailor support and teaching strategies to effectively address the needs of students across different courses and backgrounds.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are presented to enhance the oral communication skills of students:

1. Integrate multimedia in teaching EFL. As Dayag (2016) put forward, integrating multimedia into teaching EFL among Omani learners promotes interaction, and increases their intrinsic motivation and creativity.
2. Integrate courses devoted to teaching pragmatics and communication skills (Al-Mahrooqi (2012)).
3. Implement more focused, effective and feasible programs that can develop students' skills in English and public speaking.

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