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**THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' ANXIETY AND SPEAKING  
PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH CLASSES AT SMA  
NEGERI 1 KRADENAN**

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**ABSTRACT**

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*Anxiety significantly impacts students' language learning processes, particularly influencing their ability to perform effectively in speaking activities. This study aims to determine the correlation between students' anxiety and their speaking performance at SMA Negeri 1 Kradenan, involving a sample of 72 eleventh-grade students. A quantitative approach was employed, utilizing Pearson correlation analysis to assess the data. The Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale questionnaire, adapted from Horwitz et al. (1995), was used to measure anxiety levels, while speaking performance scores were collected from teachers as secondary data. The results showed a statistically significant negative correlation ( $r = -0.926$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). These findings indicate a strong negative correlation, suggesting that higher anxiety levels are associated with lower speaking performance. To address these challenges, educators must create a supportive learning environment that fosters student confidence. Based on the study's findings, it is recommended that educators implement effective strategies to reduce anxiety, such as relaxation techniques and small group speaking practices. These approaches can help improve students' confidence and enhance their speaking performance, leading to a more positive language learning experience. By addressing anxiety, educators can significantly enhance students' engagement and success in language learning.*

**Keywords:** *Correlation, Speaking, Anxiety, Speaking Performance*

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## INTRODUCTION

Resolutions in Indonesian education continue to develop rapidly. The government allows schools to design their curriculum (Sapitri, 2022). This curriculum is better known as the "Merdeka Curriculum". According to Mubarak et al. (2023), The government allows teachers to innovate and creatively design teaching methods. Therefore, students must be more active in the learning process, following the vision and mission of the curriculum being implemented. One of the subjects taught at school is English.

English has four language skills: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Speaking is an important skill to learn. This is supported by Arini and Wahyudin (2022), who stated that speaking is one of the skills that students must master in English. On the other hand, according to Samad and Kafryawan (2021), Speaking allows students to use their ideas to express the feelings that are on their minds. Therefore, speaking is the most complex and challenging skill to master.

Students often face challenges in mastering their English-speaking skills. Feelings of nervousness and embarrassment can trigger this because students must speak in front of their friends (Reza et al., 2023). In addition, several factors influence students' speaking

performance. According to Rajitha and Alamelu (2020), these factors include performance conditions, affective factors, topical factors, feedback during speaking performances, and listening ability. Anxiety is also a factor that influences students' speaking performance.

Anxiety seems to have a significant impact on students' language learning process. This understanding is supported by Pihkala (2020), who stated that anxiety is closely related to feelings of guilt and anger. In this case, speaking anxiety influences students when learning takes place. Speaking anxiety is an uncomfortable condition in individuals when imagining or speaking in front of many people (Ramli et al., 2024). Thus, it can be concluded that speaking anxiety is an uncomfortable feeling, such as embarrassment and fear of receiving negative judgment when speaking in front of many people.

Efforts to overcome anxiety when speaking in public are many ways that can be used to control fear and increase self-confidence. Physical signs, such as heart palpitations and excessive sweating, as well as psychological symptoms, such as difficulty speaking, can indicate anxiety about speaking (Horwitz et al., 1995). Recognizing these symptoms is crucial, allowing individuals to address their fears

proactively. Techniques like deep breathing, visualization, and practice can improve communication skills and overcome the fear of speaking. In the end, this will lead to more effective and confident public speaking.

A significant number of researchers in the literature have discussed this. First, as Anzanni and Dewi (2023) stated, the review shows that recent studies have shown a negative correlation. Furthermore, Kasim (2024), has also investigated this by demonstrating a correlation analysis of the two variables, which exhibit a negative correlation. In addition, Manda and Irawati (2021), indicated a significant correlation between two strongly negatively correlated variables. Negative correlation is a statistical term describing the correlation between two variables where one variable increases while the other decreases. In short, the three previous studies can conclude that speaking anxiety shows a negative correlation that can interfere with student performance.

SMA N 1 Kradenan, located in the Grobogan district, is an interesting educational institution to study. This school is a public high school that has many achievements for both teachers and students. Based on the observation, many students showed signs of anxiety during the English-speaking test. This raises questions

about the factors that cause this anxiety. Therefore, the researchers is interested in developing a study on student anxiety in learning English, entitled "The Correlation Between Students' Anxiety and Speaking Performance in English Classes at SMA Negeri 1 Kradenan".

A case study is provided regarding the correlation between students' anxiety and their speaking performance. In previous studies, different degrees of anxiety were observed (Kasim, 2024; Qadri et al., 2023; Manda & Irawati, 2021; Sari 2023; and Azanni & Dewi, 2023), and has shown through a series of recent studies that there is a negative correlation between students' anxiety and speaking performance. This has also been explored in prior research by Kasim (2024), which shows a negative correlation analysis of the correlation between students' anxiety and speaking performance. Quantitative research on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz et al. on eleventh-grade students showed that eleventh-grade students in a specific high school obtained better speaking performance scores when they showed lower anxiety levels.

This was successfully established, as described by Manda and Irawati (2021), The study shows a significant correlation between students' anxiety and their

speaking performance, indicating a strong negative correlation among eleventh-grade students. Quantitative research, which includes speaking tests and a questionnaire adapted from Woodrow (2015), demonstrates that speaking anxiety adversely affects students' speaking abilities in grade eleven. Several researchers have acknowledged this correlation, noting varying degrees of anxiety in their findings. For instance, research conducted by Qadri et al. (2023), recognized three degrees of anxiety: low, medium, and high in students during their third semester. The research findings suggest that two elements lead to student anxiety, specifically internal and external factors. This study employed descriptive qualitative methods and purposive sampling, utilizing observation and interviews as the primary research methods.

Furthermore Sari (2023), this was clearly shown by finding a negative correlation within the medium correlation criteria between the anxiety levels of tenth-grade students and their speaking performance, assessed through a quantitative questionnaire and performance scores. The findings suggest a negative correlation between students' anxiety levels and their speaking abilities. Moreover, in addition to Anzanni and Dewi (2023), the research emphasized a negative correlation

between students' speaking anxiety and their speaking performance in English learning in the X OTKP 1 and X OTKP 2 classes. The findings show that students' anxiety while speaking adversely affects their English-speaking performance. The research techniques comprised a quantitative survey and evaluation of speaking performance scores.

The final section shows the conclusion. Prior studies indicate that there is a negative correlation between student anxiety and speaking performance, with speaking anxiety significantly affecting students' speaking skills. In short, negative correlation is a statistical term that describes the correlation between two variables where one variable increases while the other decreases.

Based on the problems described, the researchers formulated a research question to determine the correlation between students' anxiety and speaking performance in English classes. This research is essential to conduct given that anxiety can affect students' academic performance, particularly in speaking skills, which are often a challenge for many students.

## RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the researchers employed quantitative techniques with a

correlational analysis approach to present figures and statistics demonstrating a correlation between the two variables. According to Creswell (2015), a quantitative research identifies a research issue based on trends in the area or the necessity to clarify the reasons behind an occurrence (p.13). In another explanation, quantitative research is a method to evaluate objective theories by examining the correlations between variables (Sugiyono, 2013). In short, quantitative research emphasizes discovering problems that arise from trends or the desire to know the causes of a phenomenon and testing theories of objective analysis through correlations between measurable variables.

This study has two variables: students' anxiety, represented by "X", and speaking performance, represented by "Y". Data were gathered thoroughly via questionnaires. This study explores the level and correlations contributing to student anxiety.

The participants were 72 eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Kradenan. This study used simple random sampling. The data were collected using a questionnaire. The Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale questionnaire, adapted from Horwitz et al. (1995), was used to measure anxiety levels, while speaking performance scores were

collected from teachers as secondary data. In addition, this study will provide the results of the statistical analysis processed with IBM SPSS 25, including the correlation coefficient, which shows the intensity and direction of the correlation between anxiety and speaking skills.

### Data Analysis

In this study, researchers utilized the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) from (Horwitz et al., 1995). FLCAS was measured using a digital-based questionnaire, Google Forms, which each student used on a smartphone.

**Table 1. The Questionnaire Scoring**

Scale	Affirmative Statement	Negative Statement
<b>Strongly Agree</b>	5	1
<b>Agree</b>	4	2
<b>Neutral</b>	3	3
<b>Disagree</b>	2	4
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	1	5

Based on the table above, each number represents a level of agreement or disagreement with a statement. A score of 1 indicates "Strongly Disagree," meaning the respondent has a negative view of the statement. A score of 2, meaning "Disagree," suggests that the respondent tends to disagree, although not as strongly as the previous statement. A score of 3, defined as "Neutral," indicates that the respondent has no clear opinion or feels unaffected by the statement. A score of 4,

meaning “Agree,” suggests that the respondent tends to agree with the statement, and a score of 5, meaning “Strongly Agree,” indicates that the respondent has a very positive view and supports the statement.

**Table 2. Anxiety Level Scale**

Score	Categories
33-82	Very low anxiety
83-89	Moderately low anxiety
90-98	Moderate anxiety
99-108	Moderately high anxiety
109-165	High anxiety

Students are divided into six groups and speak about a specific theme in front of the class. The six components assessed in the test are pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and performance. Brown’s theory (2004), is the basis for implementing the speaking evaluation.

Once the researchers gather the questionnaire data from the students, they will analyze it employing the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation coefficient to evaluate the strength of the correlation between students' anxiety and their speaking performance with IBM SPSS 25.

The statistical hypotheses are below:

$H_a$  : sig 2 tailed < 0.05

$H_0$  : sig 2 tailed > 0.05

- $H_a$  is accepted if sig 2 tailed < 0.05 or there is a significant correlation

between students’ anxiety and speaking performance.

- $H_0$  is accepted if sig 2 tailed > 0.05 or there is a significant correlation between students’ anxiety and speaking performance.

To clarify the index score of "r" correlation, the product moment typically employs degree guidelines as outlined below:

**Table 3. Product-Moment Correlation**

“r” values of product-moment correlation	Interpretation
0,00-0,20	No Correlation
0,21-0,40	Low Correlation
0,41-0,60	Medium Correlation
0,61-0,80	Strong Correlation
0,81-1,00	Very Strong Correlation

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Findings

#### a. Students’ Anxiety

The researchers collected data from 72 students who made up the research sample using a questionnaire measuring student anxiety. They employed a Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) questionnaire to assess the degree of speaking performance among the learners. The table below displays the results of the students’ FLCAS scores.

**Table 4. Recapitulation of FLCAS Result Score and Category**

N	Score	Freq uency	Perce ntage	Categories
1.	102-108	9	12.5%	Very low anxiety



2.	109-115	12	16.7%	Moderately low anxiety
3.	116-121	9	12.5%	Moderate anxiety
4.	122-125	7	9.7%	Moderately high anxiety
5.	126-134	35	48.6%	High anxiety
Total		72		

Based on the data presented suggests that a score ranging from 102 to 108 signifies a very low level of anxiety. In this research, 9 students were classified in this group, representing approximately 12.5% of all respondents. The students in this group felt fairly at ease and did not encounter considerable anxiety in specific situations. Additionally, at this level of low to moderate anxiety, with scores ranging from 109 to 115, there were 12 students, accounting for 16.7% of the total respondents. Individuals in the low to moderate anxiety range typically feel some level of tension, yet it does not considerably disrupt their learning or social engagements.

The moderate anxiety group then encompasses scores between 116 and 121, identifying 9 students or 12.5% within this category. These students might be feeling increased anxiety compared to before, yet it remains within acceptable levels. They might require additional assistance to handle feelings of anxiety in stressful situations. Next, medium-high anxiety in this group, seven students with scores

ranging from 122 to 125, were identified, accounting for approximately 9.7% of the overall total. Their anxiety levels indicate discomfort in certain situations, potentially impacting their concentration and performance in studies or academic tasks.

Ultimately, intense anxiety is last. The high anxiety group includes 35 students who achieved scores ranging from 126 to 134, representing 48.6% of all respondents. Individuals in this group may be facing significant anxiety, which could necessitate specialized care and intervention to assist them in managing these emotions and fostering a more supportive educational atmosphere.

## b. Students' Speaking Performance

Data on speaking performance was collected from the speaking examination. The information was obtained from students' speaking scores.

**Table 5. Category Frequency of Speaking Performance**

No	Score	Frequency	Percentage	Categories
1.	>83	12	16.66%	High
2.	77-82	19	26.38%	Medium
3.	<77	41	56.94%	Low
Total		72	100%	

Based on the table above, 12 students have a high category, 16.66%. At a moderate level, 19 students have a percentage of 26.38%, and at a low level,

41 students have a rate of 56.94%. When it comes to the category of students' speaking scores, most of the students' scores were below KKM (Minimum Competence Criteria).

### c. The Correlation Between Students' Anxiety and Speaking Performance

The initial research question in this study focuses on the correlation between students' anxiety and speaking performance. Before performing the correlation analysis test, the researchers conducted a preliminary test to verify that the data satisfied the fundamental assumptions required for appropriate hypothesis testing.

### Normality Test

This study aims to determine whether the data follows a normal distribution. It used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

Table 6. Normality Test		
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		72
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	2.29585648
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.096
	Positive	.096
	Negative	-.076
Test Statistic		.096
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.169 <sup>c</sup>
a. Test distribution is Normal.		
b. Calculated from data.		
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.		

The table of the One-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was obtained, probability A, symp Sig. (2-tailed). The percentage was compared to a significance level of 0.05 ( $\alpha=5\%$ ) to make a choice based on:

- The distribution data is normal if the significance (Sig.) or probability is greater than 0.05.
- The data distribution is abnormal if the significance (Sig.) or probability is less than 0.05.

From the normality test results above, the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.169, which is greater than 0.05. This shows that the residual data in this research is normally distributed, allowing it to be utilized in regression and correlation analysis.

### Linearity Test

Linearity testing seeks to determine if there is a linear correlation between the two variables when performing correlation statistical analysis. Researchers calculated the linear test using SPSS 25 at a significant level of  $> 0.05$ .

Table 7. Linearity Test	
ANOVA Table	
Source of Variation	Value
<b>Between Groups (Combined)</b>	
Sum of Squares	143.321
df	24
Mean Square	5.972
F	1.215



Sig.	.278
<b>Linearity</b>	
Sum of Squares	.000
df	1
Mean Square	.000
F	.000
Sig.	1.000
<b>Deviation from Linearity</b>	
Sum of Squares	143.321
df	23
Mean Square	6.231
F	1.268
Sig.	.240
<b>Within Groups</b>	
Sum of Squares	230.917
df	47
Mean Square	4.913
Total	
Sum of Squares	374.238
df	71

The linearity test of students' anxiety (X) and speaking performance (Y) for N=72 at the significance level  $> 0.05$  is 1.000. Given that the significance is greater than 0.05, these findings suggest that the linearity test of the anxiety ratings of eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Kradenan is linear. Table 4.8 displays the results of the calculation.

### Hypothesis Testing

Following the assessment of normality and linearity, the researchers examined the hypothesis through a straightforward correlation method: the Pearson Product-Moment technique. To demonstrate the correlation between students' anxiety and their speaking performance, researchers examined the data with SPSS 25, illustrated in the table below:

**Table 8. The Correlation Between Students' Anxiety and Speaking Performance**

		<b>Correlations</b>	
		Student s' Anxiety	Speaking Performan ce
Students' Anxiety	Pearson	1	-.926**
	Correlati on		
	Sig. (2- tailed)		.000
Speaking Performan ce	N	72	72
	Pearson	-.926**	1
	Correlati on		
		Sig. (2- tailed)	.000
		N	72

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Referring to the data from the table above, the researchers found that the total  $r_{xy}$  was -.926, while N. sig (2-tailed) = .000. Hypothesis testing:

- Ha is accepted if sig 2 tailed  $< 0.05$  or there is a significant correlation between students' anxiety and speaking performance.
- H0 is accepted if sig 2 tailed  $> 0.05$  or there is no significant correlation between students' anxiety and speaking performance.

Based on the result, it indicates that  $.000 < 0.05$ . it can be concluded that there is a significant correlation between students' anxiety and speaking performance. The correlation between students' anxiety and speaking performance is -0.926. This indicates a negative correlation, which means that a

decrease in one variable accompanies an increase in the other. In other words, when students experience heightened anxiety, their speaking performance often diminishes.

## Discussion

This study aims to identify the correlation between anxiety and speaking performance among eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Kradenan. The researchers used non-test methods such as questionnaires and documentation to collect data. The students completed a questionnaire to determine the correlation between anxiety and speaking performance. In addition, speaking test scores given by teachers were used as secondary data.

In discussing this research, the researchers intend to display the information collected from the analysis. The analysis conducted aims to answer the research problem. The analyst accepts the findings from the examination as described below:

The results of the questionnaire conducted in this study showed that 35 out of 72 students, or approximately 48.61%, experienced high levels of anxiety. This figure reflects almost half of the student population involved in the study, indicating that anxiety is a significant

problem among eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Kradenan. This anxiety can stem from a variety of factors, including academic pressure, fear of negative judgment from teachers and peers, and concerns about speaking in a foreign language. High anxiety can hinder students' ability to actively participate in speaking activities, which in turn can affect the development of their communication skills. On the other hand, the results of students' speaking performance show that only 56.94% of them scored above the KKM (Minimum Completeness Criteria) in the Indonesian education system. In this context, grades below the KKM indicate that most students do not meet the academic expectations set, which can be an indication that they have difficulty in expressing their ideas and opinions orally. KKM is a standard set by educational institutions to determine the minimum level of competence that students must achieve to be considered proficient in a particular subject or skill.

Next, the researchers analyzed to measure the correlation between students' anxiety levels and their speaking performance using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 statistical software. This analysis aimed to provide a deeper understanding of how anxiety can affect students' speaking

ability. The results of the analysis showed a correlation value of -0.926, which is a highly significant number. This value indicates a strong and negative correlation between anxiety and speaking performance. In a statistical context, correlation values range from -1 to 1, where a value of -1 indicates a perfect negative correlation, 0 means no correlation, and 1 indicates a perfect positive correlation. Thus, the value of -0.926 suggests that the higher the students' anxiety level, the lower their speaking performance. Based on the results of this analysis, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), which states that there is no correlation between anxiety and speaking performance, is rejected. In contrast, the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ), which states that there is a correlation between the two variables, is accepted. This confirms that there is an inverse correlation between students' anxiety levels and their speaking performance. In practice, this means that when students experience an increase in anxiety, they tend to show a decrease in their speaking ability.

In addition, the analysis conducted in this study also resulted in a significance value (N. sig 2-tailed) of 0.000. This value has a significant meaning in research because it shows that the results obtained are unlikely to occur by chance. In the

research world, the significance value determines whether the results found can be considered valid and reliable. Generally, the widely accepted level of significance is 0.05. This means that if the significance value is smaller than 0.05, then the researcher can confidently state that there is a significant relationship between the variables under study.

In the case of this study, the significance value obtained is well below the 0.05 threshold, which is 0.000. This indicates that the results of the analysis are not only significant, but also highly statistically significant. In other words, there is strong evidence to support the hypothesis that students' anxiety has a real and significant impact on their speaking performance. When the significance value is so low, it provides additional confidence that the relationship found between anxiety and speaking performance is not the result of chance or other unmeasured variables.

In addition, this study states that there is a negative correlation between students' anxiety and speaking performance. If students experience high anxiety, then their speaking performance will decrease. The similarity of these results is also obtained by Kasim (2024), who presented a negative correlation between students' anxiety and speaking

performance, i.e., better speaking performance scores when anxiety levels are lower. This is due to experiencing much pressure and a lack of self-confidence. These results are slightly different from the findings in this study. This study found a negative correlation between students' anxiety and speaking performance, with the cause of communication apprehension being found to be fear or negative evaluation and test anxiety.

The same is the case with Manda and Irawati (2021), those who have recognized a strong negative correlation

noted varying levels of anxiety in their findings. There are several causes of speaking anxiety in students, such as having low speaking performance, fear of getting negative feedback from either their teachers or friends, and having low motivation to learn. The findings are quite different, although with different levels of anxiety identified as causes, such as low speaking performance, fear of negative feedback from teachers or friends, as well as low motivation to learn, the findings in this study show that test anxiety specifically affects students' speaking performance.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

### Conclusion

Based on the data analysis and calculations regarding the findings, it was determined that the correlation value between students' anxiety and their speaking performance was -0.926. According to the standard Pearson Product-Moment Correlation r-value in Table 3.5, the results showed a statistically significant negative correlation ( $r = -0.926$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted due to the importance of the two variables. From these findings, it can be concluded that there is a negative correlation between anxiety and students' speaking performance.

### Implication

This study implies that, based on the data analysis, which indicated a significant negative correlation between students' anxiety and their speaking performance, the implications of these results are meaningful for educational practice. First, educators must understand that students' self-confidence significantly affects their speaking skills. Therefore, plans to improve students' confidence should be the primary focus of teaching. Second, noting that anxiety affects speaking fluency, teachers must build a positive learning atmosphere

where students feel comfortable practicing speaking without fear of judgment. Third, to address students' reduced participation in speaking activities due to anxiety, educators must use methods encouraging active engagement, such as group discussions and providing positive feedback.

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