

Speaking Beyond Fear: Experiences of Bachelor of Physical Education Students in Research Presentations

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Abstract: English-speaking anxiety can be a thing for Bachelor of Physical Education students when they have to give research presentations. This study looked at what Bachelor of Physical Education students felt when they faced English-speaking anxiety during research presentations. It also looked at the coping strategies these students used and the support mechanisms they found useful. A qualitative phenomenological research design was used. Data were collected from ten Bachelor of Physical Education students at Central Luzon State University who were chosen by sampling. The data were gathered through a questionnaire made by the researcher. Sent through Google Forms. Then the data were analyzed with Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework. The results showed that the students felt nervous, scared of making mistakes had trouble putting ideas into words stuttered, had blocks and feared forgetting key points. Four main coping strategies came out: (1) Preparation and Repeated Practice, which helped the students get more familiar with their talks; (2) Deep Breathing and Staying Calm which helped them deal with nervousness; (3) Understanding the Research Topic and Practicing English which helped them speak ideas and (4) Spiritual Coping through Prayer, which gave personal comfort when they were stressed. The students also said that support mechanisms such, as chances to practice and mock presentations, constructive feedback and teacher guidance, emotional support and good presentation rooms and equipment would help them. The findings show that proper preparation, practice, guidance, emotional help and good presentation tools can help Bachelor of Physical Education students manage English-speaking anxiety and feel more confident when they present their research.

Keywords: English-speaking anxiety, research presentations, Bachelor of Physical Education coping strategies, support mechanisms, phenomenology

1. Introduction

Public speaking is often considered a top fear among students. Speaking in front of others may make students experience social anxiety or what Bodie (2010) defined as public speaking anxiety, which comes from undergoing an oral presentation. This may affect student engagement and academic outcomes, especially among higher education students (Grieve et al., 2021). Presentations can be challenging for education students because lack of self-confidence, fear of rejection, and fear of criticism may cause anxiety (Ahmad et al., 2017). Santos et al. (2021) also found that fear of making mistakes, self-embarrassment, and lack of confidence contribute to students' anxiety when speaking English during classroom presentations. Research

presentations may intensify these concerns because students are required to explain technical information, defend their study, and answer complex questions.

Several difficulties may be experienced by students when presenting research, including lack of vocabulary, anxiety, poor understanding of research content, and low confidence in speaking English (Hadi et al., 2020). However, some students who use English as a second language may still communicate effectively, while others may find it more difficult (Belaman et al., 2022). Lack of linguistic ability may hold students back from developing their potential, especially because English is widely used as a medium in many subjects.

Previous studies have shown that speaking anxiety can influence students' learning and presentation performance. Safitri (2025) examined factors influencing students' speaking anxiety during classroom oral presentations, while Maquidato (2021) described anxiety through emotional tension, psychological effects, and difficulties in speaking English. Theriana (2023) reported that learners may use cognitive and relaxation strategies, including positive self-assurance, to manage speaking anxiety. Nouairia (2019) emphasized that more oral presentations provide opportunities for students to practice English speaking, while Nguyen (2019) found that repeated oral presentations can help students improve their speaking and presentation skills.

Although previous studies have examined speaking anxiety among EFL and ESL learners and general college students during classroom presentations, limited research has explored the experiences of Bachelor of Physical Education majors specifically during research presentations. There is also limited attention to the coping strategies they use and the support mechanisms they consider helpful. Therefore, the present study explores the lived experiences of BPEd students, their coping strategies, and the support mechanisms they recommend in dealing with English-speaking anxiety during research presentations. The study may help future student researchers, faculty members, and educators design appropriate guidance, instructional adjustments, and practice activities that can support students' communication, confidence, and presentation performance.

This study specifically sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do students describe their experiences with English-speaking anxiety during research presentations?
2. What coping strategies have they developed?
3. What support mechanisms do they recommend for future researchers?

2. Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of Bachelor of Physical Education (BPEd) students regarding English-speaking anxiety during research presentations. Phenomenology focused on understanding how individuals experienced and interpreted a particular phenomenon from their own perspectives (Zahavi, 2019). This approach enabled the researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of BPEd students' experiences of English-speaking anxiety during research presentations, identify their coping strategies, and determine the support mechanisms they recommended for future student researchers.

Participants

The participants consisted of ten (10) Bachelor of Physical Education (BPEd) students who were enrolled at Central Luzon State University. The sample was considered sufficient because phenomenological studies typically involved a small number of participants to obtain detailed descriptions of their lived experiences. The participants included students who were taking research-related subjects and had experienced using the English language when presenting their academic research requirements. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who could provide rich and relevant information about the phenomenon under study. To qualify, participants had to be currently enrolled in the BPEd program, had experienced presenting a research study in English, and were willing to participate in the study and share their personal experiences.

Data Collection

Data were collected through a researcher-made questionnaire administered using Google Forms. The questionnaire contained questions about the participants' feelings and experiences when speaking English during research presentations. It also included questions regarding the strategies they used to manage or cope

with their English-speaking anxiety and the types of support they considered helpful. The Google Forms questionnaire was distributed to the selected participants after obtaining their consent to participate. Participants were given sufficient time to complete the questionnaire and were encouraged to provide honest and detailed responses based on their personal experiences. The researchers reviewed the submitted responses to ensure that the gathered data were complete and relevant to the objectives of the study. Participant validation was also considered to enhance the credibility and accuracy of the gathered information.

Data Analysis

The study utilized Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase thematic analysis, which included (1) familiarization with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the final report. This method was used to analyze the data gathered through the Google Forms questionnaire and to identify, analyze, and interpret the participants' responses accordingly. The researchers reviewed the responses several times to identify meaningful patterns and recurring ideas. Significant statements and relevant responses were coded and grouped into categories. Similar responses were categorized according to common ideas and organized into themes. These themes represented the lived experiences, coping strategies, and recommended support mechanisms related to English-speaking anxiety among BPEd students during research presentations.

Ethical Considerations

The study followed ethical principles throughout the research process. Permission was obtained from the appropriate authorities before the data collection was conducted. Written informed consent was obtained from the participants. Before answering the Google Forms questionnaire, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw from the study or choose not to answer any question that caused discomfort without any consequences. To protect the participants' identities, pseudonyms or participant codes such as P1, P2, and P3 were used instead of their real names. The information collected through Google Forms was kept confidential and was accessed only by the researchers. The data were used solely for the purposes of the study. The researchers respected the participants' privacy, maintained the confidentiality of their information, treated them with dignity, and considered their well-being throughout the research process.

3. Results and Discussion

Experiences of English-Speaking Anxiety during Research Presentations

Theme 1: Nervousness and Fear during Presentation

The participants described that they experienced nervousness when presenting their research in English, especially when they were already in front of the panel, classmates, or other people. Some participants also experienced a feeling of pressure while speaking.

"Of course, you get nervous, like your mind suddenly goes blank when you're actually in front of them." P2

"I get really nervous during research presentations, especially when I'm in front of the panel." P2

"Nakakaramdam ng kaba kapag nag pre-present kana pero kapag naka nayari kana sa pag pre-present para Kang naalisan ng tinik sa lalamunan." P7

"I feel excited yet nervous about the result." P10

The responses show that nervousness is a common experience among the participants during research presentations. They felt anxious before and while presenting, but some also felt relieved after finishing their presentation. These findings are consistent with Docena et al. (2023), who found that speaking anxiety becomes especially visible in public and evaluative situations, including in-class presentations, and is associated with fear of making mistakes and negative evaluation.

Theme 2: Difficulty Expressing Ideas and Stuttering

The participants also experienced difficulties when expressing their ideas in English. Some mentioned that they experienced stuttering or difficulty expressing what they wanted to say during the presentation.

"Sometimes, my mind suddenly goes blank, and I have difficulty expressing what I want to say." P2

"One of my challenges is stuttering while speaking." P3

The responses indicate that English-speaking anxiety can affect the participants' ability to express their ideas clearly. The pressure of speaking in English may cause students to experience stuttering, mental blocks, or difficulty in expressing their thoughts. This supports Tapado (2025), who found that Filipino learners experience speaking anxiety through communication apprehension and difficulties related to speaking English in presentation contexts.

Theme 3: Fear of Forgetting and Making Mistakes

The participants also described their fear of forgetting what they prepared and making mistakes during the presentation. This was especially noticeable when they had to answer questions or explain their research in front of the panel.

"I experienced this when I was presenting our research in front of the panel. I was so nervous that I suddenly had a mental block and forgot what I was supposed to say, even though I had practiced beforehand." P2

"I am afraid to explain a certain part of my research that I did not study well." P10

The responses show that preparation does not always remove anxiety because participants may still forget information when they feel pressured. Fear of making mistakes and forgetting important points can affect their confidence during the presentation. This is related to Yen (2026), who found that fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, and fear of negative evaluation are important psychological pressures associated with speaking anxiety in evaluative speaking situations.

Coping Strategies Developed by the Participants

Theme 1: Preparation and Repeated Practice

The participants emphasized that preparation and repeated practice helped them manage their English-speaking anxiety. They reviewed their research materials, practiced their assigned parts, and prepared themselves before the presentation.

"Practicing our presentation repeatedly and reviewing our research materials have helped me the most. It helps me remember the important points and feel more prepared." P2

"Read, review and repeat." P7

"I usually close my eyes and quickly recall my research from the beginning, and if I forget something, I look at my research paper to find a word that becomes my clue." P10

"I always make sure to save copies of my research on my laptop, flash drive, and phone for emergency purposes." P10

The responses show that repeated practice helps participants become more familiar with their presentation and research topic. It also helps them remember important information and become more confident. This further extended this strategy by preparing memory cues and backup copies of the research paper, ensuring that forgotten information could quickly be recalled or retrieved during the presentation. This supports Arumsari and Molla (2023), who found that adequate preparation and supportive peer interaction are important strategies for reducing speaking anxiety.

Theme 2: Deep Breathing and Staying Calm

The participants also used deep breathing and staying calm as ways of managing their nervousness during presentations. These strategies helped them control their emotions before and while speaking.

"I usually take deep breaths and try to stay calm. I also review and practice my part beforehand so I can feel more prepared and confident." P2

"I take a deep breath and remind myself that I prepared for this. I tell myself, 'I can do this.'" P4

The responses indicate that simple relaxation techniques can help participants manage their nervousness. Deep breathing allows them to calm themselves before continuing with their presentation, while positive self-talk can help improve their confidence. This is consistent with Theriana (2023), who identified relaxation techniques as one of the coping strategies used by Filipino learners to manage speaking anxiety.

Theme 3: Understanding the Topic and Practicing English

The participants also developed coping strategies by understanding their research topic and practicing English through conversations with others. They believed that knowing their topic well helped them explain their ideas more easily.

"Reading research articles and having English conversations with friends have helped me." P3

"Communicating with my groupmates helps me understand the topic better." P7

"Practicing English in everyday conversations has been the most effective for me." P8

These responses show that understanding the research topic and regularly using English can help participants become more comfortable when speaking. Rather than depending only on memorization, understanding the topic allows students to explain their ideas more naturally. This supports Idrus (2023), who found that understanding the speaking topic well and using positive strategies can help EFL learners cope with speaking anxiety.

Theme 4: Spiritual Coping through Prayer

Beyond cognitive and behavioral strategies, one participant relied on prayer as a form of spiritual coping to manage anxiety before and during research presentations.

"I never forget to pray before and after my presentation." P10

"Prayer is the most effective strategy that I do." P10

This response suggests that spiritual practices, such as prayer, also serve as a personal coping mechanism for managing presentation anxiety. They prayer provided a sense of calmness and reassurance that was considered more effective than other strategies used. This finding suggests that coping strategies for English-speaking anxiety may extend beyond the cognitive and behavioral techniques described in existing literature to include spiritual or faith-based practices.

Support Mechanisms Recommended for Future Student Researchers

Theme 1: More Practice Opportunities and Mock Presentations

The participants recommended that future student researchers should be given more opportunities to practice before their actual research presentation. They suggested mock presentations and practice sessions to help students become more prepared.

"I suggest giving students more opportunities to practice their research presentations, such as mock presentations and practice sessions." P2

The response shows that additional practice opportunities can help students become more familiar with the presentation process. Mock presentations may also help them become more comfortable when speaking in front of others. This supports Solihati et al. (2026), who found that repeated speaking practice with peer support can reduce public speaking anxiety and improve speaking confidence.

Theme 2: Constructive Feedback and Teacher Guidance

The participants also emphasized the importance of constructive feedback and guidance from teachers. They believed that feedback can help them identify the areas they need to improve and become more prepared for their presentation.

"Teachers could also give constructive feedback and guidance to help students feel more prepared and less anxious." P2

The response shows that teacher guidance can help students improve their presentation skills and reduce uncertainty about their performance. Constructive feedback can also help students recognize their strengths and weaknesses. This supports Rachman et al. (2026), who found that supportive and constructive teacher feedback can reduce speaking anxiety and increase students' confidence.

Theme 3: Emotional Support and Encouragement

The participants emphasized that emotional support from teachers, classmates, friends, and family can help them feel more confident and less pressured during research presentations.

"Emotional support from teachers, classmates, friends, and family can help me feel more confident and less pressured. Their encouragement and reassurance help calm my nerves and make me feel that I am not alone when presenting." P2

"It give you motivation and more comfortable when it comes in reporting." P9

"It helps a lot because you can share your conflicts and struggles about your research. Moreover, you can also ask for advice and ideas that can help you with your research. Having a companion in your battle can greatly reduce the chance of defeat." P10

The responses show that encouragement and reassurance from people around the participants can help reduce nervousness. Emotional support gives students confidence and motivation while facing the challenges of research presentations. This supports Inyai and Chusanachoti (2025), who found that emotional and appraisal support from teachers can promote confidence and a more positive mindset in public speaking.

Theme 4: *Provision of Adequate Facilities and Equipment*

The participants also pointed out that the physical environment and equipment used during presentations affect their overall performance and confidence.

"I think it's the facilities and equipment for presentation, because during our time we only used projectors, but the room was too bright from sunlight, which made the presentation less visible." P10

This response highlights that logistical and environmental factors, such as inadequate lighting control and limited presentation equipment, can affect the clarity and quality of research presentations. This experience suggests that institutions should ensure that presentation venues are equipped with functional audio-visual tools and proper lighting control, such as curtains or blinds, to maximize the visibility of presentation materials and minimize additional stress caused by technical or environmental difficulties.

4. Conclusion

The results show that Bachelor of Physical Education students feel anxious when they speak in English during research presentations. They feel nervous, afraid of making mistakes. Have trouble saying what they want to say. They also worry about forgetting things. Even though they face these problems the students found ways to deal with their anxiety. They. Practiced a lot took deep breaths tried to stay calm learned their topic well practiced speaking English made notes to help them remember and brought extra copies of their work. They also prayed. Teachers, classmates, friends and family helped them. They gave advice did practice presentations and made sure the equipment worked well. All of these things helped students feel more confident. The study shows that being ready practicing often getting help getting support and having good resources are important for Bachelor of Physical Education students to manage their anxiety when they speak in English and to feel more confident when they present their research.

5. Recommendation

From the results teachers and research advisers should give students chances to practice do fake presentations get helpful advice and get clear instructions. This will help them get ready for presentations. Students should also learn more about their topic, practice speaking English and use ways to deal with stress like taking breaths talking to themselves in a positive way using notes and doing things that mean something to them like praying. Schools should make sure there are tools and equipment for presentations so technical problems do not make students more nervous. Teachers, classmates, friends and family should offer support and encouragement to students who are presenting. Future studies should look at more different Bachelor of Physical Education students and study ways to deal with anxiety including things, like prayer.

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