
COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF ADVERTISING STUDENTS IN OVERCOMING ENGLISH SPEAKING ANXIETY

Eka Desy Asgawanti^{1*}, Widi Sriyanto²

¹Publishing Study Program (Politeknik Negeri Media Kreatif, Indonesia)

²Graphic Engineering Study Program (Politeknik Negeri Media Kreatif, Indonesia)

E-mail: ekadesy@polimedia.ac.id ; widisriyanto@polimedia.ac.id

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-4613-8238>

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze communication strategies used by Advertising students to overcome English speaking anxiety in an academic context. The issue is important because vocational students in Advertising are expected to present creative ideas, explain campaign concepts, and use English technical terms in academic and professional communication. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach within an interpretive paradigm. Five students from the Advertising Study Program at Politeknik Negeri Media Kreatif PSDKU Makassar were selected purposively. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and documentation of academic speaking tasks. The data were analyzed using Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's model, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that students experienced anxiety in spontaneous speaking, pronunciation, grammar accuracy, direct correction, and peer evaluation. The anxiety was shaped by linguistic, psychological, and social factors. Students managed the anxiety through material preparation, independent practice, code-switching, positive self-talk, peer support, and communication style adjustment. The study contributes to understanding English speaking anxiety as an academic communication phenomenon, not merely a language learning problem.

Keyword: Communication anxiety; English speaking; communication strategies; code-switching; vocational students

INTRODUCTION

In vocational higher education, the ability to speak English is very important, especially in study programs related to communication, the creative industry, and professional needs. In the field of advertising, students are not only required to understand the basic concepts of marketing communication, but they are also required to generate innovative ideas, craft persuasive messages, explain campaign ideas, and create presentations in class and at the workplace. This need is becoming increasingly important because the advertising industry uses many technical English terms, such as branding, copywriting, creative brief, digital advertising, target audience, and media planning. Therefore, the ability to communicate in English is part of a broader communication skill set than just language proficiency. This ability helps students prepare to face the demands of academia and the workforce.

Not all students in the learning practice have the courage and confidence to speak in English.

There is a possibility that students feel nervous, afraid of mispronouncing, worried about making grammatical mistakes, embarrassed when corrected, and concerned about the judgement of their teachers and peers. This condition indicates that the problems of speaking English encompass psychological, social, and communicative issues in addition to linguistic problems. Students not only have to strive to speak English correctly, but they also have to ensure that the listeners understand what they are saying.

Anxiety when speaking in English is a phenomenon commonly experienced by students, according to several previous studies. According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), anxiety caused by the use of a foreign language in class includes fear of communication, fear of tests, and fear of negative evaluation. Ambawani, Putranti, and Saudah (2023) found that vocational students experience speaking anxiety due to a lack of vocabulary, lack of confidence, and fear of

making mistakes. Rizkiya and Pratolo (2023) found that the strategies used by students to reduce anxiety include preparation, positive thinking, relaxation, and seeking friends. Hadi and Yuliasari (2024) also found that practice, self-management, and supportive learning environments can help students reduce speaking anxiety. According to research conducted by Sholikhah and Isnaini (2024), code-switching can also help students remain fluent in their surroundings. Although this research is very beneficial, most studies place speaking anxiety as an issue in language learning. Vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, learning motivation, and academic ability are usually the focus of previous studies. There is a lack of research in this area because only a few studies have analysed English speaking anxiety as a phenomenon of academic communication, particularly among vocational advertising students. In the field of advertising, students are not only required to use English, but they must also be able to manage messages, convey innovative ideas, explain campaign concepts, build persuasive communication, and adjust their speaking style to different situations and audiences.

This new research combines perspectives from English and communication studies to analyse students' strategies in overcoming speaking anxiety. If previous research emphasised elements such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, motivation, and speaking ability, this study examines how students continue to strive to convey messages, adjust their communication styles, and maintain smooth academic interactions despite experiencing anxiety. The Communication Accommodation Theory is used in this study to understand students' anxiety in oral communication situations. The Communication Accommodation Theory is also used to analyse how students adjust their communication styles to convey messages effectively. Modifying code, slowing down speech tempo, using simple sentences, asking for help from friends, and speaking about oneself in a positive way are not merely seen as signs of language limitations but as ways to communicate in an academic context. Another novelty lies in the research context: vocational students of the Advertising Study Program at Politeknik Negeri Media Kreatif

PSDKU Makassar have a specific need to convey creative ideas, campaign concepts, and persuasive messages with the support of technical terms in English.

This research is very important because vocational students, especially those in the Advertising Study Program, need oral communication skills to complete their education and careers. In the field of advertising, students not only need to study theories of marketing communication, but they also must be able to present campaign concepts, speak persuasively, and use technical terms in various school and work tasks. Advertising often uses terms such as branding, copywriting, creative brief, campaign, digital advertising, and target audience in communication. Therefore, anxiety about speaking English becomes an important issue because it can hinder students from conveying their ideas effectively, clearly, and convincingly.

Furthermore, anxiety about speaking English can affect students' low participation in the learning process. Students who experience anxiety tend to avoid speaking opportunities, are less active in discussions, hesitate to answer questions, and do not perform optimally during presentations. This condition can hinder the creation of vocational learning that is communicative, collaborative, and practice-based. In the context of vocational education, speaking skills are not only understood as language proficiency but also as part of the work competencies required to face the creative industry. The urgency of this research is also related to the need for lecturers to design English language learning that is more supportive and aligned with the character of vocational students. By understanding the forms of anxiety, the underlying factors, and the communication strategies used by students, lecturers can develop a more adaptive learning model, such as gradual presentation exercises, pitching simulations, group work, peer feedback, and assessments that not only focus on grammatical accuracy but also on courage, message fluency, and communication effectiveness. Thus, this research is important to conduct as it can provide practical contributions to the development of more communicative, contextual, and relevant English language learning for

Advertising students in vocational education settings. The problem formulation in this research is: (1) what is the form of English speaking anxiety experienced by Advertising students in the academic environment; (2) what factors cause English speaking anxiety; and (3) what communication strategies do students use to overcome this anxiety. Based on this problem formulation, the objectives of this research are to describe the form of English speaking anxiety, analyse the factors causing the anxiety, and identify the communication strategies used by students of the Advertising Study Program at Politeknik Negeri Media Kreatif PSDKU Makassar to overcome English speaking anxiety in the academic environment.

METHOD

This research uses an interpretive paradigm and a descriptive qualitative approach to understand what the experience of students facing anxiety when speaking English in an academic context means. The aim of the descriptive qualitative approach is not to test the relationships between variables; rather, the goal of the research is to explain the types of anxiety, their causes, and the communication strategies used by students.

The research was conducted in the Advertising Study Program at the Politeknik Negeri Media Kreatif PSDKU Makassar during the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. The main data source is five students from the Advertising Study Program, selected using purposive sampling technique. The criteria for the informants include: active students, those who have participated in academic activities involving spoken English, such as presentations, class discussions, or oral assignments, having experienced anxiety when speaking English, and being willing to be informants. The identities of the informants are protected with the codes M1, M2, M3, M4, and M5.

Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. In-depth interviews used semi-structured guidelines to explore informants' experiences regarding the types of anxiety, its causes, and the communication strategies they employ. The interview questions focus on situations that cause anxiety, feelings when speaking in

English, the use of code-switching, peer support, and ways to adjust communication styles. In academic activities that use English, such as presentations, speaking exercises, and class discussions, observations are conducted. Volume of voice, eye contact, speech pauses, use of notes, word choice, code-switching, body language, and responses when experiencing difficulty speaking are all elements that are observed. The data is supplemented with presentation materials, task notes, and relevant academic documents.

Research tools include documentation formats, field notes, observation sheets, and interview guidelines. To record interviews with the informant's consent, a voice recorder or mobile phone is used, Microsoft Word or Google Docs is used for transcription, and Microsoft Excel is used to compile the data categorisation matrix. Examples of interview questions include: (1) what situations make you most anxious when speaking in English; (2) the main factors causing your anxiety; (3) how you prepare yourself before a presentation; (4) whether you use code-switching when you forget vocabulary; and (5) how peers help you reduce anxiety.

The Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) model is used to conduct data analysis, which includes the processes of data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. At the condensation stage, observations, documentation, and interview data are sorted, simplified, and coded according to the research focus. Spontaneous anxiety, pronunciation errors, limited vocabulary, fear of negative evaluation, material preparation, self-practice, code-switching, positive self-talk, peer support, and adjusting communication style are all examples of initial codes. The codes were organised into a thematic matrix during the data presentation stage. At the conclusion stage, the results are interpreted by relating them to the Communication Accommodation Theory, Foreign Language Communication Anxiety, and Foreign Language Communication Anxiety.

To ensure the validity of the data, source triangulation, technique triangulation, and simple member checking were used. Source and technique triangulation were conducted by comparing information from M1 to M5. The

results of interviews, observations, and documentation were also compared. To ensure the accuracy of the meaning, member checking was conducted by showing the interview summary to the informants. By explaining the research objectives, obtaining the informants' consent, maintaining the confidentiality of the informants' identities, and using informant codes when presenting the data, the ethical aspects of the research are observed.

Table 1. Research Informant Profile

Code	Informant Status	English Language Academic Experience	Data source
M1	Active Advertising Student	Campaign concept presentation and class discussion	Interview, observation
M2	Active Advertising Student	Presentation of creative assignments and the use of technical terms	Interview, observation, documentation
M3	Active Advertising Student	Speaking practice and English oral tasks	Interview, documentation
M4	Active Advertising Student	Class discussion and responses to the professor's questions	Interview, observation
M5	Active Advertising Student	Group presentation and practice with friends	Interview, observation, documentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results show that the anxiety of speaking English among students of the Advertising Study Program at the State Polytechnic of Creative Media PSDKU

Makassar is a multidimensional phenomenon. Anxiety does not only arise because students have not fully mastered vocabulary, pronunciation, or sentence structure, but also due to the pressure to convey messages clearly in front of lecturers and peers. In the context of Advertising, this pressure is even stronger because students have to explain creative ideas, campaign concepts, and persuasive messages using technical English terms.

The research findings are grouped into three focuses according to the problem formulation, namely the forms of anxiety in speaking English, the factors causing the anxiety, and the communication strategies used by students. The relationship between the findings shows that linguistic, psychological, and social factors influence the emergence of anxiety, while communication strategies function as adaptive mechanisms to ensure the message can still be conveyed.

Table 2. Coding and Categorisation of Research Data

Category	Thematic Code	Data Indicator	Meaning of Findings
Forms of anxiety	BK1: spontaneous anxiety BK2: fear of mistakes; BK3: embarrassment of being corrected	long pauses, soft voice, hesitation in answering questions, avoiding eye contact	Students interpret the use of English as a risky communication situation.
Linguistic factors	FL1: vocabulary ; FL2: pronunciation; FL3: grammar	Difficulty choosing advertising terms, hesitant to pronounce words, afraid of grammatical errors	Language barriers interfere with the smooth delivery of messages
Psychological	FP1: lack of self-	Nervous before	Anxiety arises from

factors	confidence ; FP2: fear of failure; FP3: negative thoughts	presentation, worried about not being able to answer, afraid of being judged incompetent	the anticipation stage before communication takes place.
Social factors	FS1: peer evaluation; FS2: lecturer correction; FS3: social comparison	Fear of being laughed at, embarrassed when corrected, comparing oneself with friends who are more fluent	The class functions as a social space that influences the courage to speak.
Communication strategy	SK1: preparation ; SK2: practice; SK3: code-switching; SK4: self-talk; SK5: support; SK6: accommodation	Prepare points, practice, mix languages, think positively, ask friends for help, slow down your speech	Adaptive strategies are used to ensure communication remains effective.

Forms of Anxiety in Speaking English

When students are asked to speak spontaneously, nervousness is the most common form of anxiety. When they are given the opportunity to prepare the material, students are usually more ready, but they hesitate when asked to speak or answer questions directly. "I get most nervous when I have to answer directly in English because I'm afraid of making grammar and pronunciation mistakes," said one informant (M1). According to the quote, anxiety arises in communication situations where students cannot fully control it.

Fear of vocabulary and grammar mistakes indicates a high level of anxiety. To avoid mistakes, students often pause, speak softly, or choose very short sentences. According to informant M2, "During presentations in English, I often pause because I'm afraid of

mispronouncing words." There are times when I know the meaning, but I hesitate to say it. Pauses in speech, the use of repeated notes, and limited eye contact indicate that doubt.

These findings align with the concept of Communication Apprehension, which explains that communication anxiety can arise in both actual and anticipated communication situations. Students are not only worried when speaking, but they are also concerned that they might be wrong, corrected, or judged as less capable by the audience. Therefore, the anxiety of speaking English in this study can be understood as psychological pressure during the academic communication process as well as a language weakness.

Factors Causing Anxiety

Anxiety factors can be categorised into linguistic, psychological, and social factors. Linguistic factors include limited vocabulary, uncertainty in pronunciation, and doubt in sentence construction. Advertising factors become more complex because students often have to use technical terms such as branding, copywriting, creative brief, campaign, target audience, and media planning. "Sometimes I know the meaning I want to convey, but I'm confused about finding the English words, especially advertising terms," said M2. Students have ideas, but they struggle to turn them into verbal messages in English, as shown in the quote.

The emergence of negative thoughts before speaking, fear of failure, and lack of self-confidence are examples of psychological factors. "Before the presentation, I was already thinking about being afraid of making mistakes, so when I started speaking, I became even more nervous," said M3. As this statement shows, anxiety has already formed at the anticipation stage. Students not only face the task of speaking, but they also face self-judgment.

The presence of an audience in the classroom is related to social factors. Students are afraid of being laughed at, embarrassed when corrected, or compared to more fluent friends. "I'm embarrassed if I'm corrected in front of my friends, afraid of being considered not good at English," said M4. In this situation, the

classroom functions not only as a learning space but also as a social space where students build their academic identity. Language errors are seen not only as linguistic mistakes but also as threats to society.

These results are in line with Rizkiya and Pratolo (2023), who found that students' speaking anxiety is influenced by communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. The emergence of fear of making mistakes, fear of negative evaluation, and lack of confidence are commonalities between this study and previous research. The difference is that this study uses these factors in the context of academic communication among advertising students. As a result, the analysis is not only focused on language but also on the ability to convey creative and persuasive messages.

Student Communication Strategy

Material preparation is the first strategy. Before speaking, students must prepare key points, key vocabulary, an opening sentence, and the order of the presentation. M1 stated, "If I have prepared the points and keywords, I feel calmer during the presentation." This helps students become calmer because they have a clearer message structure.

Practice is the second approach. Students reread the material, repeat sentences multiple times, or practice their presentations before performing. "I usually practice alone first, reading the material several times so I don't get too nervous when it's my turn," M3 said. Self-practice improves speaking fluency and mental readiness. These results support Hadi and Yuliasari (2024), who emphasise that reducing speaking anxiety requires practice and self-management.

Code-switching is the third strategy. Students use Indonesian when they cannot find the equivalent word in English or when they need to explain a message. "If I forget the English word, I usually mix it with Indonesian so that the explanation can still be understood," said M5. Code-switching is often considered a sign of limited proficiency in language learning. However, from a communication perspective, this strategy shows that students are trying to keep the communication flowing smoothly so

that the message does not get interrupted.

The fourth strategy is to talk to yourself positively and do a little relaxation. Students try to convince themselves that mistakes are part of the learning process, regulate their breathing, and focus their attention on the message being conveyed. This strategy helps students reduce mental pressure and shift their focus from grammatical perfection to the courage to convey their message. According to M4, "I usually tell myself, it's okay if I make a few mistakes, what's important is to be brave enough to speak first."

Supporting classmates is the fifth strategy. When students can practice with friends, ask for vocabulary help, or receive verbal support before a presentation, they feel more confident. "I feel more confident if I have practiced with friends beforehand," said M5. Friends sometimes help correct wrong words; this creates a safer learning environment and reduces the perceived social risk for students.

The sixth strategy is to change the way you speak. To help the audience understand, students use body language, slow down their speaking pace, choose simple sentences, and repeat key words. "If I start to get nervous, I speak more slowly and use simple sentences so I don't confuse myself," M2 explained. The Communication Accommodation Theory emphasises that people adjust their communication behaviour when interacting. This theory can help explain this strategy. According to this research, accommodation is evident in the slowing of tempo, simplification of language, use of code-switching, and gestures to ensure that the message is well understood.

Critical Discussion and Scientific Contribution

The research results show that advertising students' anxiety about speaking English does not stand alone as a linguistic problem. Although vocabulary limitations and pronunciation make students anxious, their anxiety increases when they feel that their language mistakes could affect their social judgement. Therefore, speaking anxiety is related to the process of creating an academic self-image in front of an audience.

The results of this study, compared to

previous research, show that there is a similarity between types of anxiety and anxiety reduction methods. According to Ambawani et al. (2023), Rizkiya and Pratolo (2023), and Hadi and Yuliasari (2024), fear, language limitations, and lack of confidence are considered significant factors. Because students' strategies are used as a way to communicate academically, this research provides a different perspective. Students not only learn the language, but they also learn to manage messages, maintain interactions, adjust speaking styles, and ensure that they understand the audience.

In this study, there are three aspects that contribute scientifically. First, this research expands the study of English speaking anxiety and positions it as an academic communication phenomenon. Second, this research shows that code-switching, speaking positively about oneself, gaining support from peers, and adjusting speaking style are flexible communication strategies rather than merely compensating for language weaknesses. Third, this research provides a specific context.

To explain speaking anxiety, this research must combine communication theory and language learning to elucidate. This means that lecturers should design communicative, supportive, and contextual English language learning with the advertising world. Gradual presentation exercises, group work, peer feedback, technical term lists, pitching simulations, and correction strategies that boost confidence are some of the learning methods that can be used.

CONCLUSION

As a result of this research, students of the Advertising Study Program at Politeknik Negeri Media Kreatif PSDKU Makassar exhibit symptoms of anxiety when speaking English, including nervousness when speaking spontaneously, fear of making pronunciation and grammar mistakes, embarrassment when corrected, and anxiety about negative judgements from teachers and peers. Interrelated linguistic, psychological, and social factors influence this anxiety; these include limited vocabulary, lack of confidence, previous negative experiences, and communication

pressure in academic contexts such as presentations, discussions, and the delivery of creative ideas.

To overcome anxiety, students plan the material, practice independently, use codes, speak positively about themselves, do a little relaxation, support their peers, and adjust their communication style by slowing down their speech tempo, using simple sentences, repeating key words, and using body language. These strategies show that students are not only trying to overcome their language limitations but also adapting their communication methods so that messages can be conveyed effectively in an academic environment.

The findings of this research offer a new perspective on speaking anxiety in English as an academic communication phenomenon and not just a language learning issue. These findings expand the perspective on speaking anxiety by showing that strategies such as code-switching, adjusting speech tempo, gaining support from peers, and self-talk can be considered adaptive communication strategies. Therefore, this research contributes academically to the study of educational communication, vocational English learning, and the development of communication strategies for students in vocational high schools.

This study shows that the design of English language learning in vocational environments should be more communicative, supportive, and contextual. Lecturers should not only assess correct grammar and pronunciation, but they should also consider students' confidence, communication fluency, adaptability, and the relevance of English usage to the skills required by students. English language learning in the Advertising Study Program should be focused on work-related activities, such as campaign concept presentations, pitch simulations, creative idea discussions, and the use of advertising technical terms.

To strengthen qualitative findings with

quantitative data, subsequent research should involve more informants, compare students from various vocational programs, or use a mixed-methods approach. Further research could also develop an English learning model based on adaptive communication strategies. This will help vocational students become more prepared for professional communication and reduce speaking anxiety.

REFERENCES

- Adrefiza, A., & Fortunasari, F. (2023). Students' foreign language anxiety in classroom interactions: Why do they feel anxious and how do they cope with the anxiety? *Premise: Journal of English Education*. <https://ojs.fkip.ummetro.ac.id/index.php/english/article/view/7790>
- Ambawani, S., Putranti, B. E., & Saudah, S. (2023). An analysis of students' speaking anxiety. *Jurnal Pendidikan Mandala*, 8(4), 1472–1476. <https://doi.org/10.58258/jupe.v8i4.6381>
- Botes, E., Dewaele, J.-M., & Greiff, S. (2020). The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale and academic achievement: An overview of the prevailing literature and a meta-analysis. *Journal for the Psychology of Language Learning*, 2(1), 26–56.
<http://jpll.org/index.php/journal/article/view/botesetal>
- Daflizar, D. (2024). Out-of-class speaking anxiety among Indonesian EFL students and its relationship with self-perceived speaking skills, vocabulary proficiency, and gender. *JOLLT Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 12(1), 240–253. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v12i1.9342>
- Fauzi, I., & Asi, N. (2023). Examining speaking anxiety of Indonesian learners of English: A case of university students. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 7(2), 263–275. <https://ijeltal.org/index.php/ijeltal/article/view/1338>
- Giles, H. (2016). Communication accommodation theory. In K. B. Jensen, R. T. Craig, J. D. Pooley, & E. W. Rothenbuhler (Eds.), *The international encyclopedia of communication theory and philosophy*. Wiley. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118766804.wbiect056>
- Hadi, D., & Yuliasari, U. (2024). Students' strategies to decrease anxiety in speaking English class at the sixth semester of the Informatics Engineering Study Program. *NUSRA: Jurnal Penelitian dan Ilmu Pendidikan*, 5(3), 1163–1171. <https://doi.org/10.55681/nusra.v5i3.3136>
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125–132. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1986.tb05256.x>
- Kondo, D. S., & Ying-Ling, Y. (2004). Strategies for coping with language anxiety: The case of students of English in Japan. *ELT Journal*, 58(3), 258–265. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/58.3.258>
- McCroskey, J. C. (1977). Oral communication apprehension: A summary of recent theory and research. *Human Communication Research*, 4(1), 78–96. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1977.tb00599.x>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED565763>
- Rizkiya, A., & Pratolo, B. W. (2023). Students' strategies to overcome English speaking anxiety. *Premise: Journal of English Education and Applied Linguistics*, 12(2), 660–679. <https://doi.org/10.24127/pj.v12i2.7417>
- Sholikhah, M., & Isnaini, M. H. (2024). EFL learners' views on the use of code-switching in reducing speaking anxiety. *Voices of English Language Education Society*, 8(1), 115–127. <https://doi.org/10.29408/veles.v8i1.25442>
- Sulistyowati, A. I., & Mukti, T. W. P. (2023). The EFL students' anxiety in an online public speaking class at an Indonesian university. *Edukasi: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pengajaran*, 10(1), 62–77. <https://doi.org/10.19109/ejpp.v10i1.13505>
- Suryadi, S. B. (2022). Exploring speaking anxiety of non-English department students. *Loquen: English Studies Journal*, 15(2), 87–98. <https://doi.org/10.32678/loquen.v15i2.6768>

Syifa, F. A., & Khatimah, K. (2024). Examining speaking anxiety of international relations students in Indonesian university. *English Language Teaching Methodology*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.56983/eltm.v4i2.1494>