

Is Oral Communication Apprehension Reasonable?: A Study on Sociocultural Factors Among Indonesian EFL Learners

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ABSTRACT

Globally, effective oral communication skills in English as a lingua franca have become increasingly important. However, many EFL learners, including those in Indonesia, experience apprehension about oral communication in culturally diverse environments. This study explores the phenomenon of oral communication apprehension among Indonesian EFL learners, focusing on identifying the sociocultural factors that hinder them. Using a single-case design, classroom observations, learner interviews, and a teacher focus group were conducted. Purposive sampling selected three ninth-grade students from selected private junior high school in Jember, who demonstrated apprehension in oral communication, and two EFL teachers experienced in addressing students' communication apprehension. Data analysis involved Ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis (ECA) and thematic coding. The findings indicate that factors like interruption, overlap, self-correction, self-monitoring, and reliance on the first language (L1) during oral communication contribute to apprehension. Additionally, sociocultural factors such as learners' attitudes, parental language background, language interference, and educational challenges were identified as contributing to oral communication apprehension among EFL learners. This study sheds light on the root causes of learners' struggles, encouraging them to overcome these challenges. It also offers valuable insights for educators to implement strategies that can alleviate the sociocultural burden faced by many EFL learners, especially relevant in Indonesia's context within the expanded circle of English language learning, where cultural nuances significantly influence language acquisition experiences.

1. Introduction

In today's world, people with one language are the threatened species of the universe (Ammon, 2010; Gökcan & Aktan, 2019), nevertheless English plays a minor part in people's daily lives and communication. There are still limitations and few opportunities for English language learners to interact with and be exposed to the language outside of an academic or educational setting. In such situations, EFL learners confront pressure and are susceptible to the fear of communicating with the target language in the classroom (Oxford, 2002). Anxiety as a state of emotional apprehension depends on the temporal aspects and the nature of the anxiety. Based on MacIntyre (1999) anxiety can be classified into three main types: trait anxiety, which is a relatively stable personality trait; state anxiety, which is temporary and tends to fluctuate depending on the circumstances; and situation-specific anxiety, this category refers to

specific situations that tend to trigger anxiety in individuals. Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) is a psychological phenomenon experienced by individuals when using or learning a language that is not their native language. It can manifest in various contexts, such as classrooms, social interactions, or professional settings, and can significantly impede language acquisition. The negative emotional and cognitive effects of FLA have prompted extensive research in the field of applied linguistics and language education. Horwitz et al. (1986) identify three components of FLA each characterized by distinct symptoms and underlying causes, namely communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Understanding and addressing these classifications is crucial for educators, learners, and researchers striving to create supportive language learning environments and enhance overall language proficiency.

Oral communication holds paramount global significance in EFL contexts, serving as the linchpin for effective cross-cultural interaction and academic exchange. In the EFL classroom, the ability to articulate ideas, engage in meaningful conversations, and convey thoughts fluently in English is not merely an academic pursuit but a skill set crucial for navigating an interconnected world. However, the challenges faced by Indonesian learners in mastering their oral communication abilities in EFL classrooms are distinctive. Most Indonesian EFL classrooms adopt the IRF pattern developed by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) as one of the common strategies in the educational process. Teachers frequently dominate the interaction process because students exhibit negative emotional reactions to communication in EFL classrooms (Saswati, 2018; Sundari et al., 2017; Suryati, 2015). The traditional emphasis on the learning process in Indonesian educational settings often leaves students underprepared for the real-world demands of spoken English, hindering their confidence and proficiency and increasing their oral communication apprehension.

Communication Apprehension (CA) refers to an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons (McCroskey, 1977). Students with higher levels of communication apprehension tend to experience anxiety and stress, leading to a reluctance to participate in communicative situations and causing a lack of confidence (Al Mamun, 2021; Das, 2020). This can be attributed to several underlying factors, such as lack of target language practice in the classroom; lack of exposure outside the classroom; and psychological, linguistic, and sociocultural factors (Malik et al., 2020; Shan et al., 2020). In addition, Thaher (2005) classifies the factors that cause communication apprehension in the classroom into three categories: (1) psychological factors, (2) instructional factors, and (3) sociocultural factors. Therefore, teachers need to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that addresses the underlying factors contributing to communication.

The current study noticed the apprehension and anxiety of Indonesian EFL learners at a selected private junior high school while oral communication, which is a crucial component in language acquisition and learning. As there is a lack of studies on sociocultural factors that cause communication apprehension in EFL classrooms, particularly in Indonesia, this issue needs more attention.

Numerous studies have been conducted across countries such as Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Iran, China, Malaysia, and Indonesia on the issue of communication apprehension from various aspects, for instance, the level of oral communication apprehension (Aeni et al., 2017; Jalleh et al., 2021), factors that led to communication apprehension in EFL classrooms (Malik et al., 2021; Thaher, 2005), the major role of

communication apprehension and communication competence in EFL/ESL learning (Mahdi, 2015), the role of extracurricular activities on overcoming of communication apprehension (Alnaeem, 2021), and communication strategies used by students with communication apprehension (Bijani & Sedaghat, 2016). Although several studies have been conducted on various aspects of communication apprehension among EFL learners in different countries, there is an empirical gap in understanding the hindering sociocultural factors that cause oral communication apprehension in the Indonesian EFL classroom context. Based on this gap, the current study aims to examine the nature of oral communication apprehension occurrence among Indonesian EFL learners and explore the hindering sociocultural factors that led to oral communication apprehension. To address the research objectives, the following research questions were formulated: (1) How does oral communication apprehension occur among Indonesian EFL learners? and (2) What are the hindering sociocultural factors that led to oral communication apprehension? The identification of sociocultural factors that produce a rise in students' oral communication apprehension contributes to creating awareness among Indonesian EFL learners in particular and others in general to find out the causes and address these issues. It can also enlighten educators in Asian contexts in general and in Indonesia in particular on the required measures that should be adopted to reduce the sociocultural burden borne by many EFL learners who would benefit from improved English communication skills and a sense of comfort and confidence in their presence in EFL classrooms. The current study emphasizes the importance of addressing sociocultural aspects that trigger oral communication apprehension in the Indonesian EFL classroom context, not only to ease the burden of oral communication apprehension but also to foster better language learning outcomes.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Stephen Krashen (1982) – Affective Filter

According to Krashen (1982), the affective filter is a metaphorical "screen" that blocks or filters the input language learners receive to reach the language acquisition device (LAD) in the brain. The filter is influenced by affective variables such as motivation, self-confidence, anxiety, and emotional state. When the affective filter is low, learners are more open and receptive to input, allowing for effective language acquisition. On the other hand, when the affective filter is high, learners are more guarded, and the acquisition process is hindered. This state is often referred to as the "affective filter barrier." In such a state, learners may be less willing to participate, take risks, or make mistakes, leading to decreased language acquisition.

Furthermore, Krashen's affective filter hypothesis provides a valuable framework among Indonesian EFL learners for understanding the emotional dimensions of

language learning, particularly in the context of oral communication apprehension. The affective variables identified by Krashen can significantly influence learners' openness to language input. It seeks to uncover how specific sociocultural factors, particularly in Indonesia, could reinforce or mitigate the affective filter, thereby influencing oral communication apprehension.

2.2 Elaine Horwitz (1986) – Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA)

Horwitz's (1986) theoretical framework on Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) provides a comprehensive understanding of anxiety experienced by learners in the foreign language classroom. Horwitz's framework highlights three main components that contribute to FLCA: Communication Apprehension (CA), Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE), and Test Anxiety (TA). Horwitz developed a questionnaire called the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to measure FLCA. The FLCAS consists of 33 items that assess the three aspects above. These components are influenced by individual learner differences (Personality traits, past experiences, learning styles, and language proficiency levels), affective factors (Motivation, self-esteem, and attitudes toward language learning), and situational variables (Classroom environment, teaching methods, teacher-student interactions, and the cultural context). Considering the objective and emphasis of this study is communication apprehension, the first component of Horwitz's framework was discussed as compared to the other two components, focusing on sociocultural factors hindering Indonesian EFL learners, thus contributing to a better understanding of oral communication apprehension in a broader context of foreign language learning.

2.3 Lev Vygotsky (1978) – Sociocultural Communication Theory

Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory provides a framework that emphasizes the role of social interaction and cultural context in the development of cognitive processes and learning. According to Vygotsky (1978), the development of an individual's mind is inseparable from the social and cultural environment in which they grow and learn. Vygotsky believed that individuals acquire language and communication skills through interactions with more knowledgeable others, such as parents, caregivers, and peers. Vygotsky contended that children are born with certain basic biological constraints on their minds, but their development is greatly influenced by the cultural tools and practices that exist in their society. Each culture provides specific "tools of intellectual adaptation" that are appropriate and relevant to society's needs and values. These tools include both technical tools, such as books, media, or computers, and psychological tools, such as language, symbols, and signs. Vygotsky referred to these cultural tools as

"mediators" because they mediate the child's thinking and learning process. In the context of Indonesian EFL learners, an understanding of the sociocultural factors is essential to uncover the roots of oral communication apprehension. This study bridges Vygotsky's theoretical framework with the lived experiences of Indonesian EFL learners to investigate how sociocultural elements contribute to the phenomenon of oral communication apprehension.

2.4 Related Studies on Oral Communication Apprehension in EFL Context

Several previous studies have investigated oral communication apprehension among EFL learners in various contexts. Taha and Rezek (2018) conducted a study on the extent of oral communication apprehension among students at Al Quds Open University in Palestine. The results of the study indicated that the level of oral communication apprehension was moderate, based on the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension Measurement (PRCAM). Additionally, the study revealed no statistically significant difference in oral communication apprehension based on gender (male or female) among the participants ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). While other studies have found high levels of oral communication apprehension among EFL learners in Malaysia and Indonesia (Aeni et al., 2017; Jalleh et al., 2021). These studies also confirmed a link between low communication abilities and high apprehension. It is recommended that anxiety-reducing techniques and a positive learning environment be implemented to reduce apprehension and increase language learning efficiency.

Additionally, Malik et al. (2021) have indicated that Chinese EFL university learners face numerous obstacles when it comes to speaking and communicating in English. These obstacles can be categorized into psychological, linguistic, and socio-cultural factors. Chinese students often prefer to remain silent and passive listeners, experiencing communication apprehension and anxiety. The lack of comprehensible input, both in and out of the classroom, was identified as a major obstacle. Limited interaction with foreigners, insufficient use of English on social media, and a lack of exposure to English-language books, movies, and television contribute to their communication anxiety.

Additionally, the role of parents was found to influence students' language anxiety, either exacerbating or reducing their communication apprehension. Geographic background and cultural alienation were also associated with students' communication and speaking abilities. Some students expressed concerns about losing their cultural values if they learned or spoke English.

Furthermore, [Anandari \(2015\)](#) study on speech-production-related foreign-language anxiety in Indonesian English Language Education students identified fear, shyness, and discomfort as primary causes of anxiety. Self-reflective activities, particularly in a Public Speaking course, proved effective in reducing anxiety by enabling students to identify their strengths and weaknesses, engage in problem-solving, and enhance their confidence. The study concluded that foreign language teachers should recognize and address anxiety among English learners. It was also considered necessary for teachers to train the students in regular self-reflection as a way of monitoring learning and improving outcomes, allowing students to gain concrete evidence of their achievements.

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

The authors adopted a constructivism/interpretivism paradigm for the current study. Constructivism highlights the active role of individuals in constructing their own knowledge through personal experiences and interactions with their environment ([Grix, 2010](#); [Guba & Lincoln, 2005](#)). Because of the nature of this research, a qualitative research approach by [Creswell \(2014\)](#) was considered relevant in helping answer the research questions. This study employed a single-case study taking advantage of its methods of inquiry to capture the hindering sociocultural factors on oral communication apprehension ([Yin, 2018](#)). The considerations for adopting this research design are that case studies include some flexibility, analysis of phenomena units embedded in one context, data collection by the researcher, and inclusion of participants' views as important data ([Creswell, 2014](#)). This method allowed us to gain insight into the social factors that led to oral communication apprehension among Indonesian EFL learners.

3.2 Context and Participants

This study was conducted in an EFL classroom at one of the private junior high schools in Jember, Indonesia. The sampling technique followed in this study is purposive sampling based on the characteristics of the sample that help in achieving the objectives of the study. Both the EFL teachers and students were involved in this study. The sample of this study was three students in ninth-grade grade who faced hesitation and apprehension of oral communication in the target language significantly. This educational level represents a transitional and critical phase in language development and acquisition where language apprehension, particularly oral communication apprehension, can have a substantial impact on the overall language learning experience. In addition, there was cooperation with two EFL teachers based on their expertise and experience in facing cases of students' oral communication apprehension. Both of

teacher and students speak Bahasa as their first language and English as their foreign language.

Following the ethical guidelines set forth by [British Educational Research Association \(2018\)](#) the process of gathering data was carried out with the utmost care and consideration. School officials and students were informed first of the purpose and conditions of the study through a face-to-face meeting in school, and then given an informed consent form to sign. To ensure their anonymity and confidentiality, school officials and students were provided with details regarding their privacy protections and were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

3.3 Data Collection

The data sources collected for this study consisted of lesson observations; student interviews; and teacher focus group over a three-week period as it can provide an insightful perspective on the nature of classroom dynamics, understanding the experiences and perceptions of individual students, and integrating teachers' insights to gain a better understanding of the sociocultural factors of oral communication apprehension. The researcher provided an oral explanation of the study and requested each participant sign an informed consent form before conducting the observation, interview, and focus group. In addition, participants were assured that they had the right to refuse to answer any particular questions or to halt the interview at any point.

3.3.1 Classroom Observation

At first, the data was obtained through three classroom observations (40 to 50 minutes each) which involved grammar, reading, and vocabulary lessons. Teacher and student voices, gestures, and participant appearances were captured through video recordings and transcribed according to [Hutchby and Wooffitt \(2008\)](#) transcription. There was no researcher intervention during the whole observation, the researcher was sitting in the corner of the classroom. Observations can complement the inadequacy of interviews by identifying the discrepancy between what people say and what people do ([Hennink et al., 2020](#)).

3.3.2 Student Semi-structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three Indonesian EFL private junior high school learners aged between (14-15). Each interview spanned around an hour to complete; however, the actual duration varied depending on the interviewer and participants involved. The interviews were meticulously recorded using an MP3 recorder. The interviews adhered to a semi-structured form (each of the three students was interviewed individually), and the questions are included in Appendix I. Questions 1 to 4 correspond to students' previous experiences and personal emotions towards learning English, which are

related to students' perceptions, knowledge, and feelings. Questions 5 and 6 correspond to the factors causing their apprehension toward oral communication in the classroom. Question 7 attempted to determine the strategies used that helped reduce the apprehension of classroom communication. A free-flowing and exploratory approach towards the semi-structured interviews by Bogdan and Biklen (2007) was used to get a general understanding of students' oral communication apprehension and hindering sociocultural factors.

3.3.3 Teacher Focus Group

The researcher recorded the entire dynamic discussion during the focus group with two EFL teachers in one of the meeting rooms, which spanned about an hour and covered all the questions in Appendix II. Teachers' focus group led to a deeper understanding of students' oral communication apprehension and the underlying sociocultural factors contributing to it. To discuss all of the major points of the current issue, the focus group also followed a semi-structured form while permitting some freedom in the direction of the discussion. According to Gubrium et al. (2012) and Hennink (2014), focus group discussion and interviews are the most effective ways to get an understanding of the numerous complicated deeper concepts.

3.4 Data Analysis

3.4.1 Ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis (ECA)

Through data obtained from the classroom video recording, the researcher used ethnomethodological conversation analysis put forward by Seedhouse (2004) to closely examine the nature of communication between teacher and learners to identify patterns and trends in Indonesian EFL learners' communication apprehension. Ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis (ECA) is developed from traditional Conversation Analysis (CA) emphasizing both the structure and order of interactive talk as well as the social and contextual factors (Seedhouse, 2004). The analysis follows a 'bottom-up and data-driven' approach. The analysis involved transcribing and coding the observed conversations, paying attention to the participants' verbal and non-verbal cues, turn-taking, and the overall dynamics of the interactions.

3.4.2 Thematic Coding

To analyze the semi-structured interviews and focus group, thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) was applied to the verbal data from the audio recordings to identify themes and patterns in the data. This approach was selected because it is useful for summarizing key features and generating unanticipated insights. The first step of the procedure was to transcribe the recorded verbal data. Next, the transcripts were read several times to familiarize the

researcher with the data. Then recurring themes in the text were identified, this step was done by manually coding each segment of the transcript. Next, the themes were categorized and identified patterns in the data. This involved reducing the themes to broader categories, subthemes, and finer themes. Finally, we interpreted the findings and concluded the overarching themes and patterns in the data.

3.5 Trustworthiness

This study used one of the methods to promote credibility through methodological triangulation (Norman & James, 2020; Thurmond, 2001). There was more than one method for data collection and analysis (classroom observation, students' interviews, and focus groups) to enhance the validity and credibility of findings, mitigate the presence of any research biases, and give a more comprehensive understanding of a current research problem. By combining all three methods, the shortcomings of one method will be compensated with the strength of another.

4. Results

4.1 How does oral communication apprehension occur among Indonesian EFL learners?

The transcripts provide valuable insights into the dynamics of an EFL classroom in Indonesia, where English is taught as the target language and the participants' first language is Indonesian. In certain EFL classrooms, the learning process is often hindered by communication apprehension. This refers to the fear or anxiety experienced by individuals when engaging in oral communication in L2 by diminishing the confidence and participation of individuals. Consistent with the first research question, the subsequent paragraphs will delve deeper into the manifestation of communication apprehension in teacher and EFL learners' oral communications within Indonesian EFL classrooms.

4.1.1 Interruptions and Overlaps as a Follow-up

One noteworthy observation from the transcripts is the occurrence of interruptions and overlaps among Indonesian EFL learners, which contributes to classroom communication apprehension. This dynamic is captured in excerpt 1 (for the transcription conventions, see Appendix III), which exemplifies a situation where a teacher and students interrupt one another to express a contrasting viewpoint, resulting in a tangled web of voices vying for attention, a chaotic exchange of ideas, and a lack of coherent communication.

Excerpt 1_GL:IO

- 1 T: can anyone give me an example of the present perfect tense? ↓
- 2 SA: ((hesitant to answer))
- 3 T: come on don't be shy ↑ £just give it a try

- 4 SA: umm <I have been to Bali last year>
((confused))
- 5 SB: [no that's incorrect it should be I have
been to Bali]=
- 6 T: =good effort [¿can you identify student
A's mistake?]
- 7 SB: ((silence))
- 8 T: be attentive (0.5) in student B's sentence
using one of the past-time expressions
with no connection to the present ↓

Excerpt 1 shows the Indonesian EFL classroom discussing the lesson of the present perfect tense. The teacher initiates the lesson with a review and engages the students by asking questions and encouraging participation (line 3). It turns out that when student A finally gathers the courage to answer the question (line 4), before the question is fully addressed, student B interrupts with a different answer with Student A's response, creating a complex conversational pattern (line 5). It is evident that students actively engage in the discussions, often interjecting their thoughts or opinions while their peers are speaking. Then the teacher overlaps positively with Student B's interruption and provides the question to check Student B's understanding while maintaining a supportive and encouraging tone (line 6).

Although the interruptions and overlaps serve as corrections or clarifications, however, the frequency and timing of the interruptions and overlaps create apprehension among the students unintentionally. They may become hesitant to contribute or feel self-conscious about making mistakes. The interruptions and overlaps (line 5) and (line 6) caused confusion and muddled comprehension and students became hesitant to ask further questions.

However, we notice in (line 3) and (line 6) that the teacher maintains his smile and positive attitude toward the students' attempts, aiming to alleviate communication apprehension and create a safe learning environment that encourages mistakes and constructive feedback. Providing an environment that is safe and comfortable is fundamental in reducing students' anxiety, and this requires teachers and students to make an effort not to exert unnecessary pressure on each other, so that students feel encouraged to participate in oral activities without worries (Liu & Wang, 2023).

4.1.2 Self-correction and Self-monitoring

In Indonesian EFL reading classroom, it has been observed that students engage in self-correction and self-monitoring as they navigate through texts as shown in excerpt 2 (for the transcription conventions, see Appendix III). While these behaviors demonstrate active participation and an effort to comprehend the material, they can also lead to apprehension in communication. Students may become anxious about making mistakes or being perceived negatively by their peers or teachers.

The fear of being judged or misunderstood can hinder their willingness to engage in open communication, as they constantly scrutinize their own reading and communication abilities.

Excerpt 2_RL:SCM

- 1 T: please follow along as we read the story
together titled Mysterious Island (.) I'll
start and then we'll take turns ↓ ((The
teacher reads the paragraph aloud
emphasizing proper pronunciation and
intonation))
- 2 T: now student A it's your turn (.) pay
attention to your pronunciation and try to
read fluently ↓
- 3 SA: ((student A start reading)) <they looked
everywhere digging ho::use hous::e ehm
(0.3) digging hole::s and tur::ing (0.5)
°t::urning over rocks° ((instability of
tone))
- 4 SB: ((student B takes turns reading)) hh.
suddenly the <pa::rties ehm pi::rates
mm... pirates> ((slight confusion and
glanced around the room)) <spotted a
small island in the distance they were
excited ↑ and har::d hardl::y mm
hurr::iedly rowed their boats toward it ↓
- 5 T: excellent ((class continues reading))

Excerpt 2 portrays a typical scene the students are engaged in reading a short story aloud, each taking turns to read a paragraph. During the reading, students' fear of making mistakes and being judged by their peers contributed to occur self-correction and self-monitoring frequently when they encountered a challenging reading passage, causing disruptions in their oral fluency. This was reflected as student A began reading aloud and stumbled on certain words but quickly corrected himself, and it was noticed that his voice started descending from loud to low inclined to a whisper (line 3). Also, this is evident when Student B mispronounces certain words she isn't familiar with. Student B glanced around the classroom, hoping nobody noticed her struggle. Student B's apprehension of being judged led to reconsidering and correcting the mispronounced words (line 4).

However, Student A and Student B actively worked to correct their mistakes in real-time. This process involved rereading the word until he got it right, as shown when students paused, backtracked, and repeated the incorrect words until they corrected themselves (line 3) and (line 4). The students' apprehension in oral communication is evident throughout the excerpt. They are nervous about making mistakes but demonstrate a strong desire to improve through self-correction and self-monitoring. They involve recognizing errors or uncertainties and making appropriate corrections independently. Indonesian EFL Learners exhibit a distinct preference for self-correction as their primary choice.

Therefore, language teachers need to consider individual differences within the class and give corrective feedback, prompting the students to correct themselves (Yakışık, 2021). The apprehension in oral communication, such as speaking with a low voice, shyness, and fumbling over words, is evident in some students and this is a common experience in language learning. These behaviors may stem from a fear of making mistakes or a lack of confidence in their English abilities. Anandari (2015) identified three beneficial effects of using self-reflection to reduce foreign language anxiety: identifying strengths and weaknesses, problem-solving, and increasing self-confidence. This self-reflection provides an opportunity for EFL students, particularly in Indonesia, to realize the importance of self-correction regarding their oral communication performance. Through the practice of self-correction and self-monitoring, the students gradually build their skills and try to become more comfortable in expressing themselves orally.

4.1.3 Learner Reliance on L1

Excerpt 3 (for the transcription conventions, see Appendix III) captures an Indonesian classroom scene in a vocabulary lesson. The students exhibit a sense of apprehension and unease when it comes to using L2, the students appear to rely heavily on their L1. This excerpt depicts a classroom environment where the students' lack of confidence in speaking English becomes apparent and hinders their confidence in expressing themselves resulting in a reluctance to actively participate in class activities.

Excerpt 3_VL:RL1

- 1 T: who would like to come forward and share the ingredients of your favorite food? ↓
- 2 Ss: ((silence fills the room as the students avoid eye contact with the teacher))
- 3 T: hh it seems like no one wants to come forward ↓ (0.6) okay if that's the case (.) I will choose someone myself (0.3) student A please come to the front ↑
- 4 SA: ((timidly walks to the front of the class)) I will share the ingredients of umm nasi goreng (*fried rice*) first is rice egg[E] umm (0.3) bawang merah (*red onion*) bawang putih (*garlic*) then is salt[E] mm apa lagi ya? (*What else?*)
- 5 SB: ((whispering)) [°bumbu tambahan seperti saus tomat atau sambal°] (*Additional seasonings like tomato sauce or chili paste*)
- 6 SC: ((whispering)) [°Sayuran juga°] (*vegetables too*)
- 7 SA: ((nervously)) oh umm I also can add tomatoes and[E] umm sayuran (*vegetables*) umm that's all the ingredients that I can mention[E]
- 8 T: good job ↑

Analysing Excerpt 3, it is evident that the students in Indonesian EFL classroom have an apprehension about using English and are more comfortable with their L1. When the teacher asks a question about the ingredients of students' favorite food, the silence and lack of response from the students indicate their apprehension of oral communication and their avoidance of potential embarrassment or mistakes (line 2). This apprehension likely stems from a lack of confidence in their English language abilities, leading them to be hesitant to participate and answer in L2. Student A, who is chosen to share the ingredients, responds to the teacher's question using a mix of L2 and L1. The use of L2 is limited to frequently used vocabulary such as "rice," "ingredients," "egg", etc. However, the student quickly switches back to L1 when providing unfamiliar words of ingredients in her favorite food (line 4). This mixing of languages suggests that the student's proficiency in their L2 appears to be limited and still in the process of acquiring fluency in their L2. It is common for language learners to use their L1 as a fallback when encountering difficulties or expressing complex ideas that are beyond their current level of proficiency (Khairunnisa & Lukmana, 2020). The other students (Student B) and (Student C) offer assistance by suggesting additional ingredients in their L1 (line 5) and (line 6). This indicates that the apprehension or hesitation that occurs among the students when it comes to using English is not limited to Student A alone, but is present among other students as well. The fact that Student B and Student C offer assistance in their L1 suggests that they also feel more comfortable communicating in their L1 rather than L2. Overall, the student's reliance on their L1 can be attributed to an apprehension of making mistakes and a lack of confidence in their English-speaking abilities.

4.2 What are the hindering social factors that led to oral communication apprehension among EFL learners?

The results of the research also indicated that perceived oral communication apprehension among Indonesian EFL learners can be attributed to several hindering sociocultural factors. These factors encompassed various aspects that combine to create a complex environment that hampers EFL learners' ability to engage confidently in oral communication.

4.2.1 Attitudes

The current study revealed that attitudes played a significant role in contributing to Indonesian EFL learners' apprehension. These attitudes can be gained from a range of values, beliefs, and attitudes within the different communities in which individuals participate, including classrooms, families, and institutions, as well as the sociocultural context (Ortega, 2009).

In this study, attitudes were shaped by learners' self-identities, face-saving, and perceptions of the English

language that created a sense of fear and self-doubt among Indonesian EFL learners.

[EFLLI: 02.05]

"I'm afraid that by speaking too much English, I will lose touch with my Indonesian cultural identity. Our language is a reflection of our heritage, and if we focus too much on English, our traditional values and customs may become overshadowed by Western. It's not that we don't value English, but we fear losing our own language and traditions in the process of mastering it."

Several Indonesian learners feel torn between embracing English as a global language and preserving their cultural heritage. EFL Learners express concerns about prioritising L2 over their L1, as they perceive it as a threat to their cultural heritage. This attitude may lead to a reluctance to fully engage with the English language and hinder their overall language-learning process.

[EFLTFG: 09.07]

"In our culture, it's essential to maintain harmony, avoid causing embarrassment, and lose face to ourselves and others. When students communicate in English, we know that they fear making mistakes and being ridiculed by their peers or teachers. This fear of humiliation often holds them back from participating actively in English communication. We also become more careful in giving feedback or pointing out errors."

This indicated that the cultural norm of politeness and face-saving plays a significant role in hindering English language learning in the Indonesian context. The pressure to appear competent may hinder communication between teacher and learners.

[EFLLI: 01.58]

"I see English as a subject for the elite or those seeking economic opportunities abroad and I believe it's not relevant to my daily lives or maybe my future career prospects within Indonesia."

Negative perceptions surrounding English learning create a sense of disinterest and reluctance among Indonesian learners. The belief that English proficiency is a marker of privilege can lead to feelings of exclusion and discouragement, especially among individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. Such perceptions act as deterrents and may hinder learners' motivation to engage with the language. When the language is perceived as an exclusive domain or irrelevant to their local context, learners may not fully invest in the learning process, thereby impeding their language learning progress.

4.2.2 Parental Language Background

The lack of educational awareness among parents can hinder students' progress and create barriers that affect their motivation, confidence, and overall communication skills. In the context of Indonesian EFL learning, the students' motivational force is not the only factor; parents' attitudes towards foreign

languages also play a crucial role. The student's attitude towards learning a language is formed at home, and if the parents have a positive attitude, the child is more able to adopt a positive attitude as well (Getie, 2020).

[EFLTFG: 09.28]

"Many of my students come from families where English is not spoken at home, and the parents themselves have limited knowledge of the language. They don't understand the importance of English proficiency and often prioritize other subjects especially religious subjects in their children's education."

This study found when parents do not prioritize English education or fail to understand its relevance in today's interconnected world, learners may feel discouraged or unsupported in their language-learning journey.

[EFLLI: 02.29]

"My parents don't speak English, so they can't help me with my English homework or practice speaking with me. It feels like I'm on my own when it comes to learning English at home."

The results showed that in non-English speaking households, learners may lack the opportunity to practice and reinforce their language skills at home. It also the absence of English language support at home limits learners' access to resources and guidance, which can negatively impact their English language learning progress.

4.2.3 Educational System Challenges

This study highlighted some of the challenges within the educational system that hindered Indonesian EFL learners' oral communication skills. One of the challenges is a lack of active teaching methods and limited opportunities for interactions that contribute to learners' apprehension in engaging in oral communication.

[EFLTFG: 09.15]

"We acknowledge that our education system places a strong emphasis on teachers as the center of attention in the classroom. The teacher mostly lectures and expects learners to listen and take notes and there are rarely interactive activities or discussions. It feels like learners are passive recipients of knowledge rather than active participants in the learning process."

The focus group discussion with English teachers reveals that most of Indonesian EFL classroom dynamics are characterized by a lecture and teaching style, where teachers primarily lecture while students listen passively. Cultural restrictions often make students reluctant to participate or ask questions, so they pretend to understand the teacher's explanation to avoid disrespect (Saswati, 2018). This passive learning environment limits opportunities for active participation, interaction, and authentic communication in English.

4.2.4 Language Interference

This study indicated that language interference, specifically the influence of the learners' L1 on English pronunciation and grammar, played a role in oral communication apprehension. The learners' struggle with pronunciation and grammar rules stemming from differences between their L1 and L2 added to their fear of making mistakes and being misunderstood, leading to increased apprehension.

[EFLLI: 02.13]

"In Indonesian, we have different sentence structures and word order. When I try to speak in English, I often find myself using the same structure as in Indonesian, and it makes my English sound weird."

Teachers in the focus group also acknowledged the issue of language interference:

[EFLTFG: 09.23]

"Sometimes, learners just can't let go of their mother tongue. They try to fit English words into Indonesian sentence patterns, and it hinders their fluency and accuracy."

The teachers' observations align with the learners' experiences, emphasizing the impact of language interference on grammatical accuracy and fluency. The tendency to translate directly from Indonesian to English leads to errors and unnatural phrasing, further hindering effective communication in English and making it difficult for learners to produce natural-sounding English sentences. [Hawa et al. \(2021\)](#) mentioned that it is essential to encourage EFL learners to gradually rely more on the L2 so that the L1 does not replace the L2 rather than support it.

5. Discussion

Based on the discussion, several of concluding observations can be made to reveal valuable insights into the occurrence of apprehension of Indonesian EFL learners' oral communication, as well as the hindering social factors contributing to this apprehension. In the analysis of conversational dynamics, the study identified several key aspects. Firstly, interruptions and overlaps emerged as follow-ups between teacher-student and student-student. When learners are frequently interrupted or experience overlaps in conversations with their teachers or another student, it can disrupt the flow and coherence of their speech, potentially leading to the apprehension and reduced confidence. Disregarding the recognition of this overlap can lead to detrimental effects, fostering a negative environment and instilling an apprehension of oral communication among students. As [Sert's \(2017\)](#) study emphasized the importance of fostering an interactive space in the classroom where learners have the opportunity to contribute to the conversation and receive constructive feedback.

The study conducted by [Sacks et al. \(1974\)](#) focused on the phenomenon of turn-taking in

conversation. One aspect they examined was overlap, which refers to the situation when two or more speakers speak simultaneously, with their utterances overlapping in time. The researchers observed that overlap occurred frequently in natural conversation. Besides overlap can be used to display enthusiasm, solidarity, or agreement with the ongoing speaker's remarks, it can also be a way of taking the conversational floor or asserting dominance. According to the research conducted by [Yataganbaba & Yildirim \(2016\)](#), it has been observed that when teachers interrupt students and impose a limited wait-time for their responses, it tends to diminish the interactional space within the classroom. In other words, these practices restrict the opportunity for students to fully engage in meaningful dialogue and participate actively in the learning process. In contrast to the study conducted by [Avila-Cancino \(2019\)](#), believes that the overlap is an initiative and a crucial step that prompts learners to elaborate turns that have a freer range in their speech and make them active agents that support the learning process. According to [Sert \(2017\)](#), teachers play a pivotal role in managing learner-initiated contributions, transforming them into valuable learning opportunities and fostering student agency. This is also confirmed by [Cancino's \(2017\)](#) study, which indicates that learners progress through classroom interactions, so the teacher assumes a crucial position in employing interactive strategies to enhance language learning in EFL settings.

Secondly, one prominent factor identified in the study is the occurrence of self-correction and self-monitoring among Indonesian EFL learners. This observation aligns with the "monitor hypothesis" proposed by [Krashen \(1981\)](#), which posits that learners possess an internal mechanism, termed the "monitor," which is responsible for editing and correcting their speech. When learners are aware of their errors and actively engage in self-correction and self-monitoring, they gain a sense of control over their language production. While this monitoring process can be beneficial for accuracy and error correction, it can also have negative consequences when overutilized. In the context of the research, Indonesian EFL learners excessively focused on self-correction and self-monitoring during reading. It was noted that there was a battle between fluency and accuracy and students made a little sacrifice of some fluency to improve their accuracy which led to heightened apprehension of making mistakes or being judged negatively by others. This is associated with the affective filter hypothesis by [Krashen \(1982\)](#) which suggests that high levels of anxiety hinder language acquisition, in which the apprehension experienced by EFL learners may be attributed to the affective filter being activated due to the heightened self-awareness and pressure associated with self-correction and self-monitoring. Is not easy to fix the Over-monitor because it involves changing habits and behavior, but students can take one small step at a time to achieve big changes in the long run.

Conversely, Ahangari's (2014) study, highlights the importance of monitoring and self-correction in the learning process to improve oral production by enhancing the memory of errors and reducing their likelihood of recurrence, thus restoring self-confidence. In line with the study conducted by Hassan and Arslan (2018), it is evident that EFL learners exhibit a strong inclination toward immediate correction of their oral errors. The study indicates that these learners not only prefer immediate correction but also express a preference for being encouraged to engage in self-correction, fostering a reflective process upon their initial mistakes. Furthermore, students acknowledge the significance of feedback from their teachers, viewing it as a crucial element for maximizing the benefits derived from the language learning process. This emphasis on immediate correction, self-reflection, and teacher-provided feedback underscores the multifaceted nature of effective language instruction, highlighting the interconnected roles of learners and educators in creating a conducive environment for language acquisition.

Last but not least, the study highlighted the reliance of EFL learners on their first language (L1) during interaction. This reliance on L1 stems from a lack of confidence in English proficiency. The use of L1 as a crutch or fallback option in EFL classrooms leads to apprehension when learners struggle to find the right words or phrases in L2 which limits the learners' ability to fully engage in English. The input hypothesis by Krashen (1977) suggests that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input that is just slightly beyond their current proficiency level. That means that learners need lots of opportunities to interact and communicate in English to progress in their language skills. However, the reliance on L1 as a crutch hinders the natural process of acquiring English through meaningful interactions. In line with Resmini's (2019) findings, it is evident that EFL students exhibit a distinct tendency for instructors to use English predominantly during material explanations. This preference stems from the belief that an English-centered teaching approach contributes to a more comfortable learning environment. EFL learners recognize the pitfalls associated with overreliance on their L1, where they may become accustomed to relying on translations from teachers or peers. This reliance on L1 can hinder the development of oral communication skills in the EFL classroom. When EFL learners are used to turning to their L1 for clarification, they may experience apprehension when they have to engage in spontaneous oral communication in English. This apprehension is rooted in the fear of being unable to rely on translation. As emphasized by several studies overreliance on L1 can hinder language development and limit opportunities for meaningful L2 practice (Alzamil, 2019; Liando et al., 2023).

Furthermore, this heavy reliance on L1 during interactions can also create a psychological barrier, as learners may develop a fear of making mistakes in English. This fear of being judged or misunderstood could lead to decreased confidence and reluctance to participate actively in English-speaking activities. As a result, learners may miss valuable opportunities to practice their English, further impeding their language development. This finding is in line with the Sparks and Alamer (2022) study, which suggests that permanent dependence on L1 affects and causes anxiety in L2 in the long run. This suggests that the impact of sustained reliance on the L1 extends beyond the initial stages of language learning, influencing the learner's emotional state in the long run. Consequently, it is crucial to minimize over-reliance on L1 throughout the language learning process, highlighting the importance of promoting pedagogical methods that encourage equitable and effective integration of both L1 and L2.

Beyond the nature of the occurrence of EFL learners' oral communication apprehension, the study identified some hindered factors that contribute to this apprehension such as learners' attitudes (e.g., self-identities, saving face, and negative perceptions), parents' language background, educational system challenges, and language interference, and these findings are in line with previous studies (Ahmad, 2015; Hakim, 2019; Hashemi, 2011; Malik et al., 2021; Tanveer, 2007). For instance, the study's identification of attitudes, including self-identities and face-saving, as contributors to learners' oral communication apprehension, is in line with Giles's communication accommodation theory. Giles (2016) suggested that individuals adjust their communication styles to align with or distance themselves from others. In the classroom, students might feel anxious about speaking up if they perceive that their communication style is significantly different from that of their peers or the instructor, fearing potential negative judgments, ostracism or their identity changes over time. Furthermore, other hindered factors were identified, which is the parents' language background, which aligns with Lev Vygotsky's mediation concept in social constructivism. Lev Vygotsky's mediation concept in social constructivism underscores the significance of social interactions and cultural influences, a principle that resonates with the identified hindered factors related to parents' language background. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that individuals acquire knowledge and develop cognitive abilities through interactions with more knowledgeable others, and in the context of language development, parents and caregivers play a pivotal role. The language background of parents can act as a mediating factor, shaping the linguistic environment in which a child or learner is immersed. The cultural and linguistic nuances conveyed by parents contribute significantly to the construction of meaning and understanding.

Consequently, in the context of language acquisition and communication apprehension, the influence of parents' language background aligns with Vygotsky's emphasis on the social nature of learning, highlighting the intricate interplay between social factors and cognitive development in the realm of language acquisition. The current study highlighted the educational system challenges in Indonesian EFL classrooms, as there is a noticeable adherence to turn-taking and sequencing patterns, which are mainly dictated by the teachers, resulting in students being silent, which hinders communication. These findings align with the study by [Rodriguez and Wilstermann \(2018\)](#), which indicates that EFL learners' commitment and linking their participation to turn-taking and sequencing limits interactive outcomes. Additionally, these outcomes are closely connected to the decisions made by the teacher. As emphasized by [Lee and Ng \(2009\)](#), this restrictive approach reduces opportunities for negotiation of meaning and involvement, hindering the teacher's role as a facilitator who can grant greater participation rights. Additionally, the study's acknowledgment of language interference as a significant hindered factor in oral communication apprehension aligns with Robert Lado's Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis. [Lado \(1957\)](#) assumes that learners' native language influences their learning of a second language, often leading to errors and difficulties attributed to the transference of linguistic elements from one language to another. In the context of oral communication apprehension, this interference phenomenon can manifest as pronunciation difficulties, grammatical errors, and syntactical inconsistencies, ultimately hindering effective communication. This shows how importance of addressing language interference in language education to enhance learners' proficiency and mitigate oral communication apprehension effectively.

The examination of oral communication apprehension among Indonesian EFL learners in the current study provides valuable implications for the enhancement of EFL teaching and learning in the Indonesian educational context. The identified results conform to the objectives of this study, emphasizing not only the improvement in linguistic proficiency but also the development of self-confidence and oral communicative competence.

However, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of this study, particularly regarding its generalizability. The results were specific to the context of Indonesian EFL learners, and caution should be exercised when applying or interpreting them to other cultural or linguistic contexts. Additionally, an acknowledgment of potential biases influencing the results underscores the importance of incorporating diverse perspectives and methodologies in future research endeavors. Despite these limitations, this study provides valuable insights that can significantly inform pedagogical practices. This study delves into

the complexities surrounding oral communication apprehension, identifying the sociocultural factors that act as impediments to effective language learning. By identifying these challenges, the study not only contributes substantively to the understanding of EFL learners' struggles but also empowers them with knowledge about the underlying causes of their difficulties. The results serve as a trigger for encouraging learners to confront and surmount these obstacles, fostering a more resilient and self-confident oral communicative competence. Furthermore, the study offers valuable guidance for educators, equipping them with the tools to implement targeted measures that address the sociocultural burdens faced by many EFL learners, thereby enhancing the overall language learning experience in the classroom.

6. Conclusions

This study delves into the nature of the occurrence of apprehension of oral communication among Indonesian EFL learners and explores the hindering social and cultural factors causing it. This study adopted a triangulation method (observation, semi-structured interview, and focus group) to help provide a comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon and enhance the validity and credibility of the findings. The study's results reveal that interruption, overlap, self-correction, self-monitoring, and reliance on the native language during oral communication contributed to apprehension occurrences. In addition, sociocultural factors such as learners' attitudes (e.g., self-identities, saving face, and negative perceptions), parental language background, language interference, and educational challenges were identified as hindering factors leading to oral communication apprehension among EFL learners. To address this issue, the study recommends specific measures that can be implemented to enhance oral communication among Indonesian EFL learners. Fostering a supportive learning environment that embraces linguistic errors and encourages regular oral practice inside and outside the classroom is crucial, so teachers and parents must play a pivotal role in creating an atmosphere of reduced emotional filtration and enhanced social interaction. In addition, taking into account social and cultural differences among learners is essential to address fearful behaviors in oral communication and effective language teaching. Moreover, it is recommended that future research identifies other dimensions and factors such as personal psychological, and linguistic to enhance oral communication among EFL learners in Indonesia and obtain more comprehensive results.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Questions asked in the semi-structured interviews

- 1) How would you describe your overall experience of communicating in English within the Indonesian EFL classroom?
- 2) Can you identify any specific situations that contribute to your communication apprehension in the EFL classroom?
- 3) How do you perceive the role of your native language in the English classroom? Do you feel it is encouraged or discouraged to use your native language during English activities? How does this affect your communication apprehension?
- 4) How do you think your communication apprehension affects your overall language learning progress and participation in class activities?
- 5) Have you noticed any differences in your communication apprehension when interacting in an EFL classroom versus your Indonesian peers? If so, what do you think contributes to these differences?

Appendix II: Questions asked in the focus group

1. How would you describe the oral learners' communication in your EFL classroom?
2. What are the major socio-cultural factors that affect the communication of EFL learners?
3. Have you noticed any differences in communication apprehension levels among students from different sociocultural backgrounds?
4. What are some common manifestations or behaviors associated with communication apprehension among EFL learners?
5. Do you incorporate any specific teaching materials or resources that address communication apprehension with accommodate sociocultural background differences?
6. How can teachers collaborate with parents or guardians to reinforce efforts in addressing communication apprehension among Indonesian EFL learners?
7. What suggestions or recommendations do you have for fellow teachers to address learners' communication apprehension in the Indonesian EFL classroom, considering sociocultural factors?

Appendix III: Transcription conventions

The transcription symbols used here are common to conversation analytic research. The next ones are conventions compiled by (Atkinson & Heritage, 1999; Sacks et al., 1974).

Table 1. Transcription symbols

Transcription symbols	Descriptions
=	Indicates continuous stretch of talk.
[]	Indicates simultaneous talk.
°word°	The degree sign indicates talk that is softer than the surrounding talk.
↑	Indicates a shift in pitch going up.
↓	Indicates a shift in pitch going down.
(.)	Indicates a very short pause or micropause.
(0.5)	Indicates the length of the silence in relation to the surrounding talk.
<word	The sign < at the beginning indicates talk that starts quickly.
<word>	The signs < > indicates talk that is slower than its surrounding talk.
((word))	These are used to indicate transcriber's verbal descriptions of talk, talk that cannot easily be transcribed, or visual actions.
hh	Exhalation.
.hh	Inhalation.
£	Smile voice.
:::	Indicates that a prior sound is prolonged. The more colons, the longer the prolongation.

Appendix IV: Coding system

Table 2. Coding system used in marking the excerpt

Code type	Descriptions
GL	Grammar Lesson.
IO	Interruptions and Overlaps.
RL	Reading Lesson.
SCM	Self-correction and Self-monitoring.
VL	Vocabulary Lesson.
RL1	Reliance on First Language.
EFLLI	English Foreign Language Learner Interview.
EFLTFG	English Foreign Language Focus Group.
00.00	Indicates the Startup Minute.