Making Presentations in English: Anxiety Experienced by Engineering Students at UET Lahore

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Abstract

The research investigates if and to what extent undergraduate engineering students, who are frequently required to give technical and non-technical presentations during their four-year BS degrees, are anxious about giving presentations in English. To help them improve their spoken and written English, as well as soft skills, the undergraduate engineering students are offered two subjects, Communication Skills and Technical Writing and Presentations Skills, during their degree program at UET, Lahore. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scales (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986) has been used as a research instrument, while 516 randomly selected undergraduate engineering students from different departments of UET Lahore, Pakistan filled the questionnaire. Findings indicate that while making presentations in English, the students experience low to moderate levels of anxiety, while the order of the severity of the factors is: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Over half of them feel fully confident. The study has implications for English for specific purposes, teaching English as a second language, second language acquisition, and psychology.

Keywords: anxiety, engineering education, presentation skills, SLA, TESOL, UET Lahore

Introduction:

Anxiety can be interpreted in three ways: a trait, a temporary response to apprehension, or a situation-specific recurrent behavior pattern or response (Horwitz et al., 1986; in Galante, 2018; Teimouri et al., 2019), while learners of English as a foreign language commonly experience all three types (Ahsan et al., 2020, p. 307). Compared to other language skills, speaking can be the most daunting task or frightening experience in learning English as a second or foreign language. Therefore, making oral presentations can cause anxiety to the learners of English as a foreign language (Horwitz et al., 1986). The courses and teaching methods must, therefore, come up to students' professional needs in the future because anxiety is caused to people when they lack adequate skills but are forced

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to display them (Tsang, 2020). Public speaking anxiety or the anxiety caused by oral presentations is one of the most prevalent forms of disorders. Since communication skills have been ranked among the most crucial 21st-century skills, investigating the levels of anxiety caused by oral presentations, which involve informing, persuading, and entertaining larger groups, is paramount (Tsang, 2020). Naiman et al., (1978) asserted that "good language learners, like self-made millionaires, have positive attitudes and strong motivation but differ widely in personality profiles" (cited in Dewaele, 2017, p. 433).

Anxiety has been studied with reference to the analogous anxiety traits suggested by Horwitz et al., (1986) as well as "a range of interacting factors" such as "linguistic abilities, physiological reactions, self-related appraisals, pragmatics, interpersonal relationships, specific topics being discussed, type of setting in which people are interacting, and so on" (MacIntyre, 2017, p. xx; cited in Dewaele, 2017, p. 435). Not only do learners, who are in habit of getting anxious in other contexts, get anxious in second and foreign language learning contexts but also learners who are in habit of memorizing the content, get anxious if they forget words (Dawaele, 2017). Just like students differ in terms of personality traits, cognitive abilities, learning styles, gender, socioeconomic status, cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Kubat, 2018), learning strategies, beliefs, motivation, and aptitude (Ellis, 2004), they differ in terms of their levels of anxiety which are also affected by their varied physical, psychological, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds.

The study helps understand the levels of anxiety experienced by the engineering students concerning their oral presentations at UET, Lahore. As English is "the language of science and technology" (Riaz, 2015, p. 23) and a "lingua franca in non-English-speaking countries" (Riaz, 2019, p. 412), and it is used as a medium of instructions at the universities in Pakistan (Ahsan et al., 2020), so its need and worth increase for the students of engineering, science, and technology. Engineers from Pakistan do jobs at multinational companies and go to other countries for studying further or doing jobs. To secure admissions and scholarships, and find good jobs, they appear "for competitive exams such as PMS or CSS, appear for IELTS, TOEFL" or GRE tests (Akhtar & Riaz, 2019, p. 4; Riaz, 2021), and various types of interviews in which English language skills are specifically focused. English skills are vitally important for engineers to work or study comfortably in countries like the US where the number of immigrant professionals is increasing (Santos, 2019).

They must also be fluent in both spoken and written English, particularly technical English, because they will be writing proposals, technical descriptions, definitions, instructions, memorandums, letters,

and applications, among other things. As a result, knowing English is critical for them to give effective presentations, compose technical paragraphs, and speak or write in a variety of situations. Mostly, "students don't speak or learn English at home" and "academic issues including lack of individual attention paid to the students due to imbalanced teacher-student ratio in colleges, the excessive workload on teachers, inattention to the use of diverse learning materials, etc." also cause hindrances in developing English language skills (Akhtar & Riaz, 2019, p. 16). Moreover, multiple systems of education such as Urdu/English medium, Madrassa system, and public and private institutes, A Level/F.Sc./Diplomas, etc. create more challenges and differences among engineering students.

Engineering students at the University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Lahore, which is a prestigious public sector engineering university in Pakistan (Riaz, 2013), also have diverse linguistic, financial, geographic, social, and academic backgrounds. Many belong to underdeveloped or underprivileged areas. Students from countries, such as Nepal, Somalia, Jordan, Nigeria, Yemen, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Saudi Arabia also come to study at UET, Lahore. UET, Lahore offers zero semester course on functional English and Urdu to meet the linguistic needs of these students, however, making presentations in English is often a challenging task even for students who studied at English medium schools and colleges, or had opportunities to groom themselves up. It is irrevocably important to estimate the levels of anxiety of such a diverse group of students and take measures accordingly because they should be able to display their technical knowledge and competence effectively through their presentations or interviews. The students getting admission at public sector universities are extremely diligent, and efficient in their fields but making presentations fluently in English often becomes a challenge. Siagto-Wakat (2016) noted that "English language learners go through shimming and shaming experiences, specifically, buffing, baffling, shutting, sweating and shivering, and shattering (p. 1). Furmark et al., (1999), for instance, pointed out that 80% of the Swedish population experiences public speaking anxiety. Anxiety may not only obstruct the "communicative ability" of learners or speakers (Ahsan et al., 2020, p. 306) but also result in low self-esteem, withdrawal, and isolation.
The present study explores the levels of anxiety experienced by undergraduate engineering students on making oral presentations in English.

The following research question has been explored:

1. To what extent do undergraduate engineering students at UET, Lahore, face anxiety about giving presentations in English due to communication, audience, and tests? An engineer with strong communication skills is in high demand and a valuable asset to any company. Lenard and Pintaric (2018) found that "81.9% of the employers" consider it "absolutely essential for employees" in engineering fields "to use the advanced level of English" (p. 68). While there is a competency gap between engineering graduates' competencies and employers' expectations (Lenard & Pintaric, 2018), companies look for engineers who display high levels of proficiency in English, as well as sound command on various 21st-century skills. Foreign language anxiety influences the communication negatively (Bashori, et al., 2020). The situation exacerbates when one must make a presentation in a foreign language to a larger audience. "Anxiety prevents students from giving successful oral presentations", while students possessing higher proficiency in English, due to believing in their competencies, show a higher level of engagement and take up challenging assignments and tasks (Ka-kan-dee & Al-shaibani, 2018, pp. 232-234); therefore, understanding the causes and levels of anxiety will help the teachers and curriculum designers take measures for alleviating the psychological burden of the students as well as preparing them well for interviews and presentations in English. Moreover, FLPAS based on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale suggested by Horwitz et al., (1986) can be used in further research on assessing the levels of anxiety over making presentations in English.

Horwitz et al., (1986) "identified three sources of foreign language anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation" (Alkhawsaneh, 2016, p. 140; Miskam & Saidalvi, 2019; Kho & Leong, 2015). Communication apprehension is a feeling of fear, nervousness, or unease connected with real or anticipated communication with other people. "Students are afraid of making mistakes, of being criticized or rejected by the audience, and of forgetting what they want to say" in a foreign language (Kho & Leong, 2015, p. 134). Fear of negative evaluation involves fearing the remarks and judgments of the audience. Learners with such anxiety fear being laughed or mocked at by the peers and receiving negative remarks by the teachers over their pronunciation or grammar etc. Test anxiety is the tendency to apprehend the results of poor performance and fear failure in an evaluative situation. Chen (2015) noted in the Chinese context that poor proficiency in English, preparation time, unfamiliar or complex topics, presenters' past experiences, and attention paid by the audience as the main linguistic and non-linguistic factors of anxiety while making presentations. Tian (2019) added that in the Korean context, negative attitude towards presentations, silence, speech

disruption, or attention by peers or teachers could also cause anxiety. Doing a metanalysis of the 97 studies on language anxiety carried out from 1985-2017, Teimouri et al., (2019) reflected on the reliability and validity of the instruments used to measure language anxiety and noted that "L2 anxiety accounts for approximately 13% of the variance on average in students' language achievement" (p. 377).

Using FLCAS suggested by Horwitz et al., (1986), Bhatti et al., (2016) examined perceptions of 145 college students in Sindh Pakistan and found that they experience anxiety mainly due to communication apprehension. Applying the same anxiety scale, Toubot et al., (2018) surveyed 300 fourth-year students at three Libyan universities and found low confidence to be the main reason followed by fear of negative evaluation, and communication apprehension. Employing the same framework, Gopang et al., collected data from 100 students at Lasbela University, Baluchistan, Pakistan, and suggested that the order of the factors of anxiety was test anxiety, communication apprehension, and fear of negative evaluation. Applying FLCAS, Mugheri et al, explored speaking anxiety levels of 200 students at the University of Sindh, Pakistan, and noted moderate levels of anxiety. Employing the same research instrument, Karatas et al., (2016) studied differences between the levels of anxiety of 320 male and 168 female students at Istanbul Technical University, Turkey. Karatas et al., (2016) noted that female students experienced higher levels of English language anxiety than male students. Latif (2015) however, used the same research instrument in the Malaysian context and found no difference in the levels of anxiety based on gender and age, but asserted that years spent in learning English could affect the level of anxiety. Bashori et al., (2020), using FLCAS, evaluated the speaking anxiety experienced by Indonesian students while learning English through two websites and found moderate to severe levels of anxiety. Bashori et al., (2020) noted that the use of websites or technology could reduce anxiety because the learners could adjust their pace. Using FLCAS, the present study, however, explores the levels of anxiety related to communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety among undergraduate engineering students at UET Lahore, Pakistan.

Methods

The sample of this exploratory quantitative research consists of 516 randomly selected undergraduate engineering students studying at the University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan. The instrument employed for data collection was Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al., (1986) which is "by far the most frequently used research instrument" to assess levels of

language anxiety (Teimouri et al., 2019, p. 371). This questionnaire comprises of 33 items in three categories: *test anxiety* (2, 8, 10, 19, and 21), *communication apprehension* (1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 22, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 32), and *fear of negative evaluation* (3, 7, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25, 31, and 33). This questionnaire as a self-report tool is scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). This instrument was found to be reliable in multiple studies (Al-Khasawneh, 2016, p. 141). The levels of anxiety based on FLCAS are categorized into three levels, the highest of which is represented by a score over 144, the moderate by 108 to 144, and little or no anxiety level by a score of less than 108.

Twenty-two of the 33 items have been used in the present study and items 1, 4, 6, 11, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29, and 32 were excluded from the questionnaire (Appendix 1) because these were about the language input in the form of teachers' lectures, or native speakers, time, and comprehension, rather than output in the form of oral presentations. As 10 questions have been excluded, the serial numbers 1-22 of the questions based on FLCAS in the questionnaire distributed for the present study correspond with the item numbers 2, 5, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 31, 33 in FLCAS. For analysis item numbers in FLCAS instead of serial numbers in the questionnaire, which is termed as Foreign Language Presentations Anxiety Scale (FLPAS) in the present study, have been used. FLPAS (Appendix 1) just like FLCAS uses a 5-point Likert scale ranging from one 'strongly disagree' to five 'strongly agree'. The following items related to the four categories suggested for FLCAS developed by Horwitz et al., (1986) were selected for FLPAS to understand the levels of anxiety experienced by the undergraduate engineering students while making presentations in English.

1. Test anxiety: (2, 8, 19, 21)
2. Communication apprehension (5, 9, 10, 12, 16, 17, 18, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30)
3. Fear of negative evaluation (3, 7, 13, 20, 31, 33)

The participants filled a questionnaire/Google form sent to them via email. The first part of the questionnaire included a few questions regarding the gender, session, number of courses communication skills done, personality traits such as introversion, extroversion, or ambiversion, and academic background such as the medium of instruction at the schools or colleges of the respondents to gather demographic information of the sample. Following are the responses to these questions:

Table 1. Demographic information of the respondents
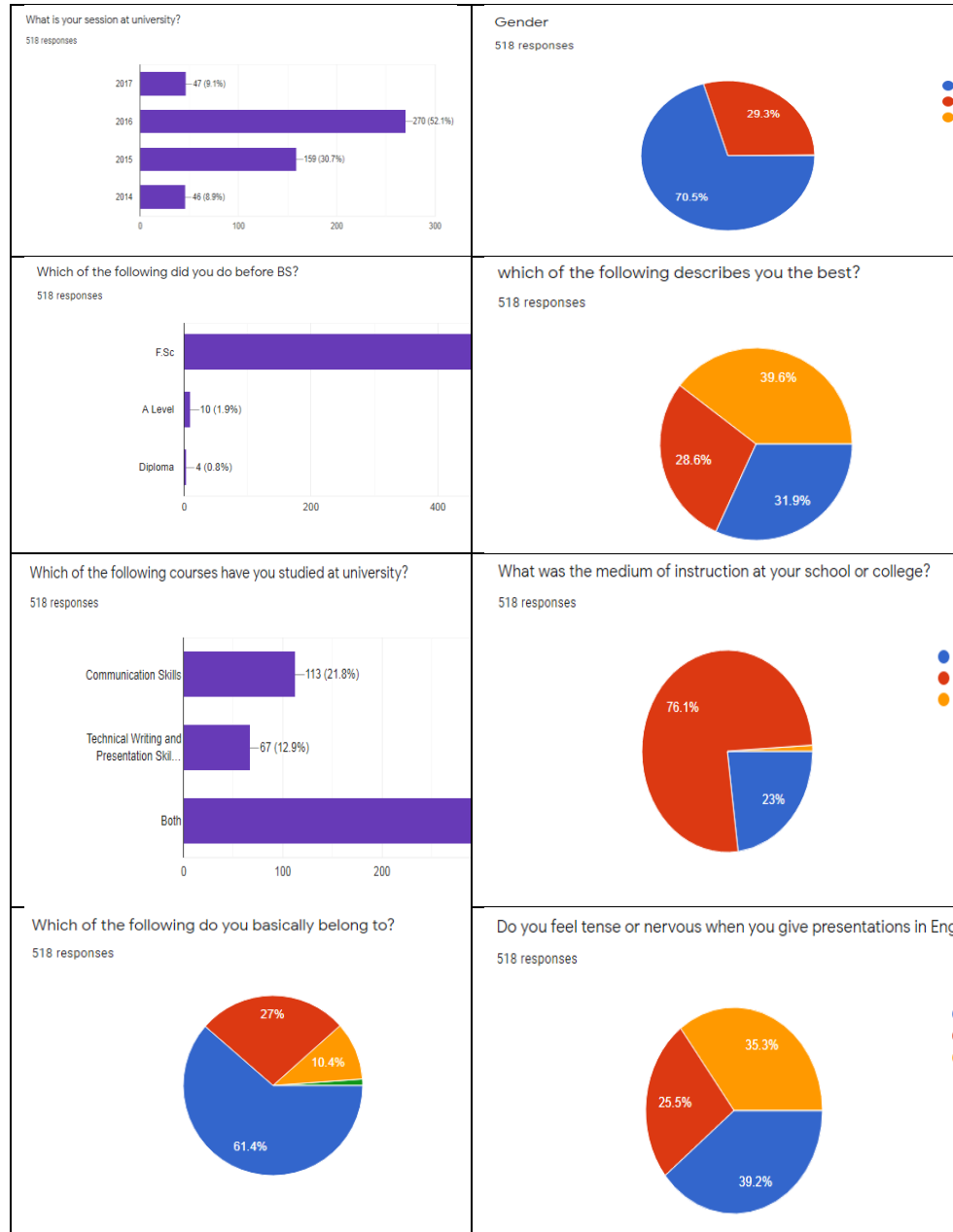
According to the figures given in Table 1, students from 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017 sessions participated in the study. 70.5% respondents were male and 29.3 % were female students. 97.5% had done F.Sc before joining UET, Lahore for their BS in engineering programs. 1.9% had done A-Level while 0.8% were diploma holders. 31.9%, 28.6%, and 39.6% of the respondents were introvert, extrovert, and ambivert, respectively. 68.9% had attended both the courses (Communication Skills and Technical Writing and Presentation Skills) offered in the first and third year of their degree programs, while the remaining had done one course at least. It means all of them had learnt about making presentations and practised as well. 76.1% responded that the medium of instruction was English at their schools and colleges, while in the case of 23%, it was Urdu-medium. 61.4 %, 27%, and 10.4% of the respondents belong to big cities, small cities, and villages, respectively. 39.2% responded that they get nervous or anxious while making presentations, while, 25.5% were comfortable in making presentations. 35.3% indicated a possibility of either getting anxious or staying calm.

Frequencies were checked using excel sheets and responses were tabulated.

Findings and Discussion

Following are the findings based on the data collected through a questionnaire based on 22 items from 516 undergraduate engineering students at UET, Lahore.

Table 2: *Percentages of Responses to the Questionnaire Based on Five Point Likert Scale*

Item		1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Category Mean
	Test Anxiety							
2	It worries me when I know I need to give multiple presentations in the English class.	14.9	26.6	21.5	25.2	11.8	2.92	2.80
8	I am usually at ease during	7.6	19.4	28.1	30.0	14.9	3.25	

	presentations in my English class.							
19	I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	23.6	26.2	23.3	20.0	7.0	2.60	
21	The more I prepare for presentation in English, the more confused I get.	29.7	31.2	16.3	12.6	10.3	2.43	
	Communication Apprehension							
5	It worries me when I know I need to give multiple presentations in the English class.	18.4	17.4	18.6	29.8	15.7	3.07	3.09
9	I start to panic when I have to make presentation without preparation in English class.	12.0	16.7	17.1	29.5	24.8	3.38	
10	It frightens me when I know the presentation will be graded by the teacher.	20.7	27.5	14.9	20.5	16.3	2.84	
12	In English presentations, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	19.8	25.6	18.2	21.5	14.9	2.86	
16	Even if I am well prepared for presentation in English, I feel anxious about it.	15.1	18.2	16.5	34.5	15.7	3.17	
17	I often don't feel like going to my English class due to presentations.	38.4	19.6	19.6	15.5	7.0	2.33	

18	I feel confident when I make presentations in English.	6.6	14.3	26.0	31.4	21.7	3.47	
22	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for presentations in English class.	9.7	24.6	24.4	26.4	14.9	3.12	
24	I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	10.1	17.4	26.6	31.6	14.3	3.23	
26	In English classes, I feel tenser and more nervous about the presentation than other class activities.	14.9	24.4	20.3	27.1	13.2	2.99	
28	When I'm on my way to English class for making presentation, I feel sure and relaxed.	6.2	21.9	30.2	27.5	14.1	3.22	
30	I feel overwhelmed, because I have to learn the rules about how to give a good presentation in the English class.	7.4	14.0	31.0	31.6	16.1	3.35	
	Fear of Negative Evaluation							
3	I tremble when I know that I will be the next one to make presentation in English class.	14.9	20.3	18.8	25.4	20.5	3.16	2.97
7	It frightens me when I know the presentation will	18.0	20.5	19.2	22.5	19.8	3.05	

	be graded by the teacher.						
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer for presentations in my English class.	21.7	24.2	20.9	20.2	13.0	2.78
20	I can feel my heart pounding when I give presentation in English.	11.8	19.0	21.9	28.9	18.4	3.23
31	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I give presentation in English.	28.9	26.4	17.2	14.5	13.0	2.56
33	I get nervous when I am asked questions, during and after my presentation, which I haven't prepared in advance.	16.7	21.7	20.3	26.7	14.5	3.01

Table 2 shows the frequencies of the responses regarding test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and communication apprehension based on a 5-point Likert scale. Item numbers related to the four categories, mean of every point of an item, as well as the cumulative mean score of every item has been given. It is important to mention here that item numbers 2, 8, 22, 28, and 18 are positive statements; therefore, the responses for test anxiety and communication comprehension show neutrality given that the students feel both anxious and confident in these cases. For further clarification, another study on the specific scenarios and conditions is required. In the case of test anxiety, the first two items show levels of confidence, while the last two show levels of anxiety, which is why their effect neutralizes. It shows that students do feel test anxiety, but it is not severe. However, considering the statements of item numbers related to communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation, it can be stated that the levels of anxiety are not severely high but anxiety due to both these categories needs serious attention. It shows that students have neutral and similar levels of anxiety caused by tests, communication,

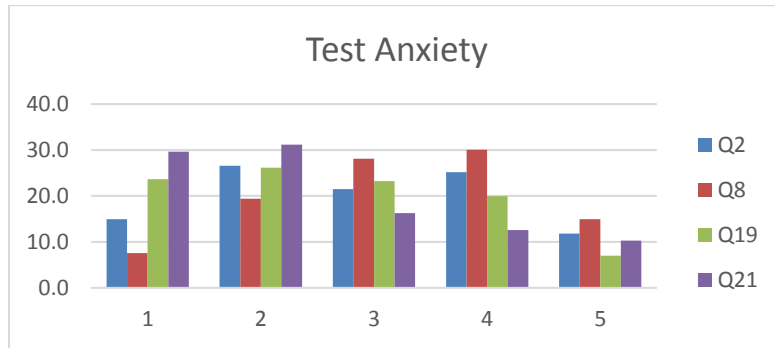and audience; however, anxiety caused by communication in English is the highest.

Figure 1: Bar Graph Showing Test Anxiety Experienced by the Respondents
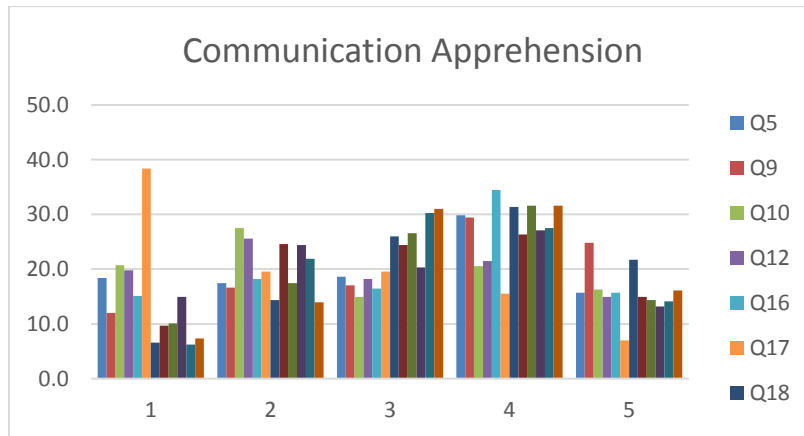

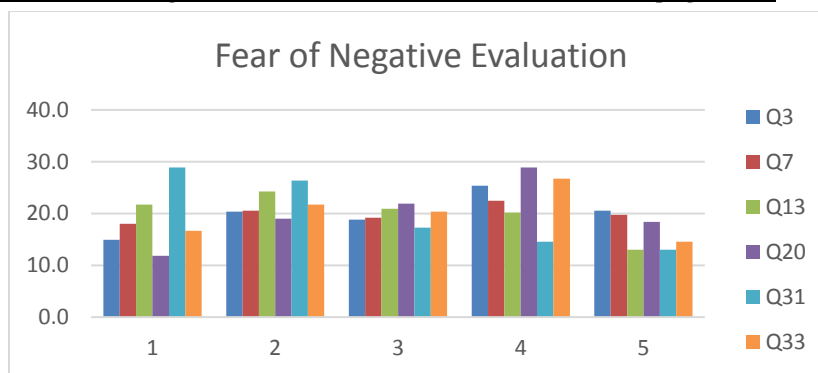*Figure 2:* Bar Graph Showing Communication Apprehension Experienced by the Respondents

Figure 3: Bar Graph Showing Fear of Negative Evaluation
Experienced by the Respondents

Figure 1, 2, and 3 are bar graphs which display the frequencies of responses given in Table 1. Figures 1, 2, and 3 display the anxiety caused by tests, communication in English, and judgments of the audience, respectively. The graphs show the trends of neutrality as illustrated in Table 1. A few items related to communication apprehension touch the highest values in the graph, however, the overall trend shows neutrality. Item numbers 18, 9, 30, 20, 24, 8, 28, and 23 received the higher score which ranged from 3.16 - 3.47, while item 18 received the highest score. While items 8, 18, and 28 were about the level of confidence and ease, the remaining items were about the anxiety experienced before or while making presentations. Item 9, 30, 20, 24, 28, 16, and 3 are about poor preparation, rules for making an effective presentation in English, severe anxiety while making presentations, self-consciousness about speaking English, being anxious despite being fully prepared, and trembling on knowing about one's turn. It shows that students experience anxiety right before making a presentation. They also experience it while making a presentation due to their beliefs about their spoken English as well as the level of preparedness. Price (1990) and MacIntyre (2017) also affirm speaking anxiety is primarily caused by the fact that students are required to speak in front of the class on the spot. As a result, they are afraid of making mistakes and being humiliated by their peers. Yashima et al., (2016) postulate that teachers globally struggle to get the learners to initiate communication in the target language. It is similarly harder for the respondents to volunteer for a presentation. They even tremble on knowing that they will be the next one to make a presentation. Though according to the findings of the present study, many of the respondents also feel relaxed on the way to the classroom and confident while making presentations, it

is an important finding that they experience moderate to high levels of anxiety right before their presentation. They also feel anxious and concerned about their level of preparedness and proficiency in English. It is possible, that if not asked to make presentations, they may avoid making a presentation or even skip it. Yashima et al., (2016) have also pointed out avoidance to communicate in the target language as a major issue. Avoidance or unwillingness to make presentations can be addressed with the help of strategies for willingness to communicate.

Discussion

Findings suggest that while making presentations, undergraduate engineering students at UET, Lahore experience anxiety due to communication in English, fear of judgment by the audience, and evaluation. The levels of anxiety are not severely high but consistent in the case of all three categories, with communication caused by speaking in English being the highest. Results also show similar and neutral or moderate levels of anxiety. Students mostly experience anxiety due to communication in English, especially when they have to speak without preparation, for instance, on being asked a question by the end of a presentation. Glossophobia combined with stage-fright is the major issue that causes them anxiety. They also fear the audience, their questions, and their judgments. They also experience anxiety caused by the fear of failure in a test or evaluation by the teacher. It can be inferred that the levels of fluency, accuracy, and confidence need equal attention. For this purpose, maximum opportunities for public speaking or speaking off-the-cuff should be given in an environment where they don't fear judgment. They also need to be counselled for not fearing the audience.

Miskam and Saidalvi (2019) also noted moderate levels of anxiety and the same order i.e., communication apprehension, fear of judgment by the audience, and tests, as the causes of anxiety experienced by undergraduate Malaysian students having high or moderate levels of speaking anxiety. However, students with low levels of speaking anxiety displayed high levels of test anxiety. Bhatti and Pathan (2016) also found communication apprehension to be the leading cause of anxiety among Pakistani college students. Ka-kan-dee and Alshaibani (2018) found that during presentations, Thai students experienced high levels of anxiety (66.67%) due to poor presentation skills, fear of negative assessment, and low confidence levels. While the present study suggests, communication apprehension (Mean: 3.09) to be the main cause of anxiety, Toubot et al., (2018) and Gopang et al., (2017) found low-confidence (78.3%) and test anxiety (Mean: 40.5) to be the main factors, respectively. Speaking is both productive and interactive skill, and making a presentation also involves

interaction, while speaking without preparation requires English language skills, therefore, it becomes challenging to produce and interact simultaneously (Miskam & Saidalvi, 2019). Concerns over communicative competence, motivational disposition, mood, and learners' attribution of their anxiety to internal or external factors may also trigger or avoid anxiety related to communication and English. Due to personal attributes, "language learning is linked with losing face, risking criticism, and also embarrassment" while making presentations in foreign language contexts (Aksoy-Pekacar, et al., 2020, p. 462). It implies that students' self-perceptions of their ability to communicate in English and handle an audience, as well as stage fright, can influence their anxiety levels. If a student believes he or she is unable to communicate in English, this notion can cause anxiety during presentations. Therefore, sensitizing the students towards their attributes such as motivational disposition, self-control, and beliefs about self can also improve their confidence (Aksoy-Pekacar, et al., 2020). Exploring self-perceptions regarding delivery competence based on body language and paralanguage of 211 students making oral presentations in Hong Kong, Tsang (2020) found a significant correlation of 22 out of 23 categories of nonverbal delivery with anxiety. Therefore, working on non-verbal aspects of oral presentations, especially arms and hand movements, which are predictors of anxiety as well, can also help in managing anxiety. Self-perceived competence or self-efficacy improves performance. Rehearsals, practice, and prior experiences don't help as much as self-efficacy does in reducing anxiety during presentations. Teachers' and peers' encouraging remarks can improve self-efficacy (Tsang, 2020). Sharing an interpersonal and affective perspective on anxiety, Bielak and Mystkowska-Wiertelak (2020) reinforce the importance of emotion-regulation strategies and the need for focusing on positive emotions such as hope and enjoyment by the teachers to reduce learners' language anxiety. Creating a non-threatening, friendly, and supportive environment by displaying a caring attitude towards the learners and applying an affective filter that prioritizes emotions and positions the teacher's self in an empathetic manner is essential (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2016; Gkonou & Miller, 2019). Toyama & Yamazaki (2019) also suggested that anxiety reduction sessions in foreign language classrooms help reduce anxiety levels significantly.

As the second major factor identified in the present study is the fear or judgments of the audience (Mean: 2.97), so rooting out stereotypes and illogical perceptions (Behlol & Kayani, 2016) about making mistakes in English can also improve the confidence level of students caught up in a stressful, sensitive and emotionally loaded process of making presentations in English. As students face challenges in making

presentations randomly, memorization should be discouraged (Akhtar & Riaz, 2019). Moreover, repeated tasks related to presentations, presentations in small groups, situating avoidance and reticence in the cultural background of the learners, and engaging others may also reduce anxiety and enhance the willingness to participate (Yashima et al., 2016) and volunteer for making presentations. Moreover, adopting task-based methods of teaching, and using authentic and varied materials such as newspapers, reports, and documentaries may be helpful (Riaz, 2013). Increasing exposure to the English language by offering richer linguistic input, giving maximum opportunities of making presentations, and assigning pair or group work can also help reduce anxiety.

Conclusion

Overall, it is encouraging to note that compared to the subjects of the studies discussed above, the anxiety levels of the undergraduate engineering students at UET Lahore are quite low. Undergraduate engineering students at UET, Lahore, Pakistan experience low to moderate levels of anxiety while making presentations in English. Similar levels of anxiety in all three categories can be observed, nevertheless, the major factor is communication in English, especially without preparation. The dread of being judged by the audience, classmates, or teachers is the second major cause. Test anxiety, fear of failure, or evaluation by the teacher is the third main factor. Even if the anxiety levels are overall low, and over half of them feel fully confident, it is crucial to note that about half of the participants have low to moderate levels of anxiety that prevent them from speaking confidently in English, volunteering to make presentations, or comfortably replying to questions of the audience. By highlighting an understudied area concerning the anxiety issues of undergraduate engineering students at UET, Lahore, the study establishes that given the competition for job opportunities and the demands of engineering jobs, it is important to give the students ample chances to speak English or make presentations in a supportive and stress-free environment so that they not only develop fluency but also overcome their fear of speaking in front of an audience through practice.

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