

**VIETNAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, HANOI
UNIVERSITY OF LANGUAGES AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
FALCULTY OF ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION**

GRADUATION PAPER

**ANXIETY EXPERIENCED BY FIRST YEAR
FELTE FAST-TRACK PROGRAM STUDENTS AT
THE END-OF FIRST TERM SPEAKING TEST AT
ULIS, VNU.**

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Year of enrolment : QH 2009

Ha Noi, May 2013

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In order to complete this research study, I owe profound indebtedness to many people for their invaluable help during the conduct of our research. First and foremost, my thanks are extended to my supervisor, Ms. Nguyen Quynh Trang for her support and helpful instructions on the construction of our study. I also want to sincerely thank Mr. Nguyen Chi Duc for his critical comments in my progress report, Mr. Tran Hoang Anh and my friend Nguyen Thi Quyen for their thoughtful advises and consultancy that help me get out of impasse.

Secondly, I would like to send my heartfelt gratitude to 39 students of FELTE, Fast-Track program for their participation in both the survey questionnaire and the interview. Their support is immeasurable and timely regardless of anytime.

Last but not least, I am so obliged to my beloved families and my love one who have always encouraged and supported me during the time of conducting this research

ABSTRACT

Test and examination has been a predominant way of evaluating students' knowledge, skill and development for a long time. Besides bringing about the evaluative result, test also lead to test anxiety among students - a phenomenon which recently has caught the attention of many educational scientists, researchers and scholar. Test anxiety can appear in many subjects among which foreign language speaking is one of the most popular among EFL students.

As one of the leading institutions in foreign language teaching and learning, the Fast-Track group at ULIS, VNU also uses test as a key tool to measure the quality of students. All students joining this group are EFL learners who are at high risk of being exposed to foreign language speaking test anxiety. In spite of this threat, the group as well as the university seems to pay no attention to the issue.

As one of the first attempts to confirm the existence of speaking test anxiety for a specific group of EFL learners, namely the 1st-year FELTE Fast-track program students at ULIS, VNU, this paper aims at calculating the level of test anxiety of students to give out an reflection of the real situation related to test anxiety issue among these students. Additionally, by identifying the underneath causes of test anxiety, the paper provides several pedagogical suggestions to reduce test anxiety among students and thus, helps them to improve test performance in the future.

To fully achieve these purpose, 39 first year FELTE Fast track students who had experienced their speaking test in the university in the first semester, were involved in completing the questionnaire to measure their level of test anxiety. To find out the causes of test anxiety, the interview is also employed on 9 participants. Finally, based on the reasons found out through the interviews, the researcher makes recommendation of what should be done to minimize the level of test anxiety. The findings from this research will benefit not only researchers and teachers interested in the same topic by giving thorough background information of test anxiety, but also students who need to reduce the level of their anxiety during test.

TABLE OF CONTENT

ACCEPTANCE.....	1
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
ABSTRACT.....	3
LIST OF FIGURES.....	5
LIST OF TABLES.....	6
ABBREVIATION LIST.....	6
PART 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. Background of the study:.....	1
2. Aims of the study.....	3
3. Significance of the study.....	3
4. Setting of the study.....	4
5. Scope of the study.....	4
6. Methodology.....	5
PART 2: DEVELOPMENT.....	8
CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
1.1. Speaking test.....	8
1.2. Test anxiety.....	10
1.2.1. Overview.....	10
1.2.2. The effect of test anxiety on students:.....	12
1.2.3. Test anxiety measurement:.....	13
1.2.4. Prevalence.....	16
CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY.....	18
2.1. Selection of Subject:.....	18
2.1.1 Research setting:	18
2.1.2. Research participants:	19
2.1.3. Sampling:	21
2.2. Data Collection Methods and Procedure.....	21
2.2.1. Data collection method:	22
2.2.2. Data collection procedure:	27
2.3. Data analysis method and procedure.....	31
2.3.1. <i>Data analysis method</i>	31
2.3.2. Data analysis procedure:	33

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	34
3.1. Result from survey questionnaire:.....	35
3.2. Findings of the interview:.....	42
3.3. Discussion:.....	45
PART 3: CONCLUSION.....	47
1. Major findings of the study.....	47
2. Implication:.....	48
3. Contribution of the study.....	50
4. Limitations of the study.....	50
5. Suggestions for further studies.....	51
REFERENCES LIST.....	52
APPENDICES.....	56
APPENDIX A: WESTSIDE TEST ANXIETY SCALE.....	56
APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE.....	58
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDELINE QUESTIONS.....	60
APPENDIX D: STUDENTS INTERVIEW EXTRACT.....	60

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Participants' test anxiety score.....	35
Figure 2: Participants' response for 1st question.....	36
Figure 3: Participants' respond for 2nd question.....	37
Figure 4: Participants' respond for 3rd question.....	38
Figure 5: Participants' response for 4th question.....	38
Figure 6: Participants' response for 5th question.....	39
Figure 7: Participants' response for 6th question.....	39

Figure 8: Participants' response for 7th question.....	40
Figure 9: Participants' response for 8th question.....	41
Figure 10: Participants' response for 9th question.....	41
Figure 11: Participants' response for 10th question.....	42

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: A comparison between three test anxiety scales.....	23
Table 2: Ways to reduce test anxiety.....	48

ABBREVIATION LIST

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as Foreign Language
ULIS	University of Languages and International Studies
VNU	Vietnam National University
FELTE	Faculty of English Language Teacher Education
TAI	Test Anxiety Inventory
RTT	Reaction To Test
WTAS	Westside Test Anxiety Scale

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

* * * * *

This initial part outlines the research problem and rationale for the study together with its scope and significance. Above all, the aims and objectives are identified with four research questions which serve as guidelines for the whole research. Finally, the chapter concludes with a sketch of the rest of the paper to orientate the readers throughout this paper.

1. Background of the study:

Throughout years, testing has become one of the key tools to evaluate students' achievement, skills and ability in any stage of education. It seems that school and testing always go along with each other and become an "inevitable aspect of most students' lives in today's world" (Ergene 2011). The fact that almost all countries in the world have their own national examinations, the result of which play an important role in deciding the students' abilities in all level of education, proves the popularity of testing in the education world today. Zollar & Benchain (1990) even states that the world is now in a "test-conscious" era in which test and test performance have a great influence on many people lives (cited in Rana & Mahmood 2010).

One of the consequences that the popularity and importance of test brings about is the rise of test anxiety – a phenomenon that has attracted a widespread concern from scientists and scholars as well as the whole society. First investigated in the 1960s, until now there has been many scientific research conducted by researchers from all over the world investigating test anxiety in educational environment makes it a "beyond national and cultural boundaries" issue. Many studies from different countries have proved the existence of test anxiety and its effect among students. For example, surveys conducted in the UK confirmed that tests are "major source of anxiety" among students as the majority of them report "exams" or "tests" when being ask about what makes they stress the most

(McDonald 2001). Research by Hill and Wigfield (1984) in the United State also draw the conclusion that “test anxiety is one of the most important aspects of negative motivation and has direct debilitating effects on school performance”. Studies in other countries such as Korea, Greek, Turkey, India, etc. also bring about similar result.

The University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS) is one of English environment institutions where testing is also used as a predominant method to measure the students’ knowledge, skills and achievements. As stated in the curriculum of all faculties of the university, almost all subject have at least one test - the final test of which the result account for 50% to 60% of the subject average score. In addition, two third of the subjects have the mid-term test which accounts for 20% to 30% of the subject score, some subjects even have mini tests. These statistics mean that students’ studying results are decided mostly by test which can leave great pressure on students.

Fast-track group of ULIS (also known as CLC group) is a special group established in 2001 by the head board of the university with the aim of training high quality and competent learners (Nguyen 2007). During studying time, students of fast-track program also have to face as many tests as the mainstream class do. However, the demand of the faculty as well as the level of difficulty of fast-track program tests is much higher than the mainstream ones. These facts make the potential threat of test anxiety become worse among fast-track students. In the specific case of speaking test of FELTE students in fast-track group, the level of anxiety can be higher as speaking is always “anxiety-provoking in foreign language activities” (Intyre & Gardner 1991 cited in Chan & Wu 2004).

However, in spite of the obvious threat of anxiety as mentioned above, there is no research that concern the test anxiety practical situation among Vietnamese students in general and ULIS students in particular, especially the ones that are involving in Fast-track program. The need of confirming the existence of test anxiety among ULIS students to make the university teachers and authority more

aware of the negative effects that it may bring about urges the researcher to carry on this research with the hope of ringing an alarm about this undiscovered issue.

2. Aims of the study

This study aims at addressing and measuring the existence of test anxiety among students of the FELTE, Fast-track program at ULIS, VNU. The current research particularly tries to answer the two following questions:

1. At which level are first year students of the FELTE, Fast-track program at ULIS, VNU experiencing speaking test anxiety?
2. What are the causes of test anxiety as perceived by the students,?

The purpose of conducting this study is also to make it valuable source of general knowledge about test anxiety as this concept has not been popularly investigated in Vietnam. This research also serves as a tool for the participants in particular and people who can access this research in general to check their level of anxiety in taking speaking test.

3. Significance of the study

For long, there have been many studies about speaking test in English Speaking class for EFL learners. In studying this issue, test anxiety is one of the feature that get attentions from scholars worldwide. However, as far as the researchers have found, in the specific context of Vietnam, there is almost no previous research discuss thoroughly about test anxiety, let alone speaking test anxiety among language students. Additionally, among many students who have experienced speaking test, the one being investigated in this research, who are following a brand-new studying curriculum, has not been studied in any academic document before. Thus, the researchers decided to conduct this research to investigate the issue of speaking test anxiety in the case of class QH.2009.F.1.E1 of the FELTE Fast-track Program at ULIS, VNU with the hope of filling this significant gap.

The result of this research is expected to indicate the existence and level of speaking test anxiety among students of two classes QH.2010.F.1.E1 and QH.2010.F.1.E2 of the FELTE Fast-track Program at ULIS, VNU as well as explore the reasons that cause their test anxiety. Hopefully, the research will be one of the useful sources for readers to understand more about the issue, knowing the level and the causes of speaking test anxiety that they are experiencing. Also, it would be an honor if this research can be references for further studies in the future. By this way, the research may open an era of studying English test anxiety among Vietnamese EFL learners.

4. Setting of the study

The test anxiety being investigated in this research is put on the specific setting of the final exam for speaking skill for first year Fast-track students. The test usually takes place at the end of the first semester in a school year of ULIS, VNU. The test includes short exchanges between students and interlocutor; a collaborative task involving both candidates and a 1-minute long turn. The standard format is two candidates and two examiners. One examiner acts as an interlocutor and manages the interaction by asking questions and setting up the tasks. The other acts as assessor and does not join in the conversation. The result of this test accounts for 60% of the final average score for speaking skill.

5. Scope of the study

The kind of speaking test that is used in the setting of the research is the paired-format. The pair form of speaking test can be applied in both classroom activity and exam context. In the limited scope of the research, the researchers focus only on the Speaking test performance in the final exam of the first semester for first year students at ULIS, VNU as it was the most recent speaking test that the participants have taken.

Paired form of speaking test is used in the final exam for students from both main-stream and Fast-track group; both Faculty of English Language Teacher Education and Faculty of Interpreting and Translation Training. However, the researcher limits the population to the Fast-track students in the major of English Language Teaching only to ensure the similarity of the participants as well as to be easier to approach them.

There are many confounding variables related to test anxiety as the researcher found out in the literature review. However, as the research topic of test anxiety is still new in Vietnam and the scale of the study is small, the researcher do not have the ambition to dig deeply in every sides of the problem but only attempt to address and measure generally the existence of test anxiety among participants in the study scope.

6. Methodology

6.1. Participants

The study is carried out to investigate the anxiety experienced by first-year FELTE Fast Track program's students at ULIS, VNU. As a result, 40 students from class QH.2009.F.1.E1 are selected as the targeted population of the research.

The reasons for the mentioned population selection are their common characteristics which are best suitable for the research's purposes. These characteristics are presented as follow:

- They all passed a special entrance test designed by the Fast-track group including IQ test and Interview section or had high score (32 in total and higher) in the entrance exam to the ULIS, VNU to be a students of Fast-track Program.

- They have experienced 4 months learning social and academic speaking skill (according to their class's syllabus)
- They all follow the same syllabus for speaking skill.
- They have at least one time taking the speaking test. The brief description of the test is described in the part of research setting.

6.2. Data collection method

- ***Survey questionnaire***

In accordance with Brown (2001)'s definition, questionnaire is "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting them among existing answers". There are 4 main administration modes of a questionnaire. In the context of this research, however, only written questionnaires (paper-and-pencil questionnaires) will be used. Unlike the other types of research instruments, this instrument is cost effective and easy to analyze. Moreover, a written questionnaire is familiar to mostly everyone.

- ***Semi-structured interview***

According to Kajornboon (2005), interview is regarded as a way to collect data from individuals by applying a systematic ways of talking and listening to people. In this research, the form of face-to-face and semi-structured interview was applied as this instrument not only helps us to create a rapport with the participants and gain their cooperation, but also

gives us more freedom. Since the interviewers and the interviewees communicate face-to-face, we can ask for further information and be flexible to improvise on some specific situations.

6.3. Data analysis method

- ***For data from questionnaire:***

To analyze data collected from questionnaire, the researcher decided to apply descriptive statistic method. Through means of mean, median, mode, measures of variability and measures of central tendency, descriptive statistic method is considered one of the best ways of data analysis for analyze and present data as it “helps summarize and support assertions of fact”.

- ***For data from interview***

To analyze data collected from interview, the method of content analysis was applied. Thanks to its systematic characteristic and the ability of dealing with large volume of material, content analysis become the best choice in helping the researcher to summarize the data as well as describe the attitudes or perceptions of the author of this material.

Summary: The chapter has provided the rationale for the study by stressing the real situation of testing in the specific environment of ULIS, VNU as well as proposed the ideas of test anxiety’s existence among students here. The framework of the research has also been identified clearly with the three research questions and clearly defined scope. The study’s elaborations have not only justified the major contents and structure of the study but will also play the role of main guidelines for the rest of the paper.

PART 2: DEVELOPMENT

* * * * *

CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a brief review of the literature related, specifically the background and a number of studies related to the research topic. Initially, key terms will be defined together with their sub-related issues. Finally, a brief review of the related studies will disclose the research gap and hence, justify the aims and objectives of this research paper.

1.1. Speaking test

For most EFL learners, the final goal of learning a foreign language is to be able to communicate in this language. “It is through communication that people send and receive messages effectively and negotiate meaning” (Rubin & Thompson 1994 cited in Zhang 2007). As well as for teachers, the goal of teaching speaking skill is communicate efficiency in which learners are helped to understand and use their current proficiency to the fullest. Nowadays, speaking skill which is essential in foreign language communication becomes more and more important than other (Zhang 2007).

At any level of education, studying seems to go along with testing - a key tool to evaluate achievement, skills and abilities of individuals (Rana & Mahmood 2010). Talking about the increasing important role of test, Zollar and Ben-chain

(1990) stated that “the era in which we live is a test-conscious age in which the lives of many people are not only greatly influenced, but are also determined by their test performance” (cited in Rana & Mahmood 2010). As speaking skill in learning foreign language becomes more and more important, speaking assessment also catches more attention.

In accordance with Fulcher (2003 cited in Breeze 2004), “one of the main problems underlying speaking tests is that "speaking skill" is a difficult construct to define”. Though there are many studies providing deep understandings about speaking skill, very few of them can give explicit definitions. According to Mackey (1965), speaking or “oral expression involves not only [...] the use of the right sound in the right patterns of rhythm and intonation, but also the choice of words and inflections in the right order to convey meaning.” Chomsky (1994 cited in To 2012) shares the same point of view with Mackey. He proposes the conception of linguistic competence including the knowledge of different linguistic field, such as phonology, vocabulary and syntax. Meanwhile, Bygate (1987 cited in To 2012) names this kind of competence as motor-perceptive skills, and one new concept known as interaction skills. Interaction skills relate to one making decisions about communication. One has to decide what to say, how to say it, and whether to develop it, and at the same time, maintain coveted relations with others. (1997 cited in To 2012)

Besides the lack of knowledge about the definition of “speaking skill”, like any other kind of test, the problem of speaking test also includes the impact of test anxiety. Students experiencing speaking test anxiety “do not feel comfortable communicating in the target language in front of others, due to their limited knowledge of the language” (Tsiplakides & Keramida 2009). More detailed explanation on the concept of test anxiety and its effect is presented in the next part.

1.2. Test anxiety

1.2.1. Overview

1.2.1.1. Definition of test anxiety

In general, among scholars, the most widely agreed-upon conceptualization describes “test anxiety as a multidimensional unpleasant state” (Bruehl 2009). To be more exact, the researcher takes a closer look to others’ views about this concept. According to Scovel (1978 cited in Park & Lee n.d.), anxiety is a “complex affective concept, associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension or worry”. Zeidner (1998) defines test anxiety as the fear of failure or negative result on an exam or other situation related to testing and evaluation (cited in Bruehl 2009). Sharing the same ideas with Zeidner, Spielberger (1980 as cited in Ergene 2011) states that anxiety is a state of fearfulness occurring when students taking examinations in any form and at any level. In later study, Spielberger, along with his company - Vagg, gave a more detailed and scientific definition of test anxiety as “an emotional state experienced during examinations (consisting) of feelings of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry and associated physiological arousal resulting from activation of the autonomic nervous system” (1995 cited in Yager 2008). With similar opinion about the subject, Dusek (1980 cited in Hill & Wigfield 1984) describes test anxiety as "an unpleasant feeling or emotional state that has physiological and behavioral concomitants, and that is experienced in formal testing or other evaluative situations."

As a sum up of many former researchers ideas about the concept of test anxiety, Bruehl (2009) gives out a general definition in which test anxiety is considered to “involves an interaction among physical and emotional tension and autonomic nervous system arousal, cognitive worry and doubt in one’s abilities, and behavioral responses that interfere with test preparedness and performance”. The researcher will use this conclusion of Bruehl as the main definition for the key concept of test anxiety in this research.

1.2.1.2. Components of test anxiety

Identifying the portrait of test anxiety has been an attraction of researchers since a long time. After several decade of exploring test anxiety, scholars seem to meet each other at one point that test anxiety is constructed by two main elements known as emotional and cognitive components.

According to Schwarzer (1984 cited in Yager 2008), emotional component often refers to emotionality which consists of an “individual’s subjective interpretation of such autonomic reactions” such as fear, nervousness, and physical discomfort (Hanckock 2001, Pintrich & Schunk 1996, Williams 1994). Physical reactions of the body that emotionality can cause include arousal, trembling and sweating occurred during the testing time. Results of most of the studies show that the emotionality factor has weak or insignificant effect on the test-takers’ performance, especially in comparison with the effect of cognitive component. (Hembree 1988 cited in Ergene 2011)

Cognitive component refers to worry about evaluation and consequences of failure (Liebert & Morris 1967 cited in Bruehl 2009). Individuals with high cognitive test anxiety often focus their mind and thoughts on “(a) comparing self-performance to peers, (b) considering the consequences of failure, (c) low levels of confidence in performance, (d) excessive worry over evaluation, (e) causing sorrow for their parents, (f) feeling unprepared / inexperienced for tests, and (g) loss of self-worth” (Deffenbacher 1980, Depreeuw 1984, Hembree 1988, Morris et al. 1981 cited in Cassady & Johnson 2004). According to results of many researches, it is the cognitive aspect of test anxiety that demonstrates a great negative impact on test performance which mainly cause the fall in students’ academic achievement. (Humbree 1981, Seip 1991, Williams 1991, Bandlos, Yates & Thorndike-Christ 1995). In conclusion, the cognitive component has the strongest relationship with the quality of one’s performance (Cassady & Johnson 2004).

Besides the two major components mentioned above, later researchers also suggest other components to broaden the definition of test anxiety and try to have a

more accurate measure for this concept (Cassady & Johnson 2004). Along with worry and emotionality, in 1977, self-efficacy had been proposed by Bandura as one important factor that construct test anxiety. In 1997, Friedman & Bendas-Jacob added social derogation (the fear of being belittled or disparaged by significant others for failure on a test) and Hodapp & Benson included distraction (inattention) and lack of confidence as parts of test anxiety concept (cited in Yager 2008).

In this research, the researcher will focus mainly on the cognitive component which is proved to have much stronger impact on test performance than other ones. In addition, as emotional and cognitive components are widely confirmed as the main components that make up test anxiety, it can be considered the source of this phenomenon. Thus, the researchers decide to use it to classify the causes that cause test anxiety among students.

1.2.2. The effect of test anxiety on students:

To confirm that test anxiety does exist in education environment, many studies have been conducted and bring about supportive results. In 1985, Spielberger (cited in Rana & Mahmood 2010) found that students always consider test or examination as “a source of increase in anxiety”. According to McDonald (2001), two thirds of high school students report that they do feel anxious at great level while taking test. Indeed, for many students, “high school exams and centralized, high - stake examinations are the most anxiety inducing experiences in their programs of study” (Zeidner 1991, as cited in Ergene 2011).

Discussing about the negative effect of anxiety, Gaudry & Spielberger (1971) confirm that high test anxiety is perceived as one of the main reasons that cause unsatisfied performance among university students (cited in Rana & Mahmood 2010). In their studies, Hill & Wigfield (1984) agree upon the idea that there existed a negative relationship between anxiety and academic success when stating that such feelings of anxiety among students prevent them from demonstrating their abilities to the fullest during the test situation which can be a direct reason for the fall in the student achievement (cited in Rana & Mahmood 2010). Beidel, Turner &

Karen (1994)'s research also find that in a higher evaluative environment, "students are more likely to receive poorer scores, repeat a grade, and perform more poorly" (cited in Ergene 2011). The reason is that a student experiencing test anxiety may present as easily distracted, forgetting previously known information, or "freezing up" when taking an exam (Emery & Krumboltz 1967, Keogh, 12 Bond, French, Richards & Davis 2004 cited in Bruehl, 2009).

There are many other researches in which the results show that test anxiety does have negative effect on the students' test performance by reducing students' grade point average (GPA). As cited in Chapell et al. (2005), there are three significant studies which had valuable results to consider. Firstly, Hembree's investigation (1988) on 526 studies of American students from elementary school through college shows that "test anxiety reduces academic performance at every education level". Secondly, another research of Seipp (1991) also draw a similar conclusion in which he stated that low-test-anxious students could have much higher score than the high-test-anxious ones and only 39% low-test-anxious students would fail whereas this rate in the high-test-anxious ones was 61%. Last but not least, Schwarzer's study results prove that "two third of low-test-anxious students would score higher than the average high-test-anxious students." And the research by Chapell et al. (2005) itself also shares similar results with the previous ones as it proves that there are a significant relationship between test anxiety and academic performance in 4000 undergraduate and 1,414 graduate students.

As a sum up of all statements and statistic presented above, it can be confirmed that test anxiety does exist in most of the students mind and has been found to be related negatively to their academic success (Ergene 2011).

1.2.3. Test anxiety measurement:

To measure the level of test anxiety in individuals, there have been many scales developed and applied by researchers worldwide, among which, the researcher will discuss about three significant and most well-known scales designed by famous group of scholars: Spielberger et al. (1980), Sarason (1984) and Driscoll

(2004). In this research, judgments given for these three scales are based on review of American Test Anxiety Association.

In 1980, Spielberger et al. designed the Test Anxiety Inventory (also known as the TAI) which then became the most widely applied tool to scale test anxiety in the literature as its reliability had been confirmed by a many of researchers and professor of the field (Bruehl 2009). As described in Taylor & Deane (2002), the TAI is a 20-item inventory that investigates the frequency of one's experience the symptoms of anxiety in three phases: before, during and after tests or examination. The information is collected in the form of self-report on twenty questions using a likert-type format with four points ranging from "almost never" to "almost always". The items are scored both positively and negatively to avoid the bias of left and right response. Besides having a total test anxiety scale, Spielberger also provides subscales for the two main elements of test anxiety: emotional components (emotionality) and cognitive component (worry). Having subscale ensure the adequacy of the scale but at the same time make the inventory lengthy when giving the emotionality (which considered having modest/weak impact on test performance) nearly the same number of questions (8 out of 20) as the worry (which considered having great connection with performance impairments). This also make the scoring process be more complicated and hard for the students to apply by themselves. One more disadvantage of this inventory is that it is not free-charged and difficult to access online which makes it less beneficial for the majority of users.

In 1984, Sarason developed Reactions to Test (RTT) scale which is also used extensively in researches. According to author, RTT consists of four 10-item subscale dealing with Tension; Worry; Test-Irrelevant Thinking and Bodily Reactions. Each subscale has a possible score range of 10-40. RTT is available without charged and provides thorough assessment which makes it easier for user to access. However, as reviewed by American Test Anxiety Association, the large number of items (40 items) becomes the obvious disadvantage of this scale as it takes more time to complete. In addition, the items seem to be not well-organized as

they do not follow any order. It could be better if the author can rearrange the items by separating the four subscales or following chronological order (using three phases: before, during and after tests or examinations).

Designed in the last century and remain unchanged for a long time, all three scales mentioned above seem to out of date and not suitable with current demand and situation of the education. Being aware of this fact, many modern researchers also establish their own scales among which the one of Driscoll (2004) are stand out. The Westside Test Anxiety Scale (WTAS) is a “brief, ten-item instrument designed to identify students with anxiety impairments who could benefit from an anxiety reduction intervention” (Driscoll 2004). The scale collects reflection about participant reactions toward tests in the form of self-report. The WTAS consists of 10 sentences with a likert-scale of 5 points ranging from “never true” (1) to “always true” (5). The reliability of this scale was proved through the result of Driscoll research named Westside Test Anxiety Scale Validation. In this research, the author investigate two diverse groups of students, each of which was divided into Intervention and Control groups, with the Intervention groups receiving an anxiety-reduction training. Anxiety score and test score are collected both before and after the training. The results in two distinguished student group show changes in score after training closely related to the test grade changes which means that the Westside scale is a “reliable and valid measure of test-anxiety impairment” (Driscoll 2004). Besides the reliability, as the review of American Test Anxiety Association, the WTAS has many strong points that worth to consider in comparison with other scale. Firstly, the main focus of WTAS is on the performance problems with “6 of 10 items specifically about performance problems”. Secondly, this scale focuses on investigating the cognitive component (worry) of test anxiety which has been confirmed by researchers that have strongest impact on the performance of test-takers. The scale is also easy for the user to score themselves and understand their score by using clear instructions included in the scale. Last but not least, WTAS is public access and can be download free which make it more beneficial for the majority of users.

After considering the validity as well as advantages and disadvantages of the four well-known scales, the researcher decides to use the WTAS due to its convenience and best benefit for the participants of this study.

1.2.4. Prevalence

First investigated in the 1960s, test anxiety attracts more and more concern of scientific researchers as well as the whole society. Test anxiety has been studied and surveyed on numerous of subjects throughout many countries in different regions of the world, proposing the fact that this problem has become a widespread concern which goes beyond “national and cultural boundaries” (Bodas & Ollendick 2005, McDonald 2001, Putwain 2007 cited in Bruehl 2009). For example, surveys conducted in the UK confirmed that tests are “major source of anxiety” among students as the majority of them report “exams” or “tests” when being ask about what makes they stress the most (McDonald 2001). Studies in other countries also show similar results. According to statistic collected by Academic Anxiety Resource Center, approximately 25-40% of individuals suffer from test anxiety (Carter, Williams, & Silverman 2008, Ergene 2003, McDonald 2001, Putwain 2007) with more females than males being affected (Hembree 1988). Specifically in education context, Driscoll (2010) estimates that about 20% of students have high test anxiety and another 16% have "moderately high" anxiety making the total number of students experiencing test anxiety to 36%. Many researchers also predict that these figures have the potential of being even higher in the future due to the frequent increase of testing in schools. (Cizek & Burg 2006; Zeidner 1998; Whitaker Sena Lowe, & Lee 2007 cited in Bruehl 2009).

In Vietnam education context, test anxiety also caught a considerable attention of the society. Many prestigious newspapers such as Dan tri, Giao duc, Bao moi, etc. have discussed seriously about test anxiety and its negative effect on students. In 2010, Tran – a specialist in psychology and education stated that Vietnamese youth is bending beneath the burden of test anxiety. However, as far as the researcher has found, there is almost no official or scientific research on this

problem in the context of Vietnam education which create a significant gap in the research field over this topic. This fact urges the researcher to conduct this study to bring about the most fully investigated result possible about this problem in the hope of fulfill this gap. All the investigation will be put in specific context of two classes QH.2009.F.1.E1 and QH.2009.F.1.E2 of the FELTE Fast-track Program at ULIS, VNU.

In summary, primary points in the literature that the researcher will use to construct the framework for this study are presented as follow:

- The definition of test anxiety concept stated by Bruehl (2009).
- The confirmation of the existence of test anxiety in education environment in general and in speaking test in particular extracted from the meta-analysis results of many researchers: Hembree (1988), Seipp (1991), Chapell, M.S., Blanding, Z.B., Silverstein, M.E., Takahashi, M., Newman, B., Gubi, A., et al., (2005), Shomoossi (2009)
 - The definition of test anxiety's two components which are used to classify the reason of test anxiety.
 - Emotional component: "individual's subjective interpretation of such autonomic reactions" (as cited in Yager, 2008) such as fear, nervousness, and physical discomfort (Hanckock 2001; Pintrich & Schunk 1996; Williams 1994).
 - Cognitive component: including thoughts which focus on: (a) comparing self-performance to peers, (b) considering the consequences of failure, (c) low levels of confidence in performance, (d) excessive worry over evaluation, (e) causing sorrow for their parents, (f) feeling unprepared / inexperienced for tests, and (g) loss of self-worth" (Deffenbacher 1980; Depreeuw 1984; Hembree 1988; Morris et al. 1981 cited in Cassady & Johnson 2004).
 - The Westside Test Anxiety Scale to measure the level of test anxiety among participants will be used as the core base to design this research's questionnaire.

Summary: By reviewing many significant works that related to this study's topic, the chapter has provided the theoretical base and background for the whole paper through careful elaboration on many angles of the two key terms: speaking test and test anxiety. The review of a number of studies in this chapter has revealed a research gap which the researcher is pursuing to bridge through this study.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the researchers present aspects related to methodology that is applied in this research. The selection of subject including research setting, participants, and sampling is presented in the first part. Following are the data collection method and procedure, and data analysis procedure.

2.1. Selection of Subject:

2.1.1 Research setting:

The research is conducted at Fast-track group, FELTE, ULIS, VNU in which teaching methodology are following Communicative Language Teaching Approach – a new popular trend of the world education. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach that specifically focuses on the ability to communicate naturally and realistically as a response to the recognition of the current need to emphasize communication skills in instruction (Kemp 2003). The goal of CLT is for learners to achieve “communicative competence”, which includes not only grammatical competence but also sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence (Canale& Swain 1980; Savignon 1997 cited in Chan 1999). As a result, speaking skill in CLT approach is more highly valued than it is in the other method. In high school environment, where grammar-translation method is mostly applied, speaking skill is paid the least attention or in some cases, teachers and students ignore this skill as it will not be tested in high school or any national exam in

Vietnam. As reported by 39 first-year students of Fast-track group, FELTE, ULIS, VNU, 57% of them have taken the speaking test 1 to 2 times, 27% have more than 3 times experience and 16% said they never take one. This fact of lacking experience may bring about anxiety for first-year students at Fast-track group, FELTE, ULIS, VNU in getting used to with speaking skill, especially speaking test.

The speaking test anxiety being investigated in this research is put on the specific setting of the final exam for speaking skill for first year Fast-track students. The test usually takes place at the end of the first semester in a school year of ULIS, VNU. In this test, candidates are examined in pairs by two examiners. One of the examiners acts as interlocutor and the other as assessor. The interlocutor directs the test, while the assessor does the marking and takes no part in the interaction. The test lasts for 10 to 12 minutes and consists of 4 parts which are designed to elicit a wide range of speaking skills from the candidates. Part one is about self-introduction, part 2 requires discussion to choose the best option, part 3 asks candidates to describe the picture and part 4 involve another discussion on a specific topic. The result of this test accounts for 60% of the final average score for speaking skill.

2.1.2. Research participants:

The study is carried out to investigate speaking test anxiety of first year student of the FELTE, Fast-track program at ULIS, VNU. Thus, 40 students (4 men and 36 women) from two classes QH.2012.F.1.E1, QH.2012.F.1.E2 are chosen as targeted participants of the research due to their similarity in characteristic and level of English proficiency. Besides, the fact that they are easy for the researcher to approach is also a reason why they are chosen as the research participants.

2.1.2.1. Fast-track program description:

The participants of this study come from a special group of ULIS, VNU – the Fast-track program. Established in 2001, this program is a project undertaken for

students majoring in TEFL. As stated by Professor Nguyen (2007) – the head master of ULIS, VNU, this program is a respond for the demand of “new crop of quality teachers of English, interpreters/translators” and the need for “a good command of English”. Curriculum and activities designed for this program serves the goal that students in this program will be trained to be good and competent learners who, according to Hedge (2000 cited in Nguyen & Tran 2007), are characterized as the ones:

(a) aware of their study needs and can work with teachers to achieve their goals

(b) able to study both within and without the classroom.

(c) able to further develop what they have learned in class.

(d) proactive in their learning.

(e) capable of adapting their learning strategies to suit their needs and make learning more effective.

(f) able to manage their time, and

(g) not dependent on teacher’s inputs.

2.1.2.2. Participants characteristic:

Besides sharing seven characteristic of Fast-track program students, this study’s participants also have other features in common which are described as follow:

- They all passed a special entrance test designed by the Fast-track group including IQ test and Interview section or had high score (32 in total and higher) in the entrance exam to the ULIS, VNU to be a students of Fast-track Program.

- They have experienced 4 months learning social and academic speaking skill (according to their class's syllabus)
- They all follow the same syllabus for speaking skill.
- They have at least one time taking the speaking test. The brief description of the test is described in the part of research setting.

2.1.3. Sampling

The population of the research interest is small. Only 40 students from QH.2012.F.1.E1 and QH.2012.F.1.E2 are suitable with the requirement of the research. Thus, as for choosing the questionnaire participants, the researcher decided to take all of them as representative sampling of the subjects which means that all the population are considered as samples. This way of sampling can eliminate the negative effect related to size and bias of other sampling method. For example, if the researcher chooses only some of the population to be the sample, the problem of the sample representativeness will arise. In addition, how to decide the number of sampling to correctly represent the population also challenging as it is difficult to determine how much is enough. When the whole population is considered as samples, these problems obviously do not exist.

2.2. Data Collection Methods and Procedure

2.2.1. Data collection method:

2.2.1.1. Justification for the use of questionnaire

In accordance with Brown (2001)'s definition, questionnaire is "any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting them among existing answers" (cited in Mackey & Gass 2005). This data collection method is considered one of the most common data collection methods in second language (L2) research (Dornyei 2002) thanks to many of its advantages. According to Milne (1999), Gillham (2000), Dornyei & Taguchi (2002), Mackey & Gass (2005), Kirklees council (n.d) and many other researchers, the most widely agreed-on advantages of questionnaire can be listed as follow: (1) easy to construct, (2) can collect large amount of information from a large number of people, (3) save time, (4) save money and (5) collected data can be processed and coded quickly and easily

Since both the researchers and the participants are university students and are often busy with their workload, the time-saving as well as effort-saving advantages of this method is certainly a big reason for the researcher to decide to use questionnaire as the main method of data collection.

Like any other data collection method, questionnaire is not a perfect instrument as it also has some disadvantages in which "low respond rate, lack of personal contact that may affect the reliability, superficial answer caused by large number of questions, misinterpreted questions that can lead to inappropriate answer" are considered four typical ones (Milne 1999). However, in the specific case of this research, the advantages seems to dominate the disadvantages as the researcher can ensure the respond rate, improve personal contact, explain hard-to-understand questions by showing up around participants while they completing the questionnaire. In addition, the questionnaire only has 10 short simple questions which can ensure that the participants do not feel tired and give superficial answer.

There are four types of administering questionnaire including: face-to-face, paper and pencil, computerized and adaptive computerized. The number of participants of the research is 39 so it is time-consuming to apply the method of face-to-face with every one of them. The computerized method is not practical due to lack of technology support and it is also difficult to administer if the participants do the questionnaire via email. Hence, in this research only paper-and-pencil is used combined with direct instruction and administration of the researcher during the time participants complete the questionnaire.

Questionnaire design

The main purpose of the questionnaire is to find out the answer for the two research questions, which are:

1. Does the speaking test anxiety exist among first year students of the FELTE, Fast-track program at ULIS, VNU?
2. If yes, at which level are first year students of the FELTE, Fast-track program at ULIS, VNU experiencing speaking test anxiety?

In order to answer to these questions, the questionnaire is adapted from the Westside Test Anxiety Scale by Driscoll without significant changes. The comparison between Westside Test Anxiety Scale and other scales explains the reason why the researcher decided to use this scale for the research. The comparison is presented in the table below (for more detail please refer to the part “Test anxiety measurement” in Literature review chapter)

Table 1: A comparison between three test anxiety scales

	Year of establis h	Numbe r of items	Focus	Scoring process	Validit y	Charg e

1. Test Anxiety Inventory (TAI)	1960	20 items	Both emotional and cognitive components (approximately 50:50)	Complicated	Proved by research	Not free-charge
2. Reactions to Test (RTT)	1984	40 items	Both emotional and cognitive components (approximately 50:50)	Take much time due to the number of items	Proved by research	Free-charge
3. Westside Test Anxiety Scale (WTAS)	2004	10 items	Cognitive component only	Simple	Proved by research	Free-charge
General evaluation	The WTAS, the newest scale among these three established in	The WTAS is briefer than other scale which can save	The WATS focus only on the cognitive component which has been proved to have most influence on test performance.	Thanks to its brief and clear instruction, the WATS is very easy and time-saving to score.	All three scales are reliable	Both RTT and WTAS are free-charge which is very helpful

	2004, proves to be more suitable for current situation.	time for both researcher and participants	The other two seems to waste time on the emotional components which has very little impacts on test performance			for the users
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The scale consist of 10 statements which describe the manifestations of test anxiety in students’ actions and thoughts before, during and after they do the test. In this scale, the students are asked if the statements are true to their situation, from not true at all (1) to extremely true (5). All the changes that the researcher made on the scale when adapting it for this study serve the purpose of making it investigate specifically test anxiety in speaking test, not in test generally. The researcher also reorders the statements in the scale to make the 3 phases: before, during and after test more clearly. In the questionnaire, 2 first statements investigates the stage of “before”, 6 next statements explore the “during” stage and the rest look into the “after” one (last until the participants receive the test score). The questionnaire is in English thanks to the high language ability of the participants who have learnt English for at least 4 years. More detailed description of the participants is presented in the part of “Research Participants”.

Full original scale (Appendix A)

Full questionnaire (Appendix B)

2.2.1.2. Justify the use of interview

Beside questionnaire and observation, interview is also a widely employed method in many research projects. This method is defined as “a purposeful conversation in which one person asks prepared questions (interviewer) and another answers them (respondent)” (Frey & Oishi 1995). In the research field, according to Kajornboon (2005), interview is regarded as a way to collect data from individuals by applying a systematic ways of talking and listening to people. Or in a simple word, an interview is a purposeful discussion between two or more people that can help you gather valid and reliable data that is relevant to your research objectives (Kahn & Cannel 1957).

There are many reasons why researchers usually use interview as a valid way of collecting data for their research projects. First of all, interview allows researchers to collect non-verbal data such as “lack of eye contact, jittery mannerisms or defensive posturing” (Anderson n.d.) which can seriously reflect the reliability of collected data but cannot find in a written questionnaire. In another word, while questionnaire reflects what the participants’ answers are, interview brings about the answer for both what and how the participants respond to the questions. In addition, because interviews are interactive, researchers can elicit additional data if initial answers are vague, incomplete, off-topic, or not specific enough (Mackey & Gass 2005), thus helps the researchers get more in-depth information from the participants. Furthermore, according to Gray (2004), interview can be a useful method when the respondents are not fluent in the native language of the country, or where they have difficulties with written language. This feature ensures that the participants fully understand the questions, thus, give the clearest and most relevant answer. These advantages of interview are in great accordance with the intention of the researchers when applying this method. In the case of this study, the researchers intend to use interview for exploring the reasons that cause speaking test anxiety among the participants.

Interview design

To fulfill the purpose of finding out the reasons that lead to participant's test anxiety, the form of semi-structured interview was applied in this research. According to Mackey & Gass, in semi-structured interview, the researcher uses a list of questions as a core to develop the interview. Besides the questions prepared beforehand, in this kind of interview, the researchers can add more questions depending on the participants' response to get more information. Semi-structured interviewing "is best used when you won't get more than one chance to interview someone and when you will be sending several interviewers out into the field to collect data." (Bernard 1988 cited in Cohen & Crabtree 2006). In this research, the interview questions were designed focusing on 2 main points: the confirmation of test anxiety score's accuracy perceived by each participant to guarantee the result of the questionnaire and the reason that lead to test anxiety in each student. The questions did not provide suggestions to choose but ask generally so that the participants can answer freely and express their thought as much as possible. The guiding questions are all in form of WH-/H- questions.

There are two forms of questions in the second part of the interview session. The first form was used to the students who have "*acceptable level of test anxiety*". This first form aims at exploring why they just feel a little or even not anxious or in another word why they seemed to be confident before, after and during the test. The second form was used for the students who have "*above normal*" and "*high*" level of test anxiety. This second form aims at investigating why they feel anxious or not confident in taking the speaking test.

Interview guideline (Appendix C).

2.2.2. Data collection procedure

2.2.2.1. Collect data from questionnaire:

The collection procedure for data from questionnaire consists of three main steps which are presented in the diagram below:



- ***Step 1: Piloting***

In this stage, the researchers prepared a pilot process for the questionnaire in which it was tested in a sample of five random first - year FELTE Fast track students. They filled in the first version of the questionnaire. Fortunately, they reported that the questionnaire was easy to understand and the structure of the questionnaire was clear so that the researcher made no change to the questionnaire.

- ***Step 2: Preparation***

In this step, the researcher prepared all needed material including pens or pencils (in case the participants do not have ones) and questionnaire sheet. The questionnaire sheets were designed in a clear structure with appropriate font and word size, printed on high quality white paper to ensure the participants' comfort while doing the questionnaire.

- ***Step 3: Questionnaire distribution:***

The researcher contacted with the monitor of the two classes that are participants involved in this research (class QH.2012.F.1.E1 and QH.2012.F.1.E2) to get in advance information of the time in which they were available to do the questionnaire and ask for an appointment with the whole class.

At the appointment, after introducing about the researcher, giving brief description of the research including title, rationale, purpose etc., the researcher announce the number of questions, types of questions and the method that

participants were supposed to follow. The researcher also reminded the participants to feel free to ask if they were not clear about any detail of the questionnaire. During the procedure, participants did not raise many questions about the questionnaire, just some demands of clarifying some terms that they did not understand.

- **Step 4: Questionnaire collection**

After all participants fully completed the questionnaire, the researcher collected all the responses and checked all the 39 forms to see if there was anyone who did not complete all the questions. On average, it took 8 to 10 minutes for the participants to complete the questionnaires. Thirty nine questionnaires were given out and all of them were retrieved. Finally, the researcher sincerely thanks the participants for their contribution.

2.2.2.2. Collect data from interview

The collection procedure for data from interview consists of two main steps which are presented in the diagram below:

- **Step 1: Piloting**



In this stage, the researchers prepared a pilot process for the interview session in which the researcher interviewed two random first - year FELTE Fast track students to see if the students have any problem in understanding the two key questions that the researcher prepared beforehand in this semi-structured interviewed.

At first, in the first question, the researcher asked if the test anxiety score truly reflected their real situation. Both of the students involved in the piloting asked that “Which situation? All situation?”. The researcher noticed that point and decided to make change to the question to make it clear about which situation were asked. The part of “when you took the final speaking test” was added to clarify the situation.

In the second question, at first the researcher just asked “What made you anxiety”. However, one of the pilots who had the test anxiety of 1.8 which means “comfortably low” gave out the answer “nothing”. This answer can end the conversation. Thus, the researcher decided to have two version of the interview guideline questions: one for students who have “*acceptable level of test anxiety*” and one for students who have “*above normal*” and “*high*” level of test anxiety.

- ***Step 2: Preparation:***

After collecting test anxiety score, the researcher divided the participants into 3 groups depending on their level of test anxiety.

- Group 1: Students with *acceptable level* of test anxiety (11) which includes students with *comfortably low* test anxiety (4 students) and students with *normal or average* test anxiety (7 students).
- Group 2: Students with *above normal level* of test anxiety (18 students) which includes students with high normal test anxiety
- Group 3: Students with *high level of test anxiety* (10 students) which includes students with *moderately high* test anxiety (6 students) and students with *high* test anxiety (4 students)

The researchers randomly chose 9 participants: 3 students from group 1, 3 students from group 2, 3 students from group 3 to conduct the interview session. The researcher contacted them before hand and asked them for permission to interview. We then set up an appropriate date with each of them for interviewing.

- ***Step 3: Conduction***

The interviews started with a brief introduction of the interviewer, the research topic, the confirmation of confidentiality and the researcher's gratitude for participants' cooperation. After that, to create a friendly and relaxing atmosphere for the interview, the researcher and the participants had a small talk in about 2 minutes. Then, the researchers asked for permission to record the interviews. For some participants who did not want the conversation to be recorded, we decided to take detailed notes of their interview sessions.

The researchers explained the format, the length of the interview (about 20 minutes per interview session) as well as the main content of the interview. During the interview, questions were asked one by one without time rushing. Neutrality was kept so that personal viewpoints of the researcher did not affect the quality of the information. Thorough responses were encouraged and the researcher asked extra questions to gain in-depth information from participants. Both English and Vietnamese were used so that students would not mind sharing their ideas in case they found it difficult to express in English. After all the interviews had been conducted, the data collection process finished and the data were ready to be analyzed.

2.3. Data analysis method and procedure

2.3.1. Data analysis method

- *For questionnaire response: Descriptive statistic method*

In this research, the researcher decides to use descriptive statistic as the key method for analyzing data collected from questionnaire. As one of two subdivisions of statistical method, descriptive statistic will help the researcher in "organizing, summarizing, interpreting and communicating quantitative information" obtained

from collected data (Osuji 2006). The researcher chooses this method for three reasons:

Firstly, this research is an observational study in which the forms of polls, survey. Information gathered from these tools are best presented by the use of descriptive statistic method through mean, median, mode, measures of variability and measures of central tendency.

Secondly, as this research studies a matter of fact that is “the existence of speaking test anxiety among first-year students of FELTE, Fast Track Program at ULIS, VNU”, descriptive statistics will be the best choice to analyze and present data as it “helps summarize and support assertions of fact” (Data Analysis: Describing Data - Descriptive Statistics, n.d.)

Last but not least, the reason lies on the advantages of descriptive statistic method summarized as followed: (1) essential for arranging and displaying data, (2) form the basis of rigorous data analysis, (3) much easier to work with, interpret, and discuss than raw data, (4) help examine the tendencies, spread, normality, and reliability of a data set, (5) rendered both graphically and numerically, (6) include useful techniques for summarizing data in visual form and (7) form the basis for more advanced statistical methods (Adapted from *Data Analysis: Describing Data - Descriptive Statistics*, n.d.)

- *For interview response: Content analysis method*

To process and analyze the data collected from interview, the researcher decided to use the content analysis method. Krippendorff (1980) and Weber (1990), content analysis is “a systematic research method for analyzing textual information in a standardized way that allows evaluators to make inferences about that information” (cited in Crowley & Delfico 1996). Using this method, the rich text transcribed from the interview recording will be classified in much fewer categories to identify the reason of test anxiety among participants. The reasons why the researcher chose this method lie on its advantages that are its systematic characteristic and the ability of dealing with large volume of material. Besides, it

can not only help the researcher to summarize the data but also describe the attitudes or perceptions of the author of this material.

2.3.2. Data analysis procedure

- *For questionnaire response:*

In the stage, the researcher check all the mark that the participants reported in the questionnaire (by calculating the sum of mark in each questionnaire), comparing them with Driscoll's scale to draw the conclusion about the existence and level of speaking test anxiety among first-year students of FELTE, Fast Track Program at ULIS, VNU. Finally, the researcher divided the participants into 3 groups based on their test anxiety score to prepare for the interview part.

- *For interview response:*

In this stage, the researcher transcribes the interview records to get the data in document form. Basing on the participants answer, the researcher classifies the reasons that lead to test anxiety and find out the common reasons among them. Besides facts and figures, some detailed descriptions were pointed out to find some more comprehensive and thorough answers to the third research questions.

All the names of the participants taking part in the interviews were coded. To be more specific, there are five participants, who are respectively interviewee A, interviewee B, interviewee C, interviewee D, and interviewee E.

Summary: In this chapter, the researcher's purpose is to justify the methodology of the study. Questionnaire and interview were employed as the instruments for data collections. More specifically, all three of them were designed

to answer the three research questions: the questionnaire solve the first and the second questions, meanwhile the interview plays role of ensuring the questionnaire's reliability as well as handling question 3. Descriptive statistic and content analysis were the two methods used in the data analysis procedure. The results from such analysis are going to be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the previous chapter, the methodology applied to conduct this study has been thoroughly presented with descriptions and justifications of the choice of participants, research instruments as well as the process of data collection and data analysis. In this chapter, all the collected data will be analyzed and discussed to answer each research question respectively. Table, charts and graphs are made use of for better presentation and elaboration.

3.1. Result from survey questionnaire:

The participants' test anxiety score presented below in the pie-chart is a clear answer or the two research question of the study.

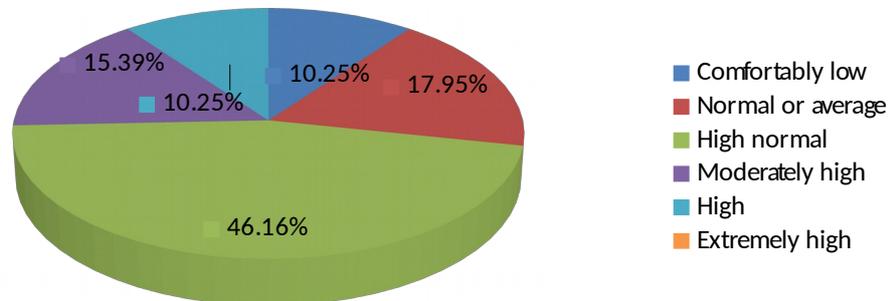


Figure 1: Participants' test anxiety score

As can be seen in the chart, 10.25% of the participants (equal to 4 individuals) have a comfortably low level of test anxiety, 17.95% (7 individuals) get the normal or average score. A significant number of 46.16% of the students (18 individuals) taking part in this research experience high normal level of test anxiety. Meanwhile, the scores of 15.39% (6 individuals) show that they are in moderately high test anxiety. As much as the comfortably low level, 10.25% of the participants appear to have high level of test anxiety. Finally, no one scored extremely high which can be considered a positive sign.

Depending on the final score collected after the participants had completed the questionnaire, it can be confirmed that speaking test anxiety does exist among first year students of the FELTE, Fast-track program at ULIS, VNU as over 70% of the participants have the test anxiety scores that are higher than the normal level.

After collecting test anxiety score, the researcher divided the participants into 3 groups depending on their level of test anxiety.

- Group 1: Students with *acceptable level* of test anxiety (11) which includes students with *comfortably low* test anxiety (4 students) and students with *normal or average* test anxiety (7 students).
- Group 2: Students with *above normal level* of test anxiety (18 students) which includes students with high normal test anxiety

- Group 3: Students with *high level of test anxiety* (10 students) which includes students with *moderately high* test anxiety (6 students) and students with *high* test anxiety (4 students)

The participants' detailed responses on each question of the questionnaire bring about a closer look on the manifestation of test anxiety in three phases: before, during and after the speaking test.

3.1.1. Before the speaking test:

This stage is investigated by the two first questions of the questionnaire. In this phase, the mode is 3 (appeared for 38.46% of the time) which means that most of the students thought that the 2 statements in this phase *moderately true to them*.

The first questions asks the participants which level does the statements “The closer I were to the speaking test, the harder it was for me to concentrate on the material (such as theory about the paired-form speaking test, steps and tips to do the test, pronunciation rule)” true to them. Below is the chart that reports the participants' answer:

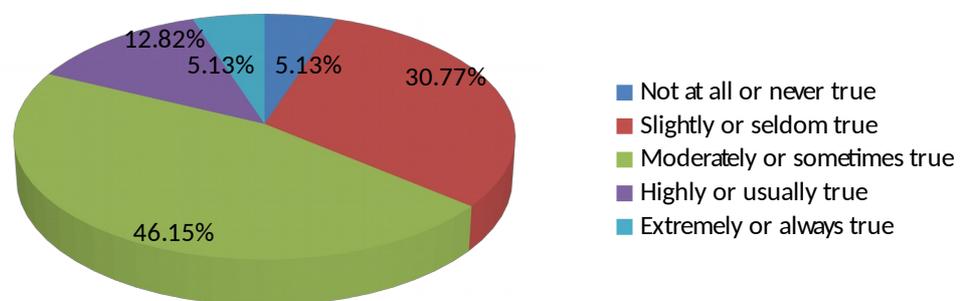


Figure 2: Participants' response for 1st question

As clearly shown in the figure, the majority of the participants which accounts for 46.15% sometimes felt that it was harder for them to concentrate on the material when the speaking test came closer. Meanwhile, 30.77% seldom felt the same, 12.82% chose “usually” as their frequency of experiencing. The options of

“never” and “always” have been chosen by the same number of participants which is 5.13% for each.

In the second question, the participants were asked to report their frequency of feeling worried that they would not remember the material on the exam when they prepared for the speaking test. The option of “seldom” was chosen by most of the participants (33.33%) while “sometimes” and “usually” were the choice of the same percentage of students (30.77% for each). Only one person (2.56%) claimed that he/she never felt worried and also, only one person said that he/she always in this situation. The summary of the second question’s result is presented in the following chart.

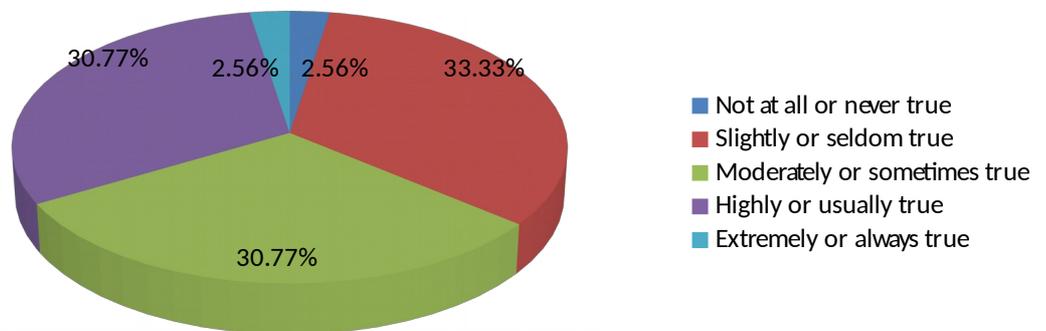


Figure 3: Participants' respond for 2nd question

3.1.2. During the speaking test:

Questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 explore the second stage which is during the speaking test. In this phase, the mode is 2 (appear for 33.33% of the time) which means that most of the students thought that the 6 statements in this phase *slightly true to them*.

The response for question 3 was described clearly in the chart below:

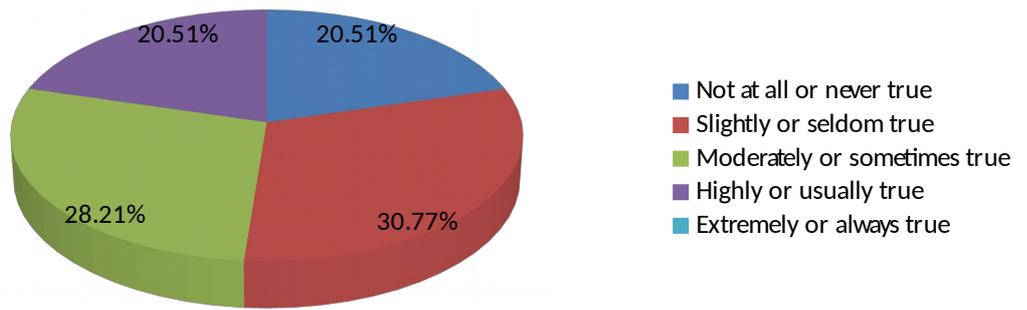


Figure 4: Participants' respond for 3rd question

When being asked in question 3, to which level the statement “During the test, I felt that whatever I did would not be good enough” true to them, none of the participants choose the option of “extremely”. The number of students choosing the rest four options was not different much from each other. 30.77% chose “slightly”, 28.21% chose “moderately” and the rest were divided equally between “not at all” and “highly” with 20.51% each.

In the next question, 30.77% of the students being asked stated that they *sometimes* lose focus when taking the speaking test, and could not remember material that they knew before the exam. The same number seldom experience this situation. Meanwhile, 23.09% of the participants said that this problem usually occurred to them, 12.82% confirmed the level of “never” and only 2.56% (1 individual) reported that he/she always fell into this situation. This questions’ answer was presented in the chart below:

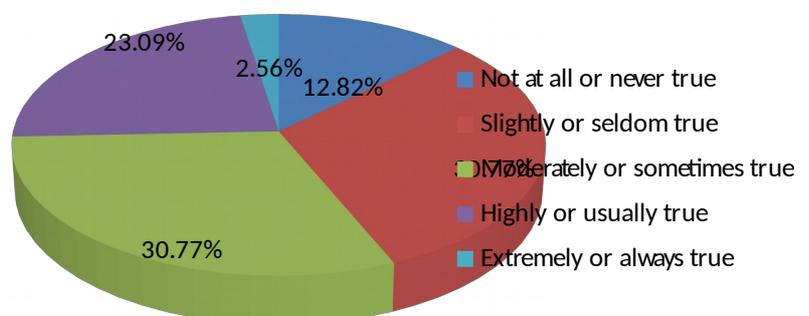


Figure 5: Participants' response for 4th question

Question 5 dug into the problem of participants' feeling during the test that whatever they did would not be good enough. 30.77% of the students involving in this research said that this kind of feeling is *moderately* true to them. The number of answer for "slightly", "highly", "not at all" and "extremely" in turn account for 25.64%, 20.51%, 15.38% and 7.69% of the research sample. Figure 6 described the above data as follow:

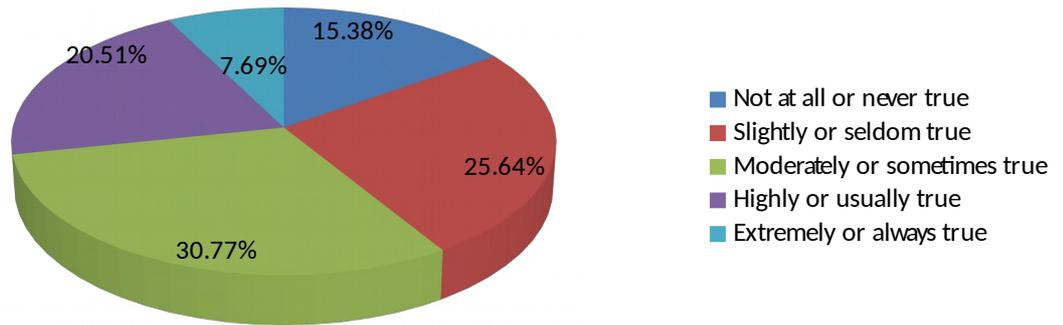


Figure 6: Participants' response for 5th question

In response to question 6, 43.59% of the students reported that the situation of feeling too worry before the test that too tired to do the test just *slightly* true to them. 25.64% thought that for them this situation is *moderately* true, 23.08% found it *not true at all* meanwhile this situation is highly true for 5.13% and extremely true for 2.56% of the participants.

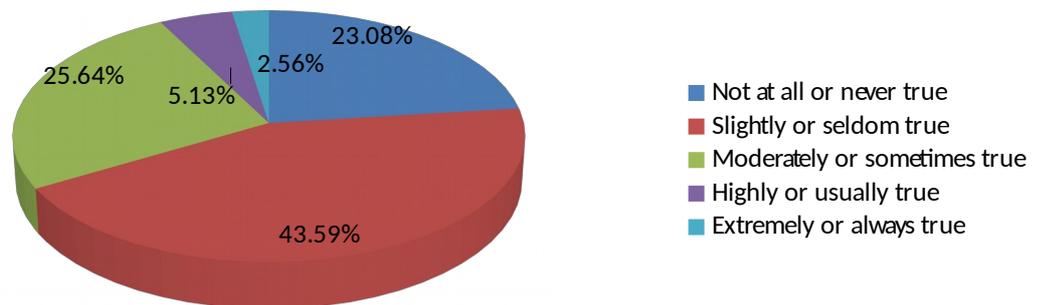


Figure 7: Participants' response for 6th question

Figure 8 presents the participants' answer for question 7 which asked the students to which level that they found the statement "I felt not really myself when I took the speaking test" true to them.

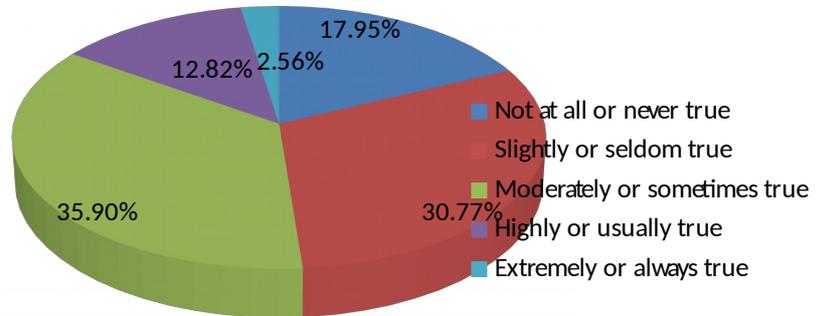


Figure 8: Participants' response for 7th question

The majority of the participants (35.90%) said that this statement *moderately* true to them. 30.77% found it just *slightly* true meanwhile 17.95% rated "not at all" and 12.82% rated "highly" as their prior choice. Only 2.56% (1 person) reported the level of "extremely" in his/her answers.

Question 8 is the last question that investigated the stage of "during the speaking test". In this question, the students were asked if they find mind-wandering during testing time was their problem. 38.46% stated that it was *slightly* true that they wander their mind when taking the speaking test, especially when they were not talking. Meanwhile, 33.33% thought the situation *moderately* true and 17.95 found it *not true at all*. The level of "highly" and "extremely" share the same number of participant' agreements which is 5.13% for each option.

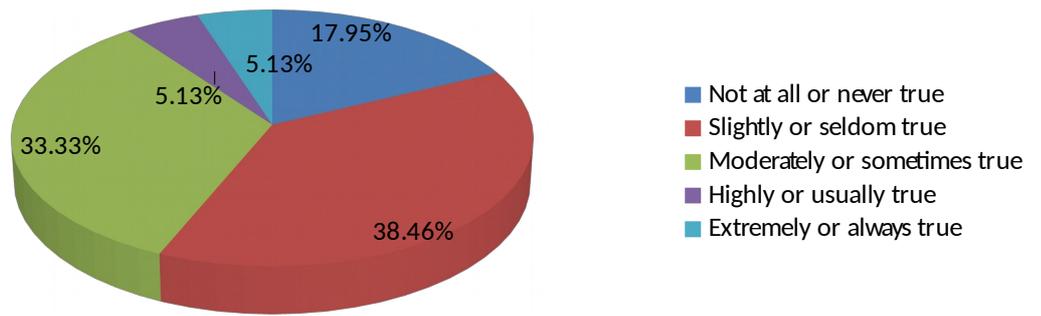


Figure 9: Participants' response for 8th question

3.1.3. After the speaking test:

The two last question of the questionnaire (question 9 and question 10) look into the phase of after the speaking test. In this phase, the mode is 2 (appear for 32.05% of the time) which means that most of the students thought that the 2 statements in this phase *slightly true to them*.

Figure 10 display the result of question 9:

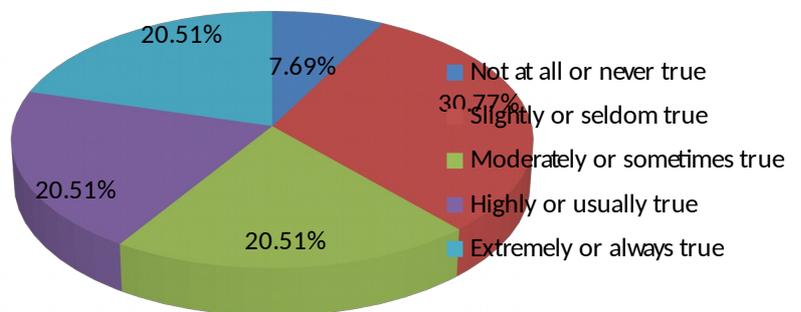


Figure 10: Participants' response for 9th question

Question 9 as to which level that the statement “After the test, I worried about whether I did well enough” true to the participants. 30.77% of the students being asked answered that this statement was *slightly* true. The option of “moderately” “highly” and “extremely” were chosen by the same number of participants with 20.51% for each. Ranking last in the choice of participants is the “not true at all” option with 7.69% of agreement.

The last question of the questionnaire – question 10, aims to find out to which level the statement “I finally remembered the answer to the questions of the speaking test after the test was already over” true to the participants. 35.9% of the participants rate it “moderately true” whereas 30.77% thought that the statement was just slightly true. Rank third and fourth in the students’ choices is “highly” (17.95%) and “extremely” (7.69%). Only 5.13% of the participants choose “not true at all” as their final answer.

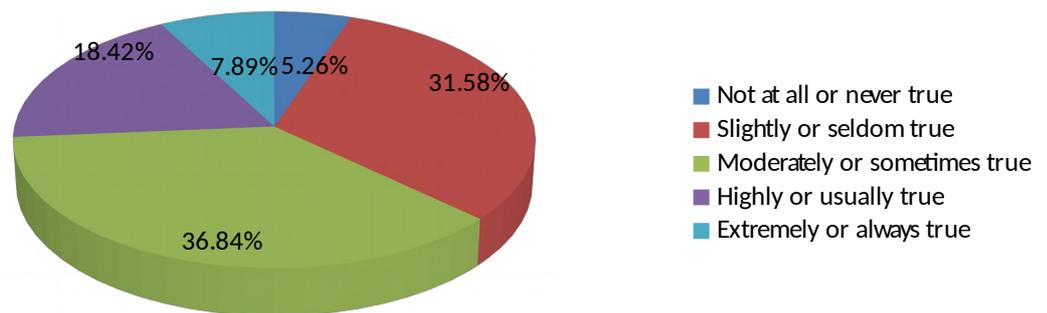


Figure 11: Participants' response for 10th question

3.2. Findings of the interview:

The first question of the interview, the researcher asks for confirmation from the participants whether the test anxiety scores truly reflects their real situation when taking the end-of-first term speaking test. All of the students being asked stated “yes” as their answer. To be more specific, five students gave a definite “yes” while the other four answers with less certainty by using “somehow yes”, “may be yes” or “quite true”. Participant A, B, F, G and H even clarified their answer with a brief description of what they were feeling when taking the speaking test. For example, participant A said that before the test she felt “worried” and even “freak out” while participant F said she often felt nervous in almost all the test and this speaking test was not an exception and participant H confessed that her nervous was clearly shown through her voice while she took the speaking test. All the participants answered this question in around 30 seconds with the eyes looked

straight to the researcher's eyes. This quick and confident reaction showed that the answer was their first thought and reflected their real thinking.

In the second part of the interview session, the researcher focused on exploring the reason that leads to participants' test anxiety by continuously using the question "Why" until getting the deepest answer. In general, it took each student 1 to 2 minutes to think of the answer for each question "Why". This brainstorming time helped the students to have the most thorough answer. The attitudes of all participants were open and friendly which could help bring about the most sincere sharing. There are two forms of questions in the second part of the interview session.

After summarizing and classifying the answers of the participants depending on the categories mentioned in the framework, the researcher found that there are 7 reasons that cause speaking test anxiety among the students. These 7 reasons are presented above from the most common to the least common.

- *Cause 1: Feeling unprepared / inexperienced for tests*

This reason was reported by 8 over 9 participants. Participants belonged to group 1 (students with *acceptable level* of test anxiety) said that careful preparation before the test, practicing by taking mock test, pronunciation self-practice, experiencing other kinds of speaking test made them more confident in taking the speaking final test. Meanwhile, participants belonged to group 2 and 3 (students with above normal level of test anxiety and students with high level of test anxiety) reported that their lacking of experience and preparation make them worried a lot before and during taking the test. The reason for their lacking of experience lied on their high-school's way of teaching speaking skill. Participant A and participant F shared that in her high school, English was not taught properly let alone the speaking skill. Participant H said that H and most of his/her friends did not have chances to practice speaking in class. The problem of lacking preparation was caused by the student's laziness.

- *Cause 2: Comparing self-performance to peers*

There are 5 participants that had the feeling of anxiety when comparing themselves to other students. Participant A and I said that they feel that they are not as good as other students of the Fast-track group, especially in speaking skill. Participants D and F said that seeing friends practicing so well made them lose their confidence. The case of participant E is a special one as he/she was affected by the halo effect when he/she got nervous when seeing his/her friends nervous.

- *Cause 3: Considering the consequences of failure*

This reason, in the specific case of 4 participants was the fear of them toward receiving low mark which could negatively affect their semester average score. This reason for anxiety is acceptable as the end-of-term speaking test account for 60% of the subject total score which is a very heavy proportion. In the case of participant I, his/her considering toward consequences of failure seem to go really far as she thought that low mark in the test would affect his/her university certificate and result in her inability of getting good job in the future.

- *Cause 4: Low levels of confidence in performance*

Three students from group two claimed the lack of confidence in performance as their reasons of test anxiety. They said that their thought of not good English proficiency (such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc.), not perform well or exposing weakness while speaking made them become anxious. In contrast, a student from group 1 said that the belief in self-ability or in another word, the high level of confidence in performance make his/her feel not anxious at all.

- *Cause 5: Fear and nervousness*

Three students agreed that fear and nervousness are popular in students, especially when it comes to speaking test. Participants D even did not know where his/her nervousness came from while participants H stated that the nervousness “was a nature of almost all students”, that’s why it is unexplainable.

- *Cause 6: Excessive worry over evaluation*

There only one participant reported this reason. He/she said that as the interview was not his/her teachers or any familiar ones, he/she was not sure of the

evaluating style which result in his/her worry about whether his/her performance fulfil the interviewer demand.

- *Cause 7: Lack of knowledge*

It is necessary to distinguish between this reason and reason number 4. Reason number 4 concerns participants' thought of being lacking of knowledge and skill that means there was no confirmation whether they had low level of English proficiency or not. Meanwhile this reason concern the real knowledge of the students. For example, the only participant (participant E) of having this reasons confessed that he/she did not know the English words related to his/her speaking topic so that he/she could not understand the question as well as express his/her ideas.

In the framework, there are two other reasons: “loss of self-worth” and “causing sorrow for their parents”. However, no participants reported those reasons in their situation.

The detail report of participants about their test anxiety reason is classified and presented in the Table 1.

3.3. Discussion:

In comparison to previous research on determining the existence of test anxiety among students, the result of this study brings about similar conclusion as it confirms that test anxiety does exist among students of the first year, FELTE Fast-track program. However the percentage of students suffering test anxiety is much higher. In comparison with the result of 25-40% in research of Carter, Williams, & Silverman (2008), Ergene (2003), McDonald (2001) and Putwain, 2007 or 36% in Driscoll's research in 2010, the percentage of over 70% really rings an alarm about the issue of test anxiety among first year, FELTE Fast-track students. Based on the mode of each phase (before, during and after the speaking test), it seems that students were more anxious before than they were during and after the speaking test. To be more specific, most of the students choose “moderately true” when

reading the statements describe the manifestation of test anxiety in the “before” phase. Meanwhile, most of them think that the manifestations in the “during” and “after” phase were just “slightly true” to them. The participants’ choice is explainable. Before taking the test, students are more anxious because they are not sure about what would come; it’s the nature of human being. However, when taking the test, they have to put more focus on the performance which sometimes can make them forget their anxiety. And after the test, students seems to have the feeling of “what done cannot be undone” so that they may feel less worried.

The causes of test anxiety that this study found followed nearly exactly the categories in the framework which means that the result of the third research question is similar to other research’s result. In this part, the researcher will discuss more about the three mostly-agreed reasons of test anxiety among the participants. The cause of “feeling of unprepared or inexperienced for the test” mainly comes from the fact that most of Vietnamese students can hardly practice speaking skill during their studying time in high school. As passing the entrance exam to university is the target of almost all students in Vietnam, both English teachers and students tend to pay less or even no attention to speaking skill which is not tested in the exam. The second cause that was agreed by many participants is “comparing self-performance to peers” reflects the inequality in students’ English speaking ability which should be considered more to develop an effective and suitable teaching program. The fact that “considering the consequences of failure” ranks third is explainable as the final exam always accounts for the highest percents of the subject total score, which means that low mark in that test can cause bad result for the whole subject. In addition, speaking is one of the main subjects of first year students in FELTE, Fast-track group of ULIS, VNU, thus, low average score in this subject can lead to a reduction in the whole year result.

On the whole, this research brings about similar result in comparison with previous studies worldwide. The similarity does not mean that this research do not have any significant outcome but shows that if the existence is confirmed and the causes is nearly the same, then the negative effect of test anxiety is likely to be no

different. This possibility will urge other researchers to dig deeper in this issue to find out the negative impacts of test anxiety and minimize them to benefit the students.

Summary: In this chapter, the answers for four research questions, which were obtained from the data in both surveys and interviews of the study, were clearly presented through tables and charts. Major findings as detailed above would be summarized in the conclusion as the final chapter of this research paper.

PART 3: CONCLUSION

* * * * *

The previous chapters have thoroughly elaborated on the introduction, the literature, the methodology, and the results of the research as well as solutions. Finally, this concluding chapter will summarize and evaluate the findings of the whole paper by summing up the results, limitations, contributions of the research as well as putting forward several suggestions for further studies.

1. Major findings of the study

On the whole, this research paper performs a fairly comprehensive study on the speaking test anxiety of first-year students of the FELTE Fast-Track program at ULIS, VNU. The research was conducted among 39 first-year Fast-Track students through means of questionnaire and interview. The data collected from the survey questionnaire was illustrated in tables and charts. Significant findings concerning the three research questions were revealed as follow:

Firstly, the data collected from questionnaire and the first question of the interview have fully answered the first and second research questions. The questionnaire's result brings about the confirmation on the existence of test anxiety among first-year students of the FELTE Fast-Track program at ULIS, VNU. To be more specific, over 70% of the participants have the test anxiety scores that are higher than the normal level. In addition, all the participants involved in the interview session stated that the test anxiety score truly reflected their real situation which enhances the reliability of the questionnaire's result.

In order to find the proper answer for the third research question as well as better understand the issue of test anxiety, the researcher continues to ask 9 students to take part in the interview session. In the interview, the participants were mainly asked about what caused their test anxiety. Their responses were classified according to the categories presented in the framework in literature review part. The results coming out show that the reasons that lead to test anxiety among students are the feelings unprepared / inexperienced for tests, the thought of comparing self-performance to peers, low levels of confidence in performance and considering the consequences of failure, fear and nervousness and excessive worry over evaluation. Besides, this research also discovers "lack of knowledge" (which includes knowledge of language and test form) as another cause that has not been mentioned in the literature.

2. Implication:

Depending on the causes presented in the result of interview session, the researcher also wants to propose some personal ideas to reduce test anxiety among students presented in the table below:

Table 2: Ways to reduce test anxiety

Causes	Ways to reduce test anxiety
1. Feeling of unprepared or inexperienced for	- High-school curriculum should pay proper attention to speaking skill - University lecturers should provide thorough explanation

the test	about the test form as well as let students practice and do the mock test in class as many as possible. - Students should practice more at home
2. Comparing self-performance to peers	- Students should consider the comparison as a way to learn from peers as well as improve the shortage of themselves
3. Considering the consequences of failure	- The university should consider changing the evaluating way in which the students' result will be evaluated throughout learning process (with frequent assignment) not mainly depending on one test result.
4. Low levels of confidence in performance	- As practice makes perfect, students should practice more to improve themselves. When their skill and knowledge are improved, they will be more confident.

Besides, the researcher also wants to recommend a useful e-book for students who are experiencing test anxiety. This is the “Reducing Test Anxiety” in The Praxis series by Education Testing Service. This 12-page book provides a clear overview about test anxiety, reasons of test anxiety and thorough guidelines on how to reduce test anxiety, especially for students. In this book, there are 8 tips presented with clear explanation which are all easy to follow. These tips are summarized as below:

- (1) Learn about the test.
- (2) Make an organize study schedule and stick to it.
- (3) Counter negative thoughts with positive thoughts and actions.
- (4) Learn the truth about tests.
- (5) Take care of the body health
- (6) Practice tension-released exercises
- (7) Tune out distraction
- (8) Stay focused.

3. Contribution of the study

First of all, this research has confirmed the existence of test anxiety among first year students of FELTE, Fast-track Program in ULIS, VNU. As test continues as an inevitable part of students' life, it is important for students to know or aware of test anxiety – the phenomenon that always go along with test which can properly negatively affect their test results and their psychological health. The readers who are students can use the scale in the questionnaire to calculate their own test anxiety score as well as applied the suggestion to reduce their test anxiety. In addition, readers who are teacher, lecturers or university authorities can consider the discussion to make proper change to the curriculum as well as give instructions to help students reduce their test anxiety.

Secondly, the research also provides a thorough overview on test anxiety – the phenomenon that lack of attention in Vietnam's research field and thus, can ring an alarm about this issue as well as open a new era of studying this problem in education environment. Hopefully the research can be a valuable framework or reference source for other researchers who interested in the same topic

4. Limitations of the study

Despite the researcher's efforts in justifying the methodology as well as collecting and analyzing data with careful consideration, certain limitations could be detected in this study due to time constraint and other unexpected factors. Firstly, the research was conducted when the participants had already finished speaking test and received the score. Knowing the result can affect the perception of anxiety among students (some with high score may think that they have the low level of anxious). In addition, as all the reflections of participants are based on their memory, it is hard to confirm the accuracy of the information. Secondly, also because of the fact that the study was carried out when the participants have finished the speaking test, the researchers could not conduct observation on the participants' performance. This is also a big limitation since all of the data we had were in the form of self-reflection, which was quite subjective.

5. Suggestions for further studies

With the result shown in the previous chapter, the researchers would like to provide some suggestions for further studies.

Firstly, since this research mainly aimed at confirming the existence of the test anxiety as well as the causes that lead to this phenomenon, a thorough analysis on how and in which angle does it affect the test result is needed to dig deeper into this issue.

Secondly, to get the most reliable test anxiety score, it could be better if later researcher can split the questionnaire in 3 parts “before”, “during” and “after” and handle it at the right time for students. The “before” part should be delivered while students are waiting for their turn to do the test and the other two should be distributed right after they finish the test.

Last but not least, the observation method should be applied to ensure the objectivity of the data.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: WESTSIDE TEST ANXIETY SCALE

Rate how true each of the following is of you, from extremely or always true, to not at all or never true. Use the following 5 point scale.

5	4	3	2	
Extremely	Highly	Moderately	Slightly	Not at all
or always	or usually	or sometimes	or seldom	or never
true	true	true	true	true

___ 1) The closer I am to a major exam, the harder it is for me to concentrate on the material.

___ 2) When I study, I worry that I will not remember the material on the exam.

___ 3) During important exams, I think that I am doing awful or that I may fail.

___ 4) I lose focus on important exams, and I cannot remember material that I knew before the exam.

___ 5) I finally remember the answer to exam questions after the exam is already over.

___ 6) I worry so much before a major exam that I am too worn out to do my best on the exam.

___ 7) I feel out of sorts or not really myself when I take important exams.

___ 8) I find that my mind sometimes wanders when I am taking important exams.

___ 9) After an exam, I worry about whether I did well enough.

___ 10) I struggle with writing assignments, or avoid them as long as I can. I feel that whatever I do will not be good enough.

_____ Sum of the 10 questions

_____ Divide the sum by 10. This is your Test Anxiety score.

What does your test anxiety score mean?

1.0—1.9 Comfortably low test anxiety

2.0—2.5 Normal or average test anxiety

2.5—2.9 High normal test anxiety

3.0—3.4 Moderately high

3.5—3.9 High test anxiety

4.0—5.0 Extremely high anxiety

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE

Rate how true each of the following is of you, from extremely or always true, to not at all or never true. Use the following 5 point scale to answer the question: “How does this statement true to you?”

5	4	3	2	
Extremely	Highly	Moderately	Slightly	Not at all
or always	or usually	or sometimes	or seldom	or never
true	true	true	true	true

___ 1) The closer I am to the speaking test, the harder it is for me to concentrate on the material (such as theory about the paired-form speaking test, steps and tips to do the test, pronunciation rule)

___ 2) When I prepare for the test, I worry that I will not remember the material on the exam.

___ 3) During the speaking test, I think that I am doing awful or that I may fail.

___ 4) I lose focus when taking the speaking test, and I cannot remember material that I knew before the exam.

___ 5) During the test, I feel that whatever I do will not be good enough.

___ 6) I worry so much before the speaking test that I am too tired out to do my best on the test

___ 7) I feel not really myself when I take the speaking test

___ 8) I find that my mind sometimes wanders when I am taking the speaking test. (especially when I'm not talking)

___ 9) After the test exam, I worry about whether I did well enough.

___ 10) I finally remember the answer to the questions of the speaking test after the test is already over.

_____ Sum of the 10 questions

_____ Divide the sum by 10. This is your Test Anxiety score.

What does your test anxiety score mean?

1.0—1.9 Comfortably low test anxiety

2.0—2.5 Normal or average test anxiety

2.5—2.9 High normal test anxiety

3.0—3.4 Moderately high

3.5—3.9 High test anxiety

4.0—5.0 Extremely high anxiety

Name: _____

Class: _____

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDELINE QUESTIONS

Form 1:

Your test anxiety score is ...

1. Do you think that this score truly reflect your real situation?
2. What do you think that are the reasons of your test anxiety?

Form 2:

Your test anxiety score is ...

1. Do you think that this score truly reflect your real situation?
2. What do you think that are the reasons of your confidence?

APPENDIX D: STUDENTS INTERVIEW EXTRACT

Introduction (the same for every participant)

Researcher (R): Hello, my name is Nguyen Phuong Nhung, I am from class 09.E1. You and your class have done a questionnaire about test anxiety for me. Do you remember it?

Participant (P): Yes.

R: You are among 9 students that I choose to interview about the reason of you test anxiety. Would you mind if I record our conversation? I will keep everything secret.

P: Yes

R: I will ask you in English and you answer in English too. If you do not know any word or do not understand any question, you can ask me in Vietnamese. Are you clear?

P: Yes.

R: So can we start now?

P: Yes.

1. Participant A

R: Your test anxiety score is 3 which means that you have a moderately high test anxiety. Do you think that this score truly reflects your real situation when you took the final speaking test?

P: “Uhm”...(slightly pull a wry face) Somehow, yes (light smile). I do tend to feel worried and “uhm” kind of freak out before the day of the speaking test.

R: Thank you. What do you think that are the reasons of your test anxiety?

P: (Think for 1 minute) my classmates can speak fluently... and... they can come up with many A LOT OF interesting ideas in a very short time, but I don't think I'm able to do that so... sometimes I lost my confidence.

R: why do you think that you are not able to do as well as other students?

P: I don't think I have enough skills and knowledge.... I think they have more chance of practice the speaking skill than me.

R: Why do you think that have less chance of speaking than other students do?

P: Because they all from the specializing schools.

R: Can you be more specific?

P: I think... in specializing schools... they have a lot of language periods so they have the chance to practice 4 skills than a student in regular school like me. “Hihi” (laugh lightly)

R: Can you tell me more about how you were taught speaking skill in your high school?

P: My school isn't a language school so we have to spend time on many other subjects like math...history...and I don't think English was taught... rightly in my school. I can only practice by /bắt chước?/ (big grind) [it's “imitate”] “yeah” imitate

the characters on T.V most of the time so I think that I experience such as with native speakers.

R: What else can you think that are the reason for your test anxiety?

P: The result of the speaking test.

R: Can you be more specific?

P: The result of the speaking test accounts for high amount of the final grades so if I screw it up, it will affect my grades so I think I should be worried about it.(smile)

R: Ok. What else can you think?

P: I think that's all (big grind) I cannot (shaking head) think of any more reasons.

2. Participant B

R: Your test anxiety score is 2.4, which means that you have normal test anxiety level. Do you think that this score truly reflects your real situation when you took the final speaking test?

P: "Ah ohm" We just look at the final speaking test?

R: Yes, that's right. So do you think that this score truly reflects your situation?

P: YES (firmly nod) I think so because I often have a careful preparation before speaking tests. What... "uhm" what I mean is not that I only practice a lot on the days right before exams but speaking English must be a habit of mine every day. It's the reason why I can reduce most anxiety on speaking tests.

R: You said that you can reduce most strain on speaking tests which means that you still anxious a little bit, right?

P: Yes, because it's still a TEST for a foreign language and I think a LITTLE bit "nervous" is normal for a student like me (point at himself/ herself)

R: what do you mean by "student like you"?

P: "Uhm"...what I mean here is about... general students, my competence.

R: Can you be more specific?

P: "Yeah" we are students... we are on the way to kind of... "uhm" perfect our English and especially speaking. What's more, as I can see, speaking seems always challenging to almost all the learners because their native accents and their habits of wrong pronunciation or /nói không có nhấn nhá là gì ạ?/ [it's "flat intonations"] "yeah"...flat in...[intonation] yes intonation make it hard to copy the native speakers sound.

R: So besides practicing every day, what else do you think that make you confident in your speaking test?

P: "Yeah" besides practicing, I think we should take care of our health to have a brilliant mind on that day (bid grind) ...we should not put ourselves under too much /áp lực?/ [it's "pressure"] "yeah"...pressure make us nervous and easy lead to regret mistake.

R: Is there anything else that you can come up with?

P: I think no

R: Ok I think that's enough. Thank you so much.

3. Participant C

R: Your test anxiety score is 2.1 which means that you have normal level of test anxiety. Do you think that this score truly reflects your real situation when you took the final speaking test?

P: I don't think so. It is just one test so it cannot tell the every case.

R: What I mean here is the situation of the final speaking test.

B: "Oh" so it maybe yes (smile)

R: Does this mean that you were quite confident in this speaking test?

P: Yes (smile)

R: what do you think that make you confident in this test?

P: The fact is that I have taken MANY kinds of tests so I familiar with different ways to expose to the tests.

R: what kind of speaking test have you taken?

P: I have taken TOEFL test (smile) and the speaking test of another language (smile)

R: what can you gained from other speaking test that became helpful for you in this speaking test?

P: "Well" As I said above, I have become MORE and more confident after each kind of different tests. The TOEFL test helps me to have experience in... quick reaction to different topics and the speaking test of another language help me... familiar with the testing environment.

R: What else can you think that makes you be more confident?

P: I think that because I practice very carefully for this test (big grind)

R: How did you practice?

P: "Uhm" (a little shy face) it sounds a little ridiculous but I tried to speak to myself until I found the most satisfactory.

R: "Oh" that's interesting. It means that you self-practice a lot right?

P: YES (firmly nod) because test result only improve when I MYSELF want to enhance and try as much as possible to practice.

R: What else can you think of?

P: "Oh"... I think that when you try to tell yourself that you will be good, then you will be good (thumps up)

R: "Oh" (thumps up) that's very interesting. I like it.

P: Thank you (big grind) I think that's all that I can think of (big grind)

R: Thank you so much for your supporting and interesting sharing.

4. Participant D

R: Your test anxiety score is 2.3 which means that you have normal level of test anxiety. Do you think that this score truly reflects your real situation when you took the final speaking test?

P: YES, I do.

R: Does this mean that you were quite confident in the speaking test?

P: Yes (slightly nod) I was. I was a bit nervous a few minutes right before the test, I don't know why... it just... naturally came, but overall I was quite confident (big grind)

R: what do you think that make you confident?

P: "Uhm" I think that I was instructed to do the test in advance and to me, as I've only gone through 1 speaking test, the test was... "uhm" rather easy. So I was not very nervous because I know that I can do it.

R: What were you instructed to do the test?

P: The teacher let me /thi thử?/ [it's "take sample test"] "yeah" I do sample test for several times.

R: Is the mock test similar to the real one?

P: YES (firmly nod) So that I do not feel strange when taking the test and that make me more comfortable.

R: What else can you think that makes you confident?

P: No I think that only practice in class help me to perform well.

R: so what make you feel a bit nervous a few minutes right before the test?

P: Before the test, I saw two friends of mine practicing and they were REALLY good speakers so I was nervous. But the real reason I think is just my nerves...

“uhm” what can I say... (pull a slightly wry face and look up) it tends to get tense right before the test, but during the test, it's okay again (big grind)

R: What else that can make you a little anxious.

P: I think no (big grind)

R: Ok thank you. I think that's enough.

5. Participant E

R: Your test anxiety score is 3.9 which means that you have a high level of test anxiety. Do you think that this score truly reflects your real situation when you took the final speaking test?

P: “Uhm”...I think yes

R: what do you think that are the reason of your test anxiety?

P: I think the main reason is I cannot control the topic, the question, even the grade that teachers will give me in the speaking test

R: Can you explain more about your reason?

P: “Well” Sometimes...I cannot think of words related to a topic like...technology device. I can misunderstand questions or...cannot understand them. I HATE receiving low marks so the grade of speaking test make me anxious.

R: why can't you think of words related to the test topic?

P: There're some words that related to the topic but I didn't know what they are in English.

R: It means that you lack of vocabulary?

P: Yes. (nod)

R: What about misunderstand questions or cannot understand them? Can you explain more about this?

P: “Uhm”...I think...I got too nervous that I cannot focus to the teachers’ words. I keep on thinking...what if I pronounce any word wrongly.

R: What else can you think that makes you anxious?

P: I think another reason is the interviewer... I did not know her... I was a little bit afraid of stranger.

R: Why were you afraid of stranger?

P: Because I did not know her marking...way no marking style, so I did not know whether my performance was good enough.

P: So why aren’t you afraid of me?

R: “Hihi” (smile) You came to our class come times and you look beautiful. “Hihi” (smile)

P: Really? Thank you.

R: “Hihi” (smile)

R: What else can be the reason of your test anxiety?

P: “Oh” when I looked at my friends, they were also nervous. They are better speaker than me but they were also nervous that makes me nervous too (smile)

P: What else?

R: “Uhm” Maybe because I am not familiar with interviewing.

P: Can you be more specific?

R: I do not have experience of being interviewed...I also do not prepare much “hihi” (smile) just some lessons in class (smile)

P: Do you have any other reason?

R: I think that I’m run out of ideas.

P: ok thank youuuu. I think that's enough

6. Participant F

R: Your test anxiety score is 2.7 which means that you have a high normal of test anxiety. Do you think that this score truly reflects your real situation while you took the final speaking test?

P: 2.7 over what? (slightly raising eyebrows)

R: 2.7 over 4 which means a little above normal.

P: “Well”... I think it is quite true...because in almost all the tests I often seem nervous.

R: Ok, so what do you think are the reasons of your test anxiety when you took the final speaking test?

P: It may be because I am afraid of what questions I will be asked... how I answer them or not being able to perform well.

R: Can you explain more?

P: I prepared for the final test with my partner carefully...But... it seemed... disappear when I came to the test place.

R: Does this mean that you have the feeling like you have not prepared anything?

P: I think it doesn't... “Uhm”...it kind of I knew I had already prepared but I couldn't take advantage of it

R: Ok. What else can you think that makes you anxious?

P: I saw other doing well, it somehow affected on me and made me feel worried

R: What else?

P: Uhm, I think, the other reason is that in my high school we didn't have speaking test, so I think because they were just my VERY FIRST times, i am not used to it and don't have much experience

R: “Oh” Can you tell me a little about how you studied speaking skill in your high school?

P: Because it was aimed at passing the entrance university exam...so almost of the time...we focused on grammar and vocabulary and didn't have much time for speaking lesson...Even in months near to the exam, we practised exercises for the exam in the speaking lesson. "Haha" (laugh)

R: Ok I understand.

P: So can you think of anything else that makes you anxious?

R: I think that's all (big grind)

P: So I think that 's enough. Thank you so much!

7. Participant G

R: Your test anxiety score is 2.6 which means that you have a high normal level of test anxiety. Do you think that this score truly reflects your real situation while you took the final speaking test?

P: Yes (nod) Actually... I'm not really confident whenever I take speaking tests. When it's over it feel like a heavy rock just off from my shoulders (big grind)

R: So what do you think that are the reasons of your test anxiety?

P: Oh that maybe partly because of my laziness (big grind) and partly because of my lack of confidence

R: Can you be more specific about your laziness?

P: "Well" I convinced myself that I would do well without careful preparation so I didn't prepare much but it turned out to be wrong.

R: Ok, so what made you feel not confident?

P: "Uhm"...When taking the test I started to think that I should have prepared carefully for the test... "uhm" about preparing ideas and words or something like that (smile)

R: Can you be more specific?

P: "Uhm" I feel free when talking in English... but when it's speaking test it requires... "ohm" QUALITY of ideas not QUANTITY and...the language I used

also was marked the thinking of not practicing those thing enough distract me and...

I'm worried (smile)

R: Ok, what else can you think that makes you anxious?

P: Nothing else, just my lack of confidence and my laziness (big grind)

R: Ok thank you. I think that's enough.

8. Participant H

R: Your test anxiety score is 2.7 which means that you have a high normal level of test anxiety. Do you think that this score truly reflects your real situation while you took the final speaking test?

P: I think YES (firmly nod) To be honest...the feeling of anxiety made my performance not as good as I had expected...The nervousness was quite clearly in my voice... and my partner and I even spoke a little bit out of topic in part 2 of the interview (sad face)

R: So what do you think that are the reasons of your test anxiety?

P: I think... “uhm” there are various reasons that lead to this problem.

R: Can you be more specific?

P: The first reason is that anxiety is an.../để hiểu hay kiểu tự nhiên là gì ạ? Kiểu vấn đề có thể thông cảm được í ạ? [it's “understandable”] “yeah” understandable problem of students... It's normal to have that feeling before and during the test... The second reason is that... “uhm” (look up) first year students like me have never experienced a speaking test before. At high school, we just did ...writing tests on grammar and vocabulary...We think that this different format can lower their score and not confident of doing the test well enough.

R: Why do you think that anxiety is an understandable problem of student? What are students afraid of?

P: There are some hard-working students who NEVER think that they have prepared enough for the test... The more they revise, the more they feel nervous...

It's natural to almost all students.... They are afraid of getting low scores. Me afraid too “hihi” (smile). They worry that they can make stupid mistakes.

R: What else can you think that makes you anxious?

P: For me, speaking is often the weakest skills of most first-year students... Before entering university, we seem not to have chances to practice speaking in class and speaking with native speakers... Therefore, the thought of... “uhm” not good in speaking made us even more nervous than any other kind of test. In my opinion, if we don't think that we are good or we can do it, we cannot do well (shake head)

R: Ok, I got it. What else can you come up with?

P: I think I cannot find any more reason.

R: Ok so I think it's enough. Thank you so much.

9. Participant I

R: Your test anxiety score is 3 which means that you have a high normal level of test anxiety. Do you think that this score truly reflects your real situation while you took the final speaking test?

P: somehow, yes (slightly nod)

R: So what do you think are the reasons of your test anxiety?

P: First, my bad pronunciation

R: Why do you think that you have bad pronunciation?

P: I have not been taught about pronunciation in high school.

R: Ok so next reason?

P: My vocabulary is not good.

R: What else can you think that makes you anxious?

P: The bad result I might get... Students from other class of CLC are REALLY good at speaking

R: Why are you afraid of bad mark?

P: Every student are afraid of bad mark

R: In your opinion why are students afraid of bad mark?

P: We have to agree that, students learn for their mark... It's true that we learn to get knowledge... But... it will be meaningless if we don't have a good /bằng cấp?/ [it's "certificate"]. We might not be accepted at the job we need.

R: What else can you think that can be another reason?

P: The kind of test is quite new to me...I haven't done it before (shaking head) I don't know clearly about it. So I'm a bit confuse

R: Can you come up with any other reason?

P: My English grammar is not good too. In speaking test, all of my weakness will be exposed

R: I can understand that. What else?

P: That's all

R: Ok. I think that's enough. Thank you so much.

Coding list:

... : pause

“double quotation marks”: filler

(round brankets) : action or facial expressionS

[square brackets]: researcher interruption

/solidus/: Vietnamese

CAPITALIZED: strongly stressed words