

FOREIGN LANGUAGE SPEAKING ANXIETY AND PUBLIC SPEAKING ANXIETY: IMPLICATIONS FOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Public speaking anxiety (PSA) or glossophobia is an utmost important psychological impediment that the students face while speaking in front of others and it is especially the case with speaking in foreign language in university settings. This research enquiry explores the connection amongst anxiety of foreign language speaking (FLSA) and public speaking anxiety with academic performance, besides gender variances in public speaking anxiety amongst the university students from Pakistan. The research utilized a quantitative cross-sectional research design and the number of students sampled was 250. The Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA), Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and Academic Performance Scale (APS) are employed to assimilate the data. The reliability of the instruments was good. Independent-samples t-test and regression analyses showed that there were significantly greater levels of public speaking anxiety reported by female students than male students. The foreign language speaking anxiety demonstrated a momentous correlation with academic performance, and a strong association with public speaking anxiety. The results under emphasize the outcome of language-related anxiety on students' communication and academic experiences, and the necessity of providing supportive educational interventions to develop communication confidence and decrease language-related anxiety. The study is a contribution in the form of evidence from the Pakistani higher education context and then it has practical implications for educators, curriculum developers and university counselors.

Introduction

Oral communication is an essential skill in the college and business settings. University students should be able to present, attend seminars, present research projects and

communicate with confidence in professional situations. However, students can experience psychological distress when speaking in public, commonly known as Glossophobia or public speaking anxiety (PSA), which includes fear,

physiological arousal, cognitive interference and an avoidance pattern that interferes with the communication process and student participation in the classroom (Casalia, 2025; Christy, 2021; McCroskey, 1977; Paridaluddin et al., 2025). PSA is even more problematic with respect to a foreign language environment where students must cope with the processing of the language, with pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and with the evaluation of the audience. This extra cognitive load may result in Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA), which is a situational type of anxiety associated with second language acquisition (Horwitz et al., 1986). FLCA includes test anxiety, negative evaluation fear, and communication trepidation that, in aggregate, may influence students' trust and motivation in communication. Evidence has shown that foreign language anxiety may impact students' emotions, engagement in the classroom, self-confidence in communicating in foreign languages, and learning outcomes (Dewaele & Ip, 2013; Chen, 2025). If a student has already a lot of anxiety with his/her language, he/she might not want to participate in class and refrain from giving his opinion, even if he/she has a good level of competence in his language (Botes et al., 2020). These activities may limit student engagement in learning and classroom activities.

Foreign language anxiety-academic performance relationship has also been gaining more attention. Anxiety can use mental resources that are needed for processing information, working memory, and problem solving, which can impact the performance of students in presentations, exams, and in class discussions (MacIntyre, Gregersen, & Mercer, 2020). Moderate anxiety can be helpful in preparing, but too much anxiety can lead to cognitive overload and affect performance (Horwitz et al., 1986; Chen, 2025).

Gender is another key aspect of communication anxiety. Several researches observed that females may experience escalated degrees of PSA compared to males (Christy, 2021). Socialization, fear of negative evaluation,

communication self-efficacy, cultural expectations and perceived performance pressure are all linked to these differences (Ali & Habib, 2025). Gender differences, however, do not appear in all settings and contexts, so this may be due to the differences in educational and socio-cultural backgrounds (Botes et al., 2020). Although some research related to foreign language anxiety and glossophobia is done at international level, but petite empirical enquiry has probed into the combined influence of foreign language anxiety and glossophobia in relation to academic achievement in higher education in Pakistan. Some of the previous studies have focused on these concepts separately while others have studied the connection amid FLSA and academic outcomes, using PSA as the mediating variable (Dansieh et al., 2021; Kianinezhad, N., 2024). The Pakistani educational context of being multilingual further highlights the need to look into these relationships in its linguistic and cultural context. The current study is set out to fill the following gaps: (a) to explore gender differences in PSA, (b) to understand the association of foreign language speaking anxiety on academic performance, and (c) to understand the connectedness amid foreign language speaking anxiety and PSA.

The enquiry is useful because it discusses glossophobia, foreign language anxiety and academic proficiency as a single problem within the context of Pakistan and provides evidence from the Pakistani Higher education context and suggestions for teachers, language teachers, language counsellors and curriculum developers. In sum, building confidence in communicating may help raise students' academic success, mental health, and professional competence (MacIntyre et al., 2020; Chen, 2025).

Literature Review, Research Gaps and Hypotheses

Research Gaps

First, previous research on (FLCA) is largely dedicated to the language learning outcomes (e.

g., speaking proficiency, language achievement, willingness to communicate) and has not explored the connectedness amid FLCA and glossophobia (Botes et al., 2020; Dewaele & Li, 2022). Second, studies on PSA have mostly focused on the concepts of communication competence and presentation proficiency, and the foreign language talking anxiety and its effect on glossophobia has been under-researched, specifically in the settings of multilingual education. Third, there is inconclusive evidence on the association amid FLCA and academic outcomes. Many enquiries observed adverse association, but some studies have indicated that arousal may be beneficial in being motivated, prepared, and excited, which shows that there are factors of context and culture. Fourth, while substantial scholarship exists describing gender differences in communication anxiety, little research has been conducted in Pakistani universities where mostly English language remains as a medium of instruction and as a foreign language by many students. Last but not least, a few studies have attempted to include FLA and PSA in the same theoretical framework, with a specific focus on the comparison between male and female and academic achievement in developing countries. To fill this gap, this enquiry intends to examine these associations within the university students in Pakistan.

Public Speaking Anxiety (PSA)

It is also known as glossophobia. Public speaking is a skill that is highly relevant in the educational environment, such as in making presentations, seminars, research defense and communication in the workplace. Although it is significant, many kids in the university suffer from glossophobia, which is defined as the emotional, cognitive, behavioral and physiological reactions bearing an unfavorable effect on the success of communication (McCroskey, 1977; Christy, 2021). PSA in students is severe enough such that it leads to a rapid heartbeat, trembling, excessive sweating, avoidance behaviors, negative evaluation, and reduces concentration, which in turn bears an

adverse influence on their classroom participation and academic capability (Dansieh et al., 2021). The Communication Apprehension Theory is the theory that people have different levels of communication apprehension. High communication apprehension students tend to shun speaking situations and their communication confidence is low in spite of their knowledge (McCroskey, 1977). Communication competency has become a key skill for students' success in higher education and in the world of work, as presentation and collaborative learning gain importance in the academic field (Dewaele & Ip, 2013). However, persistent glossophobia diminishes leadership participation, inclination to interconnect and communication self-efficacy (Paridaluddin et al., 2025).

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA)

FLCA is a classroom related type of anxiety that occurs when acquiring the second language (Horwitz et al., 1986). It involves communication apprehension, test anxiety and negative evaluation fear, which have a damaging outcome on the learners' communication confidence. Foreign language anxiety is a consistent aspect in research, all of which indicates that it negatively impacts speaking confidence, engagement in class, and language achievement (MacIntyre et al., 2020). It can be affected by various elements like motivation, self-efficacy, classroom climate, emotional intelligence, teacher support and peer interaction (Botes et al., 2020). Anxiety and confidence in communication can be decreased by supportive learning environments and constructive feedback (Dewaele & Ip, 2013). FLCA in the multilingual settings of Pakistan, where English is the medium of instruction, goes beyond language learning and may impact the students' total learning experience.

Gender Differences in PSA

Gender differences are still an important issue in communication anxiety studies. Higher amounts of PSA among female students have

been reported in the past when compared to their male counterparts (Perveen et al., 2018; Christy, 2021). According to S.E.T., the four sources of communication confidence are mastery experiences, observation, verbal persuasion and emotional regulation (Bandura, 1997). Also from a socio-cultural perspective, female students might be more afraid of audience evaluation, interpersonal judgment, and presentation perfectionism, which can lead to higher levels of communication anxiety (Shahan et al., 2025; Ali & Habib, 2025). But recent evidence has indicated that these differences are more a product of education and classroom environment, rather than solely biological (Botes et al., 2020). The present study confirmed that female students' PSA was meaningfully greater compared to male students, as in previous studies.

It is well known that there are gender differences in communication anxiety in education psychology and communication field. Female students tend to have higher extents of PSA since they are considerably more frightened of negative evaluation, lack in communication confidence and social expectations from their performance (Perveen et al., 2018; Christy, 2021). The differences, however, may differ in educational contexts and classrooms (Botes et al., 2022). The hypothesis is thus suggested: H1: Male university students are significantly less anxious about public speaking than female university students. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Female university students experience significantly higher public speaking anxiety than male university students.

Foreign Language Anxiety and Academic Performance

FLCA has been extensively linked to educational failure. Excessive anxiety can be distracting and cause resources to be diverted from learning, problem solving, and effective communication while being motivated to prepare for exams (MacIntyre et al., 2020). Students in a high state of anxiety are inclined

to give more consideration to the fear of being evaluated than to the task of learning and tend to show decreased comprehension, speaking fluency, participation in the classroom, and examination performance (Horwitz et al., 1986). Recent scholarships have shown an adverse connection amid foreign language anxieties and achievement in foreign languages, where language anxious students exhibited lower oral proficiency, weaker engagement, and lower academic confidence (Chen, 2025). The Control-Value Theory of Achievement Emotions (Pekrun, 2006) propositions that students' anxiety about school-related tasks affects their performance by influencing perceived control and the perceived value of learning tasks. In line with this view, the present study revealed that FLSA has significant effect on academic performance.

A secondary purpose of the enquiry was to enlighten the association amid FLCA and academic performance. The anxiety of speaking foreign language may affect students' ability to comprehend information, join in class activities, and present well in class and test. High anxiety disturbs cognitive resources and causes learners to be less confident, thus affecting learning results (Horwitz et al., 1986). In addition, Control-Value theory proposes that feelings of lack of control over learning tasks due to anxiety impact academic performance (Pekrun, 2006). Likewise, MacIntyre et al. (2020) found that needs of excessive language anxiety restrict classroom participation and communication. Based on this, the next hypothesis is suggested:

H2: Foreign language speaking anxiety significantly predicts students' academic performance.

Foreign Language Anxiety and Public Speaking Anxiety

In spite of the distinct nature of the two types of anxiety, FLCA and PSA are conceptually linked by psychological features such as negative evaluation fear, communication apprehension, decreased self-confidence, physiological arousal and avoidance behaviors (Horwitz et al., 2010; Dewaele & Ip, 2013).

The anxiety students may feel in their foreign language class can trickle over into other contexts of public speaking, which may lead to decreased participation and communication confidence in the classroom. Theories of self-efficacy suggest that people who have low communication self-efficacy see speaking scenarios as threatening and are more likely to experience anxiety and to avoid speaking in them. Positive speaking experiences on the other hand, build self-efficacy and lower the future anxiety (Bandura, 1997). In the same way, recent studies have shown that communication confidence lies in the middle of FLSA and speaking performance, which suggests that the interventions focusing on self-efficacy could decrease foreign language anxiety and glossophobia (Dewaele & Li, 2022). This is

supported by the present study, which found that the FLSA significantly predicted the PSA of the university students.

The psychological traits of FLSA and PSA are alike: that is, negative evaluation fear, communication apprehension, avoidance behavior and decreased communication confidence (Horwitz et al., 2010; Dewaele & Ip, 2013). Social Cognitive Theory suggests that communication self-efficacy is negatively related to PSA, with lower communication self-efficacy leading to higher levels of PSA (Bandura, 1997). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Foreign language speaking anxiety significantly predicts public speaking anxiety among university students.

Table 1
Summary of Literature on PSA and FLCA

Author(s) & Year	Methodology / Approach	Key Finding	Limitation
McCroskey (1977)	Theoretical/conceptual framework on communication apprehension.	Communication apprehension increases speaking avoidance and reduces communication confidence.	Primarily theoretical; no specific student sample reported in the review.
Horwitz et al. (1986)	Scale development and theoretical conceptualization of FLCA.	FLCA comprises negative evaluation fear, communication apprehension, and test anxiety.	Foundational work; context is older than contemporary multilingual learning environments.
Dewaele et al. (2013)	Empirical study of foreign-language-related emotional and communication experiences.	Supportive learning environments can reduce language anxiety and improve communication confidence.	Context-specific; generalizability to Pakistan is limited.
Perveen et al. (2018)	Quantitative comparative study examining PSA by gender.	Female students reported higher PSA than male students.	Focused mainly on gender differences rather than the combined anxiety-academic performance relationship.

Bandura (1997)	Theoretical framework developing Self-Efficacy Theory.	Self-efficacy develops through mastery experiences, observation, persuasion, and emotional states.	Theoretical source rather than a direct empirical study of foreign-language/public-speaking anxiety.
Botes et al. (2020)	Literature/meta-analytic evidence on foreign language anxiety and related learner factors.	Language anxiety is influenced by motivation, self-efficacy, classroom climate, and teacher/peer support.	Limited evidence specifically from Pakistani higher education.
MacIntyre et al. (2020)	Empirical research on language teachers' coping and language-related emotional experiences.	Language anxiety is linked to communication, classroom engagement, and learning-related outcomes.	Contextual limitations may reduce generalizability to university students in Pakistan.
Horwitz et al. (2010)	Theoretical/research-based discussion of language anxiety.	Foreign language and PSA share fear of evaluation and communication apprehension.	Limited direct examination of academic performance in the reviewed discussion.
Dewaele & Ip (2013)	Empirical study involving FLCA and related learner variables.	Anxiety is associated with reduced confidence, physiological arousal, and communication avoidance.	Limited contextual generalizability.
Pekrun (2006)	Theoretical development of Control-Value Theory of Achievement Emotions.	Excessive anxiety can reduce perceived control and undermine learning outcomes.	Theoretical framework; not specific to FLSA.
Christy (2021)	Empirical study examining speaking anxiety and student performance in speech class.	Speaking anxiety can negatively affect student performance; higher anxiety was reported among females.	Limited contextual evidence in the reviewed literature.
Dansieh et al. (2021)	Empirical study examining glossophobia among ESL students.	Glossophobia produces psychological and physiological symptoms that impair communication.	Findings may have limited generalizability beyond the study context.
Dewaele & Li (2022)	Empirical research examining foreign language anxiety/enjoyment and learner-teacher variables.	Communication confidence is important in the relationship between language anxiety and speaking performance.	Limited evidence specifically from Pakistan.
Paridaluddin et al. (2025)	Recent empirical research on public speaking anxiety.	Public speaking anxiety is associated with lower communication self-efficacy and willingness to	Study design/sample details are not specified in the supplied review.

		communicate.	
Shahan et al. (2025)	Empirical research addressing socio-cultural factors and communication-related gender differences.	Socio-cultural expectations may contribute to gender differences in communication anxiety.	Methodological details are not specified in the supplied review.
Ali and Habib (2025)	Recent empirical research on gender and communication anxiety.	Fear of evaluation and presentation perfectionism may increase female students' anxiety.	Contextual/methodological limitations are not specified in the supplied review.
Chen (2025)	Recent evidence/meta-analytic research on foreign language anxiety and achievement.	Higher foreign language anxiety is associated with poorer language achievement and engagement.	Study-specific methodological limitations are not detailed in the supplied review.

Theoretical Framework

The present study adheres to an integrated theory that integrates FLCA Theory (Horwitz et al., 1986), Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1997), Communication Apprehension Theory (McCroskey, 1977), and Control-Value Theory of Achievement Emotions (Pekrun, 2006). According to Horwitz et al. (1986) communication apprehension, test anxiety, and negative evaluation fear are some of the aspects that bring an anxious situation in learning of language. McCroskey's Communication Apprehension Theory also offers an explanation as to why some people have a fear

of oral communication, regardless of their level of competence. Social Cognitive Theory propositions that self-efficacy beliefs play a key role in determining communication behavior, and Control-Value Theory postulates that emotions are important to academic achievement because they impact students' self-efficacy and value of learning tasks. The present study combines these theories to suggest that FLSA adds to the PSA and that PSA has an impact upon students' academic performance. Another contextual factor of communication anxiety is gender, which is also taken into account.

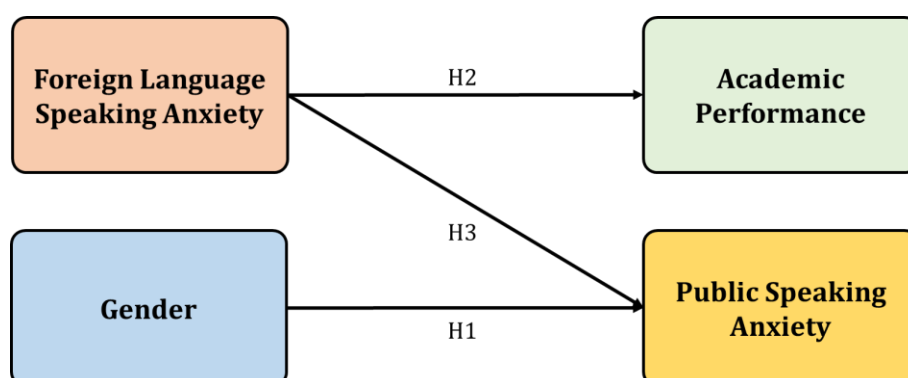


Figure 1: Conceptual model of the study (Source Authors)

**Methodology
Research Design**

This research employed quantitative research methodology based on cross-sectional approach

to evaluate the connectedness amid FLSA, PSA and academic performance within students in the university. The quantitative approach allowed for the objective measurement of psychological constructs by standardized instruments and the cross-sectional design allowed for the capture of participants' responses at one point in time.

Population and Sample

The target population was made up of students pursuing studies at the university on different semesters. The total number of children was 250, 50% (n=125) were males and 50% (n=125) were female. There was a balanced gender distribution, which allowed for comparing the PSA of male students with the PSA of female students. The sampling method used was survey method and the number of participants was 250 students of university. There is no additional sampling technique reported as the original thesis does not mention the sampling method.

Research Instruments

To collect data, three standardized questionnaires were employed. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz et al., 1986) was utilized to measure FLSA. The scale composed of 33 items. The instrument was very reliable with Cronbach's alpha 0.90. The Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA) (McCroskey, 1970, 2013) was used to quantify PSA. The 34-item scale assesses anxiety prior to and during public speaking. The instrument in the present study had good reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$). The Academic Performance Scale (APS) was used to measure academic performance. The instrument was made up of eight items with a five-point Likert scale, which exhibited high consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$). The findings of internal consistency reliability indicated satisfactory reliability for all study variables. The scores surpassed the generally recommended criterion of 0.70, signifying that the measurement instrument demonstrated good internal consistency.

Table 2
Reliability of the Research Instruments

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's α
Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA)	34	.86
Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)	33	.90
Academic Performance Scale (APS)	8	.86

Data Analysis Tools

IBM SPSS Statistics were used for data analysis. Participants' demographic characteristics and scale distributions were briefed using the descriptive statistics. To compute the internal consistency of the research instrument, Cronbach's alpha was used. The differences of PSA between genders were investigated using an independent-samples t-test. Simple linear regression analyses were conducted to determine if FLSA could predict academic performance and PSA anxiety.

Results

Participant Characteristics

This study involved 250 students in the university (125 male 50% and 125 female 50%). The majority (96%) were Muslim and 4% other religious groups. Regarding age, 58% were aged 20–30 years, followed by 25.6% aged 31–40, 13.2% aged 41–50, and 3.2% aged 51 years and above. As far as level of education, 72.4% of participants were enrolled in BS programs, 25.2% in MS programs and 2.4% in PhD programs. The majority of the participants indicated that they had no diagnosed mental (82.8%) or physical (88.8%) disorder. In general, the sample was broadly representative of students from various age and educational levels with equal gender composition.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics (N = 250)

Variables	Items	α	M	SD	Actual Range	Skewness	Kurtosis
PRPSA	34	0.86	97.90	19.90	38-147	-0.39	0.16
FLCAS	33	0.90	101.80	17.06	33-165	0.07	1.04
APS	8	.86	29.68	5.80	8-40	-0.00	—

Note.

FLCAS = Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, PRPSA = Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety, APS = Academic Performance Scale.

N = 250

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability

To determine the distribution and internal consistency of the study measures, descriptive statistics and reliability analysis were first conducted prior to hypothesis testing. The computation for descriptive statistics, and the skewness and kurtosis for the three main constructs are provided in Table 3, along with the Cronbach's alpha coefficients. As per the criterion for internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the three scales was satisfactory, ranging from .86 to .90 which is greater than the recommended coefficient of .70 (Dugard et al., 2022) thus demonstrating an acceptable internal consistency for all three scales. The PRPSA was found to be reliable with $\alpha = .86$; the FLCAS was excellent with $\alpha = .90$. The Academic Performance Scale also showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .86$).

Considering the results in the whole, it is concluded that all three instruments were valid for measuring what was intended. PSA and FLCA were both found to be in the 'moderate' range (mean = 97.90, standard deviation = 19.90 and mean = 101.80, standard deviation = 17.06, respectively). Skewness and kurtosis scores were in the adequate limits, ± 2 , which suggested an approximately normal distribution and enabled the subsequent parametric analyses.

Hypothesis Testing

A t-test for independent samples was used to find out whether a difference in PSA between male and female students was there. University students, female, have significantly high Self-reports of PSA compared to that of male university students.

Table 4
Comparison of Public Speaking Anxiety by Gender(N=250)

Variable	Male(n=125)	Female(n=125)	T (248)	p	Cohen's d
PRPSA	93.80 (20.05)	101.90 (19.09)	-3.24	.001	0.41

Note.

PRPSA = Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety

The t-test (independent-samples) indicated a significant difference amid the anxiety for female students and male learners in the public speaking task ($t(248) = -3.24$, $p = .001$). Female students reported escalated levels of PSA ($M = 101.90$, $SD = 19.09$) compared to male counterparts ($M = 93.80$, $SD = 20.05$).

The effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.41$) indicated moderate practical effect. The outcomes indicated a substantial variation between students' experiences of public speaking anxiety with regard to gender. Hence, the support was given for H1.

Table 5
Regression Analysis Results (Predictor: Academic Performance)

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	P
FLCAS	.067	.022	.193	3.10	.002

Note.

FLCAS = Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

The outcomes of a simple linear regression analysis signified that FLCA could not be used to predict students' academic performance. A simple linear regression revealed that the association amid FLCA and academic performance was statistically significant with F

(1, 248) = 9.641, $p = .002$, $R^2 = .037$. The predictor was significant, and accounted for 3.7% of the variance in academic performance ($\beta = 0.193$, $t = 3.10$, $p = .002$). However, H2 was found to be supported, albeit to a lesser extent.

Table 6
Regression Analysis Predicting Public Speaking Anxiety

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
FLCAS	.610	.060	.520	9.68	.001

Note. FLCAS = Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

A second simple linear regression analysis was carried out to see if FLCA and public speaking anxiety were related. The simple linear regression revealed that FLCA significantly predicted public speaking anxiety, $F(1, 248) = 93.73$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .274$. Foreign language anxiety was also a strong predictor, $\beta = .520$, $t = 9.68$, $p < .01$, explaining for 27.4% of the variance in the public speaking anxiety. This finding suggests that there exist a significant association amid the two anxiety constructs. So, it was confirmed that H3 was supported.

Discussion

This study investigated the association amid FLSA, public speaking anxiety, and academic success as well as the gender differences in glossophobia. All three hypotheses were confirmed. The public speaking anxiety was higher among female students, foreign language speaking anxiety significantly predicted academic performance and it strongly predicted public speaking anxiety. The results of t-test signified a statistically distinction amid PSA of female students and male students such that female students expressed significantly PSA score compared to their male counterparts, thus supporting H1. The results of this finding

align with former studies found that females with high communication anxiety scores have concerns about audience perceptions, low communication self-confident, and fear of negative evaluation (Perveen et al., 2018; Ali & Habib, 2025; Christy, 2021).

According to Social Cognitive Theory, self-efficacy is a crucial element of communication anxiety, and it is acquired through mastery experiences, observation, encouragement and emotional regulation (Bandura, 1997). Likewise, Communication Apprehension Theory states that people vary in their susceptibility to experiencing communication apprehension (McCroskey, 1977). Therefore, increased levels of anxiety could be due to differences in perceived communication threat, not actual ability. But, gender differences are not to be considered a stable trait. The communication anxiety of students can be decreased by supportive teaching, cooperative tasks, feedback, and multiple opportunities for speaking (Botes et al., 2020; Dewaele & Li, 2022).

The hypothesis of the significant prediction of academic performance by foreign language speaking anxiety was supported, albeit with a small contribution, as indicated by the

significant prediction of the FLSA. This result supports the theory of FLCA (Horwitz et al., 1986) which suggests that anxiety can decrease confidence with respect to communication, cognitive interference, and inhibit classroom participation. The Control-Value Theory also proposes that when task control in the L2 context is perceived as limited, L2 anxiety may be heightened and cognitive resources may be shifted away from L2 learning tasks (Pekrun, 2006). Previous studies also show that language anxiety is associated to decreased participation, classroom involvement, and language attainment (Dewaele & Li, 2022; Chen, 2025). In addition, meta-analytic evidence shows that FLSA has an adverse impact on language learning outcomes; however, the association among FLSA and language-learning outcomes depends on the context (Botes et al., 2020). The small amount of variance in the model also suggests that there are other factors affecting academic achievement other than language anxiety.

Public speaking anxiety was significantly predicted by foreign language speaking anxiety, and thus, supporting H3. This was the best predictive relationship between the three hypotheses, suggesting that the greater the anxiety of the students in foreign language speaking, the greater the student's nervousness in public speaking. In both constructs, there is an apprehension of communication, loss of confidence, physiological arousal, negative evaluation fear, and avoidance behavior (Horwitz et al., 2010). McCroskey (1977) suggested that Communication Apprehension Theory could explain the factors that increase the perceived communication risk for foreign-language communication. Moreover, according to SCT, lower communication self-efficacy leads to viewing speaking situations as threatening, while successful communication experiences serve to build confidence and decrease anxiety (Bandura, 1997). Moreover, recent studies point to communication confidence and willingness to communicate as other factors that connect language anxiety and speaking performance (Dewaele & Li, 2022). Therefore,

supportive instruction, constructive feedback and repeated speaking experiences can be helpful in lowering the extent of FLSA and glossophobia.

Theoretical Contributions

This study adopts the FLCA Theory, the Communication Apprehension Theory, the Social Cognitive Theory, and the Control-Value Theory of Achievement Emotions to explain the associations amid foreign language anxiety, public speaking anxiety, gender and academic performance. It also builds upon previous work by offering evidence in the settings of the Pakistani higher education setting and the expansion of the foreign language anxiety beyond language learning to other communication experiences.

Practical Implications

The results suggest a need for low stress and positive learning environments. Collaborative activities, gradual presentation tasks, constructive feedback and frequent speaking practices can help develop communication confidence for language instructors. Communication workshops, counselling and confidence building interventions can be offered by universities. Enhancing students' participation, commitment, and competence in communication through implementation of progressive oral communication activities in curricula and training faculty in order to recognize and manage communication anxiety will further improve.

Conclusion

This study explored foreign language speaking anxiety, public speaking anxiety, academic performance as well as gender differences among university students. Outcomes specified that female students had higher degree of public speaking anxiety, and that foreign language speaking anxiety was a significant predictor of academic performance and public speaking anxiety. FLSA anxiety was observed to be highly connected with public speaking anxiety, which indicated that there is close

psychological association between the two. In overall, the results confirm the applicability of FLCA Theory, Social Cognitive Theory, Communication Apprehension Theory and Control-Value Theory of Achievement Emotions to communicate anxiety in the higher educational context in Pakistan. The study shows that anxiety in foreign language is not limited to language learning but can impact students' communication and academic experiences. Therefore, institutions that want to boost student confidence, participation, and learning should focus on minimizing communication apprehension.

Limitations of the Study

The results should be kept in mind as having the following limitations. First, causal inferences are restricted as there is no study design that is longitudinal in nature, which would better allow the study of the study of communication anxiety over time. Second, self-report questionnaires can have social desirability and response bias. Third, findings are only generalizable within the university context, which means to other universities but not to other cultural contexts. The study did not investigate other factors that could possibly affect the study such as communication self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, classroom climate, motivation, language proficiency and teaching practices, but they are highly relevant to this study. Last but not least, there are numerous psychological, social and educational variables that affect academic performance, and communication anxiety should not be viewed as the only factor.

Suggestions for further research

Longitudinal designs need to be used to reconnoiter the evolution of foreign language and public speaking anxiety in future research. Interventions such as communication training, public speaking workshops, mindfulness, cognitive-behavioral approaches, and the use of technology for practice could be tested in experimental studies. Other factors that could be explored in future studies include

communication self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, willingness to communicate, classroom climate, teacher support, language proficiency, academic motivation, personality, and psychological resilience. Comparative studies among disciplines, universities, and cultural contexts also may shed more light on the differences in communication anxiety across contexts. RQs like Advanced techniques (Structural Equation Modeling, Mediation, Moderation and Multilevel modeling) can show deeper insight on the connection amid anxiety, learning of language and academic performance. Lastly, qualitative and mixed methods could further corroborate quantitative results by investigating students' real experiences relative to glossophobia and foreign language anxiety and by gaining an unfathomable comprehension of the psychological discourses involved in communication anxiety

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