

NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF PRESENTATION ANXIETY AMONG
POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS: THE CASE OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITY

MASTER THESIS

Mohsin A. Hamisa

NICOSIA

July 2014

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July 2014

We certify that we have read the thesis submitted by Mohsin A. Hamisa titled “A Qualitative Investigation of Student In-Class Presentation Anxiety Among Postgraduate Students” and that in our combined opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Educational Sciences.

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all materials and results that are not original to this study.

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To Rajaa A. Mraheel

ABSTRACT
A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF STUDENT IN-CLASS
PRESENTATION ANXIETY AMONG POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

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Oral presentation is an essential tool for measuring the performance of students involved in higher education. Nevertheless, students still find difficulties in performing academic oral presentations. This study aimed to investigate the sources that influence postgraduate students' presentations. It also tried to find out the coping strategies that students used to avoid presentation anxiety. A qualitative approach was used to answer the questions of the study. Low language proficiency, software illiteracy, presenters' perceptions toward instructors, perceived difficulty of the topic, preparation, duration of presentation, and audience reactions were found to affect the MA students' performances during oral presentations to different degrees. Reading from the slides, memorisation, speeding up, focusing on the audience ethnicities, imagining hosting a show, and spirituality and faith in God were used to cope with presentation anxiety. It was also found that instructors had helped students feel relieved from anxiety when necessary.

Keywords: Oral academic presentation, public speaking anxiety, qualitative study, MA students

ÖZ

LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM GÖREN ÖĞRENCİLERDE SINIF İÇİ SÖZLÜ SUNUMUN YARATTIĞI KAYGI ÜZERİNE NİTEL BİR ÇALIŞMA

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Sözlü sunum yüksek lisans öğrencilerinin performans ölçümleri için gerekli bir araçtır. Bununla beraber, sınıf içinde gerçekleşen sözlü sunumlarda öğrenciler zorluk yaşamaktadırlar. Bu çalışmanın amacı, lisans üstü öğrenim gören öğrencilerin sınıf içi sözlü sunum performanslarını etkileyen kaygıya bağlı etkenleri araştırmak ve öğrencilerin kaygılarını azaltmak için kullandıkları stratejileri ortaya koymaktır. Araştırmada nitel bir yaklaşım kullanılmıştır. Dilde yetersizlik, bilgisayar kullanımıyla ilgili deneyimsizlik, öğrencinin öğretim elemanlarına karşı algısı, konunun zorluğuyla ilgili algı, sunum öncesi hazırlık, sunumun süresi ve dinleyicilerin tepkilerinin öğrencinin kaygı dereceleri ve performansları üzerinde farklı derecelerde etkileri olduğu saptanmıştır. Slaytlardan okuma, ezberleme, hızlanma, dinleyicilerin etnik kompozisyonu, bir şov yapıyor olma düşüncesi, ruhaniyet ve Tanrı inancının kaygıyla baş etmede katılımcılar tarafından kullanıldığı görülmüştür. Çalışmanın bir diğer bulgusu da gerektiğinde, öğretim elemanlarının öğrencinin endişelerini gidermede yardımcı olduğu şeklindedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler : Sınıf içi sözlü öğrenci sunumu, toplum önünde konuşma endişesi, nitel çalışma, lisans üstü eğitim

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ABBREVIATIONS

SIPA:	Student In-Class Presentation Anxiety
CA:	Communication Apprehension
EFL:	English as a Foreign Language
ELT:	English Language Teaching
FLA:	Foreign Language Anxiety
PRPSA:	Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety
PSA:	Public Speaking Anxiety

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Fear of public speaking is receiving a wide interest amongst researchers and everyday practitioners (Tracy, 2009). Public speaking anxiety has a prevalence of 85% among the general population, which shows that people fear public speaking more than they fear death, spiders, diseases and heights (Motley, 1995). Moreover, due to the prevalence of this phenomenon, institutes have been established for ‘treating’ it and helping people get jobs that depend on speaking skills (Tracy, 2009). Noticing deficiencies in my oral presentations and observing other classmates, who were usually practicing teachers, suffering from similar problems, I thus initiated this study to learn more about the reasons behind being highly anxious when giving oral presentations in a specific context. This chapter provides a description of the focus of my study and outlines the reasons for conducting such a study. In this introductory chapter of the study, first, I will provide a brief explanation of my own experience in making oral presentations. Then, some reasons that may affect presenters during their performances will be discussed. The aims and research questions that guided the study will be outlined. Finally, the chapter will also provide information about the limitations of the current study.

Background of the Study

In the society where I grew up, people are often judged by their ability to speak with eloquence in front of the public. Frankly, I was not that person who can speak eloquently but I thought about it so many times and I always admired those people who

could speak in public without anxiety, such as Malcolm X. Therefore, several times I asked myself what it takes for a person to speak in front of the public without anxiety and, for those who cannot make it, what they lack.

During the second semester of my Master's degree, I learned about the "Learner-centered" learning, which is an approach used in education as well as other fields such as psychology and counseling (Weimer, 2002). I was fascinated by the advantages of this approach and its potential contributions to learners' personalities. For me, this approach meant "confidence-building approach." A curriculum written with such an approach in mind depends on the learner and the activities that the learners have to accomplish. The methods used to promote such activities were giving speeches, making presentations about selected topics, and conducting interviews with other classmates in the classroom (Weimer, 2002). The difference between such an approach and my own background in education was striking for me. Unfortunately, I was schooled following the very traditional approaches to learning and teaching, where students are just receivers of knowledge and are expected to pile up information in their memories with the aim of achieving marks in specific exams. In short, activities inside the classroom were far from innovation. It is argued by Weimer (2002) that this type of teaching and learning affects the students' personalities for the coming years of education, especially in higher education. My own experience in the first year of university proved the authenticity of Weimer's argument. When I was studying for my undergraduate degree in English Language Teaching (ELT), I had a course in the very first semester called "Speaking I." The students were required to give a ten minute presentation on an assigned topic for assessment. This was the first time for me to confront the challenge of speaking in public.

Before my presentation, I was not only worried about the performance of public speaking, but also anxious about giving a speech in a foreign language. One of my classmates advised me to “memorize two pages and present them.” On the day of my presentation, it was clear that most of my classmates depended ninety-nine percent on their memories to present their topics. However, anxiety was stronger than their memories to the degree that they forgot most of what they had memorized and could barely complete half of the time assigned for each presentation. Our performances were very poor, as were our marks in that course. This experience was extremely demoralizing for me because the anxiety that I experienced while struggling to present my topic in English was severe. Hence, I became interested in ways of coping with this stress and anxiety caused by public speaking performances, which were mostly classroom presentations in my case.

After I became a teacher of English, I very often came across students who expressed their desire to speak in English fluently. Yet, speaking fluently is not only an issue for new language learners, but also something that even the native speakers may not achieve due to some speech and psychology related problems. Barber (1939) explains that

The solution of our speech problems is important because human beings interrelate themselves largely through the spoken word. This conduct is so characteristic of the human race that we may recognize speaking essentially a form of human behavior, and the absence of it, beyond normal limits, as an asocial manifestation (p. 2).

On this account, speaking is considered as one of the skills that arouses anxiety in speakers as lack of fluency in speech may be perceived as “asocial” (MacIntyre &

Gardner, 1994). Moreover, Young (1990) explains that from language learners' point of view, speaking is considered on the top of the list of anxiety arousals. In addition, being proficient in the other three skills of language does not mean that the person is proficient in speaking (Troike, 2006). People are even different in terms of the domains that speaking contains within its rubric. For example, public speaking is different from a conversation, where the effort is shared between interlocutors, even though both types of speaking may share the same function of transmitting information. First conversation is informal, free-flowing talk, and the participants in conversations are, numerically, one or few (Tracy, 2009). Moreover, the conversation is always deliberate, unprepared, spontaneous, and occurs in an impromptu manner (Barber, 1939; Tracy, 2009). On the other hand, the audience in public speaking numerically is in large numbers and sharing information in public speaking with audience is difficult and more complicated because the message the speaker is trying to convey must be clear, so that the audience can get the meaning (Barber, 1939).

In front of an audience, everyone, including the most qualified public speakers, experience anxiety when making a speech (Lull & Coopman, 2011 ; Osborn, Osborn, & Osborn, 2009; Bovée, 2003). It is argued that anxiety in presentations is not only felt while presenting the topic. According to Osborn, Osborn, and Osborn (2009), anxiety felt while presenting is related to how much anticipatory anxiety the presenter builds up ahead of time. In other words, if the presenter keeps anxiety before the speech under control, then he/she can present in a proper way. On the other hand, if the presenter is very anxious before presentation and cannot control his/her anxiety, then anxiety will overwhelm him. As I mentioned before, I partly attributed my low performances in courses where

presentations were involved to my deficiencies in English language as an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learner. As I observed classmates with high linguistic competencies in English language experience anxiety attacks before their presentations at the master's level, I noticed that language proficiency was not the only factor. Tracy (2009) states that “much of the work of a successful public-speaking interaction is the mental work of the speaker, who must sift through the possible goals, materials, information, and organizational and delivery strategies to select the best for a particular speaking context” (p. 196). Additionally, public speakers should put into consideration the audience for which the message is delivered. All of this preparatory work before the actual presentation impact the amount of anxiety felt during the presentation. Hence, the factors that affect an individual performance and ways of coping with these may be various.

Problem of the Study

Not being able to speak in public is a major problem because “the listening world is always consciously or unconsciously measuring the speaker, not only by what he says, but by the manner in which he says it, and is labeling its findings with its approval or its disapproval” (Barber, 1939 p. 13). A person may lose a job, chance or mark because he/she cannot speak in public. The act of teaching is a public speaking situation (Lucas & Bernstein, 2005). Gardner and Leak (1995) report that some teachers experience anxiety when standing in front of students to the degree of not being able to answer the students' questions. Moreover, Lucas and Bernstein (2005) conclude that in a small scale survey, 28% of teachers described their anxiety as severe inside the classroom and 87% reported

at least some anxiety associated with teaching. Although this study does not seek to treat this phenomenon, it is designed to investigate the factors which influence the presentations of students in a foreign language classroom and to know the coping strategies that EFL postgraduate students use to avoid anxiety. Considering that most of these students are also practicing teachers, speaking in front of a group of people is their every day job. Yet, when they are students and they are giving presentations, they show higher levels of anxiety. Therefore, it is significant to know the reasons behind their anxiety, which cause them to underperform in presentations, and ways that individual students use to cope with it.

Aim of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the sources that influence postgraduate students' performances while making academic presentations. More specifically, this study attempts to explore the concerns that students had during the course of preparation and performance for academic oral presentations. Moreover, this study aims to find out the coping strategies that EFL postgraduate students use to avoid presentation anxiety. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the factors that influence M.A students' performances during academic oral presentations?
2. What are the coping strategies that presenters use to mitigate their anxiety?
3. How do instructors help participants feel relieved from anxiety during performance?

Limitations

The participants of this study were drawn from a specific department of a specific university. As a result, it seems that generalization of the findings of the present study to other educational settings is not possible.

With regard to the data collected in this study, two of the presentations were not video-recorded due to objections on the part of the instructor to the presence of a camera, arguing that it could disturb the context of the lecture. Hence, data collected in those specific presentation sessions may not have yielded as rich data as the other video-recorded presentations. In addition to that, Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen (2010) state that the observation of a social phenomenon may cause changes to the phenomenon itself. For instance, a researcher may be observing the phenomenon Y and is assuming that it is caused as a consequence of X, but it may well be that Y is happening because it is being observed. That is to say, the observation of participants may generate anxiety for them, which may be apart from the anxiety generated due to the natural context of the oral presentation. However, the presence of the instructor as an evaluator of the participants' performance may be considered as the major concern for the participants and the presence of the researcher may take minor concern during performance. A further discussion about the role of the researcher will be discussed in the methodology chapter.

Time is another limitation in the current study. Data was collected during the Fall semester, which is usually shorter than the Spring semester. Had the data been collected over a time span of two semesters, richer data could have been collected regarding the phenomenon under study. Finally, this study was designed as a descriptive study and hence did not seek to treat the anxiety faced by participants.

Conclusion

This chapter provided information about the topic under investigation and presented the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the aim of the study, and the limitations. The focus of the study is presentation anxiety among ELT postgraduate students. Moreover, the study aims to find out strategies that ELT postgraduate students use to avoid anxiety when making presentations for their postgraduate courses. In the following chapters, review of the relevant literature, the methodology followed during the study and the findings of this mixed-methods research will be presented together with a discussion of these findings and conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter set out the theoretical grounding of this study. The survey of related literature was presented in five sections. The first section dealt with anxiety and its types. The second section handled social anxiety. The third section shed the light on language anxiety. The fourth dealt with communication apprehension. The last section discussed public speaking, presentation anxiety and types of presentation. Related studies on public speaking and presentation anxiety were reviewed. Finally, a commentary was presented.

Anxiety

Anxiety is vague apprehension felt because of an unidentified source (Barlow, 2002; Rachman, 2004; Zeidner& Matthews, 2011). It is similar to fear in the sense that they are used interchangeably (Rachman, 2004). Additionally, in some situations, symptoms of anxiety are similar to the symptoms of fear but the behaviour of the frightened person is different from the anxious person in general. Barlow (2002) said that the reaction of the frightened individual is "fight or flight"(p.4). However, the anxious person becomes in a state of confusion and unable to take a successful decision (Zeidner& Matthews, 2011). May (1950) says "in fear one moves in one direction, away from the feared object, whereas in anxiety a persistent inner conflict is in operation and one has an ambivalent relation to the object" (p.38). Zeidner& Matthews (2011) divided anxiety into state anxiety, trait anxiety and specific situation anxiety (Spielberger, 1983). According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) trait anxiety is a characteristic of the person. In other

words, trait individuals perceive everything as an anxiety source. In the other hand, state anxiety is felt in specific situations such as entering the examination classroom or speaking with someone in authority (Horwitz, 2001). Specific situation anxiety is thought to be similar to state anxiety but it differs in the sense that it is attributed to specific ongoing processes such as learning a language or making public speeches (Barlow, 2002).

Social anxiety

The human being is a social being by nature and no one can live in isolation without interacting with others. This interaction can be verbally or in any other type of interaction. In 1870, a new field of study emerged due to the prevalence of a disorder called Social anxiety (Marks, 1969). This disorder nowadays is considered to be as one of the most prevalent lifetime disorders (Kessler, Chiu, Demler, & Walters, 2005). Social anxiety or social phobia is known as feelings of apprehension, anxiety, self-consciousness and emotional distress stimulated in actual social situations (Alden & Crozier, 2005; Zeidner & Matthews, 2011; Rachman, 2004; Barlow, 2002). It is widely known by the presence of others (Hofmann & DiBartolo, 2010). Therefore, people who suffer from social anxiety tend to avoid social situations because they feel that they might be humiliated in these situations (Dilbaz, Enez , & Çavuş, 2011). Kessler, Stein, and Berglund (1998) categorized social anxiety situations into six categories, public speaking, using a toilet away from home, eating or drinking in public, talking with others, writing while someone watches, and talking in front of a small group. In educational settings, sufferers of this disorder may also avoid choosing a subject or attending a class (Bogels, et al., 2010). Schneier (2006) stated that they also achieve less in school and work.

Moreover, they become preoccupied with negative thoughts and "tend to be self-conscious and self-critical" (Heckelman & Schneier, 1995, p. 3). For example, they think that they will not speak properly with others, make a mistake, or act in a way that others may consider awkward (Heckelman & Schneier, 1995). It may also go excessive to the degree that they perceive any outer situation as a negative evaluation of their performance (Barlow, 2002). Panayiotou and Vrana (1998) proved that socially anxious individuals become self-focused in evaluative situations. This self-focus is not directed toward maintaining the self but rather on negative thoughts about the self which may hinder the performance of the socially anxious person (Clark & Wells, 1995). Moreover, in evaluative situations, people who are socially anxious do not react to positive evaluation with positive feelings, but on the contrary, they view positive evaluation from negative lens (Kelly, et al., 2012).

Models of Social Anxiety. Several models were developed to explain this disorder (Scklenker & Leary, 1982). The first is the skill deficit model. This model assumes that social anxiety is caused due to deficiency in skills such as dating skills, conversation skills and ability to make and maintain friendships (Bellack & Hersen, 1979). The second model is cognitive self-evaluation model. It assumes that social anxiety is not caused by skill deficit per se but by the individual's perception of personal inadequacies (Rehm & Marston, 1968). The third model is the classical conditioning model which suggests that social anxiety may emerge because of aversive social experiences through processes of associative learning (Mineka & Zinbarg, 1995). Finally, the personality trait model which attributes social anxiety to individual differences in social situations. This model also

considers that every individual have different cognitive, behavioral reaction in social situations (Clark & Arkowitz, 1975)

Types of Social Anxiety. Kessler et al (1998) typified social anxiety into two subtypes. (1) Non-generalized social anxiety, (2) generalized social anxiety. Generalized social anxiety refers to fear of being judged by others and fear of delving in most social situations. Non-generalized social anxiety refers to fear of several specific situations such as public speaking (Schneier, 2006). Kessler et al (1998) indicated that the generalized social anxiety is attributed to greater impairment and high rates of comorbidity with other mental health problems. Moreover, generalized social anxiety has stronger chance to occur within the familial aggregation than the non-generalized social anxiety (Stein et al., 1998).

Schlenker and Leary (1982) made another classification of social anxiety, interaction social anxiety and audience social anxiety. Interaction anxiety specifically was labeled as contingent while audience social anxiety was labeled as non-contingent. In contingent interactions, the response of the individual depends largely on the responses of the other like in a conversation while in non-contingent anxiety; responses are not included like in a script speech (Zeidner & Matthews, 2011). Zeidner and Matthews (2011) also stated that social anxiety exists based on a continuum. It starts from absence of anxiety, to mild and ordinary shyness in social interactions to high proportion of social anxiety that is considered impairing and handicapping (Trower, Gilbert, & Sherling , 1990).

In conclusion, social anxiety continues to be as one of the major disorders that has prevalence and influence upon individuals' interactions in everyday life and their performance in some specific situations such as making a public speech or meeting someone who is an authority figure.

Language anxiety

Language anxiety is considered as a situation specific anxiety (Zheng, 2008). Horwitz, and Cope (1986) defined foreign language anxiety as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128). Zheng (2008) stated that anxiety is a major factor in influencing learning foreign language

Sources of Language Anxiety. Sparks and Ganschow (1993) indicated that language problems stem from the linguistic code of the language itself and students cannot acquire it for being unable to process it cognitively. Therefore, Sparks and Ganschow denied the role of affective factors such as anxiety in hindering language acquisition. Moreover, they stated that the social existence of language anxiety is considered to be mere a consequence of linguistic deficiency in processing the input of language (Zheng, 2008). The cognitive capacity is claimed to be the only mean for language acquisition and development and it is named as the Linguistic Coding Differences Hypothesis (LCDH) (Sparks and Ganschow, 1993).

In response to (Sparks and Ganschow, 1993) hypothesis of language acquisition. MacIntyre (as cited in Zheng, 2008) derived five different reasons for considering anxiety

as a key factor in influencing the acquisition of second language. First, from an academic point of view, language anxiety is a key factor in predicting language proficiency. Second, from a social point of view, language play a key role in the social life, and those who suffer from high language anxiety tend to avoid interacting with the native speakers of the language. Third, anxiety can occur in all stages of second language acquisition (Zheng, 2008). Fourth, anxiety hinders the memory from recalling information related to the second language. Fifth, language anxiety can be considered as a traumatic experience that may affect the sense of self-esteem in a negative way. Troike (2006) also emphasized the importance of lack of anxiety for self-confidence and people who are known as lower in anxiety tend to take risks or show adventuresome behaviors.

Moreover, the causes of anxiety arousal are not confined to the learner personality of whether he is considered as a trait or state, but rather there are other reasons related to the instructor, to the environment, to the course level and to the interactions between the other students (Young, 1990; Zheng, 2008; Al-Saraj, 2013; Andrade & Williams, 2009). Shan (2010) stated that there are six reasons that might be considered as anxiety arousals inside language learning classroom, (a) Personal and interpersonal anxiety. (b) Learner beliefs about language learning. (c) Instructor beliefs about language teaching. (d) instructor-learner interactions. (e) Classroom procedures, and (f) language testing.

The teacher's role is the key factor in arousing anxiety inside the classroom as stated by Katalin (2006). Al-Saraj (2013) indicated that learners consider the teacher characteristics and teacher-student interactions as major causes of arousing anxiety inside foreign language classrooms (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). The influence of anxiety

is always perceived as negative on learning the language. (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Some students may feel that their skills are not sufficient enough for learning the language and hence it might be difficult for them to concentrate while learning. As a consequence, this will lead them to self-deprecating ideas (Pappamihel, 2002). It also becomes difficult for them to recall what they have memorized (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Consequently, to avoid such circumstances, learners may follow some mechanisms such as avoidance of work, reluctance to participate and negative attitude toward the language (Zheng, 2008). However, lower levels of anxiety are perceived positively. Troike (2006) emphasized the importance of lower levels of anxiety in facilitating learning the language. He even proposed situations where lower levels of anxiety can be generated such as small-group performance that can generate less anxiety from whole-class activity. Instructors also should try to keep anxiety at lower levels by maintaining an environment free from competition (Zheng, 2008).

In multicultural classrooms, language anxiety can be attributed to differences between individuals in terms of fear of changing identity, or being a learner of a minority group (Troike, 2006). Pappameiel (2002) conducted a study on Mexican students studying English in the United States. It was found that language learning became difficult for students when they are transitioned to mainstream classes. Moreover, anxiety was high because of the social distance between the Mexican students and the other students. Another factors that can cause language anxiety in multicultural classrooms are fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety and communication apprehension (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Applbaum, Applbaum, & Trotter, 1986; Pappamihel, 2002; Troike, 2006).

Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) and Language Proficiency. Campbell and Ortiz (1991, as cited in Worde, 2003) stated that up to one half of language students suffer from debilitating levels of FLA.. FLA is an affective factor in foreign language learning (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1994). Moreover, it is a source of hindrance in the productive skills of the foreign language. Schlesinger (1995) also revealed that FLA can hinder achievement. The reason behind this is that learners become insufficient in processing the input of the language (Krashen, 1981). Troike (2006) also stated that higher anxiety tends to correlate with lower language success. In the literature related to FLA and language learning, FLA appears to show diversity in its influence over different proficiency levels. Marcos-Llinas and Garau (2009) showed that advanced level learners felt higher levels of anxiety than beginner level learners when using the target language. Advanced learners also showed low language proficiency when speaking with native speakers of the target language because of high levels of anxiety (Worde, 2003). This construct can be attributed to different variables. For example, in Lui's (2007) study, his participants attributed feeling highly anxious to shortages in foreign language words. Moreover, before attempting to speak, learners become inhibited by constructing sentences of the foreign language in their minds (Krashen, 1981). Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) stated that immature command of the language makes the speakers self-conscious and suffer from restricted language use. Suleimenova (2013) showed that high FLA can lead to several consequences, one of which is not being able to speak with confidence and becoming self-conscious. Crookall and Oxford (1991) reported that these consequences can hamper proficiency in second/foreign language (as cited in Worde, 2003). MacIntyre (1995) showed that individuals with higher FLA showed underestimation of their own

proficiency. To sum up, FLA can influence speakers of English as foreign language in two aspects. First, in their perceptions of their own proficiency. Second, in their ability to process and produce utterances of that language.

Communication Apprehension

Communication apprehension (CA) is fear of communicating with others (Beatty, 2009). In the United States, 70% of the people report experiencing CA (McCroskey, 2008). CA can influence different walks of life such as education and career. Individuals with high CA may show higher rates of dropout and be unemployed especially in careers where communication skills are needed such as accounting. In addition, they tend to aspire for jobs which demand less contact with other people (Beatty, 2009).

Being able to communicate effectively is very important to all students in general and for undergraduates in particular. However, it was estimated that 70 per cent of college students experience CA (Jones , 2013). Moreover, CA is considered to be as one of the barriers that hinder advanced education (Ali & Gowing, 2001). In fact, there are students who are educationally competent but they lack the ability to control their apprehension which may lead them to form negative attitudes toward college and consequently gain lower final course grades (Jones , 2013). Reaching such consequences reflects the severity of CA. In other low CA occasions, individuals feel nervousness before beginning to speak, but once they start to speak, nervousness starts to subside (McCroskey, Booth-Butterfield, & K.Payne, 1989).

Furthermore, CA varies from one ethnic group to another. For example, students from non-Anglo-US origins would feel more apprehension in communicative situations (Ali & Gowing, 2001). Cultures also differ in their judgment of CA. It is perceived as a negative trait for a person to have CA in the U.S. culture while it is normal in Japan because it is ranked as the highest in CA (McCroskey, 2008).

Communication apprehension is considered as a normal response, but it is as a problem when it becomes as a trait of the personality (McCroskey, 1977). For the reason is that when high communication apprehensive people are encouraged to participate, their verbalizations differ from lower CA individuals and their comments are irrelevant to the topic of discussion (McCroskey, 1977). McCroskey (2008) stated that in higher education, high CA make students unable to ask questions and prefer large classes over small classes because the probability of being seen in large classes is not high. McCroskey also indicated that they may use different strategies to conceal their apprehension. One of which is to show avoidance when they are required to interact with others and if they were forced to converse they speak less (Beatty, 2009). Another strategy they use is to over communicate, but this one is rarely used (Richmond, Smith, Heisel, & McCroskey, 1998).

Causes of Communication Apprehension. CA is attributed to two causes: genetics and learning (McCroskey, 2008). McCroskey (1984) claimed that CA is developed through passing different negative experiences which at the end becomes a personality trait called reticence. Family practices could be also the main responsible for reinforcing the child to keep quite (Beatty, 2009). McCroskey (1977) indicated that children from neglected environments such as remote environment are more likely to

suffer from high CA. The reason is that parents in these environments are less competent in communicative skills. Moreover, the school could also reinforce CA by encouraging students to stay silent inside the classroom (McCroskey & Andersen, 1976). As a consequence of these environmental practices, withdrawal behavior on the part of the child will be chosen to escape from feeling apprehension in communicative situations (McCroskey, 1977).

Aly and Gowing (2001) argued that audience attentiveness and speaker's previous experience of failure or success are two possible causes of anxiety exacerbation among speakers. However, if the audience was not so attentive, then the speaker will experience less anxiety. The speaker also may fail in meeting the audience expectations, therefore, he becomes anxious and apprehensive (Ayres, 1986). Moreover, Morreale, Spitzberg, and Barge (2007) stated that formality of the communicative situation has an impact upon the speaker because he has to adapt his language to the people addressed.

State and Trait Communication Apprehension. Some individuals are more apprehensive than others. Those high in CA are called trait CA individuals, while others low in CA are called state CA individuals (Lamba, 1972; McCroskey, 1977). State CA individuals become apprehensive in specific situations such as when they attempt to speak unprepared to the situation of interaction or when they attempt to speak to people in authority (Richmond, Smith, Heisel, & McCroskey, 1998). Nevertheless, they can control and conceal their apprehension to a certain extent (McCroskey, 2008). With trait CA individuals, they tend to exaggerate situations of interaction. They may also misinterpret

responses of others or perceive feedback as negative evaluation of their personalities (Beatty , 2009).

Aly and Gowing (2001) stated that speakers can reduce their apprehension by practice especially if he was unfamiliar with speaking in front of others. Designed courses and communicational experiences from real life situations are possible sources for alleviating anxiety. Nevertheless, having good communicating strategies does not mean that the individual can use them when he is in a communicative situation as apprehension may prevent him from putting these effective strategies into practice (Jones, 2013; McCroskey, 2008).

Public Speaking

Public speaking is the process of speaking to a group of people in a deliberate manner aimed at entertaining or influencing the listeners (Carnegie & North, 2013). Despite being a type of communication, public speaking is considered as different from any other type of interaction. It is directed and aimed at specific groups of individuals and contains a purpose and a structure (Griffin, 2012). Students consider public speaking as difficult skill to be performed. Osborn, Osborn, & Osborn (2009) found that most of their participants felt comfortable in face-to-face communication while only 24% felt comfortable while giving a public speech. Lull & Coopman (2011) indicated that public speaking depends on five elements (a) invention (what do you want to say); (b) arrangement (the ways ideas presented in a speech are organized); (c) style (the language used to present ideas); (d) memory (the ability to recall information that would make the

presentation effective); and finally (e) delivery (the features of voice, body language, and gestures presenter use to present the ideas to the audience).

Public Speaking Anxiety. Actually Anxiety is a common fear that people are used to experience during public speaking (Morreale, Hugenberg, & Worley, 2006). Individuals experience less anxiety in the other skills, but they feel more anxious in speaking classes where interaction is required. For some people, this fear comes before the fear of death (Xiuqin, 2006). Therefore, they tend to avoid public speaking situations (Witt, Roberts, & Behnke, 2008). Fear of public speaking does not emerge without prerequisite conditions. Bodie (2010) stated that home and school are considered to be the main sources for the enhancement of public speaking anxiety. For instance, students in homes are reinforced not to speak which comes in conjunction with the instructions of some school teachers for students to stay silent. Jaffe (2007) indicated that these practices force students to exhibit a non-speaking strategy. In other words, silence becomes a habit of some students. Therefore, Udomkit (2003) advised that in order to exhibit students to speak and have self-confidence, they should be encouraged to interact in schools. However, Beatty, McCroskey, and Heisel, (1998) indicated that PSA is attributed to inborn predispositions.. Besides, lacking requisite public speaking skills and experiencing different negative states are also considered to cause PSA (Beatty, 1988 ;Verderber, Sellnow, & Verderber, 2014)

Public Speaking Patterns. Behnke and Sawyer (2004) identified habituation and sensitization as two psychological state patterns of PSA. Habituation is high levels of anxiety experienced when the individual is about to confront a threat, but when the threat

is not met, the anxiety subsides. Sensitization occurs when the threat is confronted and as a result the anxiety becomes greater. Before anticipation of the public speaking event, speakers express high levels of anxiety at the moment of announcing the speech (Behnke & Sawyer, 2001). Behnke and Sawyer (1999) divided the anticipation of anxiety into four milestones of public speaking event: anticipation, the minutes before the speech; confrontation, the first minute of the speech; adaptation, the last minutes of the speech; and release, the minutes after the speech. The anticipation stage was also segmented into three events, before receiving the assignment, during preparation, and immediately prior to speaking.

Audience and Public Speaking Anxiety. The audience is the central focus for the speaker. The audience's feedback can change the reactions of the speaker and make him feel anxiety (Lull & Coopman, 2011). Baker, Slater, and Pertaub (2002) classified the audience into three types: positive audience, static audience and negative audience. The positive audience shows signs of satisfaction regarding each presentation. The static audience shows no specific reactions, while the negative audience shows negative responses to the presentation which may be reflected negatively on the performance of the speaker. Trait public speakers think that audience can detect their high levels of emotional arousal though the audience is not very accurate in detecting anxiety within speakers (MacInnis, MacKinnon, & MacIntyre, 2010). Harris, Sawyer, and Behnke (2006) stated that situational factors can explain 20% of the state PSA responding. For example, anxiety increases when the audience interact negatively with the speaker (Hilmert, Christenfeld, & Kulik, 2002).

Audience and expectations about the audience are factors that identify PSA from other socially based anxieties (Griffin, 2012). It was found that speakers monitor the audience vigilantly, and try to adapt their performance depending on the audience's reactions. Moreover, anxious speakers change their perceived competence depending on the reactions of the audience (MacIntyre & MacDonald, 1998). It means that if the audience appeared to be congenial and showed pleasantness, PSA would decline (MacIntyre & Thivierge, 1995). Nevertheless, there are some anxious speakers become self-focused and consequently become unable to interpret the audience's cues appropriately which becomes difficult for them to harmonize their performances based on these cues (Pitt, Berthon, & Robson, 2000). That is why anxiety tends to stay high and become stable (Mor & Winquist, 2002).

Transparency is also another delusional thought that speakers might experience in relation to the audience (Savitsky & Gilovich, 2003). Speakers think that their emotions, feelings and thoughts are transparent for the others. This might lead them to overestimate their own anxiety. However, their emotions in reality are not so transparent or hidden from the audience and observers. In fact, when the situation becomes so intense, some feelings become conspicuous to onlookers. In this case, the speaker may tremble, perspire and sweat heavily. All these emotional reactions are easily observed. On the contrary, when anxiety is at lower levels, it can be controlled (MacInnis, MacKinnon, & MacIntyre, 2010). Besides, the illusion can be fixed by assuring speakers that their anticipation of anxiety is not apparent for the audience (Savitsky & Gilovich, 2003).

Inner Thoughts of the Public Speaker. The speaker experiences inner-evaluative feelings related to the speaking context. These evaluative feelings are always perceived as negative or distracting feelings (Daly, Vangelisti, Neel, & Cavanaugh, 1989). The speaker's ability to think positively is an important aspect of the speaking situation. Nevertheless, all speakers think negatively when they attempt to make a public speech (Ayres, 1992). They express their concerns about being evaluated by others. Thus their performance is influenced by their over-worrying. Additionally, their overall speaking competence is negatively impacted by the same reason even when they are not in intense situations (Daly, Vangelisti, Neel, & Cavanaugh, 1989). Due to these feelings, speakers tend to forget their speeches immediately (Sawyer & Behnke, 1997).

Outcomes of Public Speaking Anxiety. In fact, speakers respond to stressful speeches through three systems, physiologically, cognitively, and behaviorally (Jaffe, 2007). The physiological response includes sweating, shaking, rattling and increasing in heart rate. The cognitive response includes inability to think properly and distortion in the mind vision while speaking. The behaviorally response can be manifested through the conspicuous reactions that can be observed by the audience on the speaker. These reactions depend on the speaker's personality (MacIntyre & MacDonald, 1998).

Public Speaking Anxiety and Depression. Negative thoughts may accompany speakers even after the speech event. In fact, some high PSA individuals think that they are not qualified enough to meet the audience expectations and the more they are indulged in these thoughts, the more they become anxious. Consequently due to this negative perception of performance, the speaker feels depressed. (Witt, Roberts, & Behnke, 2008).

Therefore, if the speaker perceives his performance as a negative event, then after the end of the speech, depression starts to emerge causing the effectiveness of the speech performance in future presentations to diminish (Daly, Vangelisti, Neel, & Cavanaugh, 1989). Depression also may intervene before the speech when the speaker suffers of a persistent depressive trait which might intervene in the preparation process and it might also hinder decision-making process. Learned helplessness theory is used to explain the negative effects of the depressive thoughts on individuals. One of the depressive thoughts that depression provoke inside the individual is that whatever he attempts to do will be futile. The main causes of these depressive thoughts are previous negative experiences and lack of control over external circumstances (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978). Therefore, it is very important to change the speakers' perception toward their performance (Ayres, 1986; Witt, Roberts, & Behnke, 2008)

Academic Oral Presentations

Academic oral presentation is a controlled process of addressing group of individuals who are relatively academic in an institutionalized and structured manner (Rendle-Short, 2006). Academic oral presentation is one of the situations of public speaking (Hincks & Edlund, 2009). It can be done in a group and last for more than 50 minutes (Griffin, 2012). It differs from other public speaking situations in many aspects. First, it has its own style of delivery. Second, the audience consists of classmates and an instructor who evaluates the performance of the presenter (Yu & Cadman, 2009). Moreover, oral presentation is used as an academic assessment tool (Cooper, 2005). Students need to put into consideration several factors to perform an academic oral

presentation i.e. gathering information, preparing content, managing presentation tools, controlling of pace of session, and coping with discussion and questions (Elliott & Chong, 2004). Unlike other public speaking situations, the main source of anxiety in academic oral presentation is poor preparation (Walker, 2014). There are four types of presentations, manuscript presentation, impromptu presentation, memorized presentation and extemporaneous presentation. The four types are discussed below:

Manuscript Presentation. It is the easiest method in which the presenter reads from a paper word by word (Hayworth, 1935). It is used frequently by those who lack proficiency in public speaking and those who do not prepare well for their topics (Nelson, Titsworth, & Pearson, 2009). Therefore, it is not recommended because it makes the presentation as a reading task not a presentation-making (Stratton, 1920). Aspects of presentation such as body language, gestures, and tone are not executed because the speaker is restricted to the paper (Barber, Speech Education, 1939). Moreover, getting feedback from audience is not possible because the speaker does not maintain an eye contact with the audience (Nelson, Titsworth, & Pearson, 2009). In addition, the audience may interpret that the speaker does not know much about the topic he is presenting (Brydon & Scott, 2008). However, weak students may use this method to build their confidence in foreign and second language (Rubenstein, O'Hair, & Stewart, 2010).

Memorized Presentation. It is similar to manuscript presentation in some aspects. The difference is reading from the memory instead of the manuscript (Brydon & Scott, 2008). Students use this method for appearing as they are improvising. They use it as an alternative to the reading manuscript and it enables them to maintain an eye contact

with audience (Bjerregaard & Compton, 2011). The presenter may fall in lapses and forget points that can make the presenter repeat one point several times in order to remember the next point (Rubenstein, O'Hair, & Stewart, 2010). Emphasis and meaning are also destroyed because of constant exhaustion of breath (Rogers, Barrows, & Holyoake, 1863). Therefore, audience can easily detect whether this presentation was memorized or not (Brydon & Scott, 2008). In fact, delivering a memorized presentation may take a lot of time and effort (Brydon & Scott, 2008). Not only does the speaker need to rehearse the restored information, but also to rehearse gestures, body language and movements which needs more brain power (Nelson, Titsworth, & Pearson, 2009). The United States has relinquished this method of presenting (Rubenstein, O'Hair, & Stewart, 2010).

Impromptu Presentation. It is a conversation-like presentation (Nelson, Titsworth, & Pearson, 2009). It does not need preparation or rehearsing. It depends largely on previous knowledge, experience and information of the person (Rubenstein, O'Hair, & Stewart, 2010). Further, no specific or detailed information is contained in impromptu presentation (Brydon & Scott, 2008). An example of such method is answering a question or summarizing verbally the lecture given by teacher (Bjerregaard & Compton, 2011). Due to its informal use, it is not advised academically (Nelson, Titsworth, & Pearson, 2009).

Extemporaneous Presentation is the most popular method (Winans, 1920). It is a speech based on key words written on note cards or Power Point slides. They are prepared in advance of the presentation by the presenter (Brydon & Scott, 2008). Extemporaneous presentation combines spontaneously and preparation. Furthermore, it

gives the presenter time to keep an eye on the audience. The presenter can skip slides or re-explain the points in case of misunderstanding or boredom on the part of the audience (Nelson, Titsworth, & Pearson, 2009). Its flexibility makes gestures, body language, and tone look natural (Rubenstein, O'Hair, & Stewart, 2010). Therefore, it is recommended academically (Nelson, Titsworth, & Pearson, 2009).

Student In-Class Presentations

Different from the public speech and academic oral presentation types found in the literature, the current study focuses on what I will call student in-class presentations (SIP). These type of presentations differ from other types of academic presentations in many aspects and are not academic presentations per se nor a public speaking events. First, they are conducted in the context of a classroom and unlike public speaking events, where the audience is expected to keep silent and listen until the end of the presentation, interaction is an essential part of the process between the presenter and the audience. Second, in SIPs, the audience also involves the lecturer, who is in most cases both the person who assigns the topic of the speech as well as the evaluator of performance. The instructor can interrupt and give direct and indirect clarifications to the presenter and/or to the other students in class. In this respect, SIPs differ from any other type of public and academic presentations. Third, the aim of the presentation is to both convey content and demonstrate linguistic competence in doing so. In this respect, SIPs involve not only mastery of the content, as is the case with academic oral presentations, but also demonstration of fluency in linguistic competence. In contexts where English is learnt and taught as a foreign language, this element usually becomes a part of the evaluation process of the SIP and may create anxiety

in the presenters in relation to FLA as discussed above. The last but not least, SIPs differ from other types of academic presentations in that the duration of the presentation may be limited with the duration of the class time. This may range from 40 minutes to three hours, which was the case in my study. The reason for such long durations is because the presenter is not expected to give a monologue as mentioned earlier. The interactive nature of such presentations makes it different from the other types.

Previous Studies

Several studies were conducted on public speaking anxiety. The focus of those studies was on two fields. The first goal is finding out the causes behind public speaking anxiety (Chandra ,2012; Finn,2007; Chen ,2008) and the second is treating public speaking anxiety (Newburger, Brannon, & Daniel, 1994; Heuet ,2011; Morgan & Schmidt ,2012;Smith ,2003; Plangkham and Porkawe, 2012; Nazarova, 2013). Researchers have investigated the common causes leading to anxiety among university students in their oral presentations:

Nazarova (2013) conducted a mixed method research that aimed primarily at examining the effectiveness of some interventions (i.e., Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) techniques of well-formed outcomes, modelling, and ‘as-if’ frame) in helping students to gain proficiency in public speaking. It was found that NLP techniques could influence students’ proficiency positively. Moreover, the researcher tried to find out the sources that contributed to participants' anxiety. These sources were the level of language proficiency, foreign language anxiety, general communication apprehension, prior experience with public speaking.

Chandra (2012) conducted a qualitative study in order to investigate the causes behind the pauses that participants produced while performing oral presentations. Participants of the study were four students enrolled in public speaking class. Seven causes influencing students' performance were found. They were (1) the lack of preparation, (2) awareness of being watched, (3) mispronouncing words (4) the process of translating the respondents' first language to English (5) the turn of presentation (6) high expectation from the lecturer and (7) high dependency on a script and noisy situation in the classroom.

Morgan and Schmidt (2012) developed one-hour public speaking anxiety training session on public speaking anxiety for native and non-native English speakers. The course included systematic desensitization, cognitive restructuring, and training skills. It was found that this one-hour training session helped both native and non-native English speakers feel less public speaking anxiety.

Plangkham and Porkawe (2012) conducted a research aimed at finding in which stage of the four stages speakers felt highly anxious. The stages were pre-preparation, preparation, pre-performance and performance. It was found that students were highly anxious in the performance stage.

Heuet (2011) investigated the differences between high and low public speaking apprehensive students in visualizing themselves in a public speaking environment. Participants were 3000 undergraduate students. It was found that high PSAs envisioned themselves negatively and less detailed while low PSAs envisioned themselves positively, and more detailed.

Chen (2008) also carried out a qualitative study to investigate graduate student's anxiety level and identify sources of anxiety in academic oral presentation. Study participants were 18 master students. Observation sheet and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. Results revealed that the participants were moderately anxious. Five sources of anxiety were identified, peer's response, audience familiarity, self-perceived oral proficiency, self-perceived accuracy of pronunciation, and self-perceived personality.

Another study was done by Finn (2007) to find the environmental factors contributing to speakers' anxiety. Three to four focus groups were recruited for the purpose of the study. Students reported upon their previous experiences in four categories (1) audience characteristics, (2) contextual factors, (3) assignment criteria, and (4) speaker concerns.

On the other hand, Smith (2003) tried to discover the most effective methods students can use to practice speeches prior to oral presentations. Participants were 90 undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory public speaking course. Results showed that students who practice their speech in front of an audience obtained higher degrees than those who practice without an audience. Regarding student's perceptions toward their performances.

Another treatment strategy was used by Newburger, Brannon, and Daniel (1994) who examined the impact of self-confrontation (self-viewing of videotaped speeches) on students' public speaking apprehension. Participants were 112 undergraduate students studying public speaking. Results showed that the use of self-confrontation as a public

speaking apprehension reduction strategy was not effective in reducing public speaking anxiety. Moreover, self-confrontation appeared to inhibit the reduction of communication apprehension.

Most of the aforementioned studies focused mainly on studying public speaking anxiety among undergraduate students. Only Chen (2008) studied presentation anxiety on postgraduate students. Nevertheless, an observation sheet was used in her study which limited the scope of the research (Turner, 2013). In addition, the observation sheets only record simple information which gives the researcher little space to analyze and judge information (Featherstone, 2013). Additionally, Oral presentations in previous studies were conducted on public speaking courses which gives the impression that Oral presentations are used for practice not transmitting valuable information. Therefore, this research was designed to fill this gap and study presentation anxiety from a holistic view. Tracking other researchers' efforts, this qualitative research aimed at studying presentation anxiety among graduate students and finding out coping strategies used to deal with anxiety.

Conclusion

In the literature communication apprehension, oral presentation anxiety, public speaking anxiety and language anxiety are called distinct fields despite the amount of similarities between these fields. This classification with these big similarities created confusion for the researcher. Moreover, the use of presentation anxiety interchangeably

with public speaking anxiety in the literature increased the researcher eagerness to study presentation anxiety in depth using qualitative approach. This will be further discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to detail the research design, the setting, the participants, the instruments used, the procedures undertaken to collect the data and method of analysis. The chapter is divided into four main sections. In section one, the research design, description of the context and the participants of the study are described. Section two introduces the data collection instruments designed and adapted for the study. Section three provides a description of the procedures for data collection. The final section details ethical considerations and the methods of analysis used.

Research Design

Qualitative research is claimed to be useful in giving a deeper and richer understanding of a phenomenon through in-depth investigation (Chi, 1997). Quantitative researchers admit that social research should be based on observations, documents, and interviews (Marvasti, 2004). Considering the research questions of the current study, which were set out in Chapter I, this study is designed to investigate presentation anxiety employing a qualitative methodology. Qualitative approach to scientific inquiry is usually conducted in natural contexts such as neighbourhoods and classrooms, without manipulating the context and with the aim of understanding the phenomena under investigation within their natural settings (Chi, 1997).

As Holloway (2005) suggests, in qualitative inquiries, the research design as well as the focus of the study have a flexible nature and can be altered depending on the context

in order to gather rich data. Initially, the main focus of the current research was to understand the causes behind anxiety among postgraduate students of the English Language Teaching (ELT) department when they made oral presentations in class. However, as the initial analysis of the data collected through the study suggested that there were other interrelated issues, the focus of the research was made broader to include more objectives, such as identifying the techniques that students use consciously and subconsciously to cope with anxiety. In addition, the practices that instructors used to mitigate students' anxiety were also examined. Understanding of such phenomena in their natural contexts required a flexible research design and qualitative research provided the framework for this. Although some quantification was made during observations to understand the frequency of certain utterances and reactions, the aim of this quantification was not to objectively analyse the data but rather to support the arguments made in explaining the experiences of the participants when giving oral presentations.

In order to collect data to understand the experiences of postgraduate students in relation to presentation anxiety, in-class observations and recordings of the participants' presentations were made. In addition, the participants and their instructors were interviewed at several occasions to clarify certain emerging issues during the course of the study. Artefacts such as course outlines of the courses attended by the participants and copies of their presentations were also collected to be used as data. A summary of the data collected in the current study can be found below in Table 1:

Table I

Summary of Data collection

Method of Data Collection	Data collection schedule	Collected Data
Field notes	18 presentations	105 A4 page
Recorded interviews	6 structured + 13 semi-structured interviews	approximately 4 hours 40 minutes of audio recordings
Recorded observations	18 presentations	approximately 21 hours of recordings
Artefacts	6 participants	18 PowerPoint presentations

Description of the Context

This study was conducted in the Fall 2013-2014 academic semester at a private university in North Cyprus. Data collection lasted from November 2013 to January 2014. English is spoken as a foreign language in the country. In the Department of ELT, where the participants were studying, English is used as a medium of instruction and communication. Students come to study in this university from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. However, majority of the students studying in the department at the time of the study were from Middle Eastern backgrounds. To obtain an MA degree, they have to choose two possible pathways. The first one is the thesis programme, where they take eight courses and write a thesis to graduate. The second path involves taking ten courses and doing a small-scaled research project to complete the non-thesis programme. It is possible for students to shift during study from one path to another. However, most

students prefer to take eight courses with a final thesis. Students are allowed to choose maximum four and minimum two courses per semester. The eight courses that must be completed before the thesis phase contain two compulsory courses and the remaining courses are electives.

In the current study, the courses that the participants were registered for included Advanced Research Techniques, Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom, Sociolinguistics, English Language and Linguistics and finally Language Testing and Program Evaluation. In each of these courses, the class met once a week on an appointed day for approximately three hours. In the first week, instructors introduced the subject of the course and gave a list of topics. For all of the courses, students were required to present topics assigned to them by their instructors. Additionally, they were required to lead classroom discussions. During their presentations, instructors sometimes intervened to ask questions or to give clarifications. Audience were also allowed to ask questions during or following the presentations. These courses included written work in the form of assignments. However, the amount of work required differed from one course to another. Table 2 presents further details regarding the courses that were observed and the nature of the presentations that students were required to give.

Student In-Class Presentations. As discussed in the previous chapter, presentations that were observed in this study were student in-class presentations (SIP). In this sense, students were given 3-hour slots, which is the duration of the whole class but the actual presentations never lasted for three hours straight. For example, in course A one of the presenter's presentations lasted for 15 minutes and the rest of the time was

spent in discussing the issues presented. Unlike academic presentations and public speaking speeches, interruptions, corrections, and clarifications took place continuously in SIPs.

Table 2

Courses and nature of student presentations

	Course type	Course duration per week	Presentation type	Classroom type	Weight of each presentation for assessment
Course A	Compulsory	Three hours	Individual and group	Regular classroom	20%
Course B	Compulsory	Three hours	Individual	Office	40%
Course C	Optional	Two hours	Individual	Conference room	40%
Course D	Optional	Two hours	Individual	Regular classroom	20%
Course E	Optional	Two hours	Group	Regular classroom	20%

Participants

In the beginning of the research, the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA) scale developed by McCroskey (1970) was used in order to select a sample from a population of 15 M.A students in the ELT department (Appendix A). Those who recorded the highest levels of anxiety in the scale were chosen as participants for this study (see table3). The scale contains 34 self-rating items on a five point Likert scale. This scale was found to be highly reliable with a Cronbach's alpha of .94 (McCroskey, 1970). Minor adaptation in wording had been done to make the items more specific and relative to the study. Phrases such as "public speech" had been replaced with "oral presentation". For

example, the item “My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a public speech” became “My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving an oral presentation.” The reliability of the scale was examined after this minor adaptation. It was found reliable with .83 Cronbach’s alpha.

Table 3

Scores of participants in PRPSA

Participant	Score	Anxiety Level
Mohammed	101	Moderate
Momen	103	Moderate
Xena	118	Moderately high
Neven	120	Very High
Abid	131	Very High
Hani	110	Moderate

Participants had to rate their own level of anxiety for each statement by marking down 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for neutral, 2 for disagree, and 1 for strongly disagree. To determine the score on PRPSA, three steps were taken. First, scores from items 1,2,3,5, 9, 10, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 34 were added. Second, scores from items 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 24, and 26 were added. Third, PRPSA score was calculated by subtracting the sum of step 1 from 132, and adding the sum of step 2. This was the procedure suggested by McCroskey (1970). The PRPSA scores may range from 34 to 170 (McCroskey, 1970). The PRPSA distinguishes five anxiety levels - low, moderately low, moderate, moderately high, and very high

(Richmond & Mcroskey, 1995). For example, if an individual obtains a score between 34 to 84, this person is said to have a low anxiety level and very few public speaking situations would arouse anxiety in this person. For the interpretation for all the anxiety levels, see Appendix B. I used this scale to determine the potential participants with the highest anxiety levels when performing SIPs. Moreover, the terms used in this scale highly match the context of SIPs.

The Participants were six students of a private university in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). All of them were postgraduate students at the Department of ELT. Two of them were females and four were males. All participants were given pseudonyms to protect their real identities. In the following sections, information about the participants and topics they presented in each course will be provided (see Table 4 for further details). Such background information is important in explaining the attitudes of individual participants towards certain issues. Some of them preferred not to give their real age so their ages will not be mentioned in the data.

Momen

This was Momen's second semester at the department. He was a Nigerian student and Hausa was his mother tongue. English is spoken in his country as a second language. He was registered for four courses. He has worked as a teacher before he started his MA degree. He made academic presentations in his bachelor's (BA) degree and a total of four presentations in the first semester.

Mohammed

Mohammed was also a second semester participant and a Nigerian. He started learning English since he was 15 years old. English is spoken in his country as a second language. He worked as a teacher in his country before coming to Cyprus for his MA degree. He was registered for four courses at the time of the study and made several academic oral presentations during his BA degree and four presentations during the first semester.

Abid

Abid was a second semester participant, who was 24 years old and was from Crimea. His mother tongue was Ukrainian but he also spoke fluent Russian. English is taught in his country as a foreign language. He was registered for three courses at the time of the study. He had several experiences in making academic oral presentations in the first semester and claimed that he became experienced in making academic oral presentations.

Xena

Xena was in her first semester during the study. She was a Libyan student and her mother tongue was Arabic. English is taught in her country as a foreign language. She is a practiced teacher and was registered for two courses. She described making academic oral presentation as something new and she wished that her country had used this type of activities in university.

Neven

Neven was another first semester participant. She was a Libyan student and Arabic was also her mother tongue. English is taught in her country as a foreign language and she is a practiced teacher as well. In addition, she was registered for two courses. She described making oral presentations as something is not practiced in her country.

Hani

Hani was from Kurdistan and his mother tongue was Kurdish. He was another first semester participant and he was a practiced teacher as well. He was registered for four courses during the time of the study. SIPs were something new to him and it was the first time that he was being asked to make oral presentations but he seemed willing to do it. When talking about presentations, he said: “Out of the class, I don’t feel anxiety but in the class I feel anxious but I saw my friends making presentations and I understood that it is easy” (pre-presentation interview, December 5, 2013).

There were four instructors, whose classes were observed while observing the SIP performances of the participants. Following is a description of each instructor and the number of interviews that were conducted with each instructor:

Tom

Tom was the chairperson of the department and the instructor of the course A. Tom is a Turkish Cypriot instructor whose teaching experience exceeded 10 years.

Unfortunately, because of the limited time in the schedule of the instructor, I could not conduct interviews with Dr. Tom. However, I observed presentations of students in his course, which gave me a clue of the methods that he had used to help students feel relieved from anxiety.

Carol

Carol is a Turkish Cypriot instructor, who was also the assistant chairperson of the department of English Language Teaching at the time of the study. She has around ten years of teaching experience at higher education. In this study, she was the instructor of course B. I conducted two interviews with her after each of the performance of participants in her class.

Bahram

Bahram is an Iranian instructor who taught student participants Course D. His current academic rank is Professor and he has over 30 years of experience in teaching English language in several international contexts. I conducted one interview with him and observed four presentations in his course.

Debra

Debra is a Romanian instructor. She was a faculty member at the time of the study in the department of English Language Teaching. She also had an extensive teaching experience in teaching different language related subjects, including linguistics and language teaching methodology. In this study, I conducted two

interviews with her and observed three presentations in her course, which was the Course C.

Table 4

The topics that each participant performed

Course	Course A	Course B	Course C	Course D	Course E
Participant					
<i>Momen</i>			Brain and language	Diglossia	Assessing reading
<i>Mohammed</i>			Second language acquisition	Code-switching, code mixing, and style shifting	Scoring in testing reading
<i>Abid</i>			Language and culture		Assessing reading
<i>Xena</i>	Observations, video & audio recording	how to teach vocabulary			
<i>Neven</i>	Observations, video & audio recordings		The classification of language		
<i>Hani</i>	Wordings of the questionnaire	Teaching listening		Kinesics	Testing Speaking

Data collection Procedures

Before beginning the collection of data, permission from the Head of the Department of ELT was obtained in order to carry out the research. In addition, a written

consent (see Appendix C) was obtained from each participant to record their presentations, obtain their Power Point presentations and make observations in the classes that they attended. Verbal consent was also obtained from their instructors.

Interviews. Two types of interviews were employed during the course of the study. The first interviews were carried out before the presentations (pre-presentation interviews) and were designed as structured interviews. The second type of interviews was designed as semi-structured interviews and will be referred to as post-presentation interviews. The pre-presentation interviews were structured and conducted once with each participant before their presentations took place. This initial interview aimed to address issues related to oral presentations in general, such as the participants' opinions about making public speeches, what they might feel about the duration of the presentations, and what type of presentation he/she preferred. A copy of the pre-presentation interview questions can be found in Appendix D. In these pre-presentation interviews, additional unstructured questions were asked to students who were in their second semester in the department to tackle the subject of experience. The reason for using structured interviews before presentations was to get certain information about the participants (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Razavieh, 2010).

For post-presentation interviews, a semi-structured interview schedule was used. In cases where participants made multiple presentations, they were interviewed following each of their presentations. Using semi-structured interviews after the presentations have taken place proved to be very helpful in clarifying situations and experiences that were observed during presentations (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Wengraf, 2001). The

semi-structured interview design allowed for additional questions to be added and alterations to be made to the original questions. It also allowed for experiences to be further explored (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Razavieh, 2010). For example, one of the participants laughed while giving his presentation and at the time of the observation, there seemed to be no reason for this behaviour. So, a question inquiring about the reasons for this behaviour was added to the interview schedule for this particular participant only. Hence, the questions in the post-presentation interviews partly emerged from the data that was being collected at the same time. Two participants were interviewed in their mother tongue, because it was difficult for them to speak fluently in English language. It was not possible to conduct post=presentation interviews with four of the participants for one or two of their presentations because they were pressurized with assignments that they had to complete. However, at least one post-presentation interview was carried out with each of the participants. Table 5 shows pre and post interviews that were accomplished.

Both pre- and post-presentation interviews were conducted in different places, such as the cafeteria, classrooms, dormitories, and sometimes participants' homes. The choice of the time and place for the interview was given to the participants in order to allow them to express themselves freely in an atmosphere that they would feel comfortable. Wengraf (2001) argues that giving the choice of time and place to subjects is important for the success of the interview. Wengraf (2001) also states that "the ideal context is a time and a place where you will be alone in a one-to-one situation, without interferences, without a telephone, and with a good stretch of time in front of you" (p. 189).

Table 5

Pre and post interviews that were accomplished

	Pre-SIP Interview	Post-SIP Interview # 1	Post-SIP Interview # 2	Post-SIP Interview # 3
<i>Momen</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<i>Mohammed</i>	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<i>Abid</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<i>Hani</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<i>Xena</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	
<i>Neven</i>	No	No	Yes	

Three students were not fluent in speaking English, therefore to ensure the flow of data those who were their mother tongue Arabic as the researcher were interviewed in the Arabic language. One student his mother tongue was not Arabic and he was not fluent in speaking English. So, the interviews with him were extended in order to let him take more time to express himself.

In order to understand the presentation anxiety experienced by the postgraduate students in the Department of ELT better, it became apparent that an understanding of the

expectations of the instructors in terms of student performances was also necessary. Thus, semi-structured interviews were carried out with three of the course instructors. Due to time constraints, two of the instructors were not interviewed. Questions of instructors' interviews focused on three main issues. These were their understanding of the concept a presentation, their criteria for evaluating their students' performances and some specific situations they experienced during the participants' presentations (see Appendix F for the instructors' interview schedule).

Observation. In the initial research design, a video camera was going to be used to record the students' presentations. Video cameras have many advantages in general but they have some disadvantages for researchers in particular. For example, they can record the voice stress, gestures, body language and the audience responses during data collection (Hatch, 2002). On the other hand, they can cause distractions in the natural setting of the observation and this may lead to changes in participants' behaviours (Pink, 2013). They can even be considered as a source of anxiety for the participants (Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2010). Therefore, alternative procedures were used to substitute the camera functions. These procedures were first to record the voice tone and stress using an audio-recorder and to use the notebook to jot down gestures, body language and audience responses in conjunction with the audio-recorder. To get a better picture of the presentations that were being observed, PowerPoint presentations of the participants were also collected with their permission. These alternative procedures, which helped to compensate for some of the camera functions, helped to collect data removed from external influence. Moreover, it helped participants to perform in their natural settings without being pressurized by the existence of the camera. Using these procedures, the

researcher observed seventeen presentations. The overall duration of what was recorded is 25 hours and 35 minutes of audio-recordings and 40 minutes of video-taping.

The Role of the Researcher

From the beginning of the study, the degree of participation was of concern to me not because of fear of manipulating the context but because of fear of my engagement. I was worried that my participation in the courses could affect my role as a researcher negatively. Hence, there was a need for balance between participation and observation (Laine, 2000). Therefore, I choose to keep my degree of participation as moderate (Gobo, 2008). Participants who were in their second semesters were also my classmates from previous semesters. Hence, I had good rapport with them. However, with the new students, I was introduced to them as a researcher and an observer. Moreover, they were overseas students in their first semester and that may have caused them to be stressed because of being unfamiliar with the classroom atmosphere and relationships inside the classroom (Singh, 2013). As a result of that, there was a need to build rapport with them before observing or interviewing them. Though ethnographic research can never be free of bias in relation to the relationship between the researcher and the field of study, the researcher tried to be as much as possible objective in the field (Smith, Lockstone-Binney, Holmes, & Baum, 2014; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

In the first three weeks of the semester, I participated in the classes even none of my participants were presenting. Fortunately, my previous experience in the courses

helped me to be able to follow the courses with relative ease and participate in classroom discussions. For this reason, new students were given an opportunity to meet me as a classmate rather than a researcher and an observer. They started asking my help in finding resources on the internet. In addition, they themselves started expressing themselves to me without me asking them questions regarding my topic of research, such as their fears, perceived obstacles, previous experiences, and problems. It should be mentioned that female participants come from conservative environments such as Libya which is considered as the most conservative region regarding the relationship between males and females (Metz, 1989). Therefore, the researcher as a male interviewed one of the female Libyan participants only for one time and for approximately seven minutes. Moreover, some questions the researcher could not ask to the participant because of the time limit the participant assigned for the researcher. The researcher avoided asking questions about age though the researcher knows the ages of two participants but one participant when asked about his age, he preferred not to answer the question so the researcher decided not to ask participants about their ages.

Data Analysis

Following data collection, first, the data collected through observation recordings were transcribed. During the transcription process, some themes have emerged and these were recorded for further analysis (Lawrence & Goodw , 1996). Then, in the coding process of the observations' transcripts, the transcripts were read line by line and then the data was segmented in light of the research questions and the research purpose. Specific

factors that provoked anxiety within presenters was sought for. Then, the coping strategies the presenters had used consciously and subconsciously were examined. Finally, mitigating strategies that instructors used to help presenters feel comfortable while they were doing their presentations were investigated.

During data collection, it was noted that there were differences in some presenters' answers in interviews and what was observed during their performances. Thus, interview recordings were transcribed and analyzed in isolation from the observations' recordings in the second step of analysis. Several themes and sub-themes were identified. These were later checked against the themes identified earlier in the observations to validate the interpretations made in relation to the participants' perceptions of the presentation situation.

The Transcription Process. In order to facilitate the analysis of the data and protect the anonymity of the participants, I transcribed the recordings.. Selective transcription was used with two presentations performed by Hani and Neven because their whole presentations were intentionally based on reading the slides (Murchison, 2010). I obtained these PowerPoint slides and used them in the transcription process. The extracts used in this thesis were taken verbatim from the transcripts without any changes for several reasons. First, I wanted to show the reader the level of English of the participants. Second, adding changes to the extracts could change the nature of the spoken language, which in turn would influence the emotional stance of the speakers. Reactions such as instant comments and emotional reactions were put into brackets []. Moreover, speeches in the abstracts were inserted in quotation marks. The symbol *[sic]* was also added to

sentences where there were grammatical mistakes in extracts. To ensure reliability, extracts were shared with supervisor.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in line with the standards of APA's ethical principles of Psychologists and code of conduct (APA, 2010). An informed consent was obtained from participants. For maintaining anonymity, participants were given pseudonyms instead of their real names. Instructors' real names also were not used. Moreover, data collected were kept confidential. One instructor from the department was interested in the pronunciation of my participants. Therefore, he asked me to give him the presentations' recordings. Recordings were not given to him unless a permission was obtained from participants.

Conclusion

In this chapter, information about the research design, data collection methods and analysis procedures was given. Due to the qualitative nature of the research aims, a qualitative research design was chosen for data collection and analysis. Participants were chosen based on their levels of presentation anxiety and data was collected through interviews and observations. Interpretations of the data and a discussion of the findings of the current research in relation to the current literature will be provided in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) is a specific situation anxiety (Horwitz, 2001). It was defined by MacIntyre (1998) as “the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language” (p. 27). Thus, the situation is detrimental in heightening anxiety among individuals (DiTomasso & Gosch, 2002). Moreover, for those who are not competent in English, their anxiety may become above the average, especially in the most feared situations such as giving a presentation in front of peers and an instructor (Guffey, 2010; Horwitz, 2001). Anxiety may also cause performance to become completely impaired (Derakshan & Eysenck, 2009). In the following sections, the results of the analysis of data collected from a group of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students studying in a Master of Arts (MA) in English Language Teaching (ELT) programme of a private university will be presented. The organisation of the chapter is based on the themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis of data. First, the factors that emerged as causing anxiety among the participants’ during their oral presentation performances will be discussed. Then, the strategies that they developed to deal with this situational anxiety will be presented. Finally, the instructors’ role in this process will be discussed.

Factors Causing Anxiety: Personal Factors

English as a (Academic) Foreign Language. In this study, performance of groups, first semester participants and second semester participants in an MA programme were focused on and the results showed that the two groups differed based on two factors: language proficiency and the presentation situation. All first semester participants showed weaknesses in English, which caused signs of high levels of anxiety during performance. These weaknesses also appeared outside the classroom, such as in my interviews. For example, I had to interview two participants in Arabic, which was their first language, rather than English because it was very difficult for them to speak in English without feeling anxious. On the other hand, I interviewed second semester participants in English, as it was clear that they were competent in speaking English language and felt less anxious during the interviews. However, deterioration in speaking and listening comprehension for second semester students emerged in highly in anxious situations. Regarding writing mistakes, first semester and second semester participants were different in their performances. For instance, Neven and Xena (first semester students) showed grammatical mistakes in writing while Momen and Mohammed (second semester students) showed little negligible typing mistakes. In addition, other factors such as preparation and topic were also influential in heightening anxiety during performance for most of participants. These language related issues will be further analysed below.

As mentioned earlier, speaking in a foreign language can be a factor that triggers anxiety in itself. In the current study, it emerged that FLA was heightened by the perception of the participants that the presentations themselves should have been made in

an “academic” language. Xena, who was a first semester participant, talked about her difficulty in speaking in English in her post-presentation interview. She said “If I make my presentation in Arabic, I will feel little anxiety, but in English it is so difficult, especially if you have to speak academically. You think of the word that you want to say each time” (Xena, individual interview, November 11, 2013, my translation). Xena’s words about thinking of the words that would come out of her mouth each time she speaks demonstrates the level of self-consciousness that causes her interactions in English to become unnatural and intermittent to a great extent. This was also reflected in her presentation performance. In course A, for example, her presentation was about “how to teach vocabulary.” As she was describing what she meant by “interactive writing,” she got stuck and could not proceed:

Xena in slide # 9 read from the note box about interactive writing. Audience members were static and seemed not to understand what she did say, and the instructor said “interactive writing, how is that, like?” The presenter replied as this “meaning, for example, two people in the class, to take one vocabulary and give example, new sentence, and the question, how can it be?” Then she showed an embarrassing smile. The instructor asked her once again “what’s interactive writing? Look, I don’t know, I am trying to understand.” The audience laughed and one member of the audience said “We don’t understand it, if you just...” The instructor gave her a list of possible interpretations: “I don’t know. We want to understand, work in a group, yes, and you ask them to write something, ok, write a paragraph about, what is it, a bird, or like environment, so how is it going to be interactive, what are we going to determine, so I understand, so we are in a group and you want us to write interactively, so what is it going to be. So, one of the members is going to write and the other is going to be talking, discussing, saying, so like they write together, everybody writes a sentence, so how is it, tell me?” The presenter was sweating, and did not say anything. Then the instructor and the audience started discussing “interactive writing” without the presenter taking part in the discussion [*sic*] (Xena, Fieldnotes, November 26, 2013)

During Xena's presentation in course A, situations such as this one occurred six times. Audience seemed not to understand what Xena was saying. Therefore, the instructor asked her for a clarification but she could not clarify, significantly because her language competency in English was low. As can be seen from her initial response (meaning, for example, two people in the class, to take one vocabulary and give example, new sentence, and the question, how can it be?), her sentences are not complete and they get more and more ungrammatical as she continues to mumble completely unrelated words in relation to the actual question. In this case, her anxiety starts to rise because of the incompetent answer she produced to this request for clarification. The instructor repeats his question for the second time, but this time Xena keeps silent as if her anxiety has reached the peak and she has felt that she cannot utter any words in English. Moreover, there was a consensus from the audience that her speech was incomprehensible. After the presentation, I asked Xena about her feelings during this situation and she replied:

Mohsin: How did you feel when the instructor asked you about interactive writing?

Xena: When the instructor said that he did not understand that point about "interactive" I explained it to him more than one time, but he did not understand it, so inwardly I prayed that we move to another point. I memorized the whole topic and I was rehearsing it every day for a month. I was doing that, every day, but this thing did not help, I was so anxious, I thought that I would be able to present it in a way that they would understand it (Xena, individual interview, November 29, 2013, my translation).

Xena, as she claimed, prepared for the presentation for one month and rehearsed it every day. Nevertheless, that was not enough to rescue her from experiencing high levels of anxiety. She thought that her answer would be sufficient to make the audience understand. Her reference to "inwardly I prayed that we move to another point" is significant here as

it shows how desperate she became at that point. Her primary goal was no longer to get her message across but to finish the presentation. In the interview, Abid also mentioned that whenever he speaks with instructors, he becomes highly anxious because of not being able to speak English “academically.”

Mohsin: When you speak with an instructor from face to face, outside the presentation classroom, like for example consulting the instructor in something in the office hour, how do you feel?

Abid: Yes, while you speak to the instructor, you have to look academically. Your speech should be in a good way. Yes, I feel anxious when I speak with my instructor during the office hours, so before telling the instructor, I have these thoughts in my mind, how to tell, I am constructing the sentence. And they are expecting something from the MA students, something in a higher level, *[sic]* (Abid, individual interview, November 7, 2013)

Abid’s thoughts were confirmed by the instructor of course A. That is, students become anxious because of not being able to express themselves properly in front of their instructors:

The other thing is I think it is because of their English. It is not because they are scared of me personally, but they are scared of not being able to express themselves and being misunderstood by me. (Carol, interview, December 16, 2013).

According to Taylor (2010), students perceive themselves as not qualified enough to speak with instructors or to consult them. She explains that

Students feared being judged, not being good enough, or not being college material. This meant that not handing in an assignment, not taking a test, not asking

a question in class, or not going to office hours was an effective way out of that dilemma (p. 2).

Gardner (as cited in Stella & Hurd, 2008) also explicated that anxiety felt while speaking in front of others cause individuals to suffer from deficits in listening comprehension and reduced word production. As a result, proficiency in the English as a foreign language together with the students' perceptions of the interactions within the departmental contexts as requiring being "academic" were the two main factors that caused especially the first semester students become more anxious.

FLA seemed to manifest itself in a very specific way that was common among the participants. Once anxiety was sparked, for instance, the person became isolated from the audience. It became difficult for him/her to understand what was being said by the audience. In Mohammed's case, he was asked the same question six times in course D, two times by one of his classmates and four times by the instructor. Each time, the question was repeated in a more simplistic manner but Mohammed still could not understand it. It wasn't a matter of not knowing the answer, but in fact, he seemed completely isolated from the audience because of his anxiety:

One of the audience asked a question about the difference between dialect and code. He said "I want to give *[inaudible]* it could be the couple *[inaudible]* of two languages *[inaudible]* different from each other's?" Mohammed showed a static countenance that he could not understand the question. His classmate repeated the question with different words "are they different types of language?" Mohammed did not comprehend it this time too. In the third time, the instructor interfered and raised his voice and asked the presenter the same question content with long, but simplistic explanation. "You did not hear the question, if *[inaudible]* Call the same language why do you *[inaudible]*?" However,

Mohammed did not understand the instructor's explanation. Instructor tried to relate the question to Mohammed's background "let me put it differently, if you speak a dialect of my language, what would be your reaction about that?" Mohammed's response was "what?" the instructor said again "If I ask him he speaks a dialect of my language, how would be your reaction to that?" Mohammed showed a sign of not understanding the question and said "aaaaaaa." Instructor added "would it make you happy if I said I speak Housa and you speak a dialect of Housa?" The audience laughed because he could not understand the question though it was repeated for him two times by his classmate and four times by the instructor. (Mohammed, Fieldnotes, November 29, 2013)

It is obvious that he had been asked the question six times. His classmate repeated the question for him twice in different words. In the third time, the instructor thought that Mohammed did not hear the question, so he raised his voice and made the question simpler from the version of Mohamad's classmate. In the fourth and fifth times, instructor tried to make the question more relevant and took himself, Mohammed, and his classmate as an example. In the sixth time, instructor made the question close to Mohammed's background and took Mohammed's language as a tool to make the question more comprehensible. However, all these trials were futile and Mohamad did not get the meaning of the question. I noticed that the presenter was completely isolated from the audience as if he had lost his sense of hearing. In his presentation in course C, he could not answer five questions asked to him by the instructor. This isolation seems to be a manifestation of his anxiety at two levels. First, he did not seem to comprehend the questions asked to him despite they were simplified each time they were repeated. As the situation intensified and he failed to take part in the on-going interaction, he retreated into a state of isolation or even an assumed invisibility. Interestingly though, in the post-presentation interview following course C,

he claimed that presenting in English does not bother him and considered it as an insult for some who are making MA degree to be bothered when presenting in English:

Mohsin: Does presenting in English bother you?

Mohammed: Actually presenting in English does not bother me. It does not actually, and because, you know, when it bothers me it seems to be shameful to me actually. I am from ELT and not undergraduate student but rather MA student. It seems to be shameful actually.

Mohsin: Is English in your country used as a second language or a foreign language?

Mohammed: It is a second language, you know, and it is an official language actually. It is taught in the school and it is a medium of instruction in school [*sic*] (Mohammed, individual interview, November 28, 2013).

From this interview extract, it seems that for Mohammed, English is a second language. Moreover, it is his major degree in MA. One would expect someone like this to be able to communicate in English without any difficulties in academic settings. However, it seemed like anxiety had made it difficult for him to understand the questions that he was being asked which shows the detrimental effects of anxiety on foreign/second language production in oral presentations.

Another symptom of isolation among the participants was mother tongue interference when presenting. It is showed to be another manifestation of high levels of anxiety. Xena uttered three times words from her mother tongue as in the following example:

Xena was presenting slide # 29. It is about memorizing words. Instructor asked her "how do we put it into long term memory". Xena responded "Eish" which an Arabic word meaning "what". (Xena, Fieldnotes, November 26, 2013)

She was shocked when I reminded her that she had used several Arabic words in her presentation. She said "Really? I did not feel that!" (Xena, individual interview, November 29, 2013). Thus, it seems that individuals become involved in subconscious processes whereby they cannot control their speech during performance because of anxiety's intensity.

Software Illiteracy. Software illiteracy, in this study, is defined as the presenter's incapability of managing or executing PowerPoint slides effectively. In this situation, the presenter may make mistakes that interrupt the flow of the presentation and cause interruptions for several seconds. During these seconds, the presenter may feel high levels of anxiety due to embarrassment. These software literacy problems occurred specifically with three participants: Momen, Mohammed and Xena. In course C, Momen was discussing slide #9 which talked about "Cerebral Hemisphere." As he was moving to Slide #10, the lower part of the slide appeared only instead of the whole slide:

Momen finished reading slide #9 and wanted to shift to slide #10. However, suddenly the lower part of the slide showed and the upper part did not appear. Everyone laughed and the instructor commented on that saying "What did you do? Hukus bukus." Momen showed an embarrassing smile. He read the lower part and then pressed the button in order to move to slide #11, but instead of that, the upper part of slide #10 appeared. He said as if he is talking to the upper part of the slide "Thank you." The instructor said "Aaaaaaah you wanted to do a trick and you did it in the wrong way." Momen replied "No no no, I missed it in the animation." The audience laughed and the instructor said "Ok, you put the animation the other way, wrong, go on." [*sic*] (Momen, Fieldnotes, November 11, 2013).

Momen was indulged in reading the slide but that unexpected problem with the animation set up interrupted his concentration and caused him to feel anxiety twice; First, when the upper part of slide #10 did not appear and second, when the upper part of slide #10 appeared instead of slide #11. The same slide caused him to feel two shocks. In the first shock, he smiled with embarrassment and continued his reading the lower part of the slide instead of clarifying that software mistake to the instructor. Smiling in evaluative situations such as making an academic oral presentation, does not indicate that the smile is an ordinary smile where the individual expresses as a result of happiness but rather it is as a result of state anxiety felt by the person (Harrigan & Taing, 1997). Hence, Momen's smile here was not because of amusement but because of anxiety. In the second shock, he explained to the instructor why that mistake occurred in an attempt to rectify this mistake.

In Course D, Mohammed showed the same humorous reaction, but by giggling, which is considered as a manifestation of anxiety felt in specific situations (Joubert, 1993):

Mohammed started his presentation while everyone was waiting for him to show the slides, but nothing has appeared. It was obvious that he could not handle the software. The instructor asked "What?!" One classmate responded, "He is finding some difficulty in performing the slides." The instructor said, "Aaaaa." Mohammed giggled and asked his classmate to help him in showing the slides on screen. (Mohammed, Fieldnotes, November 29, 2013).

Mohammed tried to solve the software mistake, but it seemed that he did not know how to solve it himself. This problem took approximately 50 seconds to be fixed. It was discernible for the observer to notice that he was finding difficulty in fixing the problem. Therefore, the instructor questioned about the problem but Mohammed did not answer the

instructor's question and his classmate did. Then, following a desperate giggle, he asked his classmate to help him showing the slides on screen. After the presentation, I asked him about this problem in our post-presentation interview:

Mohsin: Did you get nervous when the slide did not appear?

Mohamed: You don't like any kind of interruption or any kind of failure. So that brings out the attention of your audience any distraction, so you don't like it actually[sic]. (Individual interview, November 28, 2013).

Mohammed's words "You don't like it actually" were a clear sign that he became anxious because of this software mistake. In Momen's experience in the earlier example, the situation was less severe because the slide had appeared in the end and he knew why this software mistake had occurred. Yet, Mohammed did not know how to deal with it and thus sought his friend's help rendering him incapable of handling the situation at that point in time. Moreover, his reaction to the situation was a nervous one. Ramachandran (2004) gives a plausible explanation for this nervous giggling in anxious situations. He explains that such a giggle aims to give the message that whatever had happened is natural and not worthwhile to be mentioned. In other words, his giggling was a cover up for his incapability in managing the software.

Xena also experienced a situation where software illiteracy emerged. Her anxiety was evident in many ways and she looked as if the ladder was pulled out beneath her feet and she kept hanging in the air. Her presentation topic was "teaching vocabulary" and she was discussing guidelines for teaching vocabulary on slide #9:

In slide#8, Xena was reading the explanation of the key points from the note box of the slide, but this prevented the slide from being showed in a full-screen mode which disturbed the view of the audience and prevented them from seeing the key points on the slide. Because of that, the instructor said “what, make it full-screen.” Here, Xena felt lost and showed a strained look full of panic. She could neither make it “presenter view” to make notes viewed only by her nor comply with the instructor’s command to make it full-screen. She did not know how to make it full-screen, so one classmate volunteered and made it full-screen without being asked for help by her[sic]. (Xena , Fieldnotes, November 26, 2013)

Xena depended on the notes underneath the slides, so being prevented from seeing them had caused her to lose her balance. She was breathing heavily and swallowing a lot at the time. In the post-presentation interview, she described this as:

Mohsin: Dealing with the software especially when you were reading from the notes box and then instructor asked you to make it full-screen, how did you feel about that?

Xena: First I hoped that the notes did not appear on screen while I was presenting, and it was the first time for me to use this program. There was also a plan I prepared, but when the instructor asked me to make it full-screen I was lost. I became confused. One classmate told me the button “F5”, but I could not see it because I lost my control, but afterward I used my notebook(Xena, individual interview, November 29, 2013).

Xena confessed that it was the first time for her to use this program and this was clear in the way she reacted to the instructor’s command in the field notes presented earlier. Confronting the software problem and being unable to solve it made her very nervous and puzzled. This situation is one of the critical memons for the presenter during performance (Ober , 2009). Ober (2009) stated that critical moments in presentation are those when anxiety reaches the highest levels.

Participants' Perceptions of Their Instructors. During my observations of my participants, I noticed that they formed specific perceptions of and relative attitudes towards their instructors, based on the position and the practices of that instructor. The position and the practices of the instructor may cause presenters to feel either anxious or comfortable while performing their academic oral presentations. Hani and Xena have expressed that they become anxious in specific courses because of the instructor's position but they became relaxed in other courses:

Hani: You know, I have to present in course A ten days ago I have anxiety.

Mohsin: why?

Hani: I told you because of two reasons. The first one is because of his name. The second reason related to him. He asks questions, he criticizes everything and someone told me about him something scared me. He always criticizes and after two years they tell you failed. Someone told me he is a hard teacher and critical person. He can answer every question you ask[sic]. (Hani, Individual interview, December 18, 2013)

Abid also mentioned that the instructor's style made him anxious:

It depends on the instructor himself. If he questions everything, you feel more nervous. For example, the instructor of course A is not questioning as the instructor of course B. For A, you feel more anxious, you are scared. First, he is the headmaster of the department and then he is questioning a lot. The style of the teacher is different. (Abid, Individual interview, December 13, 2013)

Abid mentioned the same two reasons that Hani had mentioned earlier in his interview.

Instructor of course B stated that doctors might be feared in general:

I think one thing might be about my job, because it is not specific to me but in general doctors and professors and whatever they might be, we are people that might be feared (Carol, Individual interview, December 17, 2013).

As the extract from the interview with course B's lecturer signifies, the academic and administrative titles of lecturers may cause anxiety among their students, even before they are assigned to do any oral presentations in their courses. This may be also attributed to the cultural background of the participants, especially in the case of the Arab students where the perceived positionings of the interlocutors may require the speaker to use certain pragmatic expressions to convey respect (Farghal & Shakir, 1994). In addition to the academic titles, instructor interventions and questions were perceived negatively by Momen as well. In his opinion, they add more pressure on the presenter while performing his presentation:

Mohsin: Did you get nervous when the professor asked you questions, how did you feel, and what went in your mind?

Momen: When he interrupted me, I felt something, and when he asked me questions and sometimes he just asks questions even from the grammar. He asks what is the meaning of that word for example, and sometimes someone cannot remember of such a word, so it will be better to ask you the meaning of the whole sentence for you to explain it to you better than to ask you what is the meaning of that exact word, so that puts more weights on your presentation, but you don't have the to know the meaning of each word. It is a presentation I can explain the sentence but not some of the words alone. And even though I know the words but sometimes when I am interrupted and I was asked to explain the meaning of that exact word. Sometimes I could not remember. So sometimes I used to forget[sic]. (Momen, individual interview, December 15, 2013)

As Momen explained, the interruptions by the instructor were not welcome and he calls such questions as putting "more weights on your presentation." Eventually, he claims that

he cannot answer such questions due to elevated levels of anxiety and he fails to respond even though he might actually know the answer. As opposed to Momen, these interventions were perceived positively by Abid. He said that it gave him time to relax and take a breath. According to him, if there were no interventions, then this would cause the presenter to feel alone during the performance:

Mohsin: Did you get nervous when the professor asked you questions, how did you feel, and what went in your mind?

Abid: Instructor of course E overemphasizes on pronunciation. He is not like the other instructors. Comparing him with instructor of course B, he contributes a lot to your presentation, so while he is speaking, you can relax while the instructor is speaking. It helps you to concentrate on your presentation, whereas on instructor of course B, it is hard for you to maintain all the three hours, to talk in your own. It is really hard. It is good with the instructor stops you and makes some elaboration/*sic*/. (Abid, individual interview, December 15, 2013)

During my observations, I did not notice that instructor of course E had ever corrected Abid's pronunciation. It seems that he came to this conclusion by observing his classmates in course E. Their pronunciation was highly influenced by mother tongue interference and the instructor kept correcting the pronunciation of his classmates. Thus, his comments on being relieved of the burden of presenting, even for a short amount of time, might not actually relate to the interruptions made by the instructors but to his perception in relation to the duration of the presentation: "it is hard for you to maintain all the three hours."

Factors Causing Anxiety: Presentation Related Factors

PowerPoint as an (Visual) Aid. In academic oral presentations, presenter is expected to use PowerPoint slides to present their topics. If these slides are inaccurate, then the credibility of the presenter will be lost (Osborn, Osborn, & Osborn, 2009). Once a writing/spelling mistake is spotted in an oral presentation, the flow of the presentation will break. In fact, the audience is usually less attentive to mistakes in speech, but they can easily spot mistakes in writing (Niemantsverdriet, 2000). In this respect, my observations of the participants' presentations in class showed that the instructors did ignore spoken errors to some extent but they certainly paid more attention to written mistakes on the slides. Hence, these mistakes caused anxiety levels of the presenters to rise. In course B, for example, Xena put an ambiguous item on one of her slides and the instructor asked her about that item. However, she could not explain what she meant by it. Audience members proposed several interpretations for this item:

On the slide # 9 there was an ambiguous item called "creating where used vocabulary." The instructor asked "Creating where used, what is the last one? Xena responded "creating where used vocabulary, where a used vocabulary, subject, object, how to put this vocabulary." One member of the audience proposed a meaning for this item. The instructor said "Is it that Xena?" Xena's face became sweaty and turned pinkish. She said "you, you [*laugh*]." The instructor replied "It is not very clear, but where used vocabulary, like creating where, what does that mean? Not clear at all." Another member in the audience proposed a correction for the item and said "where they used, it should be like that." The instructor laughed and said "Where to use vocabulary, aaa then here, it is meaningful." Xena nodded[*sic*]. (Xena, Fieldnotes, November 26, 2013).

Xena could not give a clarification for the item on her slide. Her response showed her weakness in language competence once again and the more she spoke, the more she became exposed to criticism. When the audience started giving interpretations for the

item, Xena felt as if she was rescued. In her post-presentation interview she said, “When my classmate interfered to help me, I felt comfortable. He saved me actually” (Xena, individual interview, November 11, 2013). Despite being rescued, Xena could not decide whether that interpretation was right or wrong when the instructor asked. Her classmate also was uncertain about his interpretation because he said “maybe,” which could have caused Xena to be undecided herself. Furthermore, Xena could not determine whether to say yes or no because her decision-making cognitive process was paralyzed with anxiety (Snyder, et al., 2010). Supporting this expected reaction, Snyder et al. (2010) points out that higher anxiety impairs selection among high and low retrieval demands in such situations. Hence, this episode showed how a single ambiguous item on the Power Point slide escalated to a paralysing situation for Xena.

In another case, writing mistakes were detrimental and they caused Neven, another first year student, to feel so anxious because the instructor commented on each mistake that was spotted:

Neven was reading from slide # 5 about classification of languages. She read this sentence “If two speakers cannot understand one other.” Instructor interrupted her and said “cannot understand?!!” Neven said “cannot understand one other.” One classmate said “No it is one another.” Instructor said “yes, one another change it, it is one another.” Neven smiled and said “Yes, I will change it.” Neven proposed to change it later after the presentation/*sic*/. (Neven, Fieldnotes, December 26, 2013)

I noticed that Neven showed an anxious smile at that point in class, but later on she adapted herself to such situations because there were many mistakes on the slides. Therefore, the instructor said “Oh, you have to revise your presentation (PowerPoint slides). You see,

you came to the presentation with many mistakes, a lot of mistakes. You have to check it before sending it to me.” In addition, after a while I noticed that the audience started to become vigilantes about writing mistakes because they started correcting these mistakes before the instructor noticed them. Neven, as a result, felt relieved and she thought of these interventions as a support by her classmates. In the interview, she said “My classmates were encouraging me especially Tom and Sam. I felt that they were interacting with me. This gave me the strength to speak without fixating in my book” (Neven, individual interview, December 30, 2013). Hence, Neven’s interpretation of her classmates’ mistake spotting was positive, although during the observation it looked like they were pointing out Neven’s deficiencies rather than trying to help her. The impact of the audience’s attention will be discussed further in the following sections.

In addition to the first semester participants, second semester participants also had spelling mistakes on their slides. Yet, they did not have the same effect of those that were committed by first semester participants:

Speaking about “acquired dyslexia” Momen read from the slide this sentence: “They understand what the produce not what they see.” So, instead of writing “they,” he wrote “the.”. So he said two times “incorrect, incorrect” with a smile, the instructor responded “oh, yeah, you were in a hurry.” (Momen, Fieldnotes, November 11, 2013)

Mohammed in Course C had a spelling mistake in the example he provided:

Mohammed was talking about “Markedness and the subset principle.” He read this example:

[-null subject]: I speak Spanish.

[+null subject]: yo hablo español.

Heblo español.

Instead of writing on the slide “Hablo” he wrote “Heblo”, so the instructor said “yo hablo espanol, Heblo espanol. Not E but A.” Mohammed said “yes, yes, yes” (Mohammed, Fieldnotes, December 9, 2013)

As can be seen from the extracts, second semester participants’ writing mistakes were more like typing mistakes on the slides. Further, these mistakes were noticed by the second semester participants themselves before the instructor or the audience even could notice them. In such situations, criticism over these typing mistakes invoked anxiety. Their performance became more focused on trying to spot new typing mistakes on each new slide. Their speed of spotting these typing mistakes before the audience and the instructor is an indication of trying to avoid new criticisms over these typing mistakes. Leahy, Holland, and McGinn (2012) state that highly anxious individuals try to avoid criticism by exerting more effort on their tasks, such as working extra hours or trying to be accurate as possible as they could be.

Difficulty of the topic. In public speaking classes, topic of speech is left for the speaker to choose as the main goal of speaking classes is to practice the speaking skill. Therefore, it is not recommended to choose difficult topics in public speaking books (Rizvi, 2005; Eisenberg & Gamble, 1991; Griffin, 2012). However, in the context of the current study, the topics for academic oral presentations are provided by the instructor who teaches the subject. The main goal of academic oral presentations is to discuss a topic that will be tested at the end of the semester. If the topic is difficult for the presenter, then the goal of the presentation becomes very difficult to meet. Three participants complained

about the topic of their presentations as a source of anxiety in this study. Hani in course B complained about “listening” as a topic of his presentation: “The topic is difficult, it is listening. My topic is so difficult. Teaching writing is easy, teaching reading is easy but teaching listening and speaking is difficult”(Hani, individual interview, December 7, 2013). Despite the fact that I missed the first half of Hani’s presentation at the time of the observations, I noticed that he only read from the slides and he did not even contribute to the ongoing discussions during his presentation:

They discuss the topic of “real life situations of listening.” Instructor asked Hani “What are the characteristics of real life situations?” Hani did not answer and audience members started giving answers such as environment, redundancy, noise, grammar, accuracy, taboo language and organization. Hani did not contribute to the discussion which took around 35 minutes. Hani throughout that this discussion was daydreaming, yawning, sometimes looking around and sometimes surfing the slides. (Hani, Fieldnotes, December 30, 2013)

During this 35-minute discussion, yawning and daydreaming were the most frequently practiced behaviours by Hani. Yawning may seem as an indicator of boredom, but in fact in this case, it can be associated with anxiety (Ellis, 2010). Leone, Francesco, and Palagi (2014) state that yawning depends largely on three factors: the performer, the context and the behavioural pattern that is associated with the yawn. In evaluative contexts, daydreaming and yawning are signs of excessive anxiety (Starker, 1974; Ellis, 2010).

In his presentation in course F, Mohammed presented a mathematical subject. He was highly anxious to the extent that he could neither answer four questions asked by instructor nor explain two items on his slide:

In slide #6, there was a formula to measure the standard deviation. The presenter said “so this is how of getting the standard deviation, formula of getting the standard deviation, somehow complex I don’t know.” The audience exploded with laughter when he said this statement. He said again “I don’t know, it is not clear.” While smiling, instructor said “I am going to punish him.” (Mohammed, Fieldnotes, December 13, 2013)

The situation intensified when Mohammed confessed that he did not know the explanation of the formula. In the interview, he described the topic as difficult:

Mohsin: Were you nervous while presenting, do you think you were able to control it?

Mohammed: Yes. I was nervous. Actually, the topic I presented is somehow difficult, and actually I just tried to summarize the main idea. I am not a mathematician actually. This actually I can say completely- it might be felt free during my presentation. The topic I had mentioned is somehow difficult because it’s mathematical and you have to relate to reading test, so it is somehow difficult (Mohammed, post-presentation interview, December 14, 2013)

As mentioned, the first factor that Mohammed remembered was the topic. When I asked him about being prepared for his presentation, he claimed that he was well-prepared and again described the topic as difficult for seven times. He considered it as the main obstacle in his presentation:

Mohsin: How did you prepare for this presentation, do you think you were well-prepared?

Mohammed: Yes, actually I was well-prepared. The way I made slide or the way I made my points were, I think, were very clear, because I summarized, you know I presented it lastly. I was the last presenter. Most of the audience were tired and bored so you do, unfortunately my topic mathematic. Many people consider mathematic so difficult. I just to give the main idea about the topic[sic] (Mohammed, post-presentation interview, December 14, 2013).

This extracts shows that the topic itself was a very significant factor, even before the presentation, causing Mohammed to feel anxious.

Momen also mentioned the topic as his source of anxiety in course C. It was a scientific topic about “brain and language” and he said:

Mohsin: How did you prepare for this presentation? Do you think you were well-prepared?

Momen: Yes, I am well prepared for the class, but before the presentation especially at the initial stage. I felt I am not well-prepared despite that fact that the topic is scientifically based topic, so it's also a new thing to me. Because the topic is talking about brain and language, so you have to explain more, to know what you will say while doing your presentation. That's it. But I like the field neurolinguistics, I like it very much [*sic*] (Momen, individual interview, November 13, 2013)

In this presentation, Momen could answer only three questions out of eight related to his presentation. The topic was filled with diagrams and complex pictures about the brain. Chan (1999) state that most people report unfamiliarity with the topic as one of the main sources of anxiety during oral presentations. This was the situation in the three occasions in this study.

Preparation. Two factors are important for preparing academic oral presentations: content and practice (Hamilton, 2012; Sellnow, 2005). In all courses, the topic to be prepared by participants is assigned by instructors. Participants have the freedom to search for sources related to their topics. However, these sources must be specified and limited to the scope of topic. When using sources for preparation, participants sometimes prepare in the wrong way, which might cause anxiety for them instead of reducing it. As I noticed, three factors caused anxiety levels to rise among the

participants in relation to preparation. These were preparing unrelated information, presenting without an outline and presenting without practice. When I conducted an interview with the instructor of course A about preparation of participants, instructor said:

We want to define the difference between well-prepared and prepared a lot. Most of the time, my students prepare a lot, but they may not be well-prepared, so they do a lot of work. They do a lot of reading, but because they lack some presentation skills, they don't know how to put these in the presentation format. One of the things they miss is summarizing. They try to put everything there rather than giving the key points or giving the main idea of the topic. They try to say every detail which may not be relevant, so well-preparation means a lot of information, a lot of references; a lot of background information, but also it means a good summary, a good narrowing down of what is relevant and what is not relevant. Well-preparation also means that you have good slides and you go over your slides if you are using the PowerPoint, and you practice. (Carol, interview, December 17, 2013)

In her presentation for course B, Xena was presenting about "teaching vocabulary." She put information which is irrelevant to the presentation. The instructor protested against that:

Xena started talking about the number of words a person can learn per week, per month and per year. She said "and how many words learns usually. There are examples about what researchers say about vocabulary and difference in vocabulary growth. For example, if the student gets two words per day, he will be to get 750 words per year. If students to get 8 words per day, he will to get three thousand words per year". Instructor said "So what is that, what is the meaning of that?" Xena said "It is example about if the student to get two words." The instructor showed a sign of rejection and said "Now this is mathematics, no more than that." Xena smiled and stammered saying "ye....ah" [*sic*] (Xena, Fieldnotes, November 26, 2013).

In another occasion in the same presentation, she proposed the idea of translating words from English to other languages when teaching vocabulary. It seemed that Xena brought her information from old sources. It is known educationally that translation is left out in modern days (Mukalel, 1998):

Xena started to propose ways for teaching vocabulary. She said “Using gestures and actions and other techniques, for example, translate or describe or definition this a word” Instructor interrupted her and said “Translate? Oh no.” Audience laughed and one member in the audience said “remove it, remove it.” Xena was shocked of the way instructor protested against translation [*sic*]. (Xena, Fieldnotes, November 26, 2013)

In this extract, it clearly indicates that Xena’s preparation was not properly done, which caused her to be embarrassed in front of her classmates as well as her instructor. In turn, this embarrassment appeared to raise her anxiety levels because she smiled and stammered a lot following these comments.

Mohammed was presenting about “code-switching and code-mixing” in course D. Instructor asked him to give an example about “metaphorical code-switching.” However, Mohammed became anxious and confessed that he had not prepared well for this presentation because he did not have time:

Mohammed started talking about “metaphorical code-switching.” He said "metaphorical code-switching, this happens as a result of change of the topic as well, so the essence of the topic which is questioned in the language" He did not use the example that existed on the slide, but rather another example from a paper. As a result, the audience did not understand the example because they were concentrating on the example on the slide, so he said “I hope it is clear, somehow, I got different examples actually but this one” instructor interrupted and said "Why you don’t pick some examples from your language?" Mohammed said “From my language? So let me try.” Then he contemplated for a while

and said with a smile "You know, I was busy doing my proposal, since last night, I couldn't sleep" (Mohammed, Fieldnotes, November 29, 2013).

Carter (2013) indicated that anxiety overwhelm those who do not prepare well. Hope et al. (2010) state that speakers should be moderate in their preparation because sometimes over preparation is unhelpful in managing anxiety. Therefore, the speaker should use the extra time in restructuring their work and rehearsing. Moreover, practice before the presentation is important because rehearsing the speech repeatedly may help presenter feel encouraged to give the presentation (Jones, 2005). In Mohammed's case, he seems to have a problem with preparation that was caused by limited time. He claims to have been focusing on another project for another course, which he offers as a reason for not having prepared well for this presentation. Nevertheless, this unpreparedness does cause rising of anxiety for him at this point.

Place of presentation. As mentioned previously in the methodology chapter, participants presented in three types of settings. These were a conference hall, a regular classroom and an instructor's office. For myself, I performed several presentations in the three settings. In my first day in the English language teaching department, the instructor informed me that his course is going to be taught in his office. In fact, I felt anxious because it is not usual for me to give a presentation in an office. In the literature, presentations are generally performed in auditoriums, classrooms and conferences halls. Performing a presentation in an office is to a certain extent uncommon. The office where I observed presentations in was six meters in length and four in width. As I noticed, audience members were quite close in distance to the presenter. For example, Xena said

that she felt uncomfortable in the office after she had performed her presentations in the regular classrooms and in the office:

In Course B, I felt some comfortableness but in Course A I felt so anxious because I performed it in the chairperson's office not in the regular classroom. (Xena, individual interview, December 29, 2013, my translation)

Unfamiliarity with the place as a new setting could be the reason of Xena's anxiety. Walker (2014) considered the place as part of the preparation process, whereby speaker should come in advance and be familiar with it. Sanders (2003) also stated that performing a presentation in an unfamiliar place causes anxiety for the speaker. Noteworthy, instructor who taught this course was the Chairperson of the department. Therefore, Xena's anxiety might be associated with instructor himself as he was the authority figure at two levels; one as a lecturer and two as the Chairperson. The effects of the participants' perceptions of the instructors will be further analysed in the following sections.

Perceived Duration of the Presentation. Duration of the presentation was a prominent factor in framing participants' expectations towards their presentations. That is, once the participants were informed about their presentations, they became indulged in negative thoughts in advance of their performances. Abid, for instance, thought of making a presentation for three hours as something beyond the limits of memory and effort:

Mohisn: Is time duration important for a presentation?

Abid: Of course. If I have to make a presentation for three hours, it is a lot, you know, you get more nervous. It is really hard. You may forget something. It is better if your presentation 15 minutes, not too long. One point I want to mention. There is a lot of information to memorize. You have to keep in your mind during the three hours, a lot of

information you have to memorize, but when it is only thirty minutes, it is much less information you have to read, you have to know[sic]. (Abid, individual interview, November 8, 2013)

Hani also experienced anxiety once he was informed about presentation's duration. He thought that three hours of presentation would exceed his proficiency in English language:

If the time duration is more than one hour, it makes you collect more, and prepare more. And your proficiency in English, if I am qualified enough I would be talking more, so when the instructor told me that my presentation will be 3 hours, I felt anxiety. I cannot prepare three hours. It is difficult especially when the others do not participate. I'd like to present two hours instead of three[sic]. (Hani, individual interview, December 4, 2013)

As noted, Hani and Abid, proposed a duration of presentation that they consider to be appropriate. Interestingly, Hani mentioned that lack of audience participation within the three hours heightened his anxiety. On the other hand, Momen had the same expectations at the initial stage, but after he had started, he felt that he needs more time:

Mohsin: Is the time duration important, does it affect the way you feel about presentation?

Momen: Actually when I start I feel the time is too much to me. But in the process of the presentation, sometime you see you have to spend more than two hours that is it. (Momen, individual interview, November 13, 2013)

Xena also became anxious as soon as she had known about her presentation. Her biggest concern was her proficiency in English language, meaning that she would not be able to speak in English for three hours. She said that it would be possible to perform a presentation for three hours in case of using her mother tongue that is Arabic:

Mohsin: Does time duration make you anxious?

Xena: Yes, of course, because as you remember I made a presentation and it was from one o'clock till four, so, you must be accurate. You cannot make it more than the time or less. In the first time when I heard that I have to make a presentation for three hours, I said how would I be able to speak for all this amount of time. Moreover, the amount of information you have to put in your slides, it is a big challenge especially if it is in English. If it is in Arabic, it is will be easier, but in English it is difficult. And your speech must be academic. (Xena, individual interview, November 29, 2013, my translation).

In fact, in course A, presenters did not speak continuously for three hours and discussions were occurring from time to time. For instance, I noticed that a discussion continued for 30 minutes between the instructor and the audience without the presenter's participation in this discussion. These discussions were like break times for presenters. In my interview with Abid, he said that instructors should interrupt so that he can rest and relax during these interruptions. However, during long discussions, Xena became worried more about the completion of her presentation. That is, these long discussions were reducing her time duration. For example in course A, Xena talked less than seven minutes during a discussion of 30 minutes between the instructor and the audience. As a result, Xena interrupted the discussion expressing her worries about the scarcity comparing to the number of slides:

In slide #3, after one hour and 10 minutes of discussion between instructor and audience, Xena interrupted their discussion and said "Dr I have thirty-eight slides". Audience laughed and one member said with a surprised face "thirty-eight!!" because they were still on the second slide after one hour and 10 minutes into the presentation. Instructor replied to Xena "so you mean that, we need to have a break? I need to go at 4:00 o'clock myself today. I need to be somewhere, so we are at 2:00 o'clock. You are really fast. Don't worry. Okay. So, let's continue" (Xena, Fieldnotes, November 26, 2013).

Xena was worried about not being able to finish on time because of these long discussions, but the instructor assured her that she would finish and there was no need to be worried. Walker (2009) indicated that most mediocre presenters before presentations fixate on the length of the presentation because they want to finish as soon as possible: “They want to get through the speech with minimum pain or damage; therefore, they focus on how to make the presentation shorter, faster, leaner, and more concise” (p. 39). For Mohammed, he performed a three hour presentation in course C. Interestingly, he was not nervous, but after an hour and a half of performance, signs of a nervous presenter appeared on his countenance and behaviour such as sweating, reading without elaboration, and skipping slides could be observed. As I noted, these signs were not because of anxiety but because of exhaustion:

In slide #67, Mohammed mispronounced “integrative motivation”. He said "intregative" instead of saying "integrative". The instructor corrected him "Integrative. Integrative". Mohammed replied "Integrative. I am tired that's why, *[laugh]* ". The instructor said to him. "I know, I know, it happens to me, when I am tired. I include one (word from my first language) without being aware of it". (Mohammed, Fieldnotes, December 9, 2013)

Throughout the study, I asked my participants how they felt before each presentation. When I asked Moammed before his presentation in course C, he laughed and said “I am feeling comfortable.” His performance during the first hour was astonishingly effective. He answered all questions asked to him by the instructor and sparked discussions about specific points. He also made sure that audience understood every point he explained. Moreover, he re-explained for those who did not understand. However, during the last hour, his performance declined due to exhaustion. He read 23 slides hastily without giving details about them. Griffi (2011) stated that only 50% of information is retained after a

ten-minute oral presentation. Dahlberg and McCaig (2010) said that the norm for oral presentations is between 20 and 30 minutes and for discussion and questions 10 to 15 minutes. On the other hand, longer exposure to presentation may help students reduce their levels of presentation anxiety in the long term (Antony & Swinson, 2008). This seemed to be the case with Mohammed although the opposite was true for the other participants.

Type of presentation. In the current study, I observed three types of presentations. They were consecutive presentation group work, collaborative group work, and individual work. In consecutive presentation group work, individuals presented on the same topic consecutively and each one of them had his own slides. For example, the first presenter performed in the first 25 minutes of the presentation and his partner performed in the next 25 minutes. In collaborative group presentations, presenters performed together using the same slides but each one talked over a different slide. Generally, participants differed in their tendency towards group and individual presentations. Momen, for instance, preferred the collaborative group presentation. In his point of view, it was helpful in sharing ideas about the topic of the presentation during the preparation process:

Mohsin: Which kind of presentations do you prefer, group work, or individual?

Momen: Probably speaking, I'm ee like group work, because before the presentation we will sit together as a group discussion and we used to share our ideas, so I feel very happy when I am presenting in a group[sic]. (Momen, individual interview, November 13, 2013)

However, in course E, Momen performed a consecutive group presentation. Each member of the group had his own slides. Despite sharing ideas with his partners before the

presentation, he felt extremely anxious during performance. He could not answer several questions relating to the topic. In the interview, Momen mentioned that before the presentation his partner told him to delete some slides because, as his partner said, the prepared slides were more than the amount they needed. Presumably, Momen's partner's instruction reflected negatively on Momen's performance because he prepared himself differently for the presentation. Another explanation is that, Momen had not prepared well for the preparation as he only had one day to prepare. As discussed earlier, this is too little for an effective performance. Therefore, it seemed that Momen relied heavily on his partners' performances for the actual presentation.

Hani also preferred collaborative group work but conditionally. That is, he claimed that in such cases his partner should be better than him. Otherwise, all work would be left to Hani:

Mohsin: Which type of presentation do you like, group work or individual and why?

Hani: I like group work if my partner is better than me, but if I am better than him, then all work will be on me. Today I have a presentation and I like to make it individually because I like the subject and I can talk about it. So it depends on the subject and on the experience of my partner. (Hani, individual interview, December 4, 2013)

In course B, Hani performed a consecutive group presentation. He prepared for himself and for his partner. Therefore, it was like an affliction for Hani to perform a consecutive group presentation (Jaffe, 2006). For Abid, group work in general made presentations easier because there would be cooperation between presenters, especially in critical moments such as forgetting key points while presenting or not being able to understand a question asked by the instructor:

Mohsin: Which type of presentation do you prefer, group work or individual and why?

Abid: Of course group work is easier because you have to cooperate with your mate. If you tired a little bit, he can start and when he is tired I can replace him. It is kind of team work. It becomes better. If I forgot something, he can help, he can replace, he can support. If you did not understand some question from the audience of course, he can help you. You share the anxiety with him[sic] (Abid, individual interview, November 8, 2013)

Abid performed a collaborative group work presentation in course E. However, his partner was not prepared for the presentation as much as Abid was. His partner was only reading from the page and it seemed that this made Abid upset:

His partner started reading. He did not improvise at all. He was only reading from a paper without maintaining eye contact either with the instructor or with the audience. Abid looked at his partner's face for approximately 8 seconds. It seemed that he did not like the way that his partner was presenting the topic. (Abid, Fieldnotes, December 13, 2013)

During presentation, Abid showed signs of resentment over his partner's performance. This manifested itself in ways such as looking at his partner's face while he was reading from a paper. In his post-presentation interview, he criticized his partner's performance:

Mohsin: What about you partner, did you think that he has done a good presentation?

Abid: There is only one point. He is reading a lot. He has to express himself, rely on the memory not on the text. He has to say by the memory. It is not good to use papers in everything because it affects marks. Reading from a paper reduces the attention of the audience. If you want to attract the audience, you have to speak with your own words. You have to be natural. You have to improvise.

Mohsen: So did you find this thing disturbing?

Abid: Yes, of course, I was expecting more. While I was watching my presentation, I was expecting more, more proficiently (Abid, individual interview, December 16, 2013).

Abid was keen to video-record his presentations by his own camera and post them on his Facebook account. Interestingly, he posted a recorded video of only his own presentation, but his partner's scenes were deleted from the video. This may be interpreted as a non-acceptance of his partner's performance. O'Connell and Cuthbertson (2009) state that in group work, there are individuals who are untrue group members. In the cases of Hani and Abid, it seems that they considered their partners as untrue group members.

Factors Causing Anxiety: Audience Related Factors

Audience was another factor that appeared to be influential in causing anxiety among the participants of the current study. In the following sections, audience related factors are presented in two different sections, namely tangible and intangible factors.

Tangible Factors. The analysis of the data revealed that there were issues to do with the size and gender distribution of the audience that caused anxiety levels of the participants to rise. In the following sections, these factors will be described.

Size of the audience. Audience size is generally an anxiety provoking factor on performance (Kenny , 2011). The more the size of the audience, the more the presenter will be vulnerable to experience anxiety. Audience in course E consisted of 17 members. I noticed that two of the four participants who took this course felt anxious. Moreover, they were not able to answer any of the questions that had been asked by the instructor and/or the audience. Momen, for instance, expressed his pleasure to present in front of a small audience:

Mohsin: The audience number was five, did this affect you?

Momen: As far as we are more than two it is not a problem to me because during our last semester there was a course called research methods. We were only four and I found it very interesting. (Momen, Individual interview, November 13, 2013)

Momen's presentation was in a regular classroom. Seats were not in queues, but they were placed u-shaped around the class. This seating arrangement gave the impression of a crowded classroom. Jones (2005) explicated that calling audience 'large' does not depend on the number of individuals but on the presenter's interpretation of the audience size. For instance, 10 members can be considered as a large audience for highly anxious individuals. Momen told me about his experience during the fourth year of his undergraduate study:

My first experience during my fourth year in the university when I was sent to a female school (girls' school) as a student teacher. You understand what I mean by student teacher, like teaching practice, when I entered the class, I seized for over five minutes without saying anything because that is my first experience in front of people and female students, that matter again, female students and they are up to 78 in the class, so I don't even know how to start, so I felt very anxious at that time[sic] (Momen, individual interview, November 13, 2013).

In the two interview transcripts, audience size was linked to the other factor, female presence, by Momen and Mohammed. However, still the number of audience was a potential factor in influencing his performance. Karageorghis and Terry (2011) indicated that audience has a large effect on people's public performances. Leary and Kowalski (1995) stated that people generally are more anxious when performing or speaking before large audiences. As can be seen in the current participants' cases, the actual size of the

audience was less important in relation to anxiety compared to the perceived size and composition of it.

Distribution of gender. Course E consisted of five female students and eleven males. Despite the fact that male students were more than double the number of female students, two of the male participants expressed feeling anxious in the presence of female students/audience members. They expressed that they felt anxious not only during their actual performances but also during regular lectures. In one of the post-presentation interviews, Momen expressed feeling uncomfortable in a classroom filled with female students:

Mohsin: What about the distribution of gender in the classroom?

Momen: Do you mean females?

Mohsin: Yes

Momen: At the initial stage, sometimes, I could not speak in the class, and sometimes I cannot even talk, when I saw the class filled with women. I could not talk not even during the presentation but also when I want to make a clarification during a regular lecture. Sometimes, I feel that they are like a nightmare and there is also PhD student from among them, one day I sat close to her and I could not make any clarification. (Momen, Individual interview, December 15, 2013).

Mohammed described the presence of females in the classroom as something new to him. Moreover, he felt that he was under threat and his performance was merely an act of defending himself:

Mohsin: How did you feel about the distribution of gender in the classroom?

Mohammed: This is something new to me actually because before the class to see some few ladies one to two, but know plenty and they are unfamiliar so you feel something different actually. So when there are different gender actually you feel that you are trying to defend yourself. You try to make it better in anyway. (Mohammed, Individual interview, December 17, 2013).

In course E, Mohammed did not laugh or smile at all during his presentation. He just kept presenting with a static face throughout the entire presentation. Moreover, he did not even glance at the side of the classroom where female audience were sitting, although they were part of his audience. In the first lecture, Xena felt anxious because she was the only female student in course A. Thereafter, she adapted herself to the new environment:

Mohsin: Does the distribution of gender make you anxious?

Xena: Before I used to feel nervous, but now the situation is different. However, I still believe I would be better if they are all females. (Xena, Individual interview, December 14, 2013, my translation).

During my observation of presentations in course A, I noticed that Xena had not participated in discussions on her own. She only answered when the instructor asked a question and once she spoke, palpitations dominated her speech. It seemed that being the only female student was one of the reasons that kept her silent most of the time during discussions.

The main issue in terms of the gender distribution of the audience seems to be the fact that Xena, Momen, and Mohammed had all been educated in single-gender classrooms, which was different from their new environments. Masoud (2013) states that mixed-gender classrooms can be considered as an anxiety-provoking context.

Significantly, female students are more anxious than male students in terms of participation and speaking in English in mixed-gender classrooms (Siew & Wong, 2009; Mathew, Joba, Damena, & Islam, 2013). However, in the case of the current study, males appeared to be equally anxious about presenting in front of females. The relationship between males and females is socio-culturally limited in the countries of where Momen, Mohammed and Xena came from. In Libya, for instance, males and females are separated in educational institutions. Therefore, coming from such a background to co-educational classrooms would create high levels of anxiety for individuals who were educated in single-sex classrooms (Taheryan & Ghonsooly, 2014).

As opposed to the previously mentioned three participants, Hani did not appear to feel anxious in the presence of female students. During his presentation, he was laughing even though he was corrected several times by the instructor. After the presentation, he said that he was not anxious, but excited in the presence of female students: *Mohsin*: Do you feel anxious when you present in a mixed-gender classroom?

Hani: No, no, in course C there are not girls I felt bad anxiety, but in Course E half of the audience were females, so I felt good anxiety, I don't know why[*sic*]. (Hani, individual interview, December 7, 2013).

Interestingly, Hani calls the feeling he had when presenting in front of a female audience as “good anxiety.” This is why this factor cannot be linked directly to the socio-cultural background of the participants but can rather be interpreted as a personal phenomenon that does correlate with the presenters’ past educational experiences to some extent.

Intangible Factors. The analysis of the data revealed that there were issues to do with the reactions of the audience that caused anxiety levels of the participants to rise. In the following sections, these factors will be described.

Attentiveness of the Audience. In academic oral presentations, performance is generally evaluated and graded by the instructor. Therefore, being highly conspicuous to the instructor's attention can cause the presenter to feel nervous (Chivers & Shoolbred, 2007). As I noted, when the audience was not attentive, the instructor focused highly on the presenter. Questions, discussions and comments would mainly be directed to the presenter due to the passive role of the audience. In course C, the audience was not attentive to Momen's presentation and they did not participate in the ongoing discussions. Therefore, the instructor's attention was focused on him despite the continuous efforts of the instructor to revive the audience:

The audience was not in contact with him. He was only maintaining eye contact with the instructor. The instructor stopped him and said, "I interrupted you because they were not with you. I could follow you, but they were not following you. You understand, that is why I am saying slower, okay, don't hurry up, go on". (Momen, Fieldnotes, November 11, 2013).

I noticed that when the audience was attentive towards the presentation, the presenter became relieved because the instructor, who would be perceived as the evaluator, would be less attentive to the presenter. In another instance, Mohammed was very well prepared for his topic and showed an effective performance. Unfortunately, the audience were inattentive to Mohamed's performance. They also did not take part in the discussion and whenever Mohammed asked a question, the audience did not answer. Even when he tried

to take confirmation about whether they understood what he was saying, they just nodded. He repeated the statement, "I hope you understand" ten times and he re-explained each item twice:

Mohammed said "Learning how to use irregular verbs, you as a second language learner, you have to concentrate, you have to put more conscious on that rules. I hope you understand that what is referred to control processing. Haaa?. I hope you understand the point. Haaa?" Two members nodded as they had understood what he said. Therefore, Mohammed said "Ok, let us go back a little bit. We are talking about linguistics performance and we said that linguistic performance includes the interaction of a number of cognitive systems and other skills. ahaa you understand so, let us as a performance cues know how performance is developed since we know the interaction of number of cognitive systems. To use your mental capacity in learning linguistics performance and with other cues, you cannot put master without other skills, you understand, you use your brain then other skills, so how these skills are developed? We are going to discuss. So in the process of being a master in any kind of skill, there is a need of two activities. First, before you become a master, when you become a master in a certain skill, you become automatic, you understand, the skills become new, the rules become new, but the process of being a master is what is referred to as a control processing. so you do you practice several times, so what we are trying to say, if a rule were given to you at the second language learning, so there is a need for you to practice, so you when you are practicing, that is referred to as control processing. So that is how you is developed" *[sic]*. (Mohammed, Fieldnotes, December 9, 2013)

In the above extract, the audience caused "disappointment" in the presenter. He repeated what he had said twice. Afterwards, Mohammed used a different strategy with the audience by calling them by names. Remarkably, he picked up one member from the audience who was sleepy:

Mohammed. I hope you understand what positive evidence is all about? Jasir. Do you understand positive evidence? Jasir replied with a faint face. Jasir: yeah. Jasir's reply was

not as a confirmation that he understood what Mohammed had said. Therefore, Mohammed re-explained the item "positive evidence". He said "you know when English learner wants to learn Spanish +null subject, so his assumption will be in the L1, so when he crosses without a subject [*inaudible*]". (Mohammed, Fieldnotes, December 9, 2013).

It was noted that inattentive audience could make an anxious presenter to be more anxious and the confident presenter to feel disappointed. Abid also mentioned that the audience have never been attentive to his presentations. They do not participate, but only listen:

Mohsin: Did you get nervous when your classmates asked you questions?

Abid: They did not. It happens all the time. They all the time just listening and I am only presenting to my instructor. The audience only just listening, they don't care (Abid, Individual interview, December 16, 2013)

The instructor remains the biggest concern for the presenter because he is the evaluator of the presenter's performance. Therefore, if the audience is not attentive, the presenter may feel left alone with the instructor, such as in the case Momen. Verderber, Sellnow and Verderber (2014) indicate that speaker becomes highly anxious when he is/feels under scrutiny and in the case of the participants of this study, this was generally the case as the instructors were also assessing the presentations on several accounts. Hence, such perceptions of the audience in general and the instructor in particular by the audience did make a difference in causing anxiety.

Whispers. During my observations, I noted that whispering among audience members was common. The audience were sitting in a way that encouraged whispering among the members. The audience in course E was formed 'national' clusters:

Remarkably, the audience is formed as clusters of different backgrounds. For example the Ukrainian prefers to sit near his Ukrainian classmates, the Nigerian prefers to sit near his Nigerian classmate and the Cypriot prefers to sit near his classmates that come from the same background. I noticed a remarkable behaviour in this kind of grouping that may have affected the presenter negatively. They tended to whisper into each other's ears while the presentation was going on. (Fieldnote, December 7, 2013)

While Momen was performing his presentation, he noticed that the audience members were whispering into each other's ears. In the interview, he interpreted their act as they had considered his speech as out of point:

Mohsin: Have you noticed any responses of the audience when you were presenting, how did you feel about that?

Momen: Yes, I feel bad, sometimes if two or three audiences making eavesdrops. When you are presenting sometimes, it is the habit of the students to make an eavesdrops. It is just hissing and then look at you or show someone. So, sometimes you feel anxious or may be what you are saying out of point or something like that. You will be interrupted, so you feel they are talking about you[sic]. (Momen, Individual interview, December 15, 2013)

The interpretation of the audiences' whispering by Momen reflects how such acts can raise the level of self-consciousness on the part of the presenter. Momen even took it personally, saying that he thought they were talking about him. In such cases, it is inevitable that anxiety levels go up on the part of the presenter with possible fears of not being understood or talking non-sense to the audience or being talked about in general.

Laughter. Irrational laughter produced by audience was also found to be a source of anxiety, especially in the presence of other sources of anxiety such as poor preparation and female presence. I noticed that laughter was widely prevalent in course E. The

audience were vigilantes to every act that could make them laugh, even if it was out of point:

Mohsin: I saw your classmates laughing when the instructor interrupted you, how did you feel about that?

Momen: Yes, many times, when people presenting especially in that very course. When someone is making a presentation like at the initial stage, at the first discussion, when Nora is explaining she could not say some words "Micro and Macro". Due to that, many interrupted her and made her to say it in correct pronunciation. Nora could not make it. So since from that day anybody who is presenting the audience are just looking after him when he made a single mistake they laugh[sic]. (Momen, individual interview, December 15, 2013)

Mohammed and Momen denied being disturbed by laughter in the interview. However, during my observations of their presentations in course E, it was obvious that Mohammed and Momen felt annoyed because of the laughter of the audience and they both showed the same reactions to laughter. First, they did not laugh with the audience. Second, they raised their voices in an effort to suppressing the audience's laughter. I noted that the more they laughed, the more Mohammed's anxiety increased. In this particular course, the audience laughed at him at 16 different instances. He did not laugh with them at any of these times but rather he raised his voice to suppress their laughter or to keep them silent as if he was telling them "Silent" or "Shut up."

Mohammed said "Here, rank order, for the raw score of each student. So you arrange it sequentially. Test one let's say tested them to different reading test, test one and test two. (Stammering). You are arrange it, you arrange the scores sequentially, you know, then you minus scores one or raw scores one, aaaaaa, you minus one aaaaaaa saaaaaaa rank order, aaaaa the arrangement is called rank order." Instructor said: "Can you give an

example?” Mohammed replied: “Yes yes, no no there is not, because I am coming at the end, so it's normally student bored, aaa tired actually”. Audience laughed hard at what he said. Instantly, Mohammed raised his voice with the word "So" trying to vanquish their laughter. He said: “So, what I am trying to say, you know, you have, you tested student two different aaa tests of reading, so you arrange first math sequentially” *[sic]*. (Mohammed, Fieldnotes, November 29, 2013)

After the presentation, I asked him about the audience's laughter and his response to him. Even though Mohammed denied being disturbed by audience's laughter, he showed a different behaviour:

Mohsin: what did you feel when they were laughing?

Mohammed: I did not feel anything. I did not make anything wrong. (Mohammed, individual interview, December 14, 2013)

In another instance in course E, Mohammed made a sound that he usually made in his everyday life. When he made that sound, the audience laughed at him:

Mohammed said: “So what I am trying to say, you know, you have, you tested student two different aaa tests of reading, so you arrange first math sequentially, then, the second mark sequentially, so you subtract one math aaa, ahaaaa *[exhaled loudly]*”*[sic]*. This “ahaaaa” sound is a habit of the presenter. He always makes it even in regular conversations with friends. When the audience heard him say it aloud, laughter exploded inside the classroom. He did not laugh, but he showed a dead face. Again he read loudly to cover up their laughter and to silence them (Mohammed, Fieldnotes, December 13, 2013).

This extract also shows that the audience's laughter is an important factor in causing the presenter to feel anxious. This anxiety was reflected in Mohammed's “dead” face and raised intonation to suppress the laughter.

Actions. In course B, Xena performed a presentation about “observations and video-recording.” After she had finished explaining the disadvantages of camera, the instructor asked the audience whether they understood what Xena had said. One member from the audience showed an action indicating that he did not understand the whole speech of Xena:

Xena finished presenting the disadvantages of camera. The instructor asked “Are there any questions so far?” One member showed a sign of not understanding of what Xena was saying. The instructor started re-explaining the points one by one and said “What else did they talk about?” The audience mentioned the points and the instructor explained each one of these points. (Xena, Fieldnotes, November 26, 2013)

Xena seemed to be annoyed because of the reaction of her classmate. In the interview, I asked Xena about audience responses and she reminded me of the previous situation:

Mohsin: Have you noticed any responses of the audience when you were presenting, how did you feel about that?

Xena: Yes, there was an action made by Ahmed. After I had explained everything, he made a sign by hands and head that he did not understand what I was saying. I asked myself why did he make that? why did not he ask (instead of showing this sign)? He made me feel as if I did not make anything. Really it was painful. He should’ve asked. This was so annoying. (Xena, individual interview, December 29, 2013, my translation)

The element of feedback is important to successful public speaking. Audience members can give a public speaker positive feedback by showing reinforcing non-verbal behaviour (Eisenberg & Gamble, 1991). Negative audience feedback makes the presenter feel nervous by showing negative attitudes towards the presentation. Laughter, whispering and provocative actions are aspects of the negative audience feedback (Lull & Coopman,

2011). Thus, presenters may feel high levels of anxiety because of negative feedback given by the audience. Pertaub, Slater and Barker (2002) stated that negative audience causes high levels of anxiety in presenters. Even confident speakers become highly anxious when faced with negative audience responses such as yawning, whispering, laughter and inattentiveness to the speaker speech (Schroeder, 2002). Xena's description of audience response shows how this type of audience influenced her.

Another case of laughter was experienced in Momen's presentation in Course E. The instructor conducted a discussion with the audience during Momen's presentation but Momen suddenly interrupted the discussion. Then the instructor commented on Momen's interruption and the audience laughed intensely, except for Momen:

While the instructor was discussing "measuring reading process" with the audience, Momen interrupted the discussion and started reading from slide #12. The instructor commented on that saying: "He wants to finish." Everybody laughed except for the presenter. (Momen, Fieldnotes, November 11, 2013)

In the interview, Momen reminded me of this specific situation, though it was not the focus of my question:

Mohsin: So you were taking roles?

Momen: Yes, I am the second presenter. If you remember, the instructor said, "You are eager to finish" because he used to interrupt someone when you are speaking. He used to interrupt you in order to speak more and sometimes it is out of point, just because I consider his age, and I consider his teaching experience. He said that his teaching experience is for more than 45 years old, so I just allow him to talk [*sic*].

Mohsin: So you found this thing disturbing?

Momen: Yes, I found it boring because I just wanted to make my presentation. (Momen, Individual interview, December 15, 2013).

During presentation, Momen neither improvised nor took a part in the ongoing discussions. He was only reading from the slides. In his interview, he implied that he considered the instructor interrupting him as rude and something that is disrespectful. Hence, he perceived this interruption as a negative feedback and felt that his time was being limited by it. Therefore, it was obvious that he wanted to finish his presentation due to his heightened level of anxiety.

Instructor's corrections of pronunciation. There was consensus among presenters studying in course C and E that their instructors focused mainly on pronunciation, which caused presenters to feel more anxiety. Before his presentation in course C, Momen expressed his nervousness:

In front of his room in the dormitory and before his presentation of three hours, I came to ask Momen about appointing time for our interview regarding his presentation in course D. He said with a desperate glance on his face that he is always nervous with instructor of course C because she always corrects grammatical mistakes and pronunciation mistakes without bearing in mind his accent. (Momen, Fieldnote, November 13, 2013)

I noted that during the presentations in these courses, they were corrected regardless of any consideration of their mother tongue intervention, which made it difficult for the presenters to pronounce the words correctly. For example, Nigerian students have difficulty in producing English sounds like /ʃ/, /3:/, /r/, /θ/ (Patrick, Didam, & Gyang, 2013). The corrected words contained these sounds such as “nerve fibers” and “corpus

callosum.” Momen could not pronounce them correctly even after being corrected by the instructor:

Still reading the same point, Momen reached this word “nerve fibers” but he mispronounced it and said “neb fires” so the instructor fixed it for him saying “/Nɜːrv faɪbərz/”. Then he could not pronounce another word which it might be considered difficult for non-native speakers. The term is “corpus callosum.” He uttered only “corpus call,” then he moved to the rest of the sentence without uttering the whole term. The instructor stopped him and said “corpus callosum, CALLOSUM, okay”. (Momen, Fieldnote, November 13, 2013)

During the presentation, his pronunciation was corrected seven times. He was corrected intensively with the word “Markedness,” but he could not pronounce it correctly, as shown in the extract below:

Instructor: So Marrked, I have to feel the “rrr” otherwise it is confusing what you say,

it is not very clear. So Marked.

Mohammed: Maak

Instructor: Not maak, but Mark.

Mohammed: Mark. *[laughing]*

Instructor: And Unmarrked.

Mohammed: mark.

Instructor: Yea, good.

Mohammed: Marked and unmarked, so when we talk about Maak.

Instructor: Not maak, but mark.

Mohammed: Mark.

Instructor: I have to hear the “R”. Marked.

Mohammed: Maked

Instructor: You form the R which is at the back at the bottom of your tongue. Because you say Maak which is not the same.

Mohammed: mark.

Instructor: Perfect, good. (Mohammed, Fieldnotes, December 10, 2013)

As can be seen in the interaction above, it was clear that the pronunciation of the presenter was heavily influenced by his mother tongue. However, the instructor seemed to disregard this and insisted on getting him to pronounce the word correctly, which caused anxiety for Mohammed at two levels. First, he felt incompetent in using the English language, in which he was supposed to give an oral presentation. Second, it caused him to lose his concentration on the topic that he was in the middle of presenting. The insistence on the part of the instructor can be interpreted positively as an act of corrective feedback for MA students who are studying in an ELT department. In other words, they are supposed to be experts in teaching the English language and therefore should have correct pronunciation. Nevertheless, the act of correcting the pronunciation seemed to cause a great deal of anxiety in Mohammed.

Interestingly Neven, after being corrected several times, became doubtful in every word she was going to pronounce, even in cases where she had the correct pronunciation:

Neven, after having been corrected six times for her pronunciation, came to the word "Nambia". She was hesitant to pronounce it. While thinking of the word right

pronunciation, one member of the audience said "Nambia". She started pronouncing it. She said "Namb" "Nambia, yes, no no , yes." The instructor confirmed her pronunciation of the word saying "yes, yes, yes, Nambia" (Neven, Fieldnotes, December 30, 2013)

Mohammed and Momen were part of the audience while Neven was being corrected and vice versa. Therefore, experiencing such situations in different courses provoked participants to compare their performances to others' and also compare instructors:

The instructor of course C corrects the mistakes, but the instructor of course B gives you a chance to correct yourself. She does not interrupt you while you are explaining. She gives you a chance to say whatever you want. She corrects you in the form of a contribution, not interruption. She tells you there are some points. This is what I've noticed. It is so comfortable. Instructor of course C wants you to explain more and more. She comments a lot on your pronunciation and grammar. And you know, the complete perfection is for Allah. (Neven, Individual interview, December 31, 2013)

In this extract, it can be observed that Neven had different experiences with different instructors and she compared the reactions of these instructors towards their pronunciation mistakes, indicating that one gives her a "comforting" feeling while the other makes her anxious because she "comments a lot on your pronunciation and grammar." In the end of her comment, Neven seems to refer to Allah as the only perfect being, implying that she as a human being is bound to make mistakes. Within her context, this can be read as a reaction to the insistence of the instructor of course C on correcting mistakes and expecting perfect pronunciation from her students, which seems to be an anxiety arousing situation for Neven and the others.

Coping strategies

Following the research questions set earlier in Chapter I, I also analysed the strategies that the participants used to deal with the oral academic presentation anxiety caused by the factors listed earlier. In some of these strategies, I noticed that the presenters tried to “fake” the characteristics of good presentations by presumably doing things like “eye contact” and “elaboration” at a very surface level because a “real” interaction with the audience, for example, would increase their levels of anxiety. In the following sections, these strategies will be explained.

Drinking water, music and contemplating. Despite being well prepared, anxiety may infiltrate to presenters’ speeches before and during presentations. As a result, they try to use strategies that may help them allay their anxiety. Feeling presentation anxiety does not start at the time of performance, but rather it might start two days earlier or may be earlier than that (Pertaub, Slater, & Barker, 2002). Therefore, treatment of anxiety focuses on treating anxiety holistically. That is, before performance, and even treating depression after the presentation being performed. Abid used two strategies that targeted anxiety at two intervals. First, he mentioned that he listened to music before the presentation to make his mind clear. Second, he said that he drank water during presentations to help him reduce physical symptoms caused by anxiety:

Mohsin: Are there any strategies that you specifically use when you feel anxious, before and during the presentation?

Abid: Before the presentation, I try to relax, to concentrate. I try to throw all topics from my mind, and think only in my topic, me, the teacher, and the audience, nothing else, and I also mentioned during my presentation one of the techniques to reduce my anxiety and increase confidence is to listen to music. I am listening to music. It helps me before starting

my presentation. It helps me really a lot, and also during the presentation I take water with me. I am drinking water, it helps me. My throat sometimes gets dry. After presentation, I feel really good. You feel you are free/*sic*/. (Abid, individual interview, November 8, 2013)

Yung, Kam, Lau, and Chan (2003) found that music had helped pre-operative patients feel released from anxiety. Moradipanah et al. (2009) also proved that music is helpful in releasing mental disorders such as depression, stress and anxiety. I noticed during my observations that presenters felt dry mouth, especially when the presentation was longer than one hour. This is also found to be a significant physical symptom of anxiety, especially in situations where the participants feel that they are being assessed (Kaplan & Saccuzzo, 2005). Therefore, music and water can be helpful in mitigating anxiety before and during oral performances (Mann, 2012).

Reading from the slides. This method is easier than improvising in performing presentations because there is less chance for making mistakes (Morreale, 2010). Presentation from a manuscript is thought to be a safe method to avoid anxiety (Hamilton, 2012). Kline (2001) also states that reading the speech out from a written text is the easiest way to give a presentation. However, real presentation aspects are missed in manuscript presentations because the presenter is glued to the manuscript (Beebe & Beebe, 2012). “Many speakers use the manuscript as a crutch instead of fully thinking through the ideas in the talk” (Kline, 2001, p. 56). Jaffe (2007) explains that reading the presentation is an inactive method because audience will not be able to follow the speaker. Moreover, language of the manuscript can become difficult to be understood for audience (Shukla, 2010). The instructor of Course B said: “I mean the biggest problem for me is reading

from the slide and having a lot of information on the slide is another problem” (Carol, Individual interview, December 17, 2013) .Therefore, reading from slides may affect the participants’ final marks negatively. Hani used this strategy frequently in all his presentations. Here is an example of his slide in course D. The topic was about Kinesics:

- “Kinesics is the name given to the study of the body’s physical movements. In other words, it is the way the body communicates without words,
- Body language refers to the nonverbal signals that we use to communicate. According to experts, these nonverbal signals make up a huge part of daily communication. From our facial expressions to our body movements. According to various researchers, body language is thought to account for between 50 to 70 percent of all communication.” (Slide #3, Hani, December 12, 2013)

All his slides were in the form of the aforementioned slide. The language is not conversational as it should be in academic oral presentations. Moreover, the audience were concentrating on the slides and not on Hani while he was speaking. The audience also realized that Hani was reading and not improvising. Hence, I felt that audience had the assumption of receiving information from slides, not from Hani’s performance. I also noticed that the reading process itself was an obstacle because pronunciation was not sufficient enough. Moreover, he was reading in a flat mode like a robot. Intonation and stress were not performed correctly. All of these made Hani’s reading from the slides a mechanical process, where little was comprehended by the audience. However, this was his strategy for coping with the anxiety that he felt due to the perceived difficulty of the topic for him.

In some occasions, the presenters were forced to fill slides with information because of the difficulty of the topic. For instance, in Course C, the presenters were asked

to prepare one chapter from a contemporary linguistics book. They had to cover the whole chapter. Topics were mainly scientific and filled with facts. Momen presented a chapter on “brain and language.” Momen’s slides were filled with information:

- Phonologically, the phonemic paraphasias of Broca’s aphasics usually differ from the target phoneme by only one distinctive feature ‘with’ – [‘wit’] and can therefore be easily described by phonological rules.
- Morphologically, Broca’s aphasics omit affixes in their speech. Inflectional affixes are commonly dropped, but derivational are usually retained.
- Semantically, deep dyslexia patients produce reading errors which are systematically related to the word which they are asked to read. Example, a deep dyslexic patient may likely to read father instead of mother. (Slide #32, Momen, November 11, 2013)

I noticed that eye contact and interaction with audience were not maintained while reading. This also made the presentation very mechanical but helped the presenter to cope with his anxiety to some extent.

Repetition. Repetition strategy was used as a coping strategy instead of improvising. It is the repetition of the item without making any significant change on the item. This strategy was specific to Hani. Hani used this method ten times in his presentations. The instructor of course B criticized his continuous repetitions. He claimed that he did not feel anxious while repeating the items. This can be due to his ignorance of the characteristics of academic presentation. This is an example of one of his repetitions:

Hani read this item: “To collect factual information in order to classify people and their circumstances” then he looked at audience and said “To collect factual information in order to classify people and their circumstances” (Hani, Fieldnotes, December 18, 2013)

While Hani was repeating the item, he glanced at the audience and instructor briefly. Therefore, he was compensating for real eye contact with audience while he was repeating the point on his slide. In this process, audience came across each item three times. First, they read the item. Second, Hani read the item for them. Third, Hani repeated the item again but maintained an eye contact with the audience. From the audience's point of view, this could be boring but from Hani's point of view, this was a strategy where he managed to maintain the eye contact with the audience, hence carrying out one of the requirements of a "good oral presentation."

Fake elaboration. The next type of strategy was paraphrasing or adding minor changes to the original sentence. Fake elaboration was used more frequently than any other type of coping strategy identified in this study. It was used by four participants: Hani, Neven, Mahmoud, and Momen. In all of these occasions, the presenters tried to perform the characteristics of a "good presentation," such as keeping eye contact with the audience and not reading from the slides. However, since these would cause their anxiety to rise, they used a fake version of elaborating on the items. Hani used fake elaboration 16 times in course B. The following is an example of fake elaboration:

In slide #4, Hani read this item "To gather straightforward information relating to people's behavior". Then he looked at the audience and said "straightforward clear information relating to people's behaviour" (Hani, Fieldnotes, December 12, 2013)

It is remarkable that only minor changes were added to the original version. For example, "clear" was added and "to gather" was deleted. In essence, it is not adding any further

information to the original point but rather repeating it in a different way. Momen also used fake elaboration six times in courses C and E. Here is an example from course E:

By 05:59 Momen read this phrase from the slide “Ask students to separate the letters from a pile of letters, numbers, and symbols.” Then he said while looking at the instructor and audience in an improvising manner “So when the teacher introduces numbers and symbols together, he can ask the students to separate letters.” The instructor asked him “Is this for reading or listening?” He replied “No, it is reading.” (Momen, Fieldnotes, December 13, 2013)

Momen paraphrased the sentence without adding any new information to the item. The only difference is that he maintained an eye contact with the audience. Mohammed also used fake elaboration twice in course C and 16 times in course D. The following is an example from course D:

On slide #14 Mohammed read this item “It is a changing style of a speaker in response to context.” Then he said, “So the speaker change a style, as a result of context, based on context he use his style.” (Mohammed, Fieldnotes, November 29, 2013)

In one occasion, Hani used fake elaboration to its ultimate degree by elaborating something different from the item. In the below example, Hani gave wrong explanation of the item, while he was trying to elaborate on it:

The written sentence on the slide was “Besides our choice of words and the volume and tone of a voice, gestures, posture and facial expressions all convey powerful messages to the people we are talking to.” Hani read the sentence and then looked at audience and said “First we look at first the face of the people to see the expressions and after that they listen to the spoken language.” (Hani, Fieldnotes, December 12, 2013)

In the above extract, it is clear that Hani gave another explanation, which is not related to the original item. This is why his elaboration is interpreted as “fake” and a way of recovering from his elevated levels of anxiety.

Fake interaction. In fake interaction, presenters asked unrelated questions to the audience or they did not give them a chance and/or enough time to answer or think of related answers. This was interpreted as being involved in fake interaction with the audience to fulfil the requirements of a “good” presentation without raising levels of anxiety. Hani used fake interaction in two courses. In course E, after reading the item, Hani asked the instructor about its meaning while he could have easily elaborated on it:

Hani read the item “basic word pronunciation” on slide #15, and then he asked the instructor this question: “What does basic word pronunciation mean?” The instructor told him the meaning of “basic word pronunciation” and he gave him an example about it as well. Then Hani completed his reading (Hani, Fieldnotes, December 6, 2013)

Interestingly, it seemed that Hani was not anxious or embarrassed for asking the instructor about this simple item in his presentation. He was laughing and speaking with audience confidently after this interaction with the instructor. I asked him after the presentation about his feelings and he said that he was comfortable and felt as if he was in a family atmosphere, not in a classroom as he claimed. Mohammed also used fake interaction in his presentation in Course D. He asked a question which invoked thinking among audience without giving audience a chance to reflect upon the question:

In slide #5, Mohammed said “What do you think of code-switching?”, then he read the definition from the slide “Code switching is ...” Then he said “As the tester when he wants

to compare, the student, for their own, in testing reading, so this comparison has to be based on the following.” (Mohammed, Fieldnotes, November 29, 2013).

The question invoked thinking among the listeners. Therefore, Mohammed should have waited to give the audience a chance to think and answer the question. However, Mohammed himself did not comment on “code-switching.” Instead, he went on with his presentation, which rendered his question and proposed interaction with the audience “fake.”

Memorisation. This strategy was used before the actual presentation. Participants adapt themselves to memorise the whole information they want to present, instead of improvising during their presentations. This strategy is condemned in the literature of public speaking (Beebe & Beebe, 2012; Miyata, 2001; Hickman, 2008). The instructor of Course A stated that marks will be taken out in case of memorised presentations. Moreover, during my observations, I noticed that anxiety increased and reflected negatively on the performance of presenters when they tried to elaborate. Xena used this strategy frequently. It was obvious that she memorised her speech. She thought that this strategy would help her to present without any glitches, but in reality she became more anxious. This is a sample of her speech from a memorised presentation:

As a teacher, we need to help students, to save this aaaaaa this vocabulary in long term memory, if we how to how to help students, if we repeat it this vocabulary, what, what, as a teacher, if we don't use this, don't repeat it, and use this vocabulary, students he tends to forget it, but with repeated, and recalling the vocabulary, he will memorise it, not a short term memory but long term memory, when to teach vocabulary, the first he wants to say the first term memory, but with repeating and reused with few, weeks or months,

he will, to send this new word, long term memory/*sic*). (Xena, Fieldnotes, November 26, 2013)

She was breathing a lot and her voice was shivering as she was making this speech. Moreover, she was repeating phrases a lot trying to give herself time to remember what she had memorised. Xena admitted that she had memorised all her speech for this specific presentation:

I memorised the whole topic and I was rehearsing it every day for a month. I rehearsed it every day, but this thing did not help. I was so anxious. I thought that I would be able to perform in a way that they would understand it. (Xena, Individual interview, November 29, 2013, my translation).

I noticed that Xena used this strategy to cover up for her language deficiency, as mentioned earlier. Jaffe (2007) states that novice speakers think memorising their presentations will help them overcome their fears. They are unaware that they may not be able to remember what they had memorized before the presentation due to high levels of anxiety. Jones (2012) states that speakers will be pressurised when they try to remember the written text they had memorised before the presentation. Kline (2001) indicates that speaking from the memory is the worst and poorest method used to deliver a speech. Moreover, memorising destroys the spontaneity and the sense of communication. Kline quoted the words of an international student: “I think if I memorise the entire speech including the pauses, gestures, posture, etc., I will feel more comfortable delivering the speech and I will be less nervous” (Kline, 2001, p. 266). Xena adopted the same view thinking that by memorising she would be able to present without feeling high levels of anxiety, which in her case, did not work.

Speeding up. Speeding up is a strategy that participants used to cope with anxiety. In their view, finishing the presentation as soon as possible would shorten the stimulus that they had for arousing anxiety. Xena used this strategy frequently. It was difficult for audience to understand her speech. Therefore, the instructor or one member of the audience had to stop her many times:

Xena started speaking so fast. It was noticeable that she was speeding up while speaking. No one could understand her. Instructor said “Xena take a deep breath, and slow down. Nobody is following. Slow down”. However, Xena kept speeding up while presenting. (Xena, Fieldnotes, November 26, 2013).

In Course A, she was warned two times to speak slowly but she did not slow down. Similarly in Course B, Xena was also warned two times by the instructor and once by a member of the audience:

Once Xena started introducing the topic, she spoke very fast. It seemed that it was difficult for the audience to understand what she was saying. Her classmate said, “Xena, slow down” and the audience laughed remarkably. The instructor said to Xena “Take a deep breath.” After that, she tried to slow her speed down. Thereafter, another member of the audience told her to slow down again (Xena, Fieldnotes, December 16, 2013)

It seemed that Xena was using this strategy, not only for avoiding anxiety, but also to hide her language deficiency. I noticed this strategy was also used frequently by Arab students who appeared to be relatively less competent in English language. Their speech could barely be followed because they tried to hide their grammatical mistakes. This strategy was also used by Momen in Course C:

He could not pronounce the word “distinctness” properly. The instructor tried to ease the situation for him saying, “So do not hurry up. Relax. Okay. Don’t hurry up. We want to

understand what you say because if you speak very fast, we don't understand what you say, Momen, you know the subject. Just relax" (Momen, fieldnotes, November 11, 2013).

Presenters may resort to this strategy to finish their presentations by any means (Nikitina, 2011). This was evident in Course E, when the instructor commented on Momen:

While the instructor was discussing the previous point with audience, Momen changed to slide #12 in a fast way and started reading interrupting their discussion. The instructor, as result of that, commented "He wants to finish." Everybody laughed (Momen, Fieldnotes, December 13, 2013).

Speakers in presentations normally speak at a rate of 120 to 150 words per minute (Kuhnke, 2012), but they tend to speed up to finish their presentations when they are anxious. They think of speeding up as virtue whereby they can finish quickly (Brokaw, 2002). Stuart (2012) stated that individuals tend to hurry up in presentations because they want to get rid of anxiety experienced while performing the presentation, which seems to be the case with the participants of this study.

Using the Video at the beginning of the presentation. Presenters experience the highest degree of anxiety at the beginning of the speech (Morreale, Spitzberg, & Barge, 2007). According to Morreale (2010), anxiety starts in the first minutes of each presentation. Therefore, if the presenter used funny video or a joke during the first minutes of the presentation, he would be able to create an atmosphere free of anxiety. Hani used this strategy to make audience laugh in the first four minutes:

Mohsin: Do you use any strategy to mitigate your anxiety during the presentation?

Hani: Yeah, of course, in today's presentation in the first minutes I will show a funny video to release my anxiety and make fun in the classroom[*sic*]. (Hani, individual interview, December 7, 2013)

This strategy was profoundly effective because it maintained a positive atmosphere since the beginning of the presentation. However, this video was not related to the context of the topic. It helped to alleviate anxiety but on the other hand, it was reflected negatively on his points. The instructor commented on his video,

“He showed a video but it was unrelated to his subject which was one of the things where he lost points” (Carol, interview, December 22, 2013)

Hosting a Show. Abid used another strategy which was interpreted as the hosting a show strategy. As mentioned earlier, he had video-recorded himself and he uploaded these videos on Facebook. He seemed to me that he felt like a confident speaker hosting a television show when he was being video- recorded. He maintained eye contact with the audience and the camera. Moreover, his body language was harmoniously organized with what he was saying. Here is a list of the expressions he used in his presentations:

- In essence
- In other words
- Let’s think about it in the most easy way.
- And let me give you an example
- Like for example
- So is it clear?
- Also I found it controversial
- Another area of interest that is interesting
- So do you think is it weird? Have you ever heard about it?
- So if we think more deeply, so it is not weird!!!
- So let me give you an example.

- I don't know.
- I would like to give one more example.
- And I believe
- Actually interesting. So let me ask you a question
- We will elaborate on them later.
- And I think we have to be aware of those things
- Actually some scholars say ...
- It is very important. So how we can do it, is another question.
- Also I read that some scholars say...

Using such expressions shows to what extent Abid wanted to appear for his imagined audience on Facebook. I observed him in his first semester, he was presenting without camera and the method he was using was reading. In fact, I followed his account on Facebook and saw that he had an audience that followed his uploads and his friends praised him as soon as he had uploaded videos. Some of their comments were “congratulations” and “good presentation,” which could be interpreted as positive feedback from this “imagined audience.” This in turn appeared to help him reduce his anxiety.

Spirituality and Faith in God. Students prepare themselves mentally before their presentations. They may have different thoughts about coping with anxiety during performance. Those thoughts included spiritual thoughts and thinking about the ethnic background of the audience. A great majority of the participants in this study were coming from Muslim backgrounds. Neven used spiritual thoughts to cope with her anxiety. The following is an extract from an interview conducted with Xena, where she referred to Neven’s spirituality:

Her faith in Allah was strong and I felt that Allah had helped her. She said that she will be satisfied if she got good or bad marks. She always says, “Thank you Allah. I am satisfied with whatever you give me.” When I took my result I was upset and I called her and she started reminding me of Allah and being satisfied with what I got. Then, I really felt comfortable with what she said. Even I learnt from her this thing and that what I am going to do in the coming presentations. I will work hard then I will put my trust (Tawakkul) in Allah. (Xena, individual interview, December 29, 2013).

The instructor of course B said that Neven was confident while she was performing her presentation:

Actually yes, I noticed something especially with Neven. Her speed was very good, may be compared to Xena, who was very fast even Sara needed to stop her and said ‘slow down.’ But Neven, her speed, voice, these things were very good. She seemed more confident and she seemed to know what she was talking about. (Carol, Individual interview, December 22, 2013).

Amen (2004) stated that spirituality and belief in God could be used to heal anxiety. Based on that, Neven used this method to alleviate her anxiety in Course B. Xena mentioned the word “Tawakkul,” which means to put your trust in God after fulfilling your preparation (Basoglu & Salcioglu, 2011). Al-Wahhab (2003) mentioned that Tawakkul to be completely fulfilled, individual should undertake the measures which have been commanded. Otherwise it will be considered a weakness, not Tawakkul (Leslie, 1976). Hence, spirituality and belief in something greater than their being seemed to help relieve the participants from their anxiety to some extent.

Focusing on the Ethnicities of the Audience. Focusing on the ethnic grouping within the group and forming ideas of “us” and “them” seemed to be another strategy. In Course B, I asked Hani about his feelings as his presentation approached:

Mohsin: Now, your presentation is going to start after minutes. Do you feel nervous?

Hani: No, why should I. look. We are all Kurdish in the classroom, I am not. (Hani, individual interview, December 19, 2013)

Jost and Amodio (2012) state that ideology is a force that can be applied in different life settings and situations. In course B, there were five Kurdish students, three Arab students and two Turkish Cypriots. Hani’s ideological view motivated him to cope with his anxiety. He had this pre-assumption that his classroom is dominated by his own ethnic group, i.e. “us.” This is observable in his use of the first person plural in: “We are all Kurdish in the classroom.” Despite the fact that his claim was incorrect in terms of the composition of the students’ ethnic backgrounds, the fact that he was a member of the dominating group helped him to feel more comfortable, reducing his level of anxiety.

Instructors’ Suggestions for Dealing with Anxiety. Beside the strategies identified earlier, which were employed by the participants, instructors sometimes intervened to help presenters cope with their anxiety. Huff (2008) mentioned that the instructor in public speaking is the first equipped person that can help students mitigate anxiety. In Course A, for example, Xena stammered a lot when she spoke. As result, the instructor intervened to help her:

Xena: When to come, aaaaaaaa, we, when, as a teacher, when aaaaaaaaaaaaaa, to visit, you, new students, we need to aaaaaa not, we need, we need to use aaaaaa, techniques for aaaaaaaa for teaching [*interruption by the instructor*][sic].

Instructor: So how we can, tell us? [*a rescue try*]

Xena: Yes, a visual imazes.

Instructor: Yes, a visual image, yes

Xena: Using gestures and actions and other techniques, for example, translate or describe or definition this a word (Xena, Fieldnotes, November 26, 2013)

Before the instructor's intervention, Xena stammered a lot and could not complete her sentence. Therefore, the instructor intervened and repeated what she had said. Then, Xena could complete her speech. Another strategy was used by instructor of course D. That strategy was to build rapport with students from the first lecture and create an atmosphere that is free from anxiety:

In the classroom to establish a rapport with students and then the job of the teacher will be a lot easier for the rest of the semester and the job of the student also will be easier because you are not tense even if they make a mistake and other classmates will find that funny. They would not mind, so that is crucially important. In my graduate classes, I never correct my students' mistakes unless they themselves demand that because he is already anxious, so if I stop him for a mistake then his anxiety will increase. That is not good, and because, to me, the purpose of that task assigned to student is not accuracy correctness.

The objective of that task is fluency (Bahram, Individual interview, December 29, 2013)

The instructor of Course D followed two strategies. The first strategy was building rapport with participants once they are in the class. The second was avoiding focusing on their mistakes during their performance. Actually, when I asked the instructor of course D for

permission to video-record the presentations of my participants in his course, he refused because the camera may cause them to feel more anxious. During my observations, I noticed that the instructor tried very hard to make the students relax and make the classroom as free of anxiety as possible. White (2000) indicated that building rapport in the classroom will help release individuals from strange anxiety. In addition, creating a caring environment that is free from negative criticism and surrounded by friendly feelings will free students from anxiety (Bulach, Brown, & Potter, 1998). Instructor of course C tried to establish such environment in her course:

I always try to be friendly with my students. I am trying to help them as much as I can, but there are situations in which I don't know exactly what to do. So I am trying to encourage as much as possible for the students to start over, beyond this barrier, the distance between the teacher and the student but secondly I want them to feel comfortable when they speak even when they make mistakes as long as they understand what they are doing. That is why I kept saying to them what did you understand (Debra, interview, December 16, 2013).

An example of such a situation occurred with Momen, when he presented his topic about "brain and language." The instructor tried to let him feel that he was aware of the topic and he had prepared, so there was no need to be anxious:

By 05:13, he started reading about "cerebral hemisphere", the instructor interrupted saying "once more again we are speaking" but Mustafa moved on, the instructor said "so once more again I am STOPPING you" then the instructor asked this question "They are considered to be separate?" he replied "yes they are considered to be separate" the instructor asked "why" he said "I will come to that" then he moved on answering the question. He said "because they are anatomically separate and everyone shows functional dist, dis, distinket, distinctness [laugh]. He could not pronounce the word "distinctness" properly. The instructor tried to ease the situation for him saying "So do not hurry up,

relax, okay, don't hurry up, we want to understand what you say because if you speak very fast, we don't understand what you say, Momen, you know the subject, just relax". (Momen, Fieldnotes, November 11, 2013)

Morehead et al. (2009) stated that positive reinforcement by the instructor will help students feel relieved from anxiety. In the interview with Neven, she talked about the instructor of Course B's style of correcting mistakes during presentations. She said that she liked the way that the instructor of Course B had corrected and dealt with her:

Instructor of course B gives you a chance to correct yourself. She does not interrupt you when you speak, then after you finish, she starts correcting you. This is what I've noticed. It is better. She makes you feel comfortable. (Neven, individual interview, December 18, 2013)

It seems clear that students' perceptions of the instructor (discussed earlier) is closely related to the instructors' ways of helping/not helping students deal with their heightened levels of anxiety during their oral presentations. This is especially clear in Neven's quote above, where she clearly indicates that the way that the instructor corrects mistakes relaxes her and makes her feel comfortable.

Conclusion

In this chapter, information about the results and discussion of the findings were presented. First of all, the answer to the first question of this research was given. Overall, factors that influenced participants' presentations were diverse. This diversity of causes emanated from the natural diversity of the participants' backgrounds. In other words, each participant expressed his own fears whether during performance or through their narratives during interviews.

Secondly, coping strategies used by participants were presented. These included (1) drinking water and listening to music; (2) Reading from slides; (3) repetition; (4) Fake elaboration; (5) Fake interaction; (6) Memorization; (7) Speeding up; (8) using the video at the beginning; (9) Hosting a show; (10) spirituality and faith in God; (11) focusing on the ethnicities of the audience. Remarkably, the number of these coping strategies exceeded the number of participants which in turn shows the diversity of these coping strategies and the struggle for maintaining performance free from anxiety. Additionally, instructors who are considered to a certain extent as a source of anxiety to some presenters used different strategies to help participants feel relieved from anxiety. These included building rapport from the beginning of the semester and rescue tries during performance.

Next, commentary about the influence of low language proficiency, software illiteracy, audience reactions and distribution of gender are presented. Moreover, successful and unsuccessful coping strategies will also be discussed. Finally, practical implications provided together with suggestions for further research will be given.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Making an in-class presentation is a significant part of the workload for all higher education students, especially for those studying in language and teaching related fields. However, most students make in-class presentations without having information about the required skills about performing oral presentations in academic settings. They may also lack previous experience in making such performances. These are important reasons leading to high levels of anxiety. This study attempted to extend the knowledge in the field of English Language Teaching by studying the situational anxiety that arouse as a result of performing in-class presentations among postgraduate students. In this respect, it made a contribution to the literature by defining a new type of public speaking situation called student in-class presentations (SIP) and looked at the anxiety caused by such situations. More specifically, it investigated in depth the factors that influenced the anxiety felt by postgraduate students during SIPs and the coping strategies that they used to mitigate their SIP anxiety (SIPA). This chapter presents the main findings, followed by recommendations for practice and suggestions for further research.

Summary of Findings

This research was led by four research questions. These were:

1. What are the factors that influence M.A. students' performances during academic oral presentations?
2. What are the coping strategies that presenters use to mitigate their anxiety?

3. How do instructors help participants feel relieved from anxiety during performance?

Following a qualitative design, the results of the study revealed three main themes in relation to the factors that affected the oral presentation performances of postgraduate students. These themes were diverse, yet interrelated with each other as well as the manifestations of anxiety during performance. In broad categories, they included personal factors presentation related factors and audience related factors. Additionally, there were factors specific to first semester participants, such as proficiency in English language, and others were general to all participants. It is also worth mentioning that first and second semester participants used different coping strategies to deal with anxiety, though they made their presentations in the same courses.

Factors that Caused Presentation Anxiety. As a personal factor, low language proficiency emerged as a specific issue among first semester participants. Xena described that it was difficult for her to speak academically in English. For Hani and Neven, low language proficiency manifested itself in different ways during their performances. For instance, they were glued to the manuscript and whenever they spoke, they made grammatical and pronunciation mistakes. Although Abid, who was a second semester participant, showed a high quality performance, he also expressed that constructing academic sentences when talking with instructors was his main concern. The differences between first and second semester participants in this respect may partly be attributed to the one-semester extra experience of the second semester students at the department. In other words, their proficiency in (academic) English may have improved over the course of their first semester at the department of ELT. As it was expected, first semester

participants, showed low language proficiency due to limitations of the capacity of their language competency (Brunson, Jarmon, & Lampl, 2007). It is worth mentioning that all participants were international students whose native language was other than English. Therefore, language was a barrier for them (Kell & Vogl, 2012). This point was supported by Carroll and Ryan (2005) who claimed that many years of English language study for non-native speakers do not prepare them for the academic use of English. He also called it as a “language shock” (p.149).

It was found that first and second semester participants had difficulties in using Microsoft Power Point as they were presenting. Momen and Mohammed, despite the fact that they used this software in their first semester, showed shortfalls dealing with the software in their second semester presentations. For example, Momen in one of the instances could not show two slides, which was reflected negatively on his performance during his presentation. Mohammed also sought his classmates’ help to show his slides in one of his presentations. Additionally, Xena, who was a first semester participant, experienced difficulties in handling the software, due to using this software for the first time. Most of their pitfalls in dealing with the software occurred during performance which caused for them a technical surprise. King (2002) states that students should make rehearsals so that technical surprises in the day of the presentation could be avoided because fixing PowerPoint slides during performance can affect marks, performance and the whole presentation. For instance, Mohammed’s presentation stopped for 50 seconds because of these technical problems. Momen also felt embarrassed when slides did not appear on the screen.

Presentation Related Factors. The results of the study suggest that SIP is a complicated task that takes more than a mere preparation before the day of the presentation. Most participants in this study showed underestimation of SIPs. As a result, their preparation was not sufficient enough for the presentations. Moreover, their performance showed high deterioration especially on the performance of first semester participants. Joughin (2009) states that students cannot make an effective oral presentation unless they know the characteristics of effective oral presentations. In this study, students seemed to perform SIPs without prior knowledge about how what SIPs require. The findings also showed that the presenters had issues with the difficulties of the topic of the presentation, its duration, place, as well as type of the presentation. They also had written errors on the slides, which was another presentation related factor causing anxiety during the presentation.

Audience was prominent factor in determining presenters' performances. In this study, instructor was part of the audience. Therefore, audience was perceived by presenters as the mirror whereby their performances were being reflected. Where audience showed negative reactions toward any presentation, presenter showed signs of depression, fear and anxiety. Presenters were aware that any negative feedback would affect their performance scores negatively. This emerged as one of the significant characteristics of SIPA. In one of the occasions, one participant felt highly depressed when audience members showed reactions indicating that his speech was out of point. Saroyan and Amundsen (2004) stated that whoever gives the feedback takes the position of power in higher education. Therefore, audience were detrimental factor in shaping presenters' perception toward their own performances. Besides, another aspect of the audience

seemed to influence participants was the distribution of gender factor among audience. Three participants, early in their education years, were taught in a single gender classroom; therefore, they flinched and showed avoidance behavior when they were in a mixed-gender classroom. In this regard, Alhazmi and Nyland (2010) points out that Saudi culture of extreme gender segregation has an impact on Saudi students' ability to relate to their peers in a mixed-gender classroom in their graduate study in Australia.

Coping Strategies. Different coping strategies were used to mitigate SIPA during the course of the semester. I selected two criteria to determine the success of each coping strategy. The first criterion was whether the coping strategy helped the participant to some extent feel relieved from SIPA. The second criterion was whether audience comprehended the content of the presentation. Only two coping strategies emerged to fit these two criteria. The first strategy was “hosting a show” strategy that was used by Abid. This strategy helped Abid to give a high quality performance. Moreover, the content of the presentation was not distorted at all and audience could comprehend the content of his presentations. The second strategy was “spirituality and faith in God”. Using this strategy, Neven did not show any signs of anxiety and the content of her presentation was to a certain extent comprehensible by the audience. For those two participants in the context described, these two strategies appeared to help them feel relieved from anxiety. The other strategies were not successful in fitting the two criteria. For instance, the reading strategy could help participants feel relieved from anxiety, but the content was distorted and audience could not follow the speech of the presenters, which led the audience to feel boredom. Similarly, the memorization strategy did not fit any of the previous criteria. It

made presenter feel more anxiety and stammer a lot, which was reflected negatively on the content of the presentation.

Practical Implications

Based on the results of this study, several suggestions can be made for students and instructors. First of all, students should avoid using methods that make them more anxious to cope with anxiety. For example, using memorisation heightens anxiety instead of helping presenters feel free from anxiety (Walker, 2014). On the other hand, presenters can develop effective strategies to deal with anxiety and perform better. For instance, imagining that the presenter is hosting a show and presenting for an imagined audience rather than a real one appeared to be an effective method for performing anxiety-reduced academic oral presentations. Additionally, the grievous implications of anxiety on presenters' performances were obvious even with those considered to be competent in English language. However, it was obvious from the differences between the first and second semester students that experience/practice did improve their performances and helped reduce their levels of anxiety. This clearly shows that giving an academic oral presentation is a skill on its own that needs to be taught to the MA students at the beginning of their studies. It can even be included as a part of their orientation programme, where they are informed about the requirements of their courses and the ways that they can make/improve their oral presentations.

Second, presenters should know how to prepare for and meet the audience's expectations. This study has shown that making SIPs in higher education is not a mere show of language proficiency or practice of public speaking. It should rather be perceived as an interactive lecture, where valuable information is transmitted to be learnt by others. PowerPoint software is a crucial component in performing academic oral presentations. Therefore, presenters need to become competent users of this software programme and they should know how to use PowerPoint slides effectively. Using PowerPoint was also highlighted as one of the academic skills that all students should focus on in the literature as well (Turner, Ireland, Krenus, & Pointon, 2008).

Third, alleviating SIPA emerged as a collective process between the students and instructors, and it is not limited to the three hours of presentations. It starts from the beginning of the semester by building a rapport and a sense of friendship between instructors and students. Participants showed variation in their fears when they performed SIPs. However, they all seemed to agree that the way that they perceived individual lecturers and their classroom's atmosphere had a profound impact in reducing or increasing their anxiety. Therefore, lecturers should strive for creating welcoming classroom atmospheres for students with high levels of presentation anxiety. Moreover, participants' criticism of the duration of presentation needs to be taken into consideration by the lecturers. Three hours of presentations proved to be too much and beyond the students' linguistic, physical and psychological abilities. Therefore, the instructional design should be planned based on the characteristics of the students present in the classroom and extra help should be provided for those who need it.

Finally, according to the results of the study, overcorrection of pronunciation and grammar elevated students' SIPA levels. Therefore, instructors are advised to correct pronunciation errors only when comprehensibility is impaired and the meaning is distorted. A separate session on the common pronunciation errors can be organised at the end of the presentation or at a specific time during the semester to help improve students' speaking skills mechanically.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings of the current study, high levels of anxiety had caused two presenters to become isolated from the situation to a certain extent. Therefore, investigating this phenomenon, the reasons behind it and its implications, may help in giving a clearer understanding of anxiety's influence during oral performances. Furthermore, the idea that people feel less comfortable when presenting in front of a multicultural audience emerged as an interesting theme. Thus, the effect of multicultural classrooms on the anxiety levels of the participants/presenters can be examined first through an in-depth analysis and the findings of this initial study can be used to develop a questionnaire for it to be tested on a large scale. Moreover, investigations for a deeper understanding of how individual cultural backgrounds determine presenters' attitudes toward multicultural audiences will be beneficial in understanding the dynamics of the classroom context. In addition, further investigations should be carried out to find out the reasons behind different reactions towards specific types of audiences, especially in relation to gender.

This research proved that presenters use different coping strategies to deal with SIPA. Unfortunately, research on presentation anxiety so far tended to lean towards trying one specific treatment on participants who come from different backgrounds and with diverse nuances. It seems that one specific treatment may work with one participant but may fail with other participants. Therefore, future research should focus on using more than one type of treatment with participants of different educational, linguistic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, experimental studies are needed to examine the effectiveness of the “hosting a show” and the “spiritual strategy” that were elicited in this study.

Another avenue for future research may delve into studying the type of correction and feedback that is the least anxiety arousing one to help presenters in dealing with SIPA. Additionally, investigation of instructors’ policies and classroom rules may reveal the implications of such rules and practices on the presenters’ performances. Further qualitative research may provide in-depth understanding of how the role of the instructor influences the presenters’ performances during specific presentation situations, such as public speaking classes.

Finally, it was depicted that the participants saw presentations as an end product, instead of a method where valuable information was being transmitted to the audience. Therefore, this assumption should be further investigated in order to know what implications this might have on the audience and the content of the presentation.

Conclusion

SIPs are integral parts of learning and assessment in higher education institutions where performance is evaluated based on both content and language competence. However, still students in higher education perform them poorly without any previous knowledge about this type of presentation. Therefore, identifying the factors that contribute to SIP anxiety and futile coping strategies which students use is very important for both the success of the postgraduate students as well as the success of the course.

This study attempted to make an important contribution to the literature in relation to public speaking and academic oral presentations by defining a new type of student presentation that has its own characteristics and causes a situational anxiety that can be defined in observable terms. Each presentation I observed during this study meant a new battle that I was going to witness against anxiety. Unfortunately, it seemed that presentation anxiety was caused by the absence of collaboration, good preparation and mutual understanding. Therefore, each SIP was not only performed by the presenters but also by audience and instructors.

This study also attempted to provide practical implications for postgraduate students, instructors and policy makers in dealing with SIPA. Significantly, it showed that for students to perform effective SIPs, they need more than preparation in advance of the presentations; they need support during the presentation as well.

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Appendix A
Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA)

This instrument is composed of thirty-four statements concerning feelings about oral presentations. Please reflect back to your second oral presentation and tick what most accurately describes you (SA: strongly agree; A: agree; N: are neutral; D: disagree; or SD: strongly disagree). Work quickly; record your first impression

s	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	While preparing an oral presentation, I feel tense and nervous.					
2.	I feel tense when I see the words “oral presentation” on the course outline.					
3.	My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving an oral presentation.					
4.	Right after giving an oral presentation I feel that I have had a pleasant experience.					
5.	I get anxious when I think about an oral presentation coming up.					
6.	I have no fear of giving an oral presentation.					
7.	Although I am nervous just before starting an oral presentation, I soon settle down after starting and feel calm and comfortable.					
8.	I look forward to giving an oral presentation.					
9.	When the professor announces there will be oral presentation activities for the course, I can feel myself getting tense.					
10.	My hands tremble when I was giving an oral presentation.					
11.	I feel relaxed while giving an oral presentation.					
12.	I enjoy preparing for an oral presentation.					
13.	I am in constant fear of forgetting what I prepared to say.					

14.	I would get anxious if someone asked me something about my topic that I do not know.					
15.	I face the prospect of giving an oral presentation with confidence.					
16.	I feel that I am in complete possession of myself while giving an oral presentation.					
17.	My mind is clear when giving an oral presentation.					
18.	I do not dread giving an oral presentation.					
19.	I perspire just before starting an oral presentation.					
20.	My heart beats very fast just as I start the oral presentation.					
21.	I experience considerable anxiety while sitting in the room just before my oral presentation starts.					
22.	Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while giving an oral presentation.					
23.	Realizing that only a little time remains in an oral presentation makes me very tense and anxious.					
24.	While giving an oral presentation I knew I can control my feelings of tension and stress.					
25.	I breathed faster just before starting the oral presentation.					
26.	I feel comfortable and relaxed in the hour or so just before giving the oral presentation.					
27.	I do poorer on oral presentations because I am anxious.					
28.	I feel anxious when the instructor announces the dates for oral presentations.					
29.	When I make a mistake while giving an oral presentation, I find it hard to concentrate on the parts that follow.					
30.	During the oral presentation, I experience a feeling of helplessness building up inside me.					
31.	I have trouble falling asleep the night before the oral presentation.					

32.	My heart beats very fast while I present an oral presentation.					
33.	I feel anxious while waiting to give my oral presentation.					
34.	While giving an oral presentation, I get so nervous that I forget the facts I really knew.					

Appendix B

Interpretation of the PRPSA scores F.

Scores	Level of anxiety	Interpretation
34-84	Low	Very few public speaking situations would produce anxiety
85-92	Moderately low	Some situations are likely to arouse anxiety, but most situations won't be anxiety-provoking for individuals in this category.
93-110	Moderate	Moderate level of anxiety for public speaking in most situations, but this anxiety is not so severe that the individuals won't be able to cope with it. They will be eventually become successful speakers.

111-119	Moderately high	People of this category tend to avoid public speaking. While some public speaking situations may be manageable, most will be very problematic.
120-170	Very high	Individuals obtaining scores in this category have very high anxiety for almost all public speaking situations and will go to considerable lengths to avoid them. It is unlikely that they can become successful public speakers unless they overcome/reduce their anxiety.

Appendix C

Consent form and Information sheet

You are kindly asked to participate in a study conducted by Mohsin A. AbuHamisa, a graduate student at the Department of English Language Teaching Department, Near East University under the supervision of Dr. Çise Çavuşoğlu, the assistant Chairperson in the Department of English Language Teaching of Near East University. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you have the option of withdrawing from the study at any time. Moreover, you can opt not to answer any question that you may feel uncomfortable with.

Confidentiality is highly appreciable in this study. Data will not be disclosed or communicated with anyone other than the researcher and the academic supervisor. The real names of participants will not be used. Rather participants will be identified by pseudonyms. When I interview you or observe your performance, I would like to take your permission to record the interviews and video-tape your academic oral presentations. These artifacts will be kept in a safe place that no one would have an access other than the researcher and the academic supervisor.

If you have further questions you may call Mohsin AbuHamisa, on 05338406277 or contact email at M.A.Hamisa@hotmail.com.

Name: _____

Year of study: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Emil: _____

I, the undersigned, having completed the above and have been briefed regarding my participation in a study carried out by Mohsin A. AbuHamisa, a graduate student, under the supervision of Dr. Çise Çavuşoğlu, at the English Language Teaching Department, Private University, North Cyprus. I am also aware that my participation in this study may be video/ audio recorded and I agree to this and I am fully informed as to what will happen to the recordings once the study is completed. Moreover, I fully understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time without having to explain or give a reason. I am also entitled to full confidentiality in terms of my participation in this study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D

Students' interview

1. What do you think of making presentations?
2. What would you feel if you were asked by someone to make a public speech?
3. Is the time duration important? Does it affect the way you feel about the presentation?
4. Which kind of presentation do you like? Group work or individual? Why?
5. If you found the audience did not comprehend one point, would you elaborate on it or just keep doing your presentation?
6. Do you think that your first semester experience has an effect on your presentations this semester?

Appendix E

Instructors' interview

1. How many marks are given on presentations?
2. If a presenter read from a paper, how would you evaluate him or her?
3. If a presenter read from slides, how would you evaluate her or his performance?
4. How do you know that a presenter did not prepare well?