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Second or Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety in English among Upper Secondary School Students in Sweden

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Abstract

This thesis presents a study on second or foreign language speaking anxiety (S/FLSA) in the English classroom of a Swedish upper secondary school based on both quantitative and qualitative tools of analysis. Since there are only a few studies of the factors contributing to the in-class speaking anxiety of Swedish students studying English, it is vital that it is explored so that policy makers devise ways to reduce anxiety while improving students' oral proficiency and teachers' understanding of S/FLSA.

The issues of whether S/FLSA exists in the English classroom in Sweden, what are its causes, does in-class speaking have an impact on language learning anxiety and whether gender plays a role are investigated through the use of questionnaires with students and interviews with teachers in this study. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) is adapted to suit the Swedish school environment and introduces the topic of in-class speaking versus small group speaking into the questionnaire.

Results from this study share students' and teachers' perspectives regarding the journey of language learning and the issues of language anxiety in the English classroom. Furthermore, since the format of the thesis is at the first stage in several of a sequence which is used in further examination and development of finding the correlation between FLCAS results and students' grades, it presents material for further investigation. The results of the study reveal in-class speaking and negative evaluation by peers as significant factors attributing to high levels of S/FLSA and the need for further investigation into S/FLSA in Swedish schools.

Keywords: Foreign Language Anxiety, Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety, Second or Foreign Language Anxiety, S/FLSA, In-class speaking, Small group speaking.

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1. Introduction

The English upper secondary syllabus in Sweden highlights that students are expected to interact in spoken English and produce various forms of speech, such as discussions, presentations, and debates with peers (Skolverket, 2022). In interactions and individual oral productions, students must contribute and actively participate in explaining, providing new perspectives, justifying, and evaluating their opinions. The syllabus also specifies that students should formulate their oral interactions and productions relatively freely and with some adaptation to purpose, recipient, and situation with strategies that facilitate and improve the interactions while moving communication forward in a constructive way (Skolverket, 2022). Second or foreign language speaking anxiety (S/FLSA) is one of many factors that hinders students' language learning process through disrupting oral productions and meaningful speaking interactions in the classroom. Therefore, it is vital to confront and generate awareness of the issue of S/FLSA for students learning to speak English in Swedish upper secondary schools.

1.1 Background

In the past few years, due to the pandemic, schools have been relying predominantly on digital tools and distance studies. They provide students with an alternative to regular traditional classroom situations which may be sources of high anxiety for some students. This thesis draws on a project outline and literature review submitted as part of an obligatory master course in "Methods and Project" at the University of Gothenburg (Abraham, 2021). In the outline, there was an emphasis on how the online environment encourages shy students to be more courageous and active, participating without anxiety, compared to face-to-face contact in classroom situations (Bakar et al., 2013, p. 230; Borup et al., 2012, p. 196 as cited in Abraham, 2021). The central theme of how students overcome language anxiety with asynchronous tools prompted further exploration of certain factors of second or foreign language anxiety in the English classrooms in upper secondary Swedish schools.

Anxiety is enmeshed into many students' upper secondary educational experiences but varies from person to person in regard to the different subjects and the diverse situations that may arise in the students' lives. However, in the English classrooms, the anxiety which

emerges linked to the learning and performance of English is generally associated with second or foreign language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986a, p. 126; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 284). Second or foreign language anxiety is defined as when an anxious student has a feeling of tension, apprehension, dread or worry which hinders the student's communication strategies in the target language related to second language contexts, such as speaking, learning, or listening (Horwitz et al., 1986a, p. 128; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 284). In the research of second or foreign language anxiety, studies have shown that anxious students have a high degree of speaking difficulties, particularly in comparison to other language skills and that S/FLSA occurs especially in situations where spontaneous speaking is required and this in turn affects the learning and speaking process negatively (Horwitz et al., 1986a, p. 126; Young, 1990, p. 539; He, 2013, p. 338).

According to Horwitz et al. (1986a, p. 131) and Young (1990, p. 540) knowing the reasons why students are anxious speaking a second or foreign language firsthand is the first step in reducing their anxiety in relation to language learning and performance. For English teachers, it is important to know more about students' attitudes towards in-class speaking contra small group speaking and whether gender plays a role to those students who prefer small group speaking. Furthermore, it would be important knowing whether there is a tendency for students to request to present or speak within small groups as a replacement for in-class speaking. Presently, most of the studies dealing with foreign language anxiety deal with non-Swedish classroom contexts and a majority of the studies which focus on in-class speaking do not pertain to the comparison of speaking in front of the whole class versus speaking in small groups during English lessons. This is still relatively unexplored research territory; hence this study focuses on the reasons leading to S/FLSA of students in a Swedish upper secondary school and its consequences for teachers. Special attention is on small group speaking versus in-class speaking regarding speaking English in class and its effects.

1.2 Aims and Research Questions

Accordingly, this study aims to cover the research gap in the literature concerning S/FLSA of students with special focus on in-class English speaking in a Swedish upper secondary school. My hypothesis is that Swedish upper secondary students have a fear of speaking English in public especially in whole class situations, as compared to in small groups. To investigate whether this hypothesis holds water, I have conducted a survey among upper

secondary school students through questionnaires and interviewed upper secondary school teachers. The aim of this thesis is to investigate how S/FLSA affects how English is being learnt and taught. The answers to the following research questions will provide the scaffolding for this study.

1. Do students in Swedish upper secondary school experience S/FLSA when speaking English during English lessons?

2. If so, what causes students to experience S/FLSA when speaking English in general during lessons?

3. Do Swedish upper secondary school students have a fear of speaking in public with special focus on in-class speaking versus small group speaking?

4. Does S/FLSA occur more in one gender than the others?

1.3 Structure of Thesis

This thesis begins with an introduction to the research topic, in addition to the aims, followed by the background which provides the theoretical framework and important concepts. Thereafter follows a detailed description of the methods and materials used for this study. It is followed by the chapter of results and discussion. The concluding chapter consists of a summary of the aims, findings and the pedagogical implications and recommendations for future research.

2. Theoretical Background and Concepts

In this chapter, vital theoretical concepts from previous research pertaining to the present study will be explained. Modifications of terms and concepts that have been revised to provide scaffolding to the present study regarding speaking English and language anxiety will also be highlighted.

2.1 Second and Foreign Language

How dominant a language is in a modern world, is not dependent on the number of speakers, but rather the economic, cultural, and technological influences (Crystal, 2003, p. 7). A driving factor in the progress of a dominant language, is the purpose and ease of cross-

cultural communications (Crystal, 2003, p. 82). Already from the beginning of the millennium, English was the most worldwide taught foreign language in over 100 countries (Crystal, 2003, p. 5) and 90 percent of all EU students learned English as their first foreign language (Modiano, 2006, p.223, as cited in Galloway & Rose, 2015, p. 127).

Over the years, the English language has gained popularity through British and American shows and movies on TV with Swedish subtitles, and in theaters which increased the spread of English knowledge and speaking throughout Sweden. However, how English is generally established and perceived by English speakers worldwide is dependent on whether the use of English is in a context where it is an official **second language** alongside the mother tongue or whether it is used in a context where it has no official status, nor is widely used in the local community but instead is restricted to special contexts such as in schools as a **foreign language** (Galloway & Rose, 2015, p. 253).

On the basis of different traditional models which consist of "World Englishes" depicting various degrees of nativeness or non-nativeness in English and not of the proficiency nor of the variations or dialects of "Englishes" used in classifying English speakers worldwide, Sweden would be placed in the farthest category, "the expanding circle" or last ring of the three concentric rings of Kachru's Three Circle Model (Galloway & Rose, 2015, pp. 17-23). The first two rings are the inner circle and outer circle. The countries using the standard varieties of native English belong to the "inner circle" and the middle ring is the "outer circle" which consists of countries that use English as a consequence of imperial expansion (Galloway & Rose, 2015, pp. 17-23).The last ring tends to consist of countries which were never colonized by an English-speaking country nor used English significantly other than for trade and international interaction (Galloway & Rose, 2015, pp. 17-23).Yet, English has permeated Swedish lifestyle in such a manner that it is easier to regard it as a second language rather than a foreign language due to its widespread use (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2014 as cited in Forsberg et al., 2019, p. 37). In addition, Swedes are considered highly proficient in English and have been ranked eighth in the EF English proficiency index (EF EPI, 2021). Hence for this study, the term second or foreign language will be used to ensure both forms of learning English are recognized when used in relation to English speaking in Swedish upper secondary schools.

2.2 Definition of Anxiety and Second or Foreign Language Anxiety

Studies of anxiety specifically focused on language learning have long existed. However, identifying anxiety in correlation to the studying of a second language and its effects gained prominence as pedagogical research only in the late 1980s (Horwitz et al., 1986a, p. 126). General anxiety is the "subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (Spielberger, 1983, as cited in Horwitz et al., 1986a, p. 125). In principle, general anxiety is considered a consistent personality characteristic which is different from the temporary state of language anxiety, which in brief is a response to a specific anxiety-provoking activity, also known as a situation-specific anxiety (Horwitz, 2001, p. 113).

Therefore, anxiety linked to a language learning situation is deemed as a specific anxiety reaction where students "experience apprehension, worry, even dread where they have difficulty concentrating, become forgetful, sweat, have palpitations, and even exhibit avoidance behavior such as missing class and postponing homework" (Horwitz et al., 1986a, p. 126). Research by Horwitz et al. (1986a, p. 126) about second and foreign language anxiety arose due to the need for more in-depth evidence establishing any links between language anxiety and the acquisition of English as a second or foreign language. Results show that foreign language anxiety has a vital role as a predictor of student achievement in a language class (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, p. 254).

The age-old argument of which came first, the chicken or the egg arises even in the field of foreign language anxiety, bringing up the debate on whether poor language learning causes foreign language anxiety or vice versa and it has only led to inconclusive results (Horwitz, 2001, pp. 121-122). Studies also highlight how difficulties with speaking in class are likely the most common cause for anxiety for students studying a second or foreign language in comparison to other language skills, such as reading, writing, and listening (Horwitz et al., 1986a, p. 126; Young, 1990, p. 539; Price, as cited in Young, 1990, p. 541). Anxiety during language learning creates a block which hinders a student from being receptive to a language input which in turn does not allow the student to "take in the target language messages", and hence the process of language acquisition is interrupted (Krashen, 1980, as cited in Horwitz et al., 1986a, p. 127). S/FLSA may cause a student to experience sweating, a dry mouth, irregular breathing, increased blood pressure and emotions of fear of

being humiliated or looking foolish (Kushner, 2004, as cited in Grieve et al., 2021, p. 1288). Students who are generally not anxious in their daily lives but who tend to be in certain situations in response to a second or foreign language, have as discussed above, a specific anxiety. Hence Horwitz's research confirms the need to specify the various type of anxieties (Horwitz, 2016b, p. 933). Additionally, it has been recommended that research should specify type of language anxiety, to ensure awareness regarding the various forms of anxiety that can be identified in language anxiety research (Scovel, 1978, as cited in Horwitz, 2001, p. 113).

2.3 Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

As previously mentioned, research by Horwitz et al. (1986a) into the phenomenon of foreign language anxiety has led to important contributions as to how foreign language anxiety is to be studied. Over time, more research based on their initial concepts with certain modifications has made further advancement in the understanding of foreign language anxiety and S/FLSA. Their initial research is often the starting point for most research in the field of foreign language anxiety and one of those fundamental contributions is the tool which measures foreign language anxiety, which is the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz et al., 1986a, pp. 129-130). The majority of FLCAS research worldwide has been conducted with English as the foreign language (Horwitz, 2016b, p. 932).

The FLCAS consists of a questionnaire of 33 items on a 5-point Likert scale designed to capture the extent and severity of anxiety that arises during second or foreign language learning in the classroom (Horwitz et al., 1986a, pp. 129-130). Through the use of this scale, it was found that an increase in anxiety led to a decrease in the American students' performance in Spanish (Horwitz et al., 1986a, pp. 130-131). Throughout the development of FLCAS, it has been shown that foreign language anxiety is a vital predictor of a student's foreign language achievement (Aida, 1994, p. 163; Tran et al., 2013, p. 217). For this study, a questionnaire was designed based on the foundational items in the FLCAS questionnaire. However, the remaining process was adapted to this study, including a different components analysis and the use of modified and additional items in the questionnaire to suit the aims of this study.

In most of the research referred to in this study, FLCAS goes through several stages in a sequence. The results from the FLCAS undergo further examination and development, such as how the correlation between the FLCAS results to the students' final grades is examined with the aid of Cronbach's alpha coefficient. These results are then analyzed and categorized into anxieties/components model which fall under various categories. Different research uses different components models to investigate S/FLSA. For example, in Horwitz et al.'s research, the results relate to three components which are communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz et al., 1986a, pp. 130). Aida's (1994) research on the constructs of FLCAS and the learning of Japanese by American students in the United States revealed four components which are speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, fear of failing the class, comfortableness in speaking with native Japanese and negative attitudes toward the Japanese class (Aida, 1994, pp. 159-163). Similarly, other research on foreign language anxiety has also used modified versions of the FLCAS questionnaire and its components of S/FLSA adapted to their particular scope.

2.4 Components of Foreign Language Anxiety

The 33 questionnaire items measured in the FLCAS deal with the oral aspects only of language anxiety, such as speaking and listening and not the other skills, such as writing, and reading. Moreover, results have shown that as students gain experience and proficiency increases, anxiety decreases in a consistent manner (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, as cited in Aida, 1994, p. 164). Consequently, the anxieties/components model of foreign language anxiety levels may vary due to the different language proficiency levels, as also students at different levels may experience anxiety differently (Horwitz, 2016a, p. 73). In a similar manner, foreign language anxiety may vary according to the various languages and cultural groups as well. Research has shown that cultural differences have an impact on foreign language anxiety and whether the acquisition of English is important or not in society will also affect language (Mak, 2011, pp. 203-204; Park,2014, p. 270; Horwitz, 2016a, p. 73). In addition, research shows how foreign language anxiety levels change according to cultural affiliation. Horwitz et al., (1986a) and by Aida (1994) have found similar levels of foreign language anxiety amongst American foreign language learners (Horwitz, 2001, p. 117). In contrast, other research reveal that Korean learners and Turkish learners of English have higher levels of foreign language anxiety than American learners of foreign languages

(Horwitz, 2016a, p. 73). With this background, this study will be assessing S/FLSA in English based on a Swedish cultural background.

As stated, foreign language anxiety is not only a combination of nor limited to only the components which are communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation but is defined 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" (Horwitz et al., 1986a, pp. 128). Initially, Horwitz et al. (1986a, pp. 127-128) started with the conceptualization of the three anxieties/components model and Aida (1994, pp. 159-163) developed it further to the four anxieties/components model. The reason that there have been several attempts to use different number of components models is because Horwitz et al. (1986a) did not clarify the questionnaire items and the components of the FLCAS. This led researchers to misinterpret the various components of measure and caused categorizing of the questionnaire items into three rigid categories which made analysis difficult and as a consequence influenced researchers to attempt various other anxieties/components models (Horwitz, 2016a, p. 72; Park, 2014, p. 263-264). Young's (1990, p. 550) study followed the three anxieties/components model of communication apprehension, social anxiety and low self-esteem which are focused on the enquiries regarding activity tasks, speaking errors and preparedness (1990, p. 542). Horwitz (2016a) states that language anxiety varies and is influenced according to the population, the learning situations, proficiency levels and how anxiety is experienced along with what is specifically being targeted in foreign language classroom anxiety (pp. 72-73). This study will also be using the components model for its analysis into the investigation of S/FLSA and the components will be defined further in this section.

2.5 Communication Apprehension

Communication apprehension is defined in the components model as "a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people" (Horwitz et al., 1986a, p. 127). Students who experience communication apprehension tend to feel anxiety speaking in public, in groups or even during one-on-one discussions. In other words, students can feel this form of anxiety either in small groups or with the whole class, also known as in-class speaking. In-class speaking is defined as a major factor affecting a student's attitude to speaking English (Mak, 2011, p. 204). Communicatively apprehensive students have a

propensity not to seek social interactions with others and usually avoid conversations (Aida, 1994, p. 156). The fear of being unable to communicate or be misunderstood are two of the main reasons underlying the component, communication apprehension.

Students who experience difficulty speaking in a group, will find further issues with participating in a second or foreign language class where they have little control of the communicative situation (Horwitz et al., 1986a, p. 127). Consequently, students who suffer from second or foreign language anxiety are orally active in other subject classes but tend to remain silent in second or foreign language classes (Horwitz et al., 1986a, p. 127). For this reason, communication apprehension in the second or foreign language classroom is a pivotal catalyst in speech anxiety and is interrelated to the students' fear of small groups and in-class speaking, as well as negative evaluation or peer pressure. According to Young (1990) "the real anxiety-evoking situation is having to speak or perform in front of others" (Young, 1990, p. 546). In summary, when students experience anxiety and start to avoid communicating with others due to their lack of competence in the second or foreign language, it can lead to frustration and communication apprehension (Aida, 1994, p. 157).

2.6 Social Anxiety

In the area of S/FLSA, the various constructs of anxiety such as embarrassment, shyness, stage fright, social-evaluative anxiety, and communicative apprehension merge into one psychological phenomenon which is social anxiety, in various kinds of social environments (Leary, 1982, as cited in Young, 1990, p. 540). It is further defined as "anxiety which arises from the prospect or presence of interpersonal evaluation in real or imagined social settings" (Leary, 1992, as cited in Young, 1990, p. 540). Accordingly, the component, social anxiety has a key role amongst various factors in regard to speaking anxiety in small group or in-class speaking, speech anxiety induced by teachers, negative attitudes towards English class, and fear of negative evaluations or peer pressure.

Research specifies that students experience S/FLSA due to "fear of negative evaluation" from others which is defined as the learners becoming distressed by the knowledge that others such as their peers would evaluate them negatively (Aida, 1994, p. 157). Results show that in-class speaking, in front of classmates during second or foreign language class, is the greatest source of anxiety due to peer pressure (Young, 1990, p. 540.),

causing students to usually "behave in ways that minimize the possibility of unfavorable evaluations" (Aida, 1994, p. 157). As an example, students may choose to be silent or avoid participation entirely by leaving the social situation of S/FLSA. This is detrimental to the students' language learning journey as it is overshadowed by the fear of being judged or evaluated by others.

2.7 Low Self-Esteem

As Horwitz et al. (1986a) clarify "no other field of study implicates self-concept and self-expression to the degree that language study does" (Horwitz et al., 1986a, p. 128). Consequently, second or foreign language learners who are fluent in their native tongue but who experience language constraints in their second or foreign language find themselves limited in expressing their points of view and hence this negatively affects the process of presenting their "true self" to others (Horwitz et al.,1986a, p. 128). Aida (1994) indicates that those students who perceive themselves as having a low proficiency in English are more likely to suffer higher levels of anxiety in English (McCroskey et al., 1985, as cited in Aida, 1994, p. 156) and this subsequently creates a hinder for those particular students to master the language (Aida, 1994, p. 157).

Other forms of limitations that affect the language learner's self-esteem and confidence are circumstances where improvisation is required. Situations where instantaneous responses and improvisation of speaking on unfamiliar topics are required lead to students experiencing a lack of control over how they can express themselves (He, 2013, p. 346). Students do not appreciate being "put on the spot or singled out", forced to be in the uncomfortable position of speaking in front of their peers in a second or foreign language (Young, 1990, p. 550). Lack of confidence or self-esteem is a common reason for learners to experience second and foreign language anxiety and is caused by various factors which can potentially hinder a student from mastering the language (He, 2013, p. 346). Self-esteem is an essential determinant with respect to peer pressure and the learner's negative attitude towards the particular second or foreign language classes. The component, low self-esteem can affect students who fear speaking English in class and yet, are expected to participate in oral presentations (Young, 1990, p. 541). In summary, "the language learner's self-esteem is vulnerable to the awareness that the range of communicative choices and authenticity is restricted" (Horwitz et al., 1986a, p. 128).

2.8 Test Anxiety

Test anxiety is one of the original components of the conceptualization of the three components model (Horwitz et al., 1986a, p. 127). Test anxiety is defined as the "apprehension over academic evaluation" (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, p. 253). This form of anxiety develops from the fear of failure and the demands of the constant pedagogical requirements of the school to continually assess students' proficiency while the students are in the process of attaining their proficiency in the second or foreign language (Aida, 1994, p. 157; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, p. 253). Test anxiety varies from a test situation where students may not fully comprehend the process or course material of a test to where students face anxiety from errors made during an oral test or where the actual act of completing a test causes students to be so anxious and fearful that they are unable to focus on the task at hand (Aida, 1994, p. 157).

However, MacIntyre and Gardner's (1989) research demonstrates that test anxiety contributes to general anxiety towards all tests rather than solely towards the communicative feature of language anxiety in a test, suggesting that test anxiety should be categorized as a general problem rather than a language class problem (1989, p. 268). As findings show that test anxiety is not "conceptually related to other components of foreign language anxiety", questionnaire items reflective of test anxiety are removed from the FLCAS in most studies conducted since Horwitz et al.'s research (Aida, 1994, p. 162). Furthermore, test-anxious students are more bothered about the test-taking prospective rather than the task in the test itself, whereas S/FLSA students are more concerned about their reaction to the task in any scenario (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, p. 269). However, students sometimes treat their general classroom performance of speaking a second or foreign language as a test-like situation rather than a learning process and this affects the students second or foreign language speaking negatively (He, 2013, p. 346). Therefore, S/FLSA caused by test-like situations or test anxiety is important to this study within certain limits.

3. Method and Material

In this study, data was collected using both the quantitative and qualitative approaches where the participants which comprised students and teachers responded to questionnaires and interviews respectively. This provided not only an insight into various sources of language

speaking anxiety experienced by students when using English speaking skills but also an insight into the views of teachers' experiences pertaining to S/FLSA. Below, the details of the two categories of participants, the reasons regarding the choice of the selected quantitative and qualitative tools as well as the ethical considerations and limitations which were considered will be presented and discussed in length in this chapter.

3.1 Participants

The participants who filled in questionnaires were 47 students from a municipal upper secondary school situated in the south of Sweden and three upper secondary teachers who participated in interviews taught at different forms of upper secondary schools in Sweden. The students came from a first year English 5 class and a second year English 6 class which were taught by an English teacher interviewed for this study. First year and second year in Swedish upper secondary schools are equivalent to 10th and 11th grade in the American system. The English 5 class (Eng 5) consisted of 31 first year students from upper secondary school in total, 29 of these students participated in the study. In addition to that class, there were 21 students in the English 6 class (Eng 6) from second year in upper secondary school and 18 of those students chose to participate. Both groups of students followed the Humanities program and were between the ages of 16 to 19 years old. Both grades share the majority of their classes together with their classmates, even in other language subjects such as Modern languages and Swedish or Swedish as a Second Language.

The Eng 5 class who participated in the study comprised 6 males, 22 females and 1 non-binary. The English 6 class students who participated in the study consisted of 5 males and 13 females. Irrespective of the minimal sum of males and non-binary in the study, the results collected from the students and the teachers may indicate that gender perhaps played a role in the topic of present English language anxiety for Swedish students. However, the sample for this study is much too small to draw any general conclusions.

The English teachers who participated in the interview were based in different parts of Sweden. The teachers' teaching environments varied from municipal and private upper secondary schools to adult education. All of their students were involved in the learning of upper secondary level English. All three teachers have at some point in their teaching careers taught all three levels of English from grades 10 to 12. The number of years teaching English

varies from 6 years to over 12 years amongst the teachers. The teachers are referred to as T1, T2 and T3 in the following chapters.

According to the guidelines of good research practice, the subjects of the study were offered the alternative to decline or withdraw from the study at any time (Appendix A). Informed consent for the questionnaire from the participating students and for the interviews from the interviewed teachers were obtained, with regard to the handling of sensitive personal data (see Vetenskapsrådet, 2017, pp. 30-31). The filling in of the questionnaire by the students was conducted during regular English class hours. The respondents to the questionnaires were assured that their participation or lack thereof would not influence their subject grade in any way. All respondents were informed that their confidentiality would be respected and protected throughout this study. Hence all participants would remain anonymous.

The students and teachers were chosen randomly and according to their availability with the sole condition that the students studied, and the teachers taught English at upper secondary level. According to the teacher of both classes, the students in Eng 5 were at a medium to high level of English proficiency attaining mostly grades from C to A. However, the students in Eng 6 were at a low level of English proficiency ranging from F to D. By including both student and teacher, it may be possible to see whether there is a correlation between the groups regarding S/FLSA.

3.2 Quantitative Method-Questionnaire

The FLCAS questionnaire draws on Horwitz et al.'s (1986a) original questionnaire with the addition of items that were needed regarding in-class speaking and peer pressure in the chosen school context in Sweden. The remaining process of Horwitz et al.'s (1986a) FLCAS regarding three-anxieties/component analysis which was discussed above was adapted to suit the additional aims and redesigned as a four-anxieties/component analysis, based on Aida's (1994) component analysis.

Hence, the categorization of components from previous studies helped compose and then analyze the items used for the questionnaire and the interviews conducted in this study. The items in the questionnaire for this thesis were categorized into four divisions to help identify the sources of anxiety. The divisions were based on the enquiries regarding speech

anxiety and fear of negative evaluation from peers, negative attitudes towards English and English class, small group speaking versus in-class speaking and lastly, speech anxiety induced by teachers and tests. The divisions were constructed by combining the questionnaire items that connected to the various components of S/FLSA. The various components of S/FLSA used were the common components from the previous studies of various anxieties/components model which are communication apprehension, social anxiety, low self-esteem, and test anxiety. These components and divisions will be referred to further in the results and discussion chapter of this study as they are interrelated to the data analysis results.

The original FLCAS questionnaire of Horwitz et al. (1986a) consisted of 33 items dealing directly with foreign language anxiety, whereas the questionnaire for this study consisted of 42 items (Appendix B). Out of these 42 questionnaire items, two items consisted of nominal questions to gauge the students' study years and genders, to use as a comparison between the two classes and to distinguish between the levels of anxiety and the genders in view of the fourth research question of this study. From the remaining 40 questionnaire items, three items pertained to school subjects other than English and three other items pertained to whether the teacher allowed small group speaking versus in-class speaking for oral presentations. Accordingly, the remaining 34 questionnaire items are directly related to the measurement of S/FLSA.

Each of the answers of the questionnaire items was set with a 5-point Likert scale similar to the original FLCAS as part of the point system calculation of S/FLSA (Horwitz et al., 1986a, p. 129). As the questionnaire items of comparison of in-class speaking and speaking in other school subjects cannot be directly used for S/FLSA in English class, it was not considered as part of the point system calculation of S/FLSA. Instead, the data from the questionnaire items 12 to 14, 18, 28 and 29 were used as comparisons through percentages between English class and other subject classes, and similarly with the category of small group versus whole class or in-class speaking (Appendix B). To distinguish these six questionnaire items of comparison, from the other questionnaire items which are calculated with point system directly for S/FLSA, these six items are supported with percentage graphs rather than tables (Figure 1, Figure 2). These six questionnaire items will prove relevant to the third research question of this study regarding in-class speaking and part of the first research question on whether S/FLSA exists in English classes in Swedish upper secondary

schools. Indirectly, the data from these six items impacts S/FLSA to some degree but more in the category of comparisons between subjects and comparisons of in-class speaking rather than the measurement of S/FLSA. Moreover, the questionnaire centers on the oral aspects in addition to the in-class speaking and small group speaking comparison when dealing with S/FLSA which the original questionnaire in English does not sufficiently emphasize nor focus on respectively.

Further, as compared to the original FLCAS, the present questionnaire also has only a few questions in the context of test-taking, as the study is focused on speaking in general and not centered on test-taking circumstances. Nonetheless, items on test-taking were incorporated into the questionnaire to gain insight into what level of anxiety the students experience from test situations. These items help to understand students' relationship with the actual act of speaking during the test and with the process and preparation of the task before an oral test for English and also for other subjects as a comparison, thus accounting for the queries of negative evaluation by peers and speech anxiety induced by teachers. These questionnaire items will assist in establishing whether the anxiety Swedish students experience when speaking English as a second or foreign language also exists in speaking tasks in other subjects.

As described in the theoretical framework, the remaining process of the research sequence of FLCAS, such as the correlation between the FLCAS results to the students' final grades which is examined with the aid of Cronbach's alpha coefficient was omitted. The majority of the items for the questionnaire for this study are derived from the FLCAS of Horwitz et al.'s (1986a) research and hence will continue to be referred by this term in this study too. Likewise, as previously explained in the theoretical background chapter, the components system used in the research sequence of FLCAS has also been adapted to accommodate the different questionnaire items about in-class and small group speaking. The closed questions and answers of the FLCAS provide an easy standardized format to collect data and is helpful to participants as they can answer through the variety of alternatives to choose from per item.

All questions were translated into Swedish and designed according to the template questionnaire used by Amouna (2021, pp.72-73). The questionnaire was in Swedish to avoid the risk of any misinterpretation due to language issues and to ensure that the students fully

understood the items and instructions (Appendix C). The questionnaire was shared via the online tool Google Forms to the participants' school emails and the participants used their laptops during class hours to complete it. The teacher was in class and the researcher was available online while the students filled in the questionnaire.

The choice and analysis of the data were based on McKay's (2006) compilation and analysis of close-ended questions in survey results (pp. 42-45). As stated earlier, each item on the questionnaire was set with the answer of a 5-point Likert scale with points ranging from "Strongly disagree" (1 point), "Disagree" (2 points), "Neither agree nor disagree" (3 points), "Agree" (4 points) to "Strongly agree" (5 points), similar to the original FLCA scale (Horwitz et al., 1986a, p. 129). In regard to the point system per questionnaire item in relation to English speaking and less language anxiety, the positively worded items where language confidence was high and language anxiety was low were reversed to the point system mentioned. An example of a positively worded item would be, "I feel sure of myself when I am speaking English in my English class." and a negatively worded item would be, "I am worried about making mistakes during an English lesson." Each questionnaire item was a statement where the student could respond to by either agreeing or disagreeing. According to the Likert-scale controversy on whether the 5-point or 4-point should be used to ascertain a more accurate answer, the argument is that the odd number of options increases the risk of participants choosing the middle or neutral option (McKay, 2006, p. 38). However, for this study, the 5-point odd number option was chosen to ensure that the participants were not forced to choose an option where they did not completely agree or disagree, hence the neutral option was provided to validate that those students who answered with "agree" or "disagree", chose it with more accuracy rather than being pushed to a certain answer. It was necessary that the data results showed a clear sign of S/FLSA or not.

Of the 40 questionnaire items, 26 items were worded negatively, eleven were worded positively and three were worded neutrally. The last items were focused on how the teacher worked with student presentations in alignment with the third research question of this study. Of the 26 negative questionnaire items, one dealt with other subjects than English and of the eleven positive questionnaire items, one dealt also with other subjects than English. Among the negative and positive questionnaire items, there are items based on the query of in-class speaking versus small group speaking which contributes to students experiencing S/FLSA. Pilot questionnaires were tested on five students who had similar backgrounds to the students

who participated in this study and these test participants gave feedback that they answered the questionnaire without difficulty. Furthermore, the student anxiety levels were calculated through the point system for these five respondents, and one actually showed a high level of S/FLSA.

The questionnaire items were grouped into the following categories. The categories were speech anxiety induced by teachers and tests, speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation from peers, negative attitudes toward English or English class and small group speaking versus in-class speaking. Questionnaire items 6, 9, 26, 30, 33, 36 and 42 were related to speech anxiety induced by teachers and tests (Appendix B). Questionnaire items 3-5, 8, 10, 11, 15, 20-24, 31, 32, 34, 35, 38 and 41 dealt with speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation from peers (Appendix B). Questionnaire items 7, 14, 25, 27-29, 37, 39 and 40 were related to negative attitudes toward English or English class (Appendix B). Questionnaire items 12, 13 and 16-19 referred to anxiety when compared between small group speaking and in-class speaking (Appendix B). As mentioned earlier, 34 questionnaire items out of the above mentioned 40 questionnaire items were used in directly calculating the levels of S/FLSA.

According to the point system above, the lowest possible score for a student to attain as a total was 34 points, the highest possible was 170 points, and the median was 103 points. This means the halfway mark between the lowest level and highest level of S/FLSA was 103 points. The values of frequency were also divided into ranges of equal value to present the low, medium, and high level of S/FLSA. The ranges were divided into 34-79 points, 80-124 points and 125-170 points. The result of the responses can be categorized as either attitude scales of a questionnaire which can be treated as interval scales or/and the results can be described in percentages (McKay, 2006, pp. 42-45). Mak (2011) used the same system by determining the average anxiety level or cutoff point and also calculated the mean score of each individual (p.205). Hence, the same data analysis method of interval scales will be used for the measurement of levels of S/FLSA.

In addition, a total of each item in the questionnaire was calculated in finding the items that caused the students to have the highest and lowest levels of anxiety per item. The lowest points tallied per item totaled 95 points and the highest points tallied were 198 points. For the questionnaire items pertaining to comparisons between speaking in English and other

subjects, and in-class speaking versus small group speaking, percentages through color-coded pie charts will be used as a summary of the students' responses.

3.3 Qualitative Method-Interviews

The qualitative research method used for this study consisted of interviews with teachers. Interviews were used for more detailed explanations and direct examples, as well as for providing another perspective than the students'. The interview guide approach was followed, all the interviewees were asked identical questions which were planned in advance to ensure that the same content was examined to review and compile data in an orderly and simple format (McKay, 2006, p. 52). The main disadvantage with using an interview guide is that new questions cannot be asked or adapted to the respondents during the interviews; these questions may arise due to new information revealed through their responses.

All three interviews were conducted in English as the teachers were very comfortable in the language for various reasons. The reasons ranged from being brought up by English-speaking parents, to living in the US for a certain period of time, and being influenced by the English language to such a degree due to an English-speaking environment, that speaking English was second nature to all three teachers.

The interview questions consisted of 14 questions in English. (Appendix D). The interviews were completed within 13 to 18 minutes within three days. The interviews were recorded on a mobile and on a laptop and conducted as a one-on-one interview with each respondent. The three teachers granted permission for the interviews and recordings to be conducted and accordingly, the teachers were assured that they would be referred to as anonymous sources, and that only the general descriptions of their background and the schools that they taught at would be included in the study.

The interviews of the teachers were included into the study after reviewing the results of the questionnaire, to compare whether the students' and teachers' views corresponded or differed. Introductory interview questions were used to find out more about the teachers' backgrounds, such as the number of years of teaching experience, at which level of teaching English and what type of school they taught at the time of the interview. The remaining interview questions dealt with the teachers' knowledge and awareness of S/FLSA and various situations where it might arise, in addition to their perspectives on whether and how S/FLSA

affects their students and the consequences of this anxiety in their classrooms. The results from the questionnaires and interviews showed a correlation between the data in the two parts of the study.

3.4 Data Analysis

Google Forms has a function that created an automated Response sheet with graphics in the form of a color-coded pie chart of the five different options which the student could choose from for each of the individual 42 items in the questionnaire. Through Google Forms the data from the questionnaires was also transformed into an automated Google Sheets spreadsheet. From the spreadsheet, the data from the 34 questionnaire items directly related to the measurement of S/FLSA was manually identified and calculated according to the chosen point system to calculate the median and the mean score of each participant. This was calculated to determine the individual anxiety levels and to also evaluate which of the relevant questionnaire items and categories scored within the high end of the S/FLSA levels.

Once the levels were determined, the participants with a total more than 103 points corresponded to having levels higher than the average level of S/FLSA and the students that had a total between 125-170 points corresponded to experiencing a high level of S/FLSA. The total score of each individual item on the questionnaire was also evaluated to observe in which category the students experienced a high level of S/FLSA and to which of the four components the category was interrelated to.

In addition, illustrations in the form of tables and pie charts are shared in this study as they distinguished two different types of comparisons between the 34 questionnaire items which were calculated with the point system and percentages, and the remaining six items which were only calculated with the percentages. Pie charts were used for the six questionnaire items not dealing with the point system and which focused on comparisons within small group versus in-class speaking situations in both English class and other subject classes.

Furthermore, a form of structured interview with identical questions aids research in establishing specific information in reference to zeroing in on predetermined topics or areas (McKay, 2006, p. 57). As stated above, the interviews were recorded, and subsequent

transcriptions were categorized through highlighting similar tag phrases and key words. As each respondent answered the same 14 interview questions, the data analysis was based on a comparison between the answers of the three respondents.

3.5 Validity and Reliability, Limitations

As asserted by Horwitz(1986b), FLCAS tests for an individual's response to specific stimuli of foreign language learning which more clearly shows how foreign language anxiety can be reliably and validly assessed through this self-reporting measure unlike other tools that measure anxiety (pp.559-560).Yet, in terms of validity except for the answers regarding gender and age which were easily verifiable, the students' honesty in answering the remaining questionnaire items was difficult to verify, which lowered the validity of the questionnaire results to a certain degree. Nonetheless, the interview results from the teachers helped support the results from the students attained through the questionnaire.

Repetition of items and opposing items were included in the questionnaire as a way to achieve reliability and to the check the internal consistency of responses in a survey (McKay, 2006, p. 42). For example, item 3 which was "I feel sure of myself when I am speaking English in my English class" was reformulated into item 11 as "I do not find it difficult to speak English during English classes". Another example is item 24 which was "It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in English in my English class" was repeated into item 31 "I think it is embarrassing to answer questions during English lessons". An opposing statement was also used, as in the case of item 21, "It does not embarrass me to volunteer answers in English in my English class".

There was not a vast difference between the results of the duplicated items in the questionnaire. Additionally in terms of reliability, the translation of the questionnaire into Swedish may have aided the authenticity of the answers, as it helped the students understand the items better. However, as mentioned earlier, the self-reported oral proficiency used in the FLCAS questionnaire should be regarded with some scepticism.

Similarly, interview questions were designed to find out more information about teachers' reported behaviour, however the answers shared with the researcher cannot be checked for validity as the answers could be a reflection on what the interviewees believe that they should say rather than what actually occurs. Yet, in terms of reliability, the similar answers to the open-ended interview questions regarding main causes of S/FLSA and students' reactions to in-class speaking from the three teachers highlights a certain degree of reliability.

There were certain limitations in this study, which can be seen in the following examples from the questionnaires and interviews. The unequal number of students gender-wise, female (74%), male (24%) and non-binary (2%), participating in the survey, may have created a gender-biased result. However, the teachers' answers during the interviews regarding S/FLSA and its effect on genders have been included, which created a perhaps more balanced support for the results found through the questionnaire and the interviews.

Other limitations that may exist is the chance that questions in the questionnaire could be misunderstood by the students, for example item 7 is worded as "It would not bother me at all to take more English classes". Students might strongly disagree with the intention that they do not want more classes even though they feel confident in speaking English. Other questionnaire items such as items 4 and 37 respectively, worded as "I worry about making mistakes in English class" and "English class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind", can be interpreted by as other skills in English, rather than just speaking English. Questionnaire item 9, which was worded as "I never feel nervous before my oral tests in English class" can be interpreted by the student in many ways and do not have to deal with the anxiety of speaking but may refer to the anxiety of being graded. In addition, questionnaire item 29, which is "Even if I am well prepared for my other subject classes, I feel anxious about presenting oral presentations in those classes" should have been specified as classes using Swedish, as students can misconstrue them with classes in modern languages. Lastly, the inclusion of an interview question regarding the teachers' observations on whether they noted any changes of S/FLSA between various years was overlooked and could have provided further information regarding causes of S/FLSA in this study.

4. Results and Discussion

This chapter, which is divided into five parts, consists of the data obtained from the questionnaires and interviews, and the analyses of the results. The parts are the five areas relevant to this study regarding S/FLSA in the English classroom in Swedish upper secondary schools. The different parts are gender, speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation from peers, small group speaking versus in-class speaking, negative attitudes towards English and English class and lastly, speech anxiety induced by teachers and tests.

Furthermore, the questionnaire items are categorized into divisions based on the last four mentioned parts (Table 1). These divisions and the earlier four components mentioned in the previous chapter will be discussed in length. The result from the interviews will be included into discussion of the five parts. The data attained from the questionnaire items and the comparisons of certain questionnaire items will be explained and supported through a table and graphs in this chapter. The manually calculated point system for each questionnaire item to evaluate the relevant items that cause high levels of S/FLSA and each student's answers to determine the individual anxiety levels will be included in the results.

The table consists of the questionnaire items and data grouped into the four divisions of speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation from peers, small group speaking versus in-class speaking, negative attitudes towards English and English class and lastly, speech anxiety induced by teachers and tests (Table 1). The table includes the data collected from the results of the student surveys based on the percentage of each of the answers chosen ranging from "Strongly disagree" (SD), "Disagree" (D), "Neither agree nor disagree" (N), "Agree" (A) to "Strongly agree" (SA). Percentages in this table are rounded to the nearest whole number, thus the percentages may not add up to a total of 100% (Table 1).

Table 1. *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) items with Percentage of Students Selecting Each Alternative in the four Divisions*

* Percentages in this table are rounded to the nearest whole number, thus may not add up to 100.

	SD	D	N	A	SA

Division One (Speech Anxiety and Fear of Negative Evaluation from Peers)

3. I feel sure of myself when I am speaking English in my English class.

	6	17	21	30	26

4. I worry about making mistakes in English class.

	11	15	15	47	13

5. I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on to speak in English class.

	21	4	13	38	23

8. I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.

	28	13	23	17	19

10. I start to panic when I must speak without preparation in English class.

	26	13	17	32	13

11. I do not find it difficult to speak English during English classes.

	15	23	15	21	26

15. I am afraid of doing oral presentations in English.

              19   6   11   40   23

20. I get nervous when I must speak English with someone of the opposite sex in my class.

              53   11   15   17   4

21. It does not embarrass me to volunteer answers in English in my English class.

              17   21   21   15   26

22. Even if I am well prepared for my English class, I feel anxious about speaking English during the lesson.

              23   15   13   38   11

23. In English class, I can get so nervous when I am speaking that I forget things I know.

               9   4   19   38   30

24. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in English in my English class.

              26   9   26   23   17

31. I think it is embarrassing to answer questions during English lessons.

              28   13   13   34   13

32. I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in English class.

              19   11   13   28   30

34. I do not feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.

              30   21   13   21   15

35. If I am well prepared, it does not feel difficult to speak English in the lessons.

              13   23   23   19   21

38. I am afraid the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.

              38   4   9   36   13

41. I get nervous and confused when I speak English in English lessons.

              30   15   17   32   6

Division Two (Small Group Speaking versus In-Class Speaking)

16. I would prefer to do my oral presentations in front of a small random group of my classmates rather than the whole class.

               6   2   15   32   45

17. I would prefer to do my oral presentations in front of a small group of my friends from my class rather than the whole class.

               6   2   13   13   66

19. I am not afraid to give oral presentations in English in front of my whole class.

              39   23   6   17   15

Division Three (Negative attitude towards English and English Class)

7. It would not bother me at all to take more English classes.

              21   9   28   21   21

25. I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers.

              21   19   21   19   19

27. I often feel like not going to my English class because I need to speak English there.

              55   6   21   15   2

37. English class moves so quickly that I worry about getting left behind.

              36   17   21   17   9

39. I feel more tense and nervous in my English class about speaking than in my other classes.

        40   13   6   21   19

40. I feel overwhelmed by all the rules I must learn about the English language to speak English well.

        30   13   28   21   9

Division Four (Speech Anxiety from Teachers and Tests)

6. I become stressed when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in English.

        43   17   19   15   6

9. I am usually at ease during my oral tests in English class.

        36   26   9   19   11

26. I get upset when I do not understand what the teacher is correcting when I speak.

        32   11   34   15   9

30. I am afraid that my English teacher will point out my errors when I speak.

        32   23   23   15   6

33. The more I study for an oral English test, the more confused I get.

        38   17   28   13   4

36. It is not stressful when my teacher points out my errors when I speak English.

        17   17   23   28   15

42. I get nervous when I do not understand every word the language teacher says because then I cannot answer correctly.

        34   15   19   32   0

_____

4.1 Speech Anxiety and Fear of Negative Evaluation from Peers

This chapter presents results from the interviews and questionnaire regarding division one which is speech anxiety and the fear of negative evaluation from peers. This division is concerned with the components of communication apprehension, low self-esteem, and social anxiety. Results range from students lacking confidence and fearful of speaking in front of others to students comparing their language skills to their peers and students' self-awareness regarding their language speaking anxiety.

Based on the manually calculated point system from the questionnaire, 11 students from the total of 47 students are in the category of low levels of S/FLSA, 29 students are in the category of medium levels of S/FLSA, and the remaining 7 students are in the category of high levels of S/FLSA. One of the top three items that has the highest levels of S/FLSA from the manually calculated point system from the questionnaire, comes from item 23, from division one, which is, "In English class, I can get so nervous when I am speaking that I

forget things I know." Data from questionnaire items 21, 24 and 31, and items 22 and 35 show that an approximately equal number of students agree and disagree about being embarrassed when volunteering answers in English class and when well-prepared feel or do not feel anxious about speaking during lessons respectively (Table 1). This displays the students' consistency in answering to a certain limit.

For questionnaire item 34, more students answer that they feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of their peers. Additionally, for questionnaire items 5 and 38, more students acknowledge that they tremble when they know that they are going to be called on to speak in English class and are afraid that other students will laugh at them when they speak English. Furthermore, there is a high percentage of students who state that they are afraid of doing oral presentations in English, shown in questionnaire item 15 and in contrast, there are a somewhat similar number of students who agree and disagree to item 11 regarding difficulty in speaking English during classes (Table 1). This shows that students fear oral presentations far greater than just speaking English in class. Out of the 18 questionnaire items from division one, students have responded more negatively to speaking English in class to at least 12 questionnaire items highlighting the students' fear of evaluation and speaking English in front of their peers. As Young (1990, p. 546) highlights, naturally students will experience a high level of anxiety when speaking a foreign language but having to speak or present it in front of others lies the "real anxiety-evoking situation".

Similarly, for interview question five regarding causes of S/FLSA (Appendix D), the teachers share how students in upper secondary schools are more fearful of peer pressure and will refuse to speak in public or are scared to make mistakes in front of others. T1 and T3 state that students lack confidence and do not want to embarrass themselves and become scared in situations which they cannot control. In addition, for questionnaire item 4, an overwhelming majority of students has responded in agreement about the worry of making mistakes (Table 1). He (2013, p. 347) reports that students view their errors and evaluation by peers as a threat to their self-image and not a natural step of learning a new language. Hence, students who refuse to speak are deprived of normal means of communication, causing students to behave in ways that avoid the risk of having negative evaluation due to their fear of making errors which is common in the language classroom (Aida, 1994, p. 165). This domino effect of fear and low self-esteem leads to a downward spiral as He (2013, p. 347)

maintains that students who fear negative evaluation tend to withdraw and be silent most of the time and not actively participate in activities.

Low self-esteem, communication apprehension and social anxiety stem from speech anxiety and the fear of negative evaluation from peers. Social anxiety can arise when speaking in front of peers is the greatest source of anxiety due to peer pressure (Young, 1990, p. 550). Young (1990, p. 550) further states that students' fear of speaking in front of others, anxiety over making a mistake in front of their peers and willingness to participate in activities that do not require them to be in the spotlight could relate to low self-esteem. T2 when comparing her students from adult education and upper secondary schools, explains that the latter group of students tend to worry more about being judged and evaluated by their peers and these students either approach the teacher to help find solutions to avoid speaking in front of others or the students do not attend classes. Due to high levels of language anxiety, students are unable to accomplish tasks due to their diversion of focus on task-irrelevant processing (Pappamihiel, 2002, p. 329). Furthermore, this affects the learners' self-esteem as learners sometimes engage in "self-deprecating and self-focused thoughts that interfere with the learners' efficacy" (Pappamihiel, 2002, p. 329). As mentioned earlier, students expressed their worry in making errors, yet for questionnaire item 3, a large percentage of students stated that they feel sure of themselves when speaking English in class and in questionnaire item 8, a rather balanced number of students either believe they are better or not than their peers. This situation can be explained by Aida 's (1994, p. 165) observation that students with high anxiety but high self-esteem might handle S/FLSA better than students with high anxiety but low self-esteem. Hence, irrespective of anxiety or not, if the student has high self-esteem, that student perhaps has the advantage to better confront and conquer speaking English in class.

In response to interview question six (Appendix D), the teachers state that during situations where spontaneous answers or discussions are required, some students tend to say the answer to a friend but refuse to say the answer out loud in class, refrain from answering or discussing in fear of being judged or laughed at or react in panic and freeze or feign ignorance to avoid answering the question or contributing to the discussion and some students even outright refuse to speak in English and will only reply in Swedish. T3 states that in the last example, the reply in Swedish exhibits the students' comprehension of English but yet does not help in displaying the students' speaking skills in English. Speech anxiety and negative evaluation by peers contribute to communication apprehension which is characterized by fear or an anxiety

about communicating with people. Students do not want to be put on the spot nor want to be singled out to speak in the foreign language in front of their peers, due to the fears of being judged, ridiculed, or misunderstood is one of the main causes of S/FLSA in this study. According to Aida (1994, p.162), speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, among other factors, are considered as relatively enduring personality traits which contribute greatly to S/FLSA. Peer evaluation plays an influential role in students' S/FLSA which in turn affects the students' abilities and creates communication apprehension, low self-esteem and social anxiety when learning and using English in the classroom.
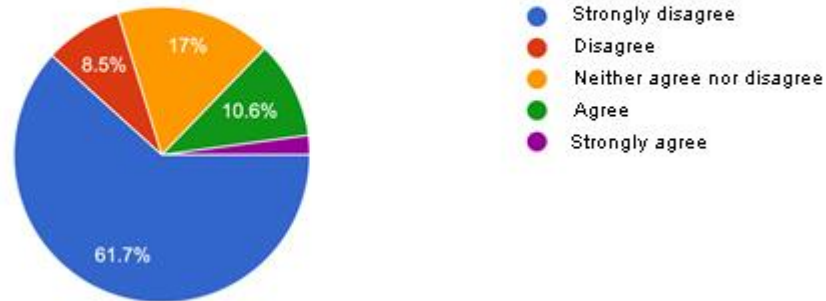
4.2 Small Group versus In-Class Speaking

Speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation of peers which is division one and small group speaking versus in-class speaking which is division two overlap one another. Both these divisions influence one another and impact the same components of low self-esteem, social anxiety, and communication apprehension. When language learners find themselves in threatening situations, it creates an adverse environment for learning and consequently, affecting the learners' abilities to concentrate and succeed in their language learning (Pappamihiel, 2002, p. 329). Due to various elements such as the fear of making mistakes when speaking or negative evaluation of peers where they are being judged or ridiculed, students tend to shy away from public or in-class speaking and instead gravitate towards small group speaking. Results show that activities where students are put on the spot or are required to present in front of the class are considered high level anxiety producing for the students (Young, 1990, p. 551).

As mentioned earlier, six questionnaire items are not included into the calculation of the levels of S/FLSA per student as they are questions regarding comparisons and are indirectly connected to S/FLSA. These six questionnaire items of comparison are supported with graphs rather than tables. Three of these questionnaire items are 12, 13 and 18 which are questions regarding comparisons between small group speaking and in-class speaking used in English classes (Figure 1).

Figure 1. *Division Two – Questionnaire Items 12, 13 and 18*

12. My teacher has allowed students to completely avoid doing oral presentations in English.

Legend:
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

13. My teacher has allowed students to do oral presentations in English in small groups rather than in front of the whole class.

Legend:
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree

18. I would prefer to do my oral presentations in front of only my teacher instead of the whole class.

Legend:
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly agree
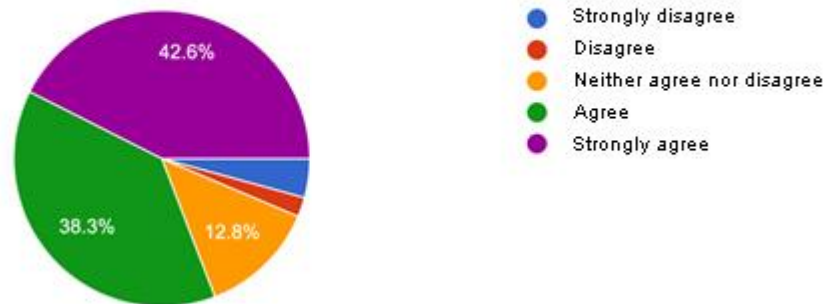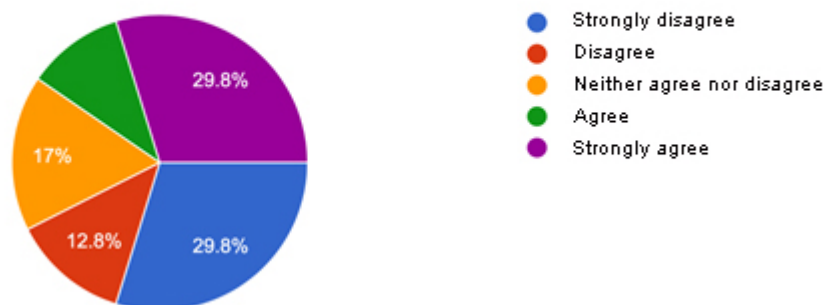
From the data of these three questionnaire items, most of the students respond that the teacher does not allow students to completely avoid undertaking oral presentations and allows

students to participate in oral presentations in small groups. Furthermore, an almost equal number of students state they either prefer or not to present their oral presentations to just their teacher instead of the whole class or in-class speaking (Figure 1). On the other hand, a vast majority of students voiced their preference to present orally to a small random group of classmates rather than to their whole class in questionnaire item 16 (Table 1). Accordingly, in questionnaire item 17, a greater percentage of students prefer doing oral presentations in front of a small group of their classmates who are their friends rather than the whole class and in questionnaire item 19, a large majority of students agree that they are afraid to give oral presentations in English in front of their whole class (Table 1). From the manually calculated point system for each questionnaire item, items 16 and 17, tally the top two highest levels of S/FLSA with 187 points and 198 points respectively. This aligns with research which highlights that respondents find the biggest challenge as speaking in the classroom that causes a great deal of anxiety and apprehension (Talib Ali & Fook Fei, 2016, p. 308). In Young's (1990, pp. 545-546) research, results show that upper secondary students generally prefer and feel more comfortable participating in oral activities in small groups rather than in front of the whole class. As seen in this study, these students' responses are no different and their teacher allows small group speaking and thereby ensures students do not avoid performing oral presentations in English. It is emphasized that anxiety is not entirely rooted in the fear of speaking a second or foreign language but more in communication apprehension and the solution to decreasing anxiety is pair work or small group work (Young,1990, p. 550).

From the English teachers' perspectives collected from the interview questions nine and eleven to fourteen regarding avoidance of oral presentations and in-class speaking (Appendix D), the teachers' daily struggle to encourage students to speak English in the classroom is evident. T1 and T3 explain that when comparing oral presentations from ten to twelve years ago to present time, it is vastly different as teachers are nowadays confronted more often by students who attempt to avoid participating in oral presentations or request for opportunities to present only to their teachers rather than more in-class speaking. All three teachers comment that smaller group speaking adds to their workload with more planning and preparing, and time consumption as they must allot time away from their regular class to attend to each group presentation which comes with its own issues, such as absent students in the group, while be responsible for the rest of the class too.

All three teachers state that the advantages of small group speaking are several, where students feel more comfortable to speak to one another and that quiet students can "shine more" and show their skills minus the mental stress of performing in front of so many, which is likened to a "deer in the spotlight" situation. T1, T2 and T3 use similar variations of encouraging students towards in-class speaking, from starting the academic year with introducing small group speaking with their students and eventually adding and creating bigger groups to finally weaning them off the groups by slowly and steadily introducing in-class speaking by the end of the year, yet it comes with a great deal of challenges and there are still a few students who outright refuse to speak in front of the class. Those students are allowed opportunities of small group speaking. T1 explains that she makes exceptions for upper secondary school students with special needs or for those who come from schools where they "have never even spoken in another language in their class and have not cultivated the habit of speaking English often or at all during English classes from their intermediary education, as their classmates have." T3 states, "Students are constantly comparing us to other subject teachers who only use small group speaking and this discourages in-class speaking which makes it an even bigger hurdle for language teachers." T2 emphasizes that adults at upper secondary school levels are easier to encourage towards in-class speaking however, upper secondary school students are much harder to convince, and small group speaking was the only option most times.

None of the three teachers deny the benefits of small group speaking and they adopt it as a means of attaining in-class speaking as the end goal for most of their students. T2 voices that small group speaking encourages more discussions which are more elaborate than the whole class discussion which is characterized as "the presenter being attacked by questions" and considered less personal compared to small group speaking. T2 asserts that both speaking strategies would be preferred in the classroom as both possess positive dynamics in different situations, however in-class speaking activities seem to be reduced over time, as fewer students want to participate in them and are either unaware or do not follow speaking or presentations etiquette. "Students don't want to stay and listen to their peers after they finish their own presentation" is an example given of the lack of speaking etiquette.

All three teachers mention how in-class speaking trains students to assess and present to a particular audience and that in-class speaking prepares students for relevant real life presentation situations in higher education or at the workplace in the future. T3 states that the

optimal teaching scenario would be for students to present in front of the whole classroom, "then students would conquer their fear of public speaking and others learn from that speaking situation. But for that to succeed, more teachers need to encourage public speaking." In addition, T1 explains that students become too comfortable within their small group speaking and that too becomes a problem when they must move out of their comfort zone for different learning situations. Piechurska-Kuciel (2012, p. 228) states that students with language anxiety tend to select "inconspicuous seats in the classroom or within small groups in order to make communication less likely. According to Young (1990, p. 550), the lack of a social environment which does not alleviate the students' insecurities can lead to social anxiety and consequently to S/FLSA. The teachers' strategies of gradually guiding their students towards in-class speaking corresponds to He's (2013, p. 346) recommendation that students should not be coerced into the spotlight before they are prepared and ready for the oral task.

The language students' views of how others perceive them affect how they perceive themselves, and this directly affects the students' self-esteem which in turn influences students' performances in the classroom. Mak (2011, p. 211) underlines how negative self-evaluation is an important indicator forewarning to S/FLSA. In response to the last interview question regarding teachers' perspectives of students' speaking skills (Appendix D), T3 shares examples of how students are self-conscious when speaking in front of their classmates, peer pressure, lack of confidence and how the fear of being made fun of or bringing attention to themselves affects students' decisions to reply or discuss spontaneously. T3 states that this directly affects Swedish students' insecurities regarding public speaking and makes it difficult for teachers to uplift the declining number of students who speak English in the language classroom.

According to T2, the number of Swedish upper secondary school students doing in-class presentations are decreasing, and the added example of how students who are initially listening closely to assignment instructions suddenly lose complete focus just because the focus is now on the fact that there will be an oral presentation in the assignment and some students start to stress, are on the verge of tears and even try their best to avoid participating. In these situations, other solutions are needed, and T2 allows students sending in voice or video recordings or doing small group presentations, other than what was originally planned which was to present in front of the class for in-class speaking. T2 understands and admits that the in-class speaking activity avoided becomes "this scary thing for them only because

they had the chance to get away with not doing and this builds up a pattern of avoidance". T2 considers small group speaking as only a short-term solution and is aware that the students can only improve with practice, and they cannot keep avoiding in-class speaking, because it is not helpful, as they will have to face it either at university or for another inevitable future situation.

T1 responds in a similar manner about the decrease of students who speak spontaneously and present in-class speaking with ease as students express discomfort with in-class speaking and simultaneously become far too comfortable in small group speaking and need to be pushed at times to speak in front of the class. As for spontaneous questions, T1 avoids them as much as possible, as sometimes students who are asked, "panic and just freeze." T1 restates the points that the other teachers share which are how in-class speaking is important to train students for the future and with small group speaking, students are at a disadvantage when they always have the same or know their small audience which is unlike real life. However, "at the same time, students need to be able to show their abilities and what they are capable of, so small group speaking is essential, but that preparation for life is missing." T1 explains that there are situations where all the students are in pairs in the class and are asked to just discuss spontaneously with one another in English, and there are a few who still outright refuse. Research shows that to reduce the effects of language anxiety, it is imperative that language teachers should attend to not only the linguistic but also emotional needs of the students and ensure a secure and comfortable learning environment which is "free from fear of speaking and conducive to risk taking in the target language" (Mak, 2011, p. 211). Hence, striving to support students towards in-class speaking, by encouraging better self-esteem and confidence using small group speaking may be both reinforcing and motivational in understanding in-class speaking anxiety and S/FLSA.

## 4.3 Negative attitudes towards English and English class

Questionnaire items in division three relate to students' attitudes towards English and English class in general and as a comparison to other subjects. The fear of making mistakes and being misunderstood are integral features of the component communication apprehension and the anxiety it creates could spread to the other components of low self-esteem and social anxiety and vice versa, as these components influence each other. As students steer through their insecurities of self and social environments, they find themselves in situations where they are poorly equipped to handle being judged by their peers and teachers. This burden of

communication apprehension limits the learners from pursuing language learning and refrains them from risk-taking and consequently "hinders creating positive relationships because in order to cope with second or foreign language learning, one must engage in dialogue with others" (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2012, p. 228). Therefore, a negative attitude towards English and English classes, where learners deprive themselves of social skills and information sharing are likely to be victims of high levels of stress and other casualties of S/FLSA (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2012, p. 228).

The questionnaire items of comparison, 14, 28 and 29 are not included in the table and are supported through graphs, as they are not included into the direct calculation of the levels of S/FLSA per student (Figure 2). Instead, these questionnaire items are used as points of comparisons of anxiety between English and English lessons and other subjects and subject lessons which are indirectly connected to S/FLSA (Figure 2).

Figure 2. *Division Three* – Questionnaire *Items 14, 28 and 29*

14. I am scared to do oral presentations in all school subjects, in general.
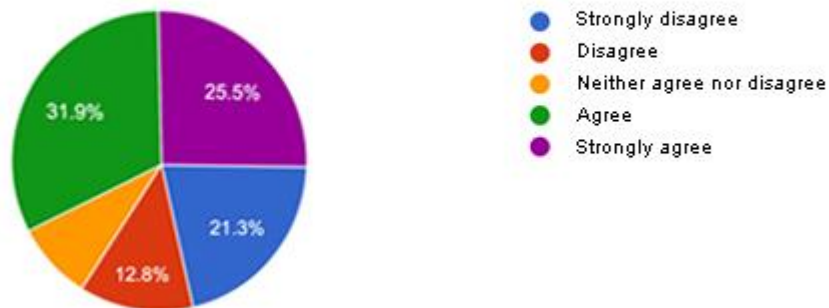
28. I feel sure of myself when I do oral presentation in my other school subjects.
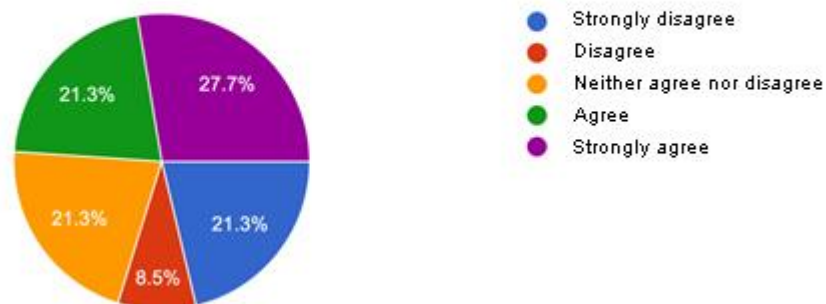
29. Even if I am well prepared for my other school subjects, I feel worried to do oral presentations in those subjects.
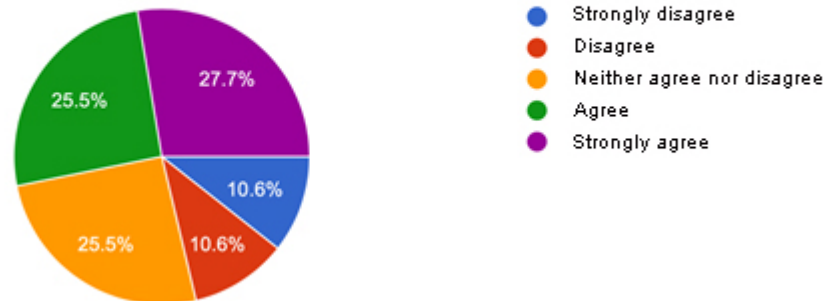

For these three questionnaire items, most of the students express their fear in speaking in other subjects but as stated earlier, the wording of the items "other/different subjects" may be misconstrued, and it perhaps confused the students with subjects such as modern languages. Nonetheless, based on the comparison between these three questionnaire items and the similar items 15, 3 and 22 respectively which lay focus on English instead, the results are similar except for a larger majority of students who state that even when well prepared, they feel anxious about oral presentations in other subjects than in English (Appendix B). However, in the same comparison, an even larger majority marked that they are afraid to do oral presentations in English than in any of the other subjects in school. This would infer that those students feel very anxious about well-prepared oral presentations in English, yet they feel more comfortable in English in comparison to oral presentations in other subjects, although unfortunately which subjects are not specified. This is similar to the issue and response to questionnaire item 39 regarding feeling nervous about speaking in English class in comparison to speaking in other subject classes. In summary, it is evident that students experience S/FLSA but in comparison to other subjects, it is not possible to verify whether more or less than English with complete certainty according to this data. Furthermore, out of all the items in the questionnaire, item 27 in division three about not going to English class because of the need to speak English there scored the lowest level of S/FLSA of 95 points (Table 1).

For questionnaire items 7, 25 and 40 an approximately balanced percentage of students agree and disagree to the statement about taking extra English classes, speaking English to native speakers, and being overwhelmed by English language rules respectively (Table 1). The insecurity students have of their skills and the fear of being judged by a person spoken to contributes to the

students' S/FLSA. Piechurska-Kuciel (2012, p. 229) notes that individuals who experience uncertainty in regard to appropriate communication behavior may tend to experience anxiety, but insufficient skills are not enough to trigger anxiety, as it is actually when individuals have low self- perceptions of their communicative skills, even though their skills may be objectively adequate. Concerns of the wording of questionnaire item 7 is included in the chapter about limitations. As for questionnaire item 40, remembering and learning of rules in any subject, irrespective of whether language or for example, mathematics comes with its own set of challenges and anxieties for any learner. On the other hand, a majority of students answer in agreement with the positive aspects of attending English classes for the remaining questionnaire items in division three, which demonstrates that in general, the students do not have a negative attitude towards English nor English classes (Table 1). Although there is a balanced percentage of students who agree and disagree in the different items regarding the various English-speaking situations in division three, this data shows that some students do struggle with S/FLSA and if not tended to this can create "serious debilitating effects on communication and induce an array of negative consequences that can be identified in almost every aspect of one's social and personal life" (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2012, p. 229).

During questions one to four from the interviews, teachers mention their experiences with students who struggle with English and their attitudes towards English that affects their S/FLSA. T1 states knowledge of foreign language anxiety and that students' insecurity with pronunciation and lack of vocabulary contribute greatly to their S/FLSA. In addition, T1 notes how the students in the present upper secondary school are more open to presentations than another upper secondary school T1 worked previously at. However, T1 stresses how students are overly concerned in embarrassing themselves in front of their classmates as "speaking sometimes means it is something they do not have control over" and mentions that Eng 5 students are far more anxious than the Eng 6 or Eng 7 students. Research explains that similar to increased proficiency, increased experiences in speaking could be an influential factor resulting in decreased S/FLSA (Aida,1994, pp. 163-164). Hence, with more experience and exposure to English, a student's anxiety can be reduced.

T2 states awareness of foreign language anxiety to a certain degree and is not certain about all the causes and effects but makes the educated guess that it is anxiety of speaking in another language in comparison to general anxiety. Furthermore, T2 comments that S/FLSA is more evident with the English classes in upper secondary schools in comparison to the English classes

in adult education. Similar to T1, T2 mentions that situations of high levels of anxiety have occurred when dealing with grammar rules, vocabulary, pronunciation and when students need to speak in front of others. According to He's (2013, p. 347) study, lack of vocabulary is a main reason for language anxiety from the students' perspectives, whereas the teachers place much less importance on it. Hence, it is recommended that language teachers be more aware of students' concerns and be more supportive regarding vocabulary building (He, 2013, p. 347). Furthermore, T2 shares examples of upper secondary school students attempting to avoid speaking, as the students stress about their insufficient skills in English and are in the habit of getting their own way, rather than carrying out the set assignment. According to T2, the same students are more secure when presenting and discussing in their Swedish classes.

T3 explains foreign language anxiety through examples of upper secondary school students from various schools who are scared to speak in class or need to present privately when using a foreign language like English. T3 also mentions a similar predicament to T2's with students who are too scared to speak in front of the class that they rather skip class than present or outright refuse to reply in English during discussions and often revert to Swedish. All three teachers share their experiences with students' tendencies of avoidance based on various insecurities in speaking and clear examples of their S/FLSA. According to Piechurska-Kuciel (2012, p. 230), the anxiety stems from others judging them, but also from the students judging themselves as poor on account of their tendencies of avoidance. The students' greater self-focus leads to a missing of external cues and opportunities to audience reactions and this causes more negative thinking dealing with class performances and other self-related issues (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2012, p. 230). Research shows that students have anxiety over fear of negative evaluation, the main source being their classmates' interpretations of their language speaking skills, the errors committed and jeopardizing their self-image in the process (Talib Ali & Fook Fei, 2016, p. 308). The students' lack of knowledge in understanding and accepting that error-making and risk-taking is the natural process of language learning hinders the students' progress in second or foreign language learning but also in increasing their self-esteem. Similarly, the findings of Aida's (1994, p. 164) research emphasizes the importance of reducing classroom tension and establishing supportive environments to reduce students' fear of making errors and embarrassing themselves in front of their peers.

4.4 Speech Anxiety Induced by Teachers and Tests

Questionnaire items from divisions three and four overlap one another, as the items are interconnected to the students' attitudes towards English and English class influenced by one of the main aspects of division four, which are the teachers. Furthermore, data collected on questionnaire items on test-taking and how it induces anxiety and not so much of S/FLSA will be explained in this chapter.

As mentioned earlier, the focus on tests is omitted mostly, as F/SLSA research has shown that anxiety based on test-taking does not highlight the fear of speaking the language as much as it focuses on the fear of test-taking itself (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, p.268; Aida, 1994, p. 268). However, test-taking related items 9 and 33 from the questionnaire are included as to demonstrate the level of fear of test-taking in comparison to the fear of language preparation for the test (Table 1). The data from these two questionnaire items show how a large percentage of students are more confident before the oral English test in comparison to the number of students who are uncomfortable during an oral test in English class. Test anxiety is a situation specific form of anxiety, connected to the emotional reactions to when the students are measured and assessed for their skills during a test (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2012, p. 232). Piechurska-Kuciel states that students do not regard tests as a process for communication but rather react to them with test anxiety. Hence test taking anxiety could run parallel to the anxiety experienced from the data collected of division one which is speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation from peers and the effects it has from being evaluated.

The fear of being evaluated by peers is at a much higher level of F/SLSA than the level of fear in the data collected from the remaining questionnaire items in division four regarding evaluation by teachers and tests (Table 1). The data from division four shows that the majority of students answering the questionnaire disagree about being stressed when not understanding their teacher and do not become upset with their teacher for pointing out their errors or when corrections are made. This data shows how perceived teacher support is closely linked to students who experience S/FLSA and that it is possible to reduce anxiety by providing students support and interest (Palacios,1998 cited in Horwitz, 2001, p. 119; Tran et al., 2013, p. 229). Furthermore, Young (1990, p. 550) explains that irrespective of the situation or the anxiety caused, students believe that their mistakes need correcting, and that

the component of social anxiety can affect students' reactions regarding error correction and this can create language anxiety. The social context plays an important role in the negative evaluation from teachers in the language classroom. Hence, the focus should be placed on how, how often and when a teacher gives students evaluations (Young, 1990, p. 550). Students may be unwilling to share their anxieties with their teachers. Consequently, teachers need to adopt a non-harsh attitude toward error correction and encourage a healthy self-talk for students to cope with their anxiety (Young, 1990, p. 551), while "establishing a balance between accuracy and fluency is a delicate part of a teacher's repertoire of strategies" (Mak, 2011, p. 212).

In response to interview questions seven and eight regarding changes in oral presentations in the classroom (Appendix D), T1 states that over time, upper secondary school students' F/SLSA gradually decreases and usually by the final year, students are no longer stressed about speaking nor about being evaluated as they reduce pressure on themselves and focus on doing what they are capable of, rather than setting difficult targets to meet in the English class. T2 shares examples of how recent adaptations to speaking presentations in upper secondary schools are "reaching absurd heights" where some teachers feel forced to allow written assignments to compensate for speaking assignments and where students will only agree to presenting only to the teacher or sending in a recording instead. T2 responds similarly to T1, citing examples of how final year students of English in upper secondary school and adult education tend to be more confident and more open to participating in in-class oral presentations. T2 mentions further that students in adult education tend to improve their grammar but their communications skills, such as summarizing a short story, are low. T3 explains that students need to refocus on conquering fear with tips like looking over the heads of their peers while presenting, as students were used to sending video recordings during the pandemic where they cheated most of the time and read straight from their script, highlighting their reading skills rather than their speaking and presenting skills.

The seven students which are in the category of high levels of S/FLSA, based on the manually calculated point system from the questionnaire, come from the Eng 5 class. In summary, experience of and exposure to speaking can produce less anxiety and improved confidence with second or foreign language speaking. The lack of experience and exposure to English speaking during the intermediary school years, as noted by T1, has also been

observed as an issue and that speaking must be included and made active at a young age is stated in various research (Mak, 2011, p. 212; Piechurska-Kuciel, 2012, p. 229). It is interesting and vital to note how the different teachers and the respective schools tackle students with S/FLSA and whether the countermeasures used promote or discourage S/FLSA.

4.5 Gender

In this chapter, the results found for the research question on gender and S/FLSA will be shared accompanied by research on this topic. There are varied answers from different studies regarding whether gender plays a role in S/FLSA or not and which factors influence the different genders regarding S/FLSA. This study focuses on whether gender plays a role in the Swedish upper secondary school and as the results show that the students with the highest levels of S/FLSA are females and males, the reference research for this study has accordingly been limited to these two genders.

Students respond to questionnaire item 20 regarding being nervous speaking to a peer of the opposite sex with a large majority disagreeing to the statement (Table 1). All three teachers state that their students' S/FLSA are greatly affected by negative evaluation by their peers, but none have highlighted whether it was dependent on the gender of the student evaluating or not, nor was the question raised during the interviews. Of the seven students who have the highest levels of S/FLSA, five of the students are female, and the remaining two are male students. However, as mentioned earlier the unequal number of students gender-wise may create a gender-biased result. The results from interview question ten show that the teachers answered unanimously that the students who tend to avoid oral presentations the most are females which may create a more balanced support of the results found through the questionnaire. The results provided by the teachers on the interview question of S/FLSA and gender provide perspective based on the teachers' varied class experiences over their vast teaching careers and the data collected from them indicates that speaking anxiety in English may be prevalent among female students. However, without a larger sample of equal number of students gender-wise, it is not possible to confirm.

There is research regarding S/FLSA and its significance for gender results with many and different outcomes, where the results lean either towards higher male anxiety or female anxiety or even where gender is irrelevant and both genders are equally anxious. Aida's

(1994, p. 162) research highlights a significant effect of anxiety on genders, where S/FLSA scores demonstrate that anxiety levels were higher with female students than male students at university level. However, their final course grades reflected that those anxious and highly anxious students in both female and male groups, were more likely to receive lower grades than students with a low level of anxiety (Aida, 1994, p. 162). Grieve et al. (2021, p. 1290) state that although there is a disproportionately higher number of female students participating in the qualitative research, there is evidence in earlier research which shows that in comparison, females tend to fear public speaking more than the males.

Previous and varied research shows female students exhibiting higher levels of anxiety than their male counterparts and there are even research results which demonstrate the opposite or other results. Research into gender and S/FLSA based on earlier research has results varying between female students having higher anxiety than males in Malaysia (Siew, 2017 cited in Nordin et al., 2021, p.2), female students in Iran have higher anxiety than their male peers (Norizan, 2016 cited in Nordin et al., 2021, p.2), both female and male students having similar levels of anxiety in China (Song, 2016 cited in Nordin et al., 2021, p.2) and finally, research that shows that there is no significant relation between the participants' gender and speaking anxiety in Yemen (Dellah et al., 2019 cited in Nordin et al., 2021, p.3). Nordin et al.'s (2021, p.1) research shows that male students have a slightly higher S/FLSA compared to female students at university level (Nordin et al., 2021, p.1). The students' anxiety stems from triggers such as low proficiency in English and fear of negative evaluation and those who demonstrate high level anxiety refuse to participate in class where they must use English and consequently perform poorly when it comes to language acquisition (Nordin et al., 2021, p.4). Hence, due to the insignificant difference between the anxiety levels of both the genders, it was established that gender did not play a vital role (Nordin et al., 2021, p.5).

Piechurska-Kuciel's (2012, pp. 231 & 234) study is based on a hypothesis focused on earlier research which suggests that females are generally more anxious than males. The reasons are attributed to females' greater sensitivity to anxiety (Simon & Nath, 2004 cited in Piechurska-Kuciel, 2012, p. 234) and higher levels of school stress (Byrne, 2000; Ginsburg &Silverman, 2000 cited in Piechurska-Kuciel, 2012, p. 234). Apart from females experiencing language acquisition as stressful and reacting with higher levels of S/FLSA, another reason is based on the differences of "social behavior, cognitive activity, general

verbal ability and the differences in the learning abilities between the sexes" (Bacon & Finnemann, 1992; Halpern, 2000 cited in Piechurska-Kuciel, 2012, p. 234). Piechurska-Kuciel's (2012, p.239) standpoint that a female's fluctuating hormones could be the cause of their anxiety sensitivity is debatable, considering that males have to deal with fluctuating hormones too. Another argument is that although male students are not as psychologically mature as female students, they do not perceive the perils of second language acquisition as much as a threat as female students due to their "male ability" to cope with stress and hence have lower levels of language anxiety than their female peers (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2012, pp. 239-240). Nevertheless, Piechurska-Kuciel's (2012, p. 238) results demonstrate that the hypothesis is incorrect, as both male and female upper secondary school students display similar levels of language anxiety.

However, other research demonstrates that female students have higher S/FLSA due to the several causes, such as developmental patterns, gender socialization processes, classroom practices and the specificity of the foreign language learning process (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2012, p. 238). In regard to gender socialization processes and classroom practices, it is argued that male students are treated differently and take up more space and receive more attention from the teacher in the language classroom (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2012, p.239). Due to female students being more self-sufficient and careful with their studying, teachers place greater expectations on them while on the other hand, teachers interact with male students more as they require more attention and support in challenging situations or they interact with them just in order to keep them interested and motivated in the lesson to avoid disruptions (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2012, p.239). Consequently, female students are neglected socially and are not academically rewarded in the classroom in the same way as their male counterparts which increases negative experiences and leaves an unfavorable impact on the female students' self-esteem and induces foreign language anxiety.

In addition, it is proposed that any conflicting research could be attributed to the diverse age levels of the respondents and the cultural differences (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2012, p. 234). To a certain degree, that argument could be accepted as it is indicated that higher proficiency and reduced anxiety develops over time and with experience in the foreign language. The factors and limitations that affect the study are that the Polish educational context and the students' individual communication which are deeply entrenched in a particular culture could impact the amount of talking a person is engaged in (Barraclough et

al., 1988, p. 187 cited in Piechurska-Kuciel, 2012, p. 242). Meaning that a student's behavior is influenced by the culture that student is raised or/and rooted in (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2012, p. 242).

Similarly, the results from my study may also differ from another study in another country and perhaps even in another school in Sweden depending on the cultural differences, educational level of the school and the background of its population sample. Both female and male students should be encouraged and rewarded for voicing their opinions while also being supervised and motivated (Piechurska-Kuciel, 2012, p. 242). In conclusion, focus needs to be placed on the specific aspects of gender socialization processes, classroom practices and the specificity of the foreign language learning process where students irrespective of gender are given space and attention to take risks in language learning without the fear of it being detrimental to their well-being.

There are studies which focus on other factors that impact the results of females who experience more anxiety than the male students due to the influence of various cultural factors and settings. For example, certain studies have shown that females may seem to experience more anxiety than their male counterparts as the males are more reluctant to report their anxieties in comparison to the female students (Abu-Rabia, 2004; MacIntyre, 2005; Williams and Andrade, 2008 cited in Talib Ali & Fook Fei, 2016, p. 308). In addition, other studies which result in females having high anxiety, being raised to avoid social interactions with their male counterparts are based on cultures in a male dominant society, such as South Korea where female students are reluctant to speak or interact with their male peers (Park et al., 2013 cited in Talib Ali & Fook Fei, 2016, pp. 307-308). Research highlights how Iraqi students in Malaysia find speaking in the classroom the biggest challenge, in fear of error-making, failing the course where the females struggle or stress about creating misunderstanding due to fear of mispronunciations, different accents, and low proficiency displaying higher levels of S/FLSA compared to the males (Talib Ali & Fook Fei, 2016, p. 308). In general, Sweden is not considered a male dominant society in comparison to other countries in the world, however, specific aspects of gender and classroom practices where perhaps males are more visible, and their voices are more heard compared to their female peers may be an aspect that requires further investigation.

As mentioned earlier, due to the absence of the examination between the correlation connecting the FLCAS results to the students' final grades with the aid of Cronbach's alpha coefficient which most of the previous FLCAS research follows, it is not possible to prove that the data obtained from the questionnaire corresponds with the students' final grades. Hence, to further support the data, a comparison of the final grades to the students or/and that the genders with high levels of S/FLSA could be useful in confirming the results. Nevertheless, the emphasis from previous research is that speaking is the most important source of language anxiety (MacIntyre, 1999, p. 33 cited in Piechurska-Kuciel, 2012, p. 234) and that S/FLSA exists due to different factors which vary between fear of in-class speaking and its influences on small group speaking, social anxiety, communication apprehension and low self-esteem induced by fears of error-making and of being evaluated negatively by others in the classroom.

The results from the questionnaires and the interviews highlight that S/FLSA is evident in Swedish upper secondary schools and that fear of in-class speaking and negative evaluation by peers play significant roles in the English classroom, increasing the students' S/FLSA. Furthermore, this study shows how S/FLSA affects the various components, communication apprehension, social anxiety, low self-esteem and even to a certain extent test anxiety and how without adequate support from teachers, S/FLSA can hinder students during their language learning process.

5. Conclusion

This study used a questionnaire to measure and compare the levels of S/FLSA of 47 students in English 5 and English 6 in Swedish upper secondary school. The study also used the results of interviews with three teachers and the data obtained from the questionnaires, to answer the following research questions:

1. Do students in Swedish upper secondary school experience S/FLSA when speaking English during English lessons?

2. If so, what causes students to experience S/FLSA when speaking English in general during lessons?

3. Do Swedish upper secondary school students have a fear of speaking in public with special focus on in-class speaking versus small group speaking?

4. Does S/FLSA occur more in one gender than the others?

The results from the questionnaires conducted with students and the interviews conducted with teachers showed many similarities. Hence, the data collected through both the quantitative and qualitative research tools in how students were experiencing S/FLSA and what teachers observed about students experiencing S/FLSA were quite similar.

In response to the first question, results from the study show that students do experience S/FLSA when speaking English during English lessons. However, the results indicate that the majority of Swedish upper secondary students are not at precarious levels of S/FLSA. Out of 47 students, only seven students exhibited high levels of anxiety. Results revealed that Eng 5 students tend to feel more anxiety than the Eng 6 students.

The second research question explores the cause behind the students experiencing S/FLSA when speaking English. The results show that speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation from peers and small group speaking versus in-class speaking, are the main causes of S/FLSA. S/FLSA has an impact on the various components of communication apprehension, low self-esteem, social anxiety and, to a certain degree, even test anxiety. The fear of being unable to communicate and be misunderstood while communicating tend to raise the levels of language anxiety amongst the students. In regard to speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation from peers, the questionnaire results reveal that a high percentage of students are afraid of doing oral presentations in English, and that students feel self-conscious about speaking English in front of their peers. The results from the questionnaires show that there are students who acknowledge that they tremble when they know that they are going to be called on to speak and fear that peers will judge them when they speak English. Similarly, the interviews of the teachers' reveal that students in upper secondary school are fearful of peer pressure, and will refuse to speak in public, out of fear of making mistakes in front of others, not realizing that error making and correcting are natural steps of learning a new language. Peer evaluation has an impact on students' S/FLSA which consequently affects the students' abilities and can create communication apprehension, low self-esteem, and social anxiety when learning to speak English in the classroom.

The findings from the interviews and the questionnaires were generally consistent with one another regarding small group speaking versus in-class speaking and the challenge of speaking a second language creating anxiety for students who generally prefer speaking in small groups rather than in front of the whole class. In this study, the levels of S/FLSA rose excessively in relation to in-class speaking versus small group speaking during situations where students' low self-esteem or self-assessment of their own proficiency hindered participating in oral activities to avoid error-making and being judged by their peers. In the survey, the students unanimously expressed their preference of small group speaking instead of in-class speaking. Simultaneously, teachers considered small group speaking to be helpful in encouraging students to speak English and that in-class speaking was the end goal for the students' oral skills. The teachers stated that supportive small group speaking would lead to students improving their confidence and proficiency for in-class speaking in English. Additionally, the teachers explained that small group speaking added to their workload with more responsibilities in planning and preparing, and that they had to take time away from their regular class, to attend to issues that arose with small group speaking presentations.

The findings related to the third question of this study, about whether Swedish upper secondary school students have a fear of speaking in public with special focus on in-class speaking versus small group speaking, can be answered in the affirmative. Students do not want to be singled out to speak in front of a large group of their peers, due to the fear of being judged, ridiculed, or misunderstood. To support students towards in-class speaking, teachers encourage better self-esteem and confidence by using small group speaking which helps reinforce and motivate more awareness and understanding about in-class speaking anxiety and S/FLSA. Based on the results of this study, S/FLSA exists because of fear of in-class speaking and although, small group speaking may help students with speaking English, teachers have stated that it perhaps creates dependency on small group speaking and that the end goal for their students is in-class speaking. S/FLSA and fear of in-class speaking affects the components, social anxiety, communication apprehension and low self-esteem which are induced by fears of error-making and of being evaluated negatively by others in the classroom.

When it comes to the fourth research question about gender difference, due to the disproportionate number of genders in the survey it is difficult to draw any general conclusions. Although, the data from the interviews show that all three teachers stated that female students are

the students who tend to mostly avoid oral presentations, the sample is much too small to confirm this issue.

In regard to further research, as stated earlier, previous research highlights how the influence of gender on S/FLSA is a controversial factor due to the varied results worldwide and requires further investigation. Perhaps detailed and extensive investigations can demonstrate how culture and classroom practice have an effect on S/FLSA and could solve this aspect of gender, once and for all. Additionally, it may be interesting to investigate the next stage of FLCAS as future research, to address whether there is a correlation between the final grades of the students and the students' S/FLSA, to understand how S/FLSA affects Swedish students' language learning process. Finally, it would also be relevant to investigate how teachers can better support Swedish upper secondary students affected by S/FLSA.

From this study, the data revealed that teachers are aware of S/FLSA. However, knowledge of what it entails, and how to tackle student anxiety while boosting student confidence, is relatively unknown. The results show that students need to learn about why it is necessary to take part in oral activities, be it in small groups or in-class situations, as this is highly beneficial for them outside of the language classroom. Rather than condemning language anxiety as a symptom that forces students and teachers to avoid oral presentations it is useful to consider it as a sign that students require more support with language anxiety and that a closer look is required into upper secondary students and their relationship to S/FLSA. S/FLSA exists in the English classrooms of Swedish upper secondary schools. This means that S/FLSA and factors contributing to in-class speaking anxiety of Swedish students studying English should be explored further so that solutions are found to reduce anxiety while improving students' oral proficiency and teachers' understanding of S/FLSA.

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7. Appendices

Appendix A - Instructions to Participating in Questionnaire in Swedish

Hej! Jag heter Miranda Abraham och den här enkäten är en del av mitt examensarbete för att undersöka elevers syn på engelska i skolan.

Deltagande i denna studie är frivilligt och kan avbrytas närhelst du önskar. Detta innebär att du har rätt att själv bestämma om och hur länge du önskar medverka. Du kommer att säkras högsta möjliga konfidentialitet. Det kommer inte att finnas några möjligheter till personlig identifikation av dig som deltar i studien. Ditt deltagande kommer således vara fullkomligt anonymt. De uppgifter som insamlas kommer ej användas för annat syfte än forskning.

Det finns inga rätt eller fel svar och du kommer inte bli bedömd på något sätt, så svara helt enkelt efter hur du känner inför varje fråga. Dina svar är viktiga för min undersökning och det är avgörande för resultaten att du svarar ärligt. Tack så mycket för ditt deltagande!

Om du har några frågor eller funderingar, så nås jag lättast via email: abramira@gmail.com
Med vänliga hälsningar
Miranda Abraham
2022-11-03

Appendix B - Questionnaire in English

Below, please tick the box that best matches how you think or feel about each statement.

-Strongly disagree. -Disagree. -Neither agree nor disagree. -Agree. -Strongly agree.

1. Which class year are you in?

2. Gender: How do you identify yourself?

3. I feel sure of myself when I am speaking English in my English class.

4. I worry about making mistakes in English class.

5. I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on to speak in English class.

6. I become stressed when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in English.

7. It would not bother me at all to take more English classes.

8. I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.

9. I am usually at ease during my oral tests in English class.

10. I start to panic when I must speak without preparation in English class.

11. I do not find it difficult to speak English during English classes.

12. My teacher has allowed students to completely avoid doing oral presentations in English.

13. My teacher has allowed students to do oral presentations in English in small groups rather than in front of the whole class.

14. I am scared to do oral presentations in all school subjects, in general.

15. I am afraid of doing oral presentations in English.

16. I would prefer to do my oral presentations in front of a small random group of my classmates rather than the whole class.

17. I would prefer to do my oral presentations in front of a small group of my friends from my class rather than the whole class.

18. I would prefer to do my oral presentations in front of only my teacher instead of the whole class.

19. I am not afraid to give oral presentations in English in front of my whole class.

20. I get nervous when I must speak English with someone of the opposite sex in my class.

21. It does not embarrass me to volunteer answers in English in my English class.

22. Even if I am well prepared for my English class, I feel anxious about speaking English during the lesson.

23. In English class, I can get so nervous when I am speaking that I forget things I know.

24. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in English in my English class.

25. I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers.

26. I get upset when I do not understand what the teacher is correcting when I speak.

27. I often feel like not going to my English class because I need to speak English there.

28. I feel sure of myself when I do oral presentation in my other school subjects.

29. Even if I am well prepared for my other school subjects, I feel worried to do oral presentations in those subjects.

30. I am afraid that my English teacher will point out my errors when I speak.

31. I think it is embarrassing to answer questions during English lessons.

32. I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in English class.

33. The more I study for an oral English test, the more confused I get.

34. I do not feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.

35. If I am well prepared, it does not feel difficult to speak English in the lessons.

36. It is not stressful when my teacher points out my errors when I speak English.

37. English class moves so quickly that I worry about getting left behind.

38. I am afraid the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.

39. I feel more tense and nervous in my English class about speaking than in my other classes.

40. I feel overwhelmed by all the rules I must learn about the English language to speak English well.

41. I get nervous and confused when I speak English in English lessons.

42. I get nervous when I do not understand every word the language teacher says because then I cannot answer correctly.

Appendix C - Questionnaire in Swedish

Nedan ska du kryssa i den ruta som stämmer bäst överens med hur du tycker eller känner om varje påstående.

-Stämmer inte alls. -Stämmer inte helt och hållet. -Varken stämmer eller inte stämmer. -Stämmer lite grand. -Stämmer helt och hållet.

1. Vilken årskurs?

2. Kön: Hur identifierar du dig själv?

3. Jag känner mig säker på mig själv när jag pratar engelska på engelsklektionen.

4. Jag oroar mig över att göra misstag på engelskalektionen.

5. Jag blir skakig när jag vet att det är min tur att prata på engelskalektionen.

6. Jag blir orolig när jag inte förstår vad läraren säger på engelska.

7. Jag skulle inte ha något emot fler engelsklektioner.

8. Det känns alltid som att andra elever är bättre på engelska än jag.

9. Jag känner mig aldrig orolig inför mina muntliga engelskprov.

10. Jag blir panikslagen när jag måste prata engelska utan att ha förberett mig.

11. Jag tycker inte att det är jobbigt att prata engelska på lektionerna.

12. Min lärare har låtit elever att helt undvika att göra muntliga presentationer på engelska.

13. Min lärare har låtit elever göra muntliga presentationer på engelska i små grupper snarare än framför hela klassen.

14. Jag är rädd för att göra muntliga presentationer i allmänhet i alla skolämnen.

15. Jag är rädd för att hålla muntliga presentationer på engelska.

16. Jag skulle föredra att göra mina muntliga presentationer inför en liten slumpmässig utvald grupp av mina klasskamrater i stället för hela klassen.

17. Jag skulle föredra att göra mina muntliga presentationer inför en liten grupp av mina vänner från min klass i stället för hela klassen.

18. Jag skulle föredra att göra mina muntliga presentationer inför bara min lärare i stället för hela klassen.

19. Jag är inte rädd för att hålla muntliga presentationer på engelska inför min hela klass.

20. Jag blir nervös när jag ska prata engelska med någon av det motsatta könet i min klass.

21. Jag blir inte generad av att frivilligt ge svar på engelska på min engelskalektion.

22. Även när jag är väl förberedd inför min engelskklass känner jag mig orolig för att prata engelska under lektionen.

23. På engelsklektionerna kan jag bli så nervös när jag pratar att jag glömmer bort saker som jag egentligen kan.

24. Det blir generad av att frivilligt ge svar på engelska på min engelsklektion.

25. Jag skulle inte vara nervös ifall jag pratade engelska med någon som har det som modersmål.

26. Jag blir upprörd när jag inte förstår vad min engelsklärare menar när hen rättar något jag sagt.

27. Jag känner mig stressad och orolig när jag är på väg till min engelsklektion på grund av att jag måste prata engelska.

28. Jag känner mig säker på mig själv när jag göra muntliga presentationer i mina andra skolämnen.

29. Även om jag är väl förberedd för mina andra skolämnen känner jag mig orolig för att göra muntliga presentationer i de ämnena.

30. Jag är rädd att min engelsklärare ska påpeka de fel som jag säger.

31. Jag tycker att det är pinsamt att svara på frågor på engelsklektionen.

32. Jag kan känna hur hjärtat bankar när engelskläraren ställer frågor till mig utan att jag räckt upp handen.

33. Ju mer jag pluggar inför ett muntligt engelskprov, desto mer förvirrad blir jag.

34. Jag känner mig aldrig speciellt nervös när jag ska prata engelska inför andra elever.

35. Om jag är väl förberedd känns det inte svårt att prata engelska på lektionerna.

36. Det känns inte alls jobbigt när läraren påpekar de fel som jag säger när jag pratar engelska.

37. Det går så fort på engelskalektionerna att jag är rädd för att hamna efter.

38. Jag är rädd att de andra eleverna ska skratta åt mig när jag pratar engelska.

39. Jag känner mig mer spänd och nervös inför engelsklektionerna för att prata än inför mina andra lektioner.

40. Jag känner mig överväldigad av alla regler jag måste lära om det engelska språket för att prata engelska bra.

41. Jag blir nervös och förvirrad när jag pratar engelska på engelskalektionerna.

42. Jag blir nervös när jag inte förstår varje ord engelskläraren säger för då kan jag inte svara rätt.

Appendix D - Interview Questions in English

1. How long have you been working as a teacher for, and which school/s have you taught at?

2. What kind of school/s do you teach at, and which levels do you teach at?

3. Are you aware of foreign language anxiety? Do you know the difference between general anxiety and foreign language anxiety (Any examples)?

4. Are you aware of your students' English-speaking anxiety and how?

5. Based on your experience, what do you think are the main causes of second language anxiety with focus on speaking in your class or in general?

6. How do your students with foreign language anxiety react to spontaneous questions or discussions (Any examples)?

7. Do you feel there is any change or trend in the number of students who do not want to do oral presentations in front of the whole class over the years (Any examples)?

8. Are there any other changes with students during oral presentations?

9. Have your students attempted to avoid oral presentations or requested for a smaller group for presentations (Any examples)?

10. Between your female, male and other gender students, who tends to avoid oral presentations mostly? Or is it pretty balanced among the genders?

11. What is your opinion regarding small groups versus whole in-class speaking for your students' oral presentations?

12. What are the advantages and disadvantages?

13. Do you think small group speaking hinders students from in-class presentation and future public speaking situations?

14. Over the number of years that you have taught, do you feel that the number of students who speak spontaneously or who make in-class presentations with ease are increasing, decreasing or the same? And if so, why do you think it is that way?