



Article



## The Oral Communication Apprehension in English Among First-Year Information Technology Students

**Reniel G. De Chavez**

Far Eastern University-Manila

### Abstract

This descriptive phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of three first-year Information Technology students with oral communication apprehension (OCA) in English. Using written Q&A, semi-structured interviews, and reflections, the study identified four key themes: classroom experiences, physical and emotional responses to OCA, learning experiences, and techniques for managing OCA. Findings revealed that OCA often stems from early educational experiences and speaking activities, with physical symptoms like shaking and sweating, and emotional responses such as nervousness and fear of negative evaluation. Despite these challenges, students maintained a positive outlook toward communication classes and employed various coping strategies, including practice, scripting, gestures, breathing exercises, and code-switching. The study highlights the importance of supportive, non-intimidating learning environments and communicative approaches in English instruction.

### Keywords

Communication apprehension, anxiety, oral communication

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**Corresponding Author:** Reniel G. De Chavez, Far Eastern University Manila

**Emai:** "Reniel De Chavez" [rdechavez@feu.edu.ph](mailto:rdechavez@feu.edu.ph)

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## **Introduction**

It is without doubt that effective communication is a pre-requisite skill needed as one enters the workplace. Specifically, it is a lifeline not only needed to increase knowledge in terms of implementing job duties, but also leads to success in workplace (Kapur, 2020). In fact, Siegel and Sorensen (1999) in their survey revealed the important knowledge, skills and abilities pertinent to success, and one of those is communication, both in oral and presentation. An emphasis is also stipulated carried out through the study of Albrecht and Sack (2000, 56) stated the agreement in between educators and practitioners of which skill is more important. Three skills were put into highlight: critical and analytical skills, written communication, and oral communication.

To have a deeper understanding of this phenomenon, the researcher conducted this descriptive phenomenological study investigating the oral communication apprehension among first-year Information Technology. This study particularly examined the classroom experiences of first-year students with oral communication apprehension, describing their physical and emotional responses to OCA in English, their learning experiences having OCA in English, and finally how they manage their OCA in English.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

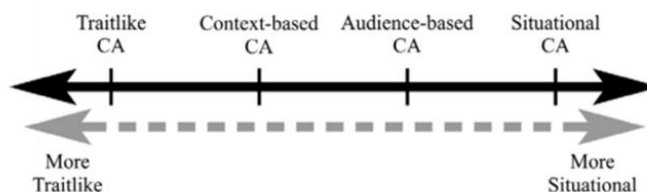
This study specifically answered the following sets of questions:

1. How do first-year Information Technology students experience OCA in English?
2. How do they describe their physical and emotional responses to these experiences?
3. How do first-year Information Technology students with OCA in English describe their learning experience?
4. How do first-year Information Technology students manage their OCA in English?

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Communication apprehension was first coined by James McCroskey (1970), “an individual’s fear of anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons”. Despite differences and variety of social setting, CA might be experienced by everyone. Communication Apprehension must be separated from the idea of communication ability, as this means people with high communication apprehension can still be good in communication but have experiences of being anxious using a particular language. People with communication apprehension may experience anxiety faced in a communicative situation, as this is not limited to formal communication scenarios as stipulated by Bodie (2010). Communication apprehension is not limited to real-world exchanges (Choi et al., 2015) as the anxiety with the use of language in social interaction can be as hindering as the anticipation towards social encounters, hence limiting oneself to these scenarios can interfere with functions of everyday life.

This study is anchored on the Communication Apprehension (CA) theory of James McCroskey (1970). This study examined both the physical and emotional responses of first-year Information Technology students with oral communication apprehension. (Horwitz, 1986; Al-Saraj, 2014; Byrne et al., 2012; McCroskey, 2009).



**Figure 1: CA Types Continuum**

As shown above, this theory is divided into four categories, visualized in a continuum above. (Richmond, Wrench and McCroskey, 2013). Trait-like CA constitutes to the personality of oneself, rooted in shyness or general quietness, hence, people with this type of CA will feel uncomfortable in initiating and engaging in communication. Context-based CA is reflected every time a person is situated in a specific context, like meetings, small-group discussion, one-to-one talks, or in the classroom. Audience-based CA happens when one feels fear and nervousness in communicating with a person or a group. Finally, a Situational CA is manifested when one finds himself or herself in a very unfamiliar setting. (Byrne, 1997; McCroskey, 1970).

## METHODOLOGY

### *Research Design*

This study follows descriptive (transcendental) phenomenology as this provides detailed description of the OCA in English among first-year Information Technology students. (Eddles-Hirsch, 2015). As illustrated by Moustakas (1994) this consists of identifying the phenomenon, bracketing one's experience, and data collection from people who experienced the phenomenon. Descriptive phenomenology is best for this study because the researcher intended to describe the essence of the phenomenon (i.e. OCA), consisting of "what" was experienced, and "how" they experienced it (Moustakas, 1994). It was then analyzed by reducing the information to statements that were significant. Textural description (what was experienced) and structural description (how was it experienced) and a combination of these descriptions were recorded with the research instruments utilized in this study.

### *Data Collection*

The data collection process comes in three phases. For Phase 1, an approval was submitted to conduct a study to a private higher education institution, followed by identifying the participants through purposeful sampling and dissemination of consent forms, which was explained carefully to the participants. After signing the consent, a written Q and A was given and explained to participants. The responses from the written Q and A provide the researcher the general ideas on the experiences of students with OCA in English

For Phase 2, the actual semi-structured interview was conducted, that took almost a week to complete all three. The researcher utilized Zoom for the virtual interview. Participants are encouraged to open their cameras but not obliged. The interview was recorded, and the recording will be stored in a Google Drive folder for one (1) year. Afterwards, the researcher then transcribed the data from the recorded files, highlighted the key segments of the text, then assigned labels or codes to categorize each segment identified.

For Phase 3, the participants were asked to write a reflection upon the interview questions and further insights. The reflection instructions were given to them. After all data were retrieved from the written Q and A, semi-structured interview, and reflection, the researcher triangulated the data to

identify the themes and sub-themes, checking its consistency of one to another

### *Participants*

Three (3) first-year students were chosen because this phenomenon is strongest during the first two years of college. A purposeful sampling was employed to gather three (3) students who were informed of the research problem and the phenomenon. (Creswell, 2013; Bragg, 2017). The researchers established the following criteria for the selection of the participants of the study:

1. Students must be first year enrolled in Bachelor of Science in Information Technology (BSIT)
2. Students must be taking up/had taken up Purposive Communication within the current academic year A.Y. 2023-2024.
3. The student must be willing to share personal experiences with OCA in English.

### *Data Analysis*

The Interactive Model (Miles and Huberman, 1994) will be utilized in this qualitative study. The researcher used this model, consisting of three (3) flows of activity: (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusions. Data collection was done through written q and a, semi-structured interview and reflections. For data condensation, the researcher manually coded the transcripts of semi-structured interviews by identifying the key segments/phrases leading to generate insights and codes. These codes were assigned to each key segment/phrase for each participant. At the same time, this study highlighted as well key segments/phrases from the written Q and A and reflection written by the participants. This will add support and clarify the initial codes generated from the semi-structured interview.

For data display, the researcher presented the four identified main themes with its themes and sub-themes through matrices, which include selected qualitative statements generated from the semi-structured interview for references. Also, the key segments/phrases from the written Q and A and reflection were also included in the discussion of each theme and sub-themes, supporting and clarifying the findings. As the matrices are identified, clarified and presented, preliminary conclusions were articulated, verifying them with the segments/phrases retrieved from the written Q and A and reflection and with the available literature and studies on communication apprehension-establishing relevance with the existing body of knowledge from these studies. Conclusion was then presented after the presentation and analysis of data with the inclusion of its implications and recommendations.

### *Ethical Considerations*

The researcher strictly observed the ethical guidelines which do not harm the participants, respect, telling of the truth, and asking for an informed consent (Sarantakos, 2005; Sieber & Tolich, 2013). permission was sought from the DEAN-OIC of College of Engineering and Information Technology Department of the chosen private higher education institution (HEI) where the study was conducted.

The study poses no serious risk to the health and wellness of the participants. All the information about the aims of study, instruments used, and the benefits it will generate were thoroughly explained to all participants. They were given certificate of consent to be signed if they agree to participate in the study. It was signed electronically and was assured of the confidentiality by covering their signatures and names. This informs him or her of the right to decline at any

point during the conduct of this study, should he or she feel discomfort doing the data generation procedures. In the conduct of the semi-structured interview, they were encouraged to open their cameras but not required. They were also asked to speak in the most comfortable language they want to use. The semi-structured interview via Zoom were recorded and the recordings were stored in a google drive to be deleted one (1) year after it was conducted. After the interview and transcription process, the researcher returned the transcripts to each participant for counter checking of their responses.

As with Husserl's concepts, epoch or bracketing was consciously observed in this study, setting aside the personal experiences anchored to the oral communication apprehension phenomenon. The researcher documented the assumptions that serve as a reference point that reminds the researcher of his pre-conceived ideas about the phenomenon. The researcher explicitly noted these assumptions: The root of OCA in English started during their childhood/elementary level. Physical manifestations of OCA in English are sweating, shaking, stuttering and use of gap-fillers. Emotional manifestations include fear of bad evaluation, and mental block. OCA in English negatively affects the learning experience and career choice of first-year Information Technology students. First-year Information Technology students use techniques in mitigating the effects of OCA in English, such as rehearsals.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed the impact of webinar-based training on educators' teaching practices and their professional growth, several key factors influencing their satisfaction and engagement with webinar-based training, and their perceptions of the effectiveness of these sessions compared to traditional in-person professional development. The discussion below elaborates on these findings about existing literature and highlights their implications for future practice.

The participants of this study were three (3) first-year information technology students from a private college institution. They were given pseudonyms as part of data privacy of these students. Each provided information about their personal experience regarding the phenomenon.

**Table 1:** Demographics Table

Participant	Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Year Level	Program
Participant 1	Harvii	18 years-old	Male	1st Year	BS-IT
Participant 2	Jazz	18 years-old	Female	1st Year	BS-IT
Participant 3	Ven	21 years-old	Male	1st Year	BS-IT

After the data collection was done through written q and a, semi-structured interview and reflections and has been coded, thematized and triangulated, it was then organized into four (4) main categories presented in matrices, filled with themes and sub-themes and corresponding qualitative statements from the semi-structured interview. The analysis and discussion part is further clarified by their responses from the written Q and A, clarifying the grasps of these responses (Janesick, 1998).

**Matrix 1:** The Classroom Experiences of First-Year Information Technology Students with OCA in English

Themes	Sub-Themes	Qualitative Statements
Theme 1: OCA in English Started During their Elementary	Called to recite in English	Harvii: That was in Grade 6. It was an English subject and there was a recitation. We should speak in English. There was a word where I mumble, all of them laughed at me.  Jazz: When I was in elementary, we had a teacher. He pronounces the words so well, and for me, it has cranky-like sound when he pronounces the words, and for me that is so cool. He has knowledge in when it comes to English, because he is our English teacher, but I was so intimidated, because there was a time that he is not in the mood.
Theme 2: OCA in English were experienced during Speaking Activities	Fear of Negative Evaluation  Unfamiliarity with the audience	Harvii: Our teacher gave us something to memorize. We were asked to prepare own explanation, and then there is one paragraph with wrong grammar. They laughed at me. I got lost on what I am about to say. I lose confidence.  Ven: Especially when speaking in English, mostly of my class used English and it is required to speak in English, and for reading comprehension (inaudible part), and the way we speak, our pronunciation, accents. The teachers look for that. That was a worst experience so far, because our teacher has a high standard and high education background.

*Theme 1: OCA in English Started During their Elementary*

All stated that their OCA in English started since elementary. This comes from different experiences, such as being called to recite in English in front, using the language with improper grammar, and pressure. OCA in English phenomenon is rooted from early childhood experiences (Phillips & Butt, 1966). As mentioned in the Written Q and A of Harvii and Jazz's reflection note, respectively:

*"I feel uncomfortable in speaking English when I was in Elementary and Highschool every time I recited and made an impromptu speech."*

*"...as I progressed through elementary to high school, feelings of frustration and disappointment began to overshadow my enthusiasm... lack of acknowledgement from my English teachers, leading to a gradual loss of interest in both the subject and them."*

It is a phenomenon, not transferred through heredity, but a phenomenon that is learned, and was conditioned by reinforcement of the communicative behavior of the child. In this case, if the behavior of being shy is learned, for example, and later reinforced, there is a high chance that the child will be quiet and avoid communicating. The three students experience the trait-like OCA in English, wherein they experienced the difficulty in speaking in English rooted

from childhood experiences, characterized by feeling of pressure, lack of confidence, anxiety, and fear of committing improper grammar as highlighted by Richmond, Wrench, and McCroskey (2013).

*Theme 2: OCA in English were experienced during Speaking Activities*

The three participants agree that the worst OCA in English experience was during a speaking activity, which includes fear of negative evaluation, unfamiliarity with the audience, consciousness with the audience, fear of committing grammar mistake, fear induced by the teacher, hesitation to speak, and shyness. The statements are related in the third and sixth component of FLCA (Young, 1991), where the instructor-learning interactions are crucial because these directly affect learning. Public speaking activities were also the reason for the presence of communication apprehension, that due to anxiety, students face difficulty in speaking and expressing themselves in large audiences (Dwyer & Davidson, 2021). The participants find it difficult to speak and perform in the given kind of set-up they are following. This is evident as well in Jazz’s and Harvii’s written:

*“During our conversation, I felt nervous, uncertain whether I would be required to speak English throughout it.”*

*“I feel uncomfortable in speaking English when I was in Elementary and Highschool every time i recited and made an impromptu speech...”*

In addition, the sixth component states that FLCA exists in public speaking activities. The more students are required to do activities like this, the more the OCA in English gets worst. Just like what Ven mentioned:

*“Especially when speaking in English, mostly of my class used English and it is required to speak in English, and for reading comprehension, and the way we speak, our pronunciation, accents. The teachers look for that.”*

**Matrix 2:** The Physical and Emotional Responses of First-Year Information Technology students with OCA in English

Themes	Sub-Themes	Qualitative Statements
Theme1: Physical Responses	Sweating/ Feeling Cold/Chills	Harvii: Physically, I sweat and I am feeling chills in my hands. I feel nervous, I cannot tell, all I know is feel nervous. On my face, I sweat. Then I feel so cold.
	Shaking	Ven: Physically, I tremble if I am pressured. On my feet, but it is not obvious. - referring to the trembling.
	Stuttering (i.e. on the first syllable)	Harvii: If speaking in English, I stutter.  Ven: Yes, I stutter even in normal conversations. Ah, I repeat the first syllable of the word.  Jazz: I stutter on ends.
	Increased Heart Rate/Palpitations	Jazz: I also want to share what I feel. I felt fast beat in my chest. During elementary when I got scared. What I feel is the fast beat

		<p>in my chest, when I get nervous, I feel cold, chills.</p> <p>Harvii: Yes, the fast beat in the chest feels like I am chasing someone.</p>
Theme 2: Emotional Responses	<p>Nervousness due to Fear of Negative Evaluation</p> <p>Feeling Bad in the way one communicates</p>	<p>Ven: I got nervous, because maybe in the presentation, I commit a mistake. I might mispronounce a word during the presentation.</p> <p>Jazz: Nervousness, maybe because I do not know what to say to my classmates.</p> <p>Harvii: Our teacher gave us something to memorize. We were asked to prepare our own explanation, and then there is one paragraph with wrong grammar. They laughed at me. I got lost on what I am about to say. I lose confidence.</p> <p>Harvii: Yes, because I am not able to say what is supposed to be said. After I speak, there is dead air. It is not good, because I somehow stop generating ideas. I felt ashamed on those instances. I felt bad for it.</p> <p>Jazz: If I know something is missing with my statement, I will think "I should have said that." But also, there is a part in me telling I did otherwise, I will feel comfortable."</p>

### *Theme 1: Physical Responses*

Al-Saraj (2014) mentioned that this phenomenon can be manifested in observable behavioral changes. It is imperative to understand this phenomenon through identifying these physical manifestations in the students; hence the following sub-themes were observed: Sweating, Shaking, Feeling Cold, Increased Heart Rate/Palpitations, and Stuttering.

#### *Sweating and Chills/Feeling Cold*

It is a very common experience to feel cold and to sweat in situations or contexts that require them to speak in English. This confirms the students with these experiences sweating as an obvious sign of anxious students (Hashemi & Abassi, 2013; Al-Saraj, 2014). Clinical studies reveal that when our body is reacting to an emotion (i.e. anxiety, stress) it releases a what so called "stress sweat". As reported by Tapado (2025), one of the "physical symptoms of anxiety" is trembling and cold sweats. For Harvii, he experienced sweating on his face when in a public speaking scenario, as stated through his written Q and A:

*"I feel so nervous and my hand gets cold and sweats a lot..."*

*Shaking*

Findings from the study of Grieve et al., (2021) and Tapado (2025) revealed that individuals tend to feel shaking in different parts of their bodies when being situated in an anxiety-inducing oral activities. Shaking is a part of the fight-or-flight reaction of the body when faced in a threatening situation (i.e. oral presentations and public speaking). Harvii, from his written Q and A he wrote:

*"...and because of that (nervousness and hands getting cold and sweats) I stammer and shake a little because I'm not good at English and I think they might judge me right away."*

*Stuttering*

All the three mentioned that they experience stuttering, which is the struggle to say a particular word/s in English which were worsened by the nervousness and anxiety they experience. Ven, mentioned that his stuttering is for the first syllable of the word.

*"I tend to repeat the first syllable of a word."*

These statements can be connected to the views of McCroskey (1970). Several manifestations connected to OCA in English includes speech disfluencies, such as stuttering. Anxiety led them to have dry mouth feeling that made it difficult for them to articulate words and phrases. Abnormal verbal behavior, such as staggered voice and stuttering/stammering is one of the signs of OCA in foreign language (Hashemi and Abassi, 2013). From a more recent study conducted by Tapado (2025), there is a diverse range of anxieties experienced, extending beyond linguistic difficulties which includes the experiences of stuttering while speaking, as part of physical manifestations of anxiety.

*Increased Heart Rate/Palpitations*

Jazz and Harvii mentioned that their experience increased in heart rate or palpitations, especially when faced in an anxiety-inducing speaking activity. This is supported by the following comments they gave:

*"That is why what I feel is fast beat in my chest..."*

*"...the beat in the chest is like I am chasing someone."*

When students feel nervous in a speaking activity, they mention that they feel a fast beating in their chest. Fast heartbeat is one of the many speaking anxiety symptoms (Kelsen, 2019; Song & Liu, 2021) Harvii, described this feeling like "he is chasing someone". Emotions trigger stress hormones, which cause body temperature and heart rate to increase.

*Theme 2: Emotional Responses*

OCA in English have been identified in established studies as an emotional state (McCroskey, 1970; Horwitz et al., 1986; Byrne, 1991; Hashemi & Abassi, 2013; Byrne et al., 2016). Determining the emotional impacts of OCA in English is important in understanding this phenomenon. This theme has subthemes, namely nervousness and feeling bad in the way they communicate.

*Nervousness due to Fear of Negative Evaluation*

One of the emotional impacts of OCA in English is nervousness. As stated on the matrix, they feel nervous especially at times when they feel being judged by their classmates. Speaking performance deteriorates when being observed and perceived judgment from the audience or the fear of being judged (Daymiel, et al., 2022; Grieve, et al., 2021). The idea of "speaker conspicuousness" is visible-

the feeling of intimidation from scrutiny (Hashmi, 2025). They think that their teachers and classmates will laugh at them if they commit a grammatical mistake or mispronounce a word. These experiences cement the idea of avoidance of speaking and communicating because of fear of possible judgment and humiliation. As stated in Harvii's reflection and Jazz's written Q and A and reflection, respectively:

*"I just struggle because every time I speak English, I am nervous and have no self-confidence."*

*"I also felt self-conscious to what I will say in English, that I might be judge and corrected in an approach that is different to me, like being corrected with insult or something which I wouldn't like."*

*"Their reactions and unnecessary comments left me feeling anxious and self-conscious, particularly during recitations or reports. The unsightly gazes and perceived judgements made me uncomfortable, convincing me to question their opinions of me whenever I spoke in English."*

#### *Feeling Bad in the way one communicates*

The participants have a feeling of dismay when they try to communicate but failed to deliver because of anxiety. They felt bad in different ways. Harvii stated that he felt bad because of dead airs he committed, and for Jazz, she felt bad for missing opportunity to say/deliver any information she knows. This is connected to the Text Anxiety component of FLCA. This is a product of the fear of being evaluated negatively, but more focused between instructor and student. Students claim to have known the information or what they are about to say, but find it difficult to retrieve in a test, which is evident with Jazz's and Harvii's comments. This also aligns to a more recent study of Subekti (2018) and Amoah & Yeboah (2021), stating that factors like making errors can affect linguistic performance.

#### **Matrix 3:** The Learning Experience of First-Year Information Technology Students with OCA in English

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>	<b>Qualitative Statements</b>
Theme 1: Motivation Despite the OCA in English	Communication with the English Teacher  Competent- Teacher Factor	Ven: Yes, I saw how competent our teacher. He is really good in English, that is why we thought that we should have the same level with him. We should practice because it will help us in the long run. If we want to get a good job, we should be good in English.  Jazz: Yes. I want to experience, like all of us, to remove the consciousness when I am talking in English. I will try. For me, English is a universal language. If you communicate in English, they will understand what you are saying. When it comes to classes (inaudible) required to speak in English, I will go for it.
Theme 2: OCA in English not an influence in career	IT Program are more practical	Ven: To be honest, no. I am always with my computer. All I have to think about with my computer is proper grammar since proper grammar is needed when it comes to coding. We are more on practical.

choice		<p>Jazz: No. It is not the school, when I entered IT. We are more on practical. It is not an issue (OCA) for me. We are more practical, rather than oral.</p> <p>Harvii: Uhm, no. I was not accepted in (name of school) and the nearest school is (name of school), and that is where my parents enrolled me.</p>
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*Theme 1: Motivation Despite the OCA in English*

Despite their OCA in English, students try their best to communicate with their English teachers. Since they consider their English teachers as competent in teaching, communicating with them serve as an avenue to learn, practice and strengthen their skills in communication. The three of them wrote in their written Q and A:

*“No, I am even more motivated to attend Purposive Communication, Because I want to enhance mg English skills and confidence in speaking English.”*

*“In fact, it is delightful and a challenge to myself when I go to such classes. Everyone can be proficient in English if they practice and study the language.”*

*“No, it doesn’t because I focus on the present. What I mean is, my willingness is based on who my classmates and teacher are at the moment... I look forward to learning and becoming more comfortable with speaking English if required.”*

The three are more optimistic and display a positive outlook to their English classes despite the fact that they have OCA in English. This debunks the idea that the common coping strategy of a person with OCA in English is to avoid in speaking activities, denial, giving up, and to avoid talking to native speakers (Oxford, 2017). On the contrary, the students still attend their classes in Purposive communication, and they do not avoid going to their respective classes. This notion is supported from one of the themes form the study of Hashmi (2025) which is the “exposure therapy”, by which constant exposure to speaking activities can result to anxiety reduction to speaking. This is manifested with Harvii’s reflection:

*“I also found out what should be done so that I can develop my self-confident about English subjects and recitation or reporting the speech.”*

From the interview, Ven and Jazz stated that English classes serve as their practice in improving their communication skills in English. In addition, Ven and Harvii mentioned that because they have a competent teacher in English, this further helped them improve in communication and feel comfortable in their English classes.

*Theme 2: OCA in English not an influence in career choice*

Their OCA in English does not influence their career choice in IT. This proves the findings that individuals with high CA tend to choose jobs that do not require them to communicate with great deal. The results of their study indicate the strength of CA as a determiner of attitude towards desired occupation and the actual occupation of choice (Daly & McCroskey, 1975). Aside from the convenience of vicinity of their school, their program, Information Technology, are more practical and requires computer-based skills more than communication and interpersonal skills.

**Matrix 4:** Managing OCA in English Practices and Techniques

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sub-Themes</b>	<b>Qualitative Statements</b>
Theme 1: Preparations for speaking tasks	Practicing  Writing Script	<p>Ven: I make sure that I review my presentation so I will not forget it. I practice it. I look for beautiful sceneries. I practice it as well in front of audience, even my sister has a school the next day, if she is still awake. I will ask her and I will present in front of her.</p> <p>Harvii: I write my own script. If there will be a reporting, even groupings, I write a script, so I will be ready. I know what I am about to say.</p>
Theme 2: Coping Mechanisms	Making Hand Gestures/Fidgeting  Deep Breaths  Code-switching	<p>Jazz: When I am presenting, I have a ballpen and I click it. My teacher told me once that if ever I am feeling nervous, I have a ballpen and just click it. I used to do that.</p> <p>Harvii: Before I speak, I can get nervous, then I will take a very deep breath in order to relieve the nervousness, so I can focus on what I am about to say.</p> <p>Jazz: That is usually included in the flow when I am speaking. I also add Tagalog so my audience will be attentive “there were Tagalog, understand that part”. If I use Tagalog, especially to the parts that (inaudible) if I explain it, I can explain it further, I will resort in speaking in Tagalog.</p> <p>Harvii: If I fail to pronounce a word in English, I use Tagalog.”</p> <p>Ven: Yes, I code switch from English to Tagalog.</p>

*Theme 1: Preparations for speaking tasks*

Students make an effort to mitigate their anxiety. Students with high OCA in English employ different self-mitigating techniques for the effects of phenomena (Bragg, 2017). The participants mentioned: practicing and writing script.

*Practicing*

Highly apprehensive students spend time practicing/rehearsing the night or the day before their presentation. Rehearsing is among the remediation techniques of Skills Remediation (ST), which is effective in reducing public speaking anxiety among students (Bodie, 2010; Hunter et al., 2014). Practicing is one of the mitigating practices they employ to manage their CA, as similarly stipulated in one of the themes generated from the study of Grieve, et al., (2021), Tapado (2025), and Ulfah (2024). Ven added in his reflection his way of practicing with her sister:

*“I tried to fix my problems by doing dummy presentation, in front of my youngest sister.”*

*Writing Script*

For students with OCA in English, preparation of script is one of the mitigating techniques they opt doing in preparing before a speaking presentation. Organized information is important in order to easily connect ideas from one to another. This is widely used by students with high OCA in English because it allows them to know the main idea of the message even when faced in a highly anxious scenario (Bragg, 2017). Taking notes is also one of the preparation strategies mentioned in the study of Ulfah (2024).

*Theme 2: Coping Mechanism*

Speaking activities can be an anxiety-inducing situation to be in. To relieve and lessen this anxiety they feel, students use these following coping strategies:

*Making Hand Gestures/Fidgeting*

This supports a more recent study conducted by Hashemi and Abbasi in 2013, by which elaborated similar signs of FLCA. Gestures may take variety and do not have any standard; thus, they are idiosyncratic or unique to every individual (Clough & Duff, 2020). For Ven, making hand movements is his way of releasing the tension he is feeling. Jazz, however, constantly clicks her ballpen, as advised by her former teacher to release stress, as was also written in her response:

*“I hold a pen in my hand and click it. Sometimes I forget or don’t hold one, but it’s still a technique I rely on.”*

*Deep Breaths*

Cognitive modifications such as calming down and relaxation is one of the best ways to ease the tension when faced in a speaking or communication scenario (Ulfah, 2024). Relaxation techniques like being calm and doing breathing exercises help in reducing the anxiety (Hashmi, 2025). Harvii and Ven mentioned that they are following their own breathing exercises to lessen the tension they are feeling. From the written Q and A, Harvii and Ven wrote:

*“Before I speak, I take a deep breath to feel comfortable and focus.”*

*“I always remain calm by doing a breathing exercise or imagining beautiful sceneries to calm my nerves.”*

### *Code Switching*

The statement on the matrices describes the participants' use of code-switching. When faced with a highly anxious public speaking activity, they use two languages at the same time or alternating one language with another. This proves that it is difficult to communicate using a language that is not your mother tongue/native tongue. (Somsai and Intaraprasert, 2011). Their responses supported Zulkurnain and Kaur (2014) that states that code-switching is helpful in constructing English sentences because of limited vocabulary. Intra-sentential code-switching aids in lowering the anxiety level in the use of the English language and provides a more inclusive means in responding to the differences in English language proficiency (Ibañez, 2025).

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings from this study illuminate several practical considerations for refining webinar-based professional development. While webinars offer notable benefits such as convenience, accessibility, and flexibility, they should not be considered a complete substitute for traditional in-person training. Instead, a hybrid approach that marries the strengths of both formats may offer the most effective solution for meeting the diverse needs of educators.

With these findings, researcher concluded that first-year Information Technology students experience a Trait-like OCA in the English language (Richmond, Wrench and McCroskey, 2013), which is rooted from their experiences from childhood, specifically during their elementary days. Their worst experience is when engaged in a public speaking activity (Young, 1991; Dwyer & Davidson, 2021). They have varied experiences from these public speaking activities, which include their fear of negative evaluation, faced with unfamiliar audience and being too conscious about it, the fear of committing some grammatical mistakes, hesitations to speak and fear induced by their own teacher. They share common physical manifestations of OCA in English, like sweating and feeling cold/chills (Tapado, 2025), shaking (Grive et al., 2022; Tapado 2025), increased in heart rate or palpitations (Kelsen, 2019; Song & Liu, 2021) and stuttering (Tapado, 2025). Emotional manifestations include nervousness that is rooted from their fear being evaluated negatively. (Daymiel, et al., 2022; Grieve, et al., 2021; Hashmi, 2025). They have a positive outlook when it comes to attending their purposive communication class despite their OCA in English. (Oxford, 2017). However, their OCA in English has no connection to their chosen career, which is IT (Daly and McCroskey, 1975). Their program, Information Technology, is more practical and requires computer-based skills more than communication and interpersonal skills. Finally, first-year Information Technology students employ variety of mitigating techniques to alleviate their OCA in English, such as practicing or rehearsals (Grieve, et al., 2021; Tapado 2025), writing a script/outline, making hand gestures/fidgeting, breathing exercises for relaxation (Ulfah, 2024; Hashmi, 2025), and doing code-switching.

With the following findings and conclusion, the researcher would like to recommend that English classrooms should be of supportive learning environment. It is encouraged to have classroom that is free from judgment, intimidation and fear as it will motivate students to participate and communicate with the class. Affective factors (i.e. fear, anxiety, apprehension) have a major effect on language learning (Krashen, 1981). Language learning is effective when support is upheld (Monsalve & Correal, 2006). A communicative approach in language teaching would help students alleviate their anxiety and fear. This would also encourage learners to take responsibility for their learning and use variety of language learning strategies (Oxford, Rebecca., Lavine, Roberta & Crookall, David, 2008).

Part of the support is by strengthening program outcomes, specifically emphasizing the communication skills and competencies by incorporating these not only to English or speech-related courses (i.e. Purposive communication) but also in other general education and/or professional courses that will allow students to practice the use of the English language, enhance their communication skills and presentation skills not only in English-specific courses, but also in other multi-disciplinary courses, general education and professional education (Arkoudis & Starfield, 2007). In addition to this, opportunities to conduct interventions like workshops and seminars for students will help enhance their communicative competence and can create a more inclusive learning environment for them. (Ulfah, 2024). Also, there is a need to ensure the readiness of the students when it comes to speaking. Start public speaking activities from small groups or smaller audiences before allowing them to speak into larger crowds. Informal small group discussions can improve English speaking skills, encouraging participation and reduces anxiety while allowing learners to practice using the language without any judgment (Hashmi, 2025; Sevinch, 2025) allowing them to slowly practice their communication skills and the use of language without forcing them to speak immediately into a larger audience. This would help them be prepared to actual school speaking engagements and public speaking activities, especially those who require English as a medium. Providing them ample practice opportunities in classroom will allow them to practice communication and to refine their speaking skills (Monsalve & Correal, 2006).

Future research can be conducted with a similar study to widen the scope of OCA in English, specifically exploring its occurrence across different fields. Future researchers can write a study on oral communication apprehension of other students from other discipline (e.g. other engineering programs, nursing, architecture, to name a few) and compare it to the current data presented in this paper. It is also highly suggested to explore the presence of OCA among people outside the academic realm and/or of people with OCA in advanced age or adult age

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**Author's Bionote**

Reniel G. De Chavez is currently a Teaching Assistant under the General Education Department in Far Eastern University- Manila. He is currently taking his graduate studies at Far Eastern University-Manila, Institute of Education-Graduate Studies and Transnational Education under the degree program-Master of Arts in Education (MAEd)- Academic Track (Educational Assessment, Measurement, and Evaluation). His research interests include educational assessment, scale development, language research, and teacher education.