



TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF COTOPAXI

PEDAGOGY OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

RESEARCH REPORT

THEME:

**“SPEAKING ANXIETY ON SPEAKING INTERACTION DURING
E-TANDEM SESSIONS”**

Research report before obtaining the bachelor degree in National and Foreign language
Pedagogy, English Major

Authors:

Real Delgado Leslie Alejandra
Romero Ramos Camila Zulay

Tutor:

Cando Guanoluisa Fabiola Soledad, Mg.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

Real Delgado Leslie Alejandra, with citizenship card No. 2300652662, Romero Ramos Camila Zulay, with citizenship card No. 1724928773, declare to be authors of the present RESEARCH PROJECT: **“SPEAKING ANXIETY ON SPEAKING INTERACTION DURING E-TANDEM SESSIONS”**, being Fabiola Soledad Cando Guanoluisa, MSc, Tutor of the present work; and, I expressly exempt the Technical University of Cotopaxi and its legal representatives from possible claims or legal actions.

Furthermore, I certify that the ideas, concepts, procedures and results expressed in this research work are my exclusive responsibility.

Pujilí, August 21, 2024



Leslie Alejandra Real Delgado
C.C: 2300652662



Camila Zulay Romero Ramos
C.C: 1724928773

ENDORSEMENT OF THE TUTOR OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

As Tutor of the Research Project on the title:

“SPEAKING ANXIETY ON SPEAKING INTERACTION DURING E-TANDEM SESSIONS”, by Real Delgado Leslie Alejandra; Romero Ramos Camila Zulay, from the career of Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages English, I consider that said Research Report is of deserving the endorsement of approval by complying with the technical standards, translation and formats foreseen, as well as it has also incorporated the observations and recommendations proposed in the pre-defense.

Pujilí, August 21, 2024



Fabiola Soledad Cando Guanoluisa, Mg

C.C: 0503101040

TUTOR

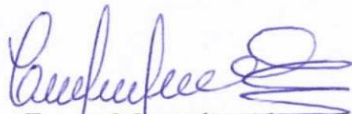
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As Readers' Tribunal, approve the present Research Report according to the regulations issued by the Technical University of Cotopaxi, and, by the Pujilí Extension; because, the applicants: Real Delgado Leslie Alejandra; Romero Ramos Camila Zulay, with the title of the Research Project: **“SPEAKING ANXIETY ON SPEAKING INTERACTION DURING E-TANDEM SESSIONS”**, have considered the recommendations issued in a timely manner and meets the sufficient merits to be submitted to the act of substantiation of the degree work.

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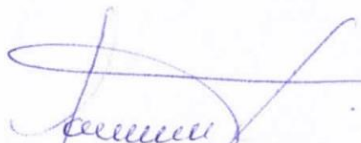
For the record signatures:



Mg. Fanny Mercedes Abata Checa
C.C: 0502278740
LECTOR 1 (PRESIDENTE)



Mg. José Ignacio Andrade Morán
C.C: 0503101040
LECTOR 2 (MIEMBRO)



Dra. Gina Silvana Venegas Alvarez, PhD
C.C: 0501598643
LECTOR 3 (MIEMBRO)

GRATEFULNESS

We would like to express our most sincere gratitude to the Technical University of Cotopaxi for opening its doors to us and giving me the opportunity to grow both academically and personally. We thank all the professors of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages carrier for their dedication, knowledge and constant support throughout my education. A special thanks to our tutor, MSc. Fabiola Cando, for her great dedication and help in creating this project, her guidance and commitment were fundamental. We would also like to thank PhD. Paulina Arias for her constant support in research subject and her pedagogical advice to improve as students and future professionals.

Leslie and Camila

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my parents, Luis and Isabel, who have been the fundamental pillar to achieve it. Their unconditional support and love have been essential in both my academic and personal life. I also want to deeply thank my brothers, Kevin and Xander, who help me at all times and make my life happier with their presence. To a special person who holds a place in my heart, Caleb Nichols, whose company and love have filled my life with joy and meaning. Also, I would like to thank my beloved pet, Cookie, who gave me many moments of happiness when I needed them the most. Last but not least, I would like to thank my college classmates and friends, Camila, Marco and Kevin, who accompanied me during these four years and helped make college life happier and more bearable.

Leslie

DEDICATION

I dedicate this academic work first and foremost to God, to whom I am very grateful for providing me with emotional support to go through the entire academic process during all these years, as well as life, health, and intelligence to be able to meet the educational demands and expectations of my teachers. Secondly, I dedicate this scholarly work to my parents and family because they have provided me with what I need to complete my studies. In fact, in this educational period, I did not have to worry about working to carry money to my house, or caring for or supporting anyone, so my only family duty was to study and obtain good grades.

Camila

TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF COTOPAXI

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

THEME: “SPEAKING ANXIETY ON SPEAKING INTERACTION DURING E-TANDEM SESSIONS”.

Authors:

Real Delgado Leslie Alejandra

Romero Ramos Camila Zulay

ABSTRACT

Anxiety in foreign language learning can significantly impact students' communicative performance. E-tandem sessions, which involve interaction with native speakers in a collaborative environment, offer valuable opportunities for language practice and exposure to real-life communication scenarios but can also induce anxiety. This study aims to analyze speaking anxiety in students during the 2023 E-tandem sessions at the Technical University of Cotopaxi (UTC). It is a descriptive, quantitative, and exploratory study. Those describe and investigate anxiety levels in English as a foreign language (EFL) in oral interaction during E-tandem sessions. The instrument Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz was used and adapted to the E-tandem context. It includes 32 items to gather data from 124 students across the fourth to seventh semesters. The analysis was conducted using SPSS, calculating the mean anxiety levels per item, student, and English proficiency level. The results indicated that most students experienced moderate anxiety, with a minority displaying low levels. Significant contributors to anxiety were identified as lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and confusion. However, student motivation was found to have a positive effect in alleviating anxiety. Interestingly, students with higher English proficiency levels tended to exhibit greater anxiety than those with lower proficiency. These findings underscore the importance of addressing and managing anxiety to optimize communicative performance and enhance the overall learning experience in E-tandem sessions.

Keywords: Anxiety, EFL Speaking anxiety, Oral interaction, E-tandem.

TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF COTOPAXI

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

TEMA: “LA ANSIEDAD VERBAL EN LA INTERACCIÓN ORAL DURANTE LAS SESIONES E-TANDEM”.

Autores:

Real Delgado Leslie Alejandra

Romero Ramos Camila Zulay

RESUMEN

La ansiedad en el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras puede afectar significativamente al rendimiento comunicativo de los estudiantes. Las sesiones E-tandem, que implican la interacción con hablantes nativos en un entorno colaborativo, ofrecen valiosas oportunidades para la práctica del idioma y la exposición a escenarios de comunicación de la vida real, pero también pueden inducir ansiedad. Este estudio tiene como objetivo analizar la ansiedad al hablar en estudiantes durante las sesiones E-tandem 2023 en la Universidad Técnica de Cotopaxi (UTC). Es un estudio descriptivo, cuantitativo y exploratorio. En él se describen e investigan los niveles de ansiedad en inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) en la interacción oral durante las sesiones E-tandem. Se utilizó el instrumento Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) de Horwitz y se adaptó al contexto E-tandem. Incluye 32 ítems para recopilar datos de 124 estudiantes de cuarto a séptimo semestre. El análisis se realizó con SPSS, calculando los niveles medios de ansiedad por ítem, estudiante y nivel de dominio del inglés. Los resultados indicaron que la mayoría de los estudiantes experimentaban una ansiedad moderada, mientras que una minoría mostraba niveles bajos. La falta de confianza en sí mismos, el miedo a cometer errores y la confusión fueron los factores que más contribuyeron a la ansiedad. Sin embargo, se observó que la motivación de los estudiantes tenía un efecto positivo en el alivio de la ansiedad. Curiosamente, los estudiantes con un mayor nivel de inglés tendían a mostrar más ansiedad que los que tenían un nivel más bajo. Estos resultados subrayan la importancia de abordar y gestionar la ansiedad para optimizar el rendimiento comunicativo y mejorar la experiencia general de aprendizaje en las sesiones E-tandem.

Palabras clave: Ansiedad, Ansiedad al hablar en EFL, Interacción oral, E-tandem.

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UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE WORK STRUCTURE

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Theme:

“Speaking Anxiety on Speaking Interaction during E-tandem Sessions”

Starting Date:

April 2024

Ending Date:

August 2024

Place of Research:

Technical University of Cotopaxi

Sponsoring Faculty:

Pujilí Campus

Sponsoring career:

Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages Undergraduate Program

Macro project of the career:

A Transdisciplinary study of Education and Linguistics in linguistic-communicative contexts for English Language Teaching.

Work team:

- Cando Guanoluisa Fabiola Soledad, Mg
- Real Delgado Leslie Alejandra
- Romero Ramos Camila Zulay

Knowledge area:

Education

Research line:

Education and communication for human and social development.

Research line of the career:

Education, linguistics, literature, interculturality and society.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Speaking Language Anxiety is a psychological phenomenon that affects many students in their use or production of a second language, specifically in the speaking skill causing feelings of tension, distress, and fear which can affect not only the communication in oral classroom activities but also the interaction in E-tandem sessions. This is supported by Hakim (2019) who announces that “English learners frequently encounter and report emotions such as fear, stress, nervousness, and anxiety related to their linguistic communication skills and competencies” (p. 64). Furthermore, “Anxious foreign language learners identify speaking in the target language as the scariest language skill” (Wörde, 2023, p. 2620).

Particularly, during E-tandem sessions because “the form of distance peer-to-peer learning where students can deepen their linguistic and cultural knowledge” (Griggio, 2018, p. 88) about the target language and interacting with native people can be a great challenge. Especially when learners have to speak in English for a long time in an interaction that “involves the dynamic exchange of information, ideas, and thoughts between people who use the English language” (Srinivas, 2019, p. 23), in conclusion, a result of the Speaking Anxiety in oral production when students convey their message orally, the communication and Interaction of E-tandem sessions may be obstructed.

Unfortunately, despite the presumed strong negative influence and the possible impact of this affective filter on linguistic skills, there is not much investigation about Speaking Anxiety in language learning of students from E-tandem Sessions at Technical University of Cotopaxi during April-August 2024, which can be related to causes and effects in English Language learning. The low investigation might be due to the complexity of the topic given that it includes psychological, emotional, and linguistic features (Abdullah & Fahad, 2021). Moreover, the research in the field of linguistics and language psychology often focuses on other aspects, such as language acquisition or phonology, which means that language anxiety may not get the attention it deserves (Lounsbury, 1963). Added to that, the manifestation of speaking anxiety in learners can be subjective and difficult to measure objectively (Khalaf & Omara, 2022). Those factors previously mentioned can prove that “the findings likely did not provide sufficient information related to interferences of foreign language anxiety” (Prasetyaningrum., Nazri., & Asrob, 2021). Also, there may be a limited understanding of the causes, manifestations, and possible interventions for anxiety-related problems (Crandon., Scott., Charlson, et al, 2022). Therefore, without comprehensive studies, educators may struggle to

address these issues effectively (Burnley., St Clair, Bedford, et al, 2023). In summary, various factors cause the problem of having a low number of researchers that study this topic which also involves effects that must be addressed. As it is well known, research studies aim to find information of a specific problem, answer research questions or prove hypotheses, as well as showing the relevance of the topic chosen. In this case, the purpose of conducting this study is analyze speaking anxiety in students during the E-tandem sessions of the 2023 cycle at the Technical University of Cotopaxi. And the relevance of investigating this affective filter issue is the research context that focuses on linguistic interaction with native speakers in virtual meetings, due to this topic and context has not been very commonly conducted in UTC research. This is why, the study pretends to impact the English Language education, and contribute to all scientific and academic communities by enriching information about the reality of this problematic psychological phenomenon by answering the following 3 research questions:

- What is the level of Anxiety in EFL oral interaction in E-tandem sessions of UTC students?
- What are the factors associated with anxiety in EFL oral interaction in E-tandem sessions of UTC students?

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

3.1 General Objective

- To analyze speaking anxiety in students during the E-tandem sessions of the 2023 cycle at the Technical University of Cotopaxi.

3.2 General Objective

- To describe the theoretical foundation about English speaking in E-tandem sessions and anxiety.
- To determine the level of Speaking Anxiety in oral interactions during the E-tandem sessions.
- To analyze factors associated with anxiety in EFL oral interaction in E-tandem sessions of UTC students

4. ACTIVITIES AND TASK SYSTEM IN RELATION TO THE OBJECTIVES PROPOSE

Table 1

Objectives and activities

Specific objective	Activities	Verification means
To describe the theoretical foundation about English speaking in E-tandem sessions and anxiety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key authors in the field to cite their definitions. • Search articles, books and papers related to the topic. • Collect relevant information from research studies. • Analyze and synthesize the findings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background • Theoretical Framework
To determine the level of Speaking Anxiety in oral interactions during the E-tandem sessions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit participants of the E-tandem program. • Use and apply a questionnaire of Speaking Anxiety adapted to E-tandem context as the instrument to gather quantitative data. • Analyze the results using SPSS software. • Calculate means and create tables. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire • SPSS (a statistical software) • Tables
To analyze factors associated with anxiety in EFL oral interaction in E-tandem sessions of UTC students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis and discussion of results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPSS (a statistical software) • Conclusions • Recommendations

5. JUSTIFICATION

Speaking skills are crucial for effective foreign language acquisition and communication, serving as a key component in achieving fluency and practical language use. However, it is essential to recognize that various factors can influence the enhancement of a learner's speaking proficiency, or negatively impact their productive ability to articulate utterances and engage in meaningful conversations in the target language. The interaction between learners and native speakers in E-tandem sessions can produce a certain level of foreign language anxiety in the students and therefore a positive or negative impact on speaking skills.

In this sense, the reason for conducting this thesis is to investigate the level of English anxiety in the students of the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh levels of Pedagogy National and Foreign Languages–English at the Technical University of Cotopaxi in the academic period of 2023 to verify if learners practicing English with native speakers or advanced learners in online platforms would produce a level of anxiety, and if this anxiety influences speaking production. While traditional studies have explored language anxiety in face-to-face interactions, there is a notable gap in understanding how this anxiety manifests in the increasingly popular E-tandem learning environments, resulting from the current literature that often overlooks the unique challenges of online communication, which may influence anxiety levels differently compared to traditional settings.

In this case, the results of this research provided significant antecedents about the correlation between the level of anxiety and speaking production. For instance, MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1991) found that learners with lower language proficiency often experience higher levels of anxiety, which negatively affects their speaking production. This is due to their reduced confidence and greater fear of making mistakes. That is why, the study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of anxiety in these digital interactions, and it is expected to contribute to both theoretical and practical advancements. Finally, the findings of this study will improve the understanding of how digital tools and interaction with native speakers impact language learners' psychological experiences and contribute to more supportive and effective language learning environments.

6. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL FOUNDATION

6.1 Background

Previous research done by Debreli (2015) focused on phenomenon of speaking anxiety in an EFL context, focusing on the levels of EFL students' speaking anxiety and the sources that make them anxious, as well as the relationship between anxiety, language proficiency level, and gender. Data were gathered from 196 Turkish and Turkish Cypriot students through questionnaires (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) and semi-structured interviews with 10 students who participated in the questionnaires. The findings indicated that the students generally had a low level of speaking anxiety, although students with a higher level of language proficiency had a higher level of anxiety compared to students with a lower level of language proficiency. No statistically meaningful difference was observed with regard to students' gender and anxiety levels. Factors causing anxiety, such as difficulty in pronunciation, being asked immediate questions by the teacher, and not understanding the question asked by the teacher, not found in the current literature, also emerged from the study. Implications for teacher education are also discussed.

El-Hariri (2017) also conducted research in base the experiences and perceptions of 11 Colombian learners of German as a foreign language who participated in a German-Spanish E-tandem project. Although E-tandems, offering the opportunity of real-life contact with native speakers of one's target language, are suggested to reduce anxiety and increase confidence in language learning, these effects had not been empirically investigated. The study employed a qualitative approach, collecting data through interviews and focus groups, and evaluated them using qualitative content analysis. The results indicate that E-tandems have great potential to reduce the fear of using German in real-life situations and to increase confidence, although these perceptions are not always transferable to the language classroom. In conclusion, E-tandem can be effective in reducing anxiety and increasing confidence in using the target language in real contexts, though their effectiveness may vary in formal educational settings.

A study conducted by Castro and Argudo (2024) to analyze the environment influences in speaking anxiety levels employed a quantitative students' questionnaire based on the Language Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The questionnaire was administered to 23 tenth-grade students (14 male and 9 female) from Colegio de Bachillerato Asaad Bucaram, both before and after a classroom intervention. The research began with a classroom visit to assess the learning

environment. Findings indicated that classroom interventions led to a 4.4% reduction in anxiety levels among students in both Low Language Anxiety (LLA) and High Language Anxiety (HLA) categories. Gender differences were observed initially, with girls showing more anxiety in certain speaking situations, but post-intervention results showed a shift, with boys exhibiting higher anxiety levels. Further investigation is recommended to elucidate specific factors contributing to these changes and gender differences in anxiety levels.

In the same direction, research conducted by Pamungkas (2018) determined the effect of English language anxiety on the speaking performance of students at the English Department of Universitas Negeri Surabaya. This quantitative study analyzed 23 students (5 male and 18 female) enrolled in an academic speaking course, utilizing the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to assess anxiety levels. The study correlated these anxiety scores with students' final speaking grades, revealing a positive relationship between anxiety levels and speaking performance grades. This finding contrasts with previous studies that typically suggest a negative correlation, prompting further investigation into additional factors influencing student performance under varying levels of anxiety.

Finally, Bergström (2017), conducted a quantitative study to explore the relationship between foreign language speaking anxiety and course level among 183 students from English as a foreign language course (English 5, 6, and 7) at upper secondary schools in South Sweden. The study employed a survey to collect demographic information such as course level, age, and sex, assess students' oral proficiency levels, and measure anxiety across 33 anxiety-provoking classroom situations. This research is quantitative in nature, utilizing survey data to analyze anxiety levels in relation to demographic and academic variables. Findings indicated that while Swedish upper secondary students generally did not exhibit significant anxiety based on course level alone, students in English 5 were less comfortable around native English speakers, and those in English 7 experienced higher anxiety levels when volunteering or being called on in class compared to other levels. However, gender and oral proficiency levels showed more pronounced differences in anxiety levels, with females and students with low oral proficiency demonstrating higher anxiety levels.

6.2 Theoretical framework

6.2.1 Language Skills

Language proficiency is based on using linguistic skills, which enable people to communicate efficiently. It is well known that one of the main targets for using language abilities is communication, given that in the same way, “language is vital in the sense that it enables people to be able to interact or communicate effectively to convey information” (Rabiah, 2012, p. 1). “Having strong language skills enables better communication” (Chettiar, 2023, para. 3). Moreover, those elements implement each other and coexist to fulfill their functions. Even though the most important purpose of using those skills is acquiring or learning a language, the regular use of the linguistic abilities helps achieve proficiency in a language. As Slavik and Egbert (2010) stipulate that “to be proficient in a language requires knowledge and skills using the linguistic components” (p. 34). In summary, language proficiency encompasses a broad spectrum of linguistic abilities that allow individuals to communicate effectively in various contexts of society.

Indeed, for a deeper understanding, Bihari (2022) gives a definition: the term "language skills" pertains to an individual's capacity to effectively utilize language, whether spoken or written, for various activities and objectives. Furthermore, according to Sharma (2021) the four basic language abilities: listening, speaking, reading, and writing are always interconnected and work together as a whole. However, language skills are classified into two categories that at a mental level belong to different processes and functions. That's why, Frydrychova (2014) specifies that “language skills can be divided according to the type of the communicative process into receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing)” (p. 87), which underscores that the different abilities can be used depending on the purposes of the communication whether receipt or send the information. To conclude, the use of a language depends on the development of linguistic skills, which function in the case of listening and reading allow people to gather information from outside, and in the case of speaking and writing lets to express ideas.

Similarly, balancing and achieving the development of these language skills is crucial for influencing various aspects of language learners' lives in both professional and academic pursuits. Manaj (2015) expresses that incorporating multiple language skills at the same time helps students develop comprehensively and make progress across all aspects of language

learning is very important. Due to in today's globalized society, possessing language abilities has become a crucial asset for achieving success in one's career. (Insan, 2023). Indeed, in terms of professional settings, proficient language abilities can open doors to career advancement and networking opportunities. Also, it is necessary to take into account that language skills are crucial in academic achievement and acquisition (Riad., Allodi, & et al, 2023). Given that in educational environments, those skills contribute to a clearer expression of ideas and a more profound understanding of complex concepts. In summary, it is necessary to acquire and develop language skills during the learning process to obtain all the academic and labor advantages.

6.2.2 Receptive Skills

The first process step of communication in a target language involves getting information through receptive skills for a later interpretation of the collected data. As it is explained by Zarate (2021) acquiring English resulted in the enhancement of receptive abilities, which implicate the capacity to receive and comprehend the message delivered by using the senses of sight and hearing. Similarly, the cognitive processes that are related to receptive language skills called listening and reading have the function of gathering information about our environment that is processed and interpreted by the brain (Rashi, 2021). As a result, this complex procedure implies decoding the data by analyzing the symbols in which it was sent using prior knowledge. Thus, in conclusion, the act of communication depends on the gathering and understanding of the information obtained in the target language. For that reason, developing receptive skills is an important issue for language learners.

Additionally, the simplest concept that can be used for defining receptive skills is the one mentioned by Al-Jawi (2010) who claims that “receptive skills are how people extract meaning from the discourse they see or hear” (p. 3), which is sent as a message by the sender throughout a conversation or a writing text. Furthermore, those skills classified as receptive or passive are divided into 2 abilities named listening and reading which definitions are the following. According to (2015), “the listening skill is considered an ability to identify and understand what others say or speak. This involves understanding a speaker’s accent or pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and gauging the meaning” (p. 224). However, its purpose goes beyond the recognition of sounds and dialects, it is about building the message extracted from the significant incrustrated within the words. On the other hand, reading “is the skill to derive meaning from printed text accurately and efficiently” (Tarjani, 2015, p. 225). Owing to when a learner

can decompose the string sentences into understandable small parts to examine them isolated, then the student puzzles the words in context that together in a text with the correct order and sequence make sense. To summarize, the receptive skills collect the words conveyed by a sender which keep information that the receiver has to take from that outside source during the oral or written interaction to understand the meaning within the message.

At the same time, the basis for the understanding of the target language and even the key to improving the English level is the development of receptive skills due to all that begins with exposure to the language. As Al-Zoubi (2018) revealed: learning or acquiring a second language depends on being exposed to the target language. To achieve this, it is essential to utilize information sources like printed texts or speeches since knowledge is integrated and synthesized later on being gathered by the skills. Furthermore, the same author claims that exposure to the English language during different phases results in learners being more open and responsive to the language (Al-Zoubi, 2018).

And also allows the learners to increase comprehension and the development of language abilities. This process of learning or acquiring a linguistic system by exposure to the language is called comprehensible input, because the receptive skills receive information that once understood can be used. Therefore, “learners are thought to progressively assimilate and accommodate their linguistic infrastructure” (Avello and Muñoz, 2023, p. 4). In other terms, receptive language skills make it possible to learn or acquire a language as well as the understanding and improvement of itself by exposing the learner to the knowledge in the target language.

6.2.3 Productive Skills

The purpose of communication in a target language is the information exchange among people in society, which is only possible by using productive skills. A point of view that supports the stated above is the declaration related to Golkova & Hubackova (2014) who claim that “the productive skills - also called active skills, mean the transmission of data produced in either spoken or written form” (p. 478), throughout a sending and responding cycle named circuit. Although everyone uses language as a communication tool in their everyday life (Rabiah, 2012), it is expressed by productive skills, because “productive skills permit learners to perform in communicative aspects” (Hossain, 2015, p. 1), such as dialogue, explanation, advising or conversation, and among other examples of interchange. In summary, productive skills help

people to face daily situations and real-life activities employing the target language, which was previously learned or acquired by the student, to communicate with other peers by conveying information.

Moreover, the classification of the language abilities called productive skills are divided between speaking and writing, which are in charge of expressing the language using sounds or graphic words. These skills are essential for mastering a language, whose meanings are the following: according to Hossain (2015) “speaking is the delivery of language through the mouth” (p. 10), and he adds “to speak, we create sounds using many parts of our body” (Hossain 2015, p. 10). These organs include the lungs to inhale and exhale the air, the larynx for making the air pass right to the vocal folds to make them vibrate and create the sound, then it is later articulated by the speech organs located in the mouth and nose, which includes the tongue, hard/soft palate, glottis, teeth and lips (Anderson, 2017).

In contrast, “writing is a specific skill which helps people to put their thoughts into words in a meaningful form through pen and paper” (Dishari, 2013, p. 11). Regarding this ability, it involves seeing the words as graphic symbols that represent a meaning, which at the time of being sent are encrypted in a code using the alphabet letters to create a written text. Given this, learning or knowing a second language involves the development of productive skills which are speaking and writing, for the language user to be able to express or send a meaningful message by conveying a sound able or graphical string of words.

Also, the person who receives the information response may employ the language as a kind of feedback by using productive skills to keep the gate of communication open. Indeed, Rabiah (2012) strongly argues that “the use of the interactional function of language serves to maintain the relationship to keep communications running smoothly” (p. 5) between the sender and receiver in a dialogue. According to the same author, the exchange of feedback between a speaker and their interlocutor requires at least two people to engage in a conversation (Rabiah, 2012). Therefore, the participants of a dialogue can change their roles by turns and be both, senders and receivers of the language. Thus, the stipulated before state that communication can be achieved through speaking and writing, which are the two primary mediums for expressing thoughts and ideas (Muzzamil, 2015). To summarize, the productive skills make the receiver become a sender, by conveying the message as feedback through speaking and writing abilities that make possible the interaction and communication between the people involved in the conversation.

6.2.4 Speaking

Although speaking in a Second Language became the main objective of learners, it is not only about using all the vocabulary and grammar knowledge in a structured way but is about producing messages through utterances in the target language. According to Renandya., and Nguyen. (2023) “one of the most important goals of learning English in a second or foreign learning (L2) context is to be able to speak the language for a variety of communicative purposes” (para. 2). After all, if a learner makes an effort to learn the language, it is expected that he or she can use the knowledge obtained for interacting with others. However, the common use of oral language speaking is ruled not only by the combination of grammar structures and isolated words (Sinclair, 1991), but focused on the capacity to generate coherent sequences of written or spoken language in a large interrupted fashion (Crystal, 1997). In summary, speaking in a second language goes beyond following rules due to its focus on function and message delivery by using the target language as a tool of communication.

Owing to, such important use of "Speaking" in learning a second language as a tool of communication; many important people as philosophers, educators, and professionals in many areas of science, especially those who are related to the linguistic branch have tried to conceptualize the word speaking, but many definitions have been given which differ each one of another. Furthermore, over time those have been changed or modified to give more complex and accurate descriptions. This is why this research is going to expose the most relevant definitions of “speaking language”.

According to Renandya, Jacobs, and Nguyen. (2023) learning to communicate in a second language includes acquiring the ability to create various forms of conversation or speaking styles to fulfill different social intentions. Whereas, for Bailey (2005) “speaking is a productive skill which involves receiving and processing information and producing systematic verbal utterances to convey a meaning that happens in a ‘real-time’ situation” (p. 23). In the case of Chaney and Burke (1998), the capacity to communicate through verbal or non-verbal symbols in various situations is known as speaking, and it can be enhanced through language acquisition. With these definitions, it can be concluded that linguistics and experts on the subject have different concepts and points of view, therefore giving explanations about what speaking is, what is important, and how relevant it is for people may differ too, whereas the assertiveness of the meanings is valid.

Finally, producing or speaking in another language involves many factors and conditions on a human being, due to it being a result of a complex mental process. This ability to communicate using oral language systems called “speaking involves a variety of complex cognitive, social, and biological processes including operation of the vocal cords, and the coordination of breath with movements of the throat, mouth, and tongue” (Stangor., and Walinga, 2014, p. 1), which “production falls into three broad areas: the conceptualization, formulation and articulation” (Levelt, 1989, p. 120) as part of those several sophisticated processes. So, it can be assumed that speaking in a second language is the result of a mental, cognitive, and mechanism process that occurs in the brain to allow the production of utterances.

6.2.5 Factors that can negatively affect the Speaking

Speaking is one of the most challenging skills to develop for language learners, due to the different factors that negatively affect the production of the language through this ability. As Leong & Ahmadi (2017) expose many language learners consider speaking to be one of the most challenging parts of learning a new language. Expressing oneself verbally can be tough for many language students as a result of intrinsic factors such as affective filters including anxiety, low self-esteem, low self-confidence, and lack of motivation (Sissons, 2024). Added to mastering a language requires strong language skills, including a wide-ranging vocabulary, a solid understanding of syntax, and overall linguistic proficiency (Nunan, 1991). In other words, for learners speaking skills are one of the most difficult mediums to express the target language due to the factors mentioned before which affect the production, fluency, accuracy, and hence the communication itself, so developing and mastering it require much effort.

Thus, for a deeper understanding of the real hard defiances students have to face learning, acquiring, or using a second language, some descriptions of the factors mentioned before will be shown, beginning with the most important called the affective filters. Those are described as “psychological or emotional barriers that learners experience during the language acquisition process. They resemble invisible walls that obstruct or restrict the passage of fresh information into the cognitive system of the learner” (Bhanu & Selvaraj, 2023, p. 26), which affects several areas related to managing a second language, especially the production of it, as Kodri (2018) express “the anxiety of students can affect the English-speaking performance” (p. 33), because “the affective filter has a great influence on the development of speaking competence” (López & Parrales, 2022, p. 8). Additionally, when this emotional factor is at a high level, it mainly impacts negatively on speaking skills. In other words, the negative feelings called affective

filters make students experience obstacles and challenges when they have to produce the language, so this portrays the harsh reality in the student's language learning process and speaking skill development.

Furthermore, affective filters frequently emerge during the learning process and can significantly hinder students' natural ability to use the target language, particularly in speaking. Kiruthiga (2022) mentions that the acquisition and use of a new language is a psychological process, so this underscores the psychological dimensions involved in adequate cognitive, affectional, and mental processing for using the language. Rammapadu (2021) also adds that speaking skills can improve or emperor depending on positive and negative emotions. Whereas in a negative case, the huge recoil impact would provoke a poor or lack of speaking production in the target language. In practical terms, these emotional factors impact English oral production, performance, competence, and interaction, highlighting the complex interplay between psychological states and language proficiency among language learners.

6.2.6 Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

Anxiety can significantly impact daily life, making simple tasks feel overwhelming and difficult to manage. According to the Cambridge English Dictionary, anxiety is defined as “an uncomfortable feeling of nervousness or worry about something that is happening or might happen in the future” (p. 10). Physically, it often manifests through symptoms such as increased heart rate, sweating, trembling, shortness of breath, headaches, muscle aches, stomachaches, or unexplained pains (National Institute of Mental Health, 2019). In the same way, these physical manifestations can exacerbate cognitive effects; as Evans (2022) explains anxiety not only impacts memory but also interferes with the executive functions of the prefrontal cortex in the brain.

Furthermore, a study from 2017 revealed that stress and anxiety have an impact on attention and cognitive capabilities. Those symptoms can include racing thoughts, difficulty concentrating, and irrational worries about future events or past experiences (Chand & Raman, 2023). Consequently, individuals may exhibit behavioral changes such as “avoidance of threat cues or situations; escape, flight; pursuit of safety, reassurance; restlessness, agitation, pacing; hyperventilation; freezing, motionless; and difficulty speaking” (Chand & Raman, 2023, para. 12).

However, those symptoms will merge depending on the types of anxiety which are the following “generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), social anxiety, speaking anxiety, specific phobias, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and post-traumatic stress disorder” (Types of Anxiety, 2020, para 1), among others. Altogether, anxiety profoundly disrupts a person's well-being, affecting their physical health, cognitive function, and daily behaviors, underscoring its substantial impact on overall quality of life.

Conversely, foreign language speaking anxiety is a common challenge encountered by learners attempting to communicate in a non-native language, caused by the fear or apprehension that individuals experience when using a second or foreign language. As explained by Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986) foreign language-speaking anxiety refers to “the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system” (p. 125). Nevertheless, this kind of “foreign language anxiety, also known as xenoglossophobia, is the fear of speaking a foreign language” (Wiacek, 2023, para 4). This anxiety can lead to students' lack of ability to communicate in a second language, which became a challenge when trying to express their thoughts, even in basic discussions (Tridinanti, 2018). Because of this, the phenomenon can be manifested in various forms, such as nervousness, difficulty in finding words, or avoidance of speaking altogether. In summary, this is a major barrier for students struggling to communicate effectively in a second language, affecting their confidence and fluency in conversational settings.

Also, many languages learners experience nervousness or anxiety before engaging in conversations in the target language, fearing potential embarrassment or misunderstanding. As Gumartifa & Syahri (2021) explain “speaking requires the ability to continuously learn and practice English. As a consequence, some issues affect the students to speak fluently in English” (p. 100), such as foreign language speaking anxiety, because it encompasses a range of emotional responses, from mild unease to severe panic, which arises from the perceived pressure of speaking accurately and fluently. Similarly, “when they anticipate speaking or communicating in the foreign language, worrying about making mistakes or being misunderstood” (Chen, 2023, p. 91). Other factors contributing to this anxiety include fear or concerns about being judged by native speakers, and lack of confidence in one's language abilities, which can be exacerbated by cultural differences and unfamiliar social norms in the target language's context. In conclusion, learners may feel intimidated by the prospect of being evaluated by native speakers or peers, leading to self-doubt and reluctance to engage in verbal interactions.

It is also well known that, students with foreign language speaking anxiety manifest a cohibit behavior that significantly affects the interaction with native speakers in the target language. This means that when students experience language anxiety a big problem called reluctance appears. “Reluctance is students’ unwillingness or disinclination to interact and participate in speaking activities including, dialogues, asking answering questions and daily conversations in general” (Giantari., et al, 2023, p. 1), as well as the avoidance of speaking opportunities, and suffering physical symptoms. This results from many factors that increase anxiety and reluctance such as personality, motivation, and student attitude. Moreover, this linguistic and psychological phenomenon can be manifested in the classroom, the teaching-learning process, and the practice with other classmates, but especially when students interact with English native speakers during the E-tandem sessions. To summarize, language learners' communication and speaking skills are limited by language anxiety affecting the student's health, and the improvement, and production of the target language. Likewise, the relationship and interaction between learners and native speakers.

6.2.7 E-tandem

The E-tandem language program is a modern approach where individuals from different linguistic backgrounds connect online to practice speaking each other's languages. Indeed, Cando & Tovar (2021) express that it's a digital platform for learning languages where two individuals, each with a different native language, work together to help each other learn their respective languages through mutual cooperation. As the authors claim E-tandem is commonly used with the purpose students learn a foreign language, whereas it is also applied to acquire knowledge and enhance their language and communication skills (Cando & Tovar, 2021). Nevertheless, it is mainly focused on developing and enhancing speaking production. Furthermore, unlike the traditional language exchanges educational institutions used to foster; E-tandem leverages digital platforms to facilitate real-time interaction. In summary, the language learners are reunited with native speakers of their target language online, so the interchange experience can be the most similar to face-to-face interaction by using Zoom, and students can improve their speaking skills when practicing the language.

However, using the E-tandem program typically involves a few requirements to ensure a productive and effective language exchange. In this case, the first one is a reliable internet connection and the availability of technological devices and tools are needed. As El-Hariri (2014) clearly remarks that E-tandem communication via the Internet may be realized in

different ways. While written interaction through emails or text chats prevailed in the late 1990s and early 2000s, audio-visual telecollaboration, e.g., through video-conferencing, establishes itself more and more these days (p. 24).

The visual and real interchange where “students interact with native speakers by video communication tools such as Zoom, Meet, Skype, Teams, etcetera” (Cando, Tovar, & Vargas, 2020, p. 2) are implemented with computers, tablets, or smartphones, equipped with audio and video capabilities. Secondly, each participant should ideally have a basic understanding of the other's language to ensure smoother interactions and mutual understanding, or at least a “basic knowledge of the foreign language is generally sufficient” (European Commission, 2015, p. 5) to create utterances that deliver the information within the dialogue. Ultimately, adhering to these prerequisites enhances the quality and success of the language-exchanging experience and sets the optimal conditions needed to make possible communication through E-tandem.

At the same time, applying communication in an E-tandem typically involves following certain rules that guarantee a suitable interaction. The first one is explained by Vassallo and Telles (2006) the two languages could not be mixed and were to be kept strictly separate, so one language must be used in learners mutually agreed for some time and later switch to another language for another time, as Cziko (2004) explains “E-tandem partners interact for about fifty minutes (half of the time in their native language and another half in their partner’s language)” (p. 1) for a supportive exchanging environment. The second rule is related to a principle of reciprocity.

This means, participants alternate between assuming the role of a student learning the target language and that of a language expert proficient in their own native language. (Vassallo & Telles, 2006). The reciprocal cooperation is also defined as a relationship in which two partners help each other to progress in his/her learning ability and skill (Brammerts, 2003), which in the context of E-tandem it means the active participation in regular and meaningful language exchange activities like interaction during the virtual sessions. In this way, both learners have the same opportunity to learn the language, develop productive skills, and obtain equal benefits. In other words, the rules of E-tandem emphasize mutual learning, respect, and balanced interaction to foster effective language exchange.

In comparison with other linguistic exchange methods or programs, E-tandem offers several benefits for language learners worldwide. As confirmed by Cando & Tovar (2021) “E-tandem is well received by students because it has a positive impact on second or foreign language

learning” (p. 3), due to “this collaborative interaction allows developing communicative competence, cultural awareness, autonomous learning, and digital skills” (Cziko, 2004, p. 3), which also fosters authentic conversations and cultural exchanges.

These general advantages can be found with the progressive use of E-tandem although the specific benefits are explained by Schug & Torea (2023) who reported that E-tandem has the potential to enhance learner motivation, just like Cando & Tovar (2021) who as well stated that “E-tandem project positively influenced students’ language learning, culture, and motivation” (p. 1). Indeed, the authors explain that in their research “students were motivated and felt happy because it was the first time they had talked to native speakers” (Cando & Tovar, 2021, p. 3). And also claimed that “all of them described their experience in E-tandem learning with expressions such as “fantastic, awesome, innovative”, and “motivating” (Cando & Tovar, 2021, p.1).

In second place, students often find E-tandem sessions appealing for several reasons, as Ryan (2014) explains “participants in his research joined the project because they wanted to speak in their target language with native speakers and develop friendships” (p. 3). The third one is related to a good criticism that makes students learn from their mistakes as Cziko (2004) explains “as in formal classroom environments, E-tandem learning also focuses on form and corrective feedback” (p. 3). It implies that in E-tandem sessions the students have the opportunity to improve their language skills by addressing and correcting their mistakes with the guidance and feedback of their language partners.

Finally, according to El-Hariri (2017) in E-tandem as familiarity and confidence grow over time, there may be long-term positive effects on reducing language anxiety. Overall, students appreciate and enjoy the benefits of E-tandem sessions for their interactive nature, cultural enrichment, and practical application in real language exchange.

Additionally, El-Hariri (2017) in his study about E-tandem and language anxiety, declare sessions negative emotions such as nervousness, anxiety, and self-doubt often stem from a lack of confidence in one's own abilities. Especially in the intermediate level where students have a higher level of anxiety than elementary level students stating that this could be due to pre-intermediate students having a more developed sense of the language and feeling competitive with their peers (Debreli, 2015). In this case, Zul (2023) stated that some reasons that can cause anxiety in English include lack of confidence when speaking English, fear of making mistakes when speaking English, and lack of vocabulary/grammar knowledge.

Despite the negative feelings can show during the interactions, participating in E-tandem learning allows individuals to enhance their language skills considerably by gaining more exposure to authentic communication and having the chance to practice with native speakers (O'Dowd, 2007). Because of peer interaction provides chances for frequent practice in language production, which helps make language use more automatic (Cambridge University, 2012). This may generate a motivation to improve when being corrected. In this regard, Cando, et al. (2020) reported that students who are willing to participate in this program become very motivated during interactions, where participants join the program knowing that they would not be evaluated. In the same way, Khan (2015) affirmed that “since they have all the required linguistic knowledge but due to their lack of confidence, they can speak the target language confidently” (p. 52).

7. METHODOLOGY

7.1 Research approach and level

The current research project employed a quantitative methodological approach as it “quantitative method is used to summarize, average, find patterns, make predictions, and test causal associations as well as generalizing results to wider populations” (Rana et al., 2021, p.2). This research is also exploratory in nature because there is not previous research done to analyze the speaking anxiety on speaking interaction during E-tandem sessions. According to Stebbins (2011) exploratory research involves creating generalizations about the group, process, activity, or situation being studied through inductive reasoning. In this way, this research aims to pioneer the investigation. Furthermore, the research is also descriptive as it seeks to describe the level of frequency and intensity of speaking anxiety observed during these interactions. The descriptive approach enables a detailed examination of how often and to what extent anxiety manifests in these specific educational settings, thereby providing a comprehensive overview of the phenomenon within the sample population.

7.2 Research context and participants

The current project was carried out at the Technical University of Cotopaxi, Pujilí extension. The participating group, made up of 124 students of the Pedagogy of National and Foreign Languages degree from 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th semester, who voluntarily agreed to participate in the

research, was made up of 67.7% women and 32.3% men. The age distribution among the participants was classified as follows: 78.2% were between 18 and 24 years old, 16.1% were between 25 and 29 years old and the rest, which was 5.6%, were over 30 years. Regarding the semester they were in, 36.3% are in the fifth semester, 32.3% are in the seventh semester, 16.1% are in the sixth semester and 14.5% are in the fourth semester. Regarding the level of English, students chose the level that they believe they have, 56.5% have an intermediate level of English B1, 31.5% have an elementary level A1, 8.9% have an upper intermediate level of English B2, 2.4% have a basic level A1 and 0.8% have advanced English C1. The majority of the students, 80.5%, had participated in the E-tandem sessions with the University of Miami, 14.6% participated with Georgetown University, and the minority, which was 4.9%, participated in the sessions with the University of Michigan.

7.3 Data collection instrument

To collect the data, a survey was applied. The questionnaire items adopted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) consisted of 32 items out of 33 items developed by Horwitz, et al. (1986). In this study, 32 question items were taken from FLCAS scale questions because one of the items had almost identical meaning context. Before applying the questionnaire, the respective validation of the instrument was carried out to adapt the instrument according to the research. It was also validated the instrument translation into Spanish, ensuring that the questions were relevant and understandable to the participants without altering their original meaning. The questionnaire was conducted in Spanish to facilitate better understanding and accuracy in the participants' responses. In addition, to ensure data quality, only students who participated more than 3 times in the E-tandem sessions during the 2023 cycle were taken into account. The questionnaire was transcribed to Google Forms for administration.

7.4 Data collection and analysis procedure

The questionnaire data were analyzed by assessing the level of speaking anxiety using the FLCAS questionnaire scale (ranging from 1 to 5), as suggested by Debreli (2016). Each of the 32 items in the questionnaire had a 5-point scale: Strongly Agree (5 points), Agree (4 points), Neither agreement or disagreement (3 points), Disagree (2 points), and Strongly Disagree (1 point). Subsequently, the data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

The results were extracted, by tabulating the level of anxiety of items and of each of the students in categories and ordered according to the different levels of English. The mean and standard deviation were calculated based on the total number of responses from the students ($N = 124$), following the process of adding all the evaluations of each item, dividing them by the number of responses to obtain the mean.

Following this, a general analysis of the data was required to determine the overall mean from the previously obtained means, to identify the most prevalent method. To interpret the frequency level of the mean, Alkharusi (2022) process was followed, which involves using a triple scale of class intervals for interpreting composite scores.

1-2.33= low degree

2.34-3.67= medium degree

3.68-5= high degree

8. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To answer the first research question about the level of anxiety in the oral interactions of English as a foreign language in E-tandem sessions of UTC students, the means of each student's answers were analyzed (See table 2) and the number of students with low, medium, and high level of anxiety were classified in percentages (See table 3).

Table 2

Student's levels of anxiety

Student	N	M	SD	Level
1	32	3,03	0,82	Medium
2	32	4,00	0,00	High
3	32	3,53	0,88	Medium
4	32	3,88	0,66	High
5	32	2,91	1,06	Medium
6	32	2,03	1,23	Low
7	32	2,34	0,70	Low
8	32	3,88	1,13	High
9	32	3,03	0,18	Medium
10	32	3,66	1,00	Medium
11	32	2,28	0,96	Low
12	32	2,03	0,47	Low

13	32	2,19	1,67	Low
14	32	2,22	0,87	Low
15	32	2,59	0,98	Medium
16	32	4,00	0,00	High
17	32	3,09	0,82	Medium
18	32	1,94	1,24	Low
19	32	3,00	0,00	Medium
20	32	3,00	0,00	Medium
21	32	2,63	0,87	Medium
22	32	2,69	1,28	Medium
23	32	3,88	0,34	High
24	32	3,53	0,84	Medium
25	32	3,72	0,68	Medium
26	32	3,00	0,00	Medium
27	32	2,69	1,12	Medium
28	32	3,22	1,56	Medium
29	32	3,63	0,79	Medium
30	32	3,66	0,83	Medium
31	32	3,00	0,00	Medium
32	32	2,66	0,70	Medium
33	32	3,25	0,72	Medium
34	32	2,09	0,78	Low
35	32	3,47	0,84	Medium
36	32	2,44	0,88	Low
37	32	3,63	1,29	Medium
38	32	2,00	1,34	Low
39	32	3,63	0,98	Medium
40	32	1,66	1,31	Low
41	32	3,03	0,93	Medium
42	32	2,81	1,15	Medium
43	32	2,53	1,44	Medium
44	32	2,56	0,80	Medium
45	32	3,19	0,74	Medium
46	32	2,53	0,80	Medium
47	32	2,75	1,30	Medium
48	32	2,03	0,18	Low
49	32	1,00	0,00	Low
50	32	1,97	1,60	Low
51	32	1,75	0,51	Low
52	32	3,66	1,23	Medium
53	32	2,28	1,44	Low
54	32	3,00	0,00	Medium
55	32	2,03	0,18	Low
56	32	2,72	0,77	Medium
57	32	3,00	1,44	Medium
58	32	2,00	0,00	Low
59	32	3,97	0,78	High
60	32	3,31	0,69	Medium

61	32	3,31	0,64	Medium
62	32	3,00	0,57	Medium
63	32	2,03	1,67	Low
64	32	2,97	0,65	Medium
65	32	2,69	0,97	Medium
66	32	2,53	0,62	Medium
67	32	4,13	0,34	High
68	32	1,66	1,75	Low
69	32	3,56	0,50	Medium
70	32	3,84	1,32	High
71	32	3,75	0,80	High
72	32	2,19	1,23	Low
73	32	3,06	0,76	Medium
74	32	2,47	1,14	Low
75	32	3,13	0,55	Medium
76	32	3,03	1,89	Medium
77	32	4,25	0,67	High
78	32	2,91	1,00	Medium
79	32	3,75	0,44	High
80	32	2,59	0,67	Medium
81	32	1,00	0,00	Low
82	32	3,91	0,53	High
83	32	2,66	1,62	Medium
84	32	2,13	0,83	Low
85	32	2,00	0,67	Low
86	32	2,78	0,71	Medium
87	32	2,56	1,19	Medium
88	32	2,97	0,78	Medium
89	32	2,53	0,84	Medium
90	32	1,97	1,36	Low
91	32	3,09	1,33	Medium
92	32	3,03	1,20	Medium
93	32	3,16	0,92	Medium
94	32	2,28	0,77	Low
95	32	2,00	0,76	Low
96	32	2,34	1,68	Low
97	32	2,16	1,19	Low
98	32	1,75	1,24	Low
99	32	2,72	0,92	Medium
100	32	2,72	0,52	Medium
101	32	1,75	1,22	Low
102	32	2,66	0,94	Medium
103	32	2,94	1,41	Medium
104	32	2,97	1,33	Medium
105	32	2,72	1,22	Medium
106	32	2,75	0,76	Medium
107	32	3,41	0,80	Medium

108	32	2,78	0,71	Medium
109	32	2,75	0,76	Medium
110	32	2,97	0,82	Medium
111	32	2,03	1,58	Low
112	32	3,44	0,91	Medium
113	32	2,50	0,98	Medium
114	32	4,09	1,15	High
115	32	2,75	1,24	Medium
116	32	2,00	1,70	Low
117	32	4,00	0,00	High
118	32	3,53	0,98	Medium
119	32	2,84	1,19	Medium
120	32	2,97	1,18	Medium
121	32	1,72	1,22	Low
122	32	2,03	1,62	Low
123	32	2,22	0,49	Low
124	32	4,66	0,55	High

Table 2 presents the anxiety levels of 124 students during oral interactions in English in E-tandem sessions, with means ranging from 1.00 to 4.66 and standard deviations between 0.00 and 1.89, reflecting notable variability in anxiety experiences. The majority of students present a medium level of anxiety, and the fact that most students present a medium level of anxiety suggests that, although these students experience some uneasiness during oral interactions in English, this does not reach significant extremes nor is it low enough to be considered minimal. This could indicate that, in general, students are aware of the challenges involved in communicating in a foreign language, but manage their anxiety at a level that, while present, does not become a major obstacle. This tendency towards a medium level could also reflect an adaptation to the context of the E-tandem sessions, where students perhaps feel comfortable enough to participate, although they still experience some apprehension.

Table 3

Percentage of anxiety levels

Level of anxiety	Number of students	Percentage
Low	38	31%
Medium	71	57%
High	15	12%
Total	124	100%

Table 3 shows the overall percentage of anxiety levels of the students. Approximately a quarter (31%) of students exhibit a low level of anxiety, indicating that a significant portion of the student population experiences relatively low levels of stress or anxiety. The majority of students (57%) fall into the medium anxiety category. This finding is notable as it suggests that most students experience a moderate level of anxiety, indicating that although they are not excessively stressed, they face regular challenges and pressures that contribute to their anxiety. A smaller portion (12%) of students experience high levels of anxiety. Although this group is the smallest, it represents a significant concern, as these students may have difficulty interacting in English.

These results suggest that the majority of students tend to feel a medium level of anxiety, indicating that, although they manage stress in an acceptable manner, anxiety remains a predominant concern. This can affect the oral interaction of students, who, although they do not have a high level of anxiety, could face difficulties when speaking in English. Evenly, Kodri (2018) express that “anxiety of students can affect the English-speaking performance” (p. 33). On the other hand, a quarter of the students have a low level of anxiety; This may be because they feel safe interacting orally or because they apply strategies to counteract anxiety. However, a small proportion of students present high anxiety when interacting, which may be due to not yet being completely familiar with speaking with native speakers in English, a lack of self-confidence, a limited vocabulary or little knowledge of strategies that They can help them cope with anxiety. In the same way, Zul (2023) stated that some reasons that can cause anxiety in English include lack of confidence when speaking English, fear of making mistakes when speaking English, and lack of vocabulary/grammar knowledge.

To answer the second question about the factors associated with anxiety in E-tandem interactions, the items of the survey were classified into 5 categories (factors): self-confidence, errors in E-tandem interactions, confusion, motivation and performance.

Table 4

Anxiety and self-confidence

Item	Statement	N	M	SD	Level
1	I was never sure of myself when I spoke in E-tandem interactions.	124	2,61	1,07	Medium
2	I generally felt comfortable during interactions in E-tandem sessions	124	3,67	1,00	Medium

3	I always felt that my peers spoke English better than I did.	124	2,90	1,19	Medium
4	I felt very self-conscious speaking English in front of my E-tandem partner.	124	2,70	1,08	Medium
5	When I was going into the E-tandem sessions I felt confident and relaxed.	124	3,30	1,10	Medium
6	I trembled when I was informed to attend the E-tandem sessions.	124	2,55	1,21	Medium
7	I did not feel nervous when I spoke English with a native speaker in the interactions.	124	3,13	1,13	Medium

Table 4 presents various statements related to anxiety and self-confidence experienced by participants during E-tandem interactions. Participants generally felt a moderate lack of self-confidence when speaking during these sessions ($M=2.61$), yet they reported a medium level of comfort ($M=3.67$) and security ($M=3.30$) before entering the sessions. Despite feeling somewhat comfortable, they often perceived their peers as better English speakers ($M=2.90$) and felt moderately inhibited when speaking English in front of their E-tandem partners ($M=2.70$). Anxiety was also evident, as indicated by trembling when informed about the sessions ($M=2.55$) and feeling panic during unprepared interactions ($M=2.78$).

Participants generally did not feel nervous when speaking English with a native speaker ($M=3.13$), reflecting a moderate level of self-confidence. However, the standard deviations, ranging from 1.00 to 1.21, suggest variability in these experiences. This variability implies that individual differences, such as language proficiency, prior experience, and personal coping mechanisms, significantly influenced their anxiety and self-confidence levels. Nevertheless, self-confidence may increase as they become more familiar with E-tandem. As stated by El-Hariri (2017) in E-tandem as familiarity and confidence grow over time, there may be long-term positive effects on reducing language anxiety.

Table 5

Anxiety and errors in E-tandem interactions

Item	Statement	N	M	SD	Level
1	I did not worry when I made mistakes in E-tandem interactions.	124	2,90	1,12	Medium

2	I was annoyed when my E-tandem partner corrected my mistakes.	124	2,05	1,09	Low
3	I was afraid that my E-tandem partner would correct every mistake I made	124	2,61	1,25	Medium
4	I felt afraid that my E-tandem partner would laugh at me when I spoke in English. in English.	124	2,81	1,20	Medium

Table 5 shows the level of anxiety related to errors made during E-tandem interactions. Participants indicated a medium level of worry about making mistakes ($M=2.90$) and fear that their peers would correct each mistake ($M=2.61$). In addition, they showed a medium fear of being ridiculed by their peers ($M=2.81$). However, the level of annoyance at being corrected by their peers was low ($M=2.05$). The standard deviation ranged from 1.09 to 1.25, indicating moderate variability in responses.

This suggests that, although many participants experienced concern and fear in relation to the errors, not all of them felt upset when being corrected, which may be because they do not feel the pressure of being graded, due to the fact that peer-correction is performed, where they feel more comfortable. Peer-interaction provides chances for frequent practice in language production, which helps make language use more automatic (Cambridge University, 2012). This may generate a motivation to improve when being corrected. In this regard, Cando, et al. (2020) reported that students who are willing to participate in this program become very motivated during interactions, where participants join the program knowing that they would not be evaluated.

Table 6

Anxiety and confusion

Item	Statement	N	M	SD	Level
1	I felt scared when I didn't understand what my E-tandem partner was saying.	124	2,84	1,19	Medium
2	The more I studied for an interaction, the more confused I became	124	2,43	1,13	Medium
3	I felt nervous and confused when I spoke in E-tandem sessions	124	2,55	1,04	Medium
4	I felt nervous when I didn't understand every word my E-tandem partner was saying.	124	2,94	1,17	Medium

5	I felt overwhelmed by the number of rules to learn in order to speak the English language correctly for the E-tandem interaction.	124	2,81	1,12	Medium
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Table 6 shows the level of anxiety related to confusion during E-tandem interactions. Participants reported a medium level of anxiety, with a mean score of 2.84 (SD = 1.19), when they did not understand what their E-tandem partner was saying. This suggests that miscommunication and lack of understanding were significant sources of anxiety. The statement regarding feeling increasingly confused the more they studied (M = 2.43, SD = 1.13) indicates that preparation did not always alleviate their confusion, potentially exacerbating their anxiety. The medium levels of anxiety reported in relation to feeling nervous and confused during interactions (M = 2.55, SD = 1.04) and not understanding every word spoken by their partner (M = 2.94, SD = 1.17) further underscore the impact of communication challenges on their emotional state. The anxiety felt when overwhelmed by the rules of English (M = 2.81, SD = 1.12) suggests that the complexity of the language contributed to their feelings of insecurity and stress.

Overall, these results highlight that confusion and lack of understanding during E-tandem sessions are notable sources of anxiety for participants. The moderate variability in the responses, indicated by the standard deviations, points to individual differences in how confusion or lack of knowledge affects anxiety levels, however nervousness may be the cause of their knowledge being affected when enacting. Additionally, El-Hariri (2017) in his study about E-tandem and language anxiety, declare sessions negative emotions such as nervousness, anxiety, and self-doubt often stem from a lack of confidence in one's own abilities (p. 14).

Table 7

Anxiety and motivation

Item	Statement	N	M	SD	Level
1	I did not mind attending the E-tandem sessions at all.	124	3,48	1,28	Medium
2	During the E-tandem sessions, I was thinking about things that were not related to the interactions.	124	2,54	1,21	Medium
3	I usually did not want to attend the E-tandem sessions.	124	2,32	1,15	Low

4	I did not feel pressured to prepare properly for the E-tandem session.	124	3,05	1,14	Medium
5	I did not understand why several colleagues were upset about having to attend E-tandem sessions.	124	3,08	1,25	Medium

Table 7 based in anxiety and motivation, reveals that participants generally experienced a moderate level of motivation and related anxiety during E-tandem sessions. The statement "I was not at all bothered by attending E-tandem sessions" scored 3.48 on average, indicating that while attendance was generally acceptable, it still involved some level of concern. The medium score of 2.54 for "During E-tandem sessions, I thought about things unrelated to the interactions" suggests that distractions were occasionally present, impacting participant focus. Meanwhile, the lower score of 2.32 for "I usually did not want to attend E-tandem sessions" shows that reluctance to attend was less common, and the average of 3.05 for "I did not feel pressured to prepare adequately" indicates that pressure was moderate but not overwhelming.

These results imply that participants had a generally positive attitude toward attending E-tandem sessions, but faced occasional challenges such as distractions and moderate preparation pressure. The moderate score of 3.08 for confusion about peer annoyance when attending sessions suggests that participants were somewhat aware of peer frustrations, but did not consider it a major problem, as for the most part, they were highly motivated to attend. Similarly, Schug & Torea (2023) reported that E-tandem has the potential to enhance learner motivation.

Table 8

Anxiety and performance

Item	Statement	N	M	SD	Level
1	I was concerned about the consequences of underperforming when I had to interact with more than one partner during E-tandem interactions.	124	3,00	1,23	Medium
2	I felt panic when I spoke without prior preparation during E-tandem sessions.	124	2,78	1,14	Medium
3	I could feel my heart pounding when I had to talk to my E-tandem partner in front of another UTC partner.	124	2,77	1,16	Medium

4	The interaction was moving so fast that I was worried about falling behind.	124	2,71	1,15	Medium
5	I felt more tense and nervous in E-tandem sessions than in any other type of English speaking activity.	124	2,55	1,11	Medium
6	I felt nervous when my E-tandem partner asked me questions that I had not prepared myself to answer.	124	2,89	1,16	Medium
7	I felt embarrassed to speak in E-tandem interactions when I was with another UTC partner.	124	2,65	1,14	Medium
8	Even if I prepared for the E-tandem sessions it made me nervous.	124	2,77	1,17	Medium

Table 8 provides an overview of how anxiety impacts performance during E-tandem interactions. The results indicate that participants experienced a moderate level of anxiety related to their performance. They were particularly concerned about the consequences of underperforming when interacting with multiple partners ($M=3.00$) and felt panic when speaking without prior preparation ($M=2.78$). Additionally, physical symptoms such as a racing heartbeat when speaking in front of another peer ($M=2.77$) and concerns about keeping up with the pace of the interaction ($M=2.71$) were prevalent. Participants also reported feeling more nervous during E-tandem sessions compared to other English-speaking activities ($M=2.55$). Moreover, the data shows that participants were nervous about unprepared questions from their E-tandem partner ($M=2.89$) and experienced embarrassment when speaking in the presence of another UTC peer ($M=2.65$). Despite their preparation efforts, participants still felt nervous ($M=2.77$).

The standard deviations, ranging from 1.11 to 1.23, reveal moderate variability in responses, suggesting that individual differences, such as levels of personal confidence and stress management skills, play a role in the anxiety experienced during these interactions, affecting learners' performance in the sessions, thus necessitating familiarization and generating greater E-tandem participation to improve their performance. Participating in E-tandem learning allows individuals to enhance their language skills considerably by gaining more exposure to authentic communication and having the chance to practice with native speakers (O'Dowd, 2007).

Additionally, the levels of anxiety in English oral interaction according to different levels of English proficiency was analyzed. The responses of the 124 students were analyzed, categorizing their anxiety into low, medium, and high according to the level of English they considered they have. Then, the percentages of students at each anxiety level were calculated for each English proficiency level (See table 9).

Table 9

Student's anxiety according to the English level

English level	Number of students	Level of anxiety		
		Low	Medium	High
Basic A1	3	2 (66%)	1 (34%)	0 (0%)
Basic Elemental A2	39	7 (18%)	28 (72%)	4 (10%)
Intermediate B1	70	17 (24%)	41 (59%)	12 (17%)
Intermediate high B2	11	8 (73%)	3 (27%)	0 (0%)
Advanced C1	1	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Total	124	100%	100%	100%

Table 9 presents the level of anxiety according to the different levels of English. Analysis of the data shows notable variation in anxiety levels as student's progress through the English proficiency levels. At level A1 (Basic), most students report low anxiety, with only a few experiencing medium anxieties. As students advance to level A2 (Basic Elementary), a significant increase in average anxiety is observed, although high anxiety remains low. The Intermediate B1 level stands out for having the greatest amount of medium and high anxiety, indicating a notable increase in anxiety in this intermediate stage. Finally, at levels B2 (High Intermediate) and C1 (Advanced), anxiety decreases considerably, with a prevalence of low anxiety and almost no high anxiety at these advanced levels.

This trend suggests that anxiety tends to be higher at the Intermediate B1 level, possibly due to the transition to more advanced levels of proficiency and the additional pressure to manage the language in more complex contexts. In the same way, Khan (2015) affirmed that “since they have all the required linguistic knowledge but due to their lack of confidence, they can speak the target language confidently” (p. 52). B1 students may experience increased concern about their performance and fear of making major mistakes. In contrast, levels A1 and A2 show relatively low anxiety, while at levels B2 and C1, advanced competence and confidence contribute to a reduction in anxiety.

This indicates that improving language skills and offering targeted support during the intermediate stage may be crucial in helping students better manage anxiety and facilitate their progress to more advanced levels. Similarly, Debreli (2015) found that intermediate level students had a higher level of anxiety than elementary level students stating that this could be due to pre-intermediate students having a more developed sense of the language and feeling competitive with their peers. It’s likely that they are aware that their classmates share a similar level of understanding, so they might worry that any mistakes they make will be corrected or possibly mocked by their friends.

9. RESEARCH IMPACTS

- The results of this research have important implications for the design and implementation of E-tandem programs. The finding that most students experience medium levels of anxiety during oral interaction suggests that this method may be effective in improving communicative competence in a relatively stress-free environment. However, the fact that a quarter of students face low levels of anxiety and a small portion experience high anxiety underscores the need for differentiated pedagogical strategies. These results can guide educators in creating targeted interventions to help students with higher anxiety, thereby improving their learning experience and encouraging more equitable participation.
- Furthermore, this study highlights the importance of addressing emotional factors in foreign language learning. Integrating approaches that account for anxiety and other emotional barriers can contribute significantly to the effectiveness of E-tandem

programs. By developing materials and activities that reduce anxiety and increase student confidence, educational institutions can promote deeper and more sustained learning.

- This approach not only benefits students with high levels of anxiety, but also enriches the educational experience for all participants by creating a more welcoming and motivating learning environment. The insights gained from this research will enable administrators of E-tandem programs to develop strategies to mitigate these challenges. Ultimately, this research provides valuable information for the development of pedagogical practices that optimize both the academic performance and emotional well-being of students in language learning contexts.

10. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 CONCLUSIONS

- Anxiety in oral production is a challenge in learning a second language such as English, manifesting itself through fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, and pressure to communicate effectively, resulting in students' potential underachievement and affecting their ability to participate in meaningful conversations. In the context of E-tandem programs, these challenges can be particularly pronounced, highlighting the need for strategies that specifically address anxiety to enhance the effectiveness of these collaborative learning environments.
- Most of the students present a medium level of anxiety during oral interaction in English in the E-tandem sessions. Although this level of anxiety is not extremely high, it is still a factor that can negatively affect oral production and participation in conversations, limiting students' ability to take full advantage of the learning opportunities offered by the E-tandem.
- Factors affecting student's oral interaction anxiety during E-tandem sessions were identified, such as lack of self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, confusion and performance. These elements generate a sense of insecurity that can inhibit their ability

to communicate effectively. However, despite these challenges, motivation was a positive factor, as students were driven by the opportunity to improve their English and gain confidence in a realistic and collaborative environment.

10.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop and implement specific strategies within E-tandem programs to reduce oral production anxiety. This may include incorporating activities and exercises that promote a supportive and confidence-building environment, such as guided practice sessions and constructive feedback.
- Design interventions that help students increase their self-efficacy and confidence in their language skills. For example, offering personal development workshops focused on communication skills and techniques for managing fear of making mistakes can be beneficial.
- Use motivation as a resource to counter anxiety. Creating opportunities within E-tandem sessions that highlight individual progress and achievements, and offering incentives that celebrate progress, can help keep students motivated and engaged despite emotional challenges.

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