



## **Psychological Barriers Contributing to Students' Poor English Language Speaking Skills**

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The study aimed to investigate psychological barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills at the College of Education and Behavioural Sciences, Haramaya University, Eastern Ethiopia. A descriptive survey research design was employed through a stratified random sampling technique to collect primary data from participants (n = 210) by using a questionnaire. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the collected data. The finding indicated that 75% of the participants agreed upon psychological barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills in Ethiopian Higher Learning Institutions in general and Haramaya University in particular. Students' lack of confidence in English language speaking skills, lack of motivation to speak the English language, fear of mistakes while speaking in English in front of many eyes, shyness, and stage anxiety (psychological barriers) contributed about 88% to students' poor English language speaking skills. There was a statistically significant mean difference between female and male respondents in English language speaking during their senior essay presentation, open defense, and advisory activities. To conclude, fear of mistakes, stage anxiety, shyness, lack of self-confidence, and lack of motivation were the five psychological barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills.

**Keywords:** English language, Haramaya University, psychological barriers, speaking skills, EFL

### **INTRODUCTION**

Since English is a foreign language in our country, Ethiopia, most students especially in our university are not familiar with it (Samira, 2014). Semira (2014) said that students use English more frequently only inside the class and less frequently outside the class where they have limited time to learn English in class. Moreover, they still do not have enough encouragement to practice English outside the class to get familiar with the English language in doing their assignments, term papers, and senior essays. This issue resulted in a problem that makes the graduating class poor in their English language speaking skills. Teaching English language speaking skills means helping learners

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develop their ability to interact successfully in the target language. To do so, one must have communicative competence. Richards, Platt, and Weber (as cited in Nunan, 1999) defined the characteristics of communicative competence to help students enhance their speaking skills, the teacher must help students improve their grammar, enrich their vocabulary, and manage interactions in terms of who says what, to whom, when, and about what. These researchers further stated that the English language is a collection of different skills that support communication between persons. Although the textbooks on the English language in schools are based on communicative knowledge, the capability to speak in this language is shallow (Crystal, 2002, Kusumawati, 2019).

According to Crystal (2002), students cannot interact with people even by using simple sentences in English. These weaknesses in speaking the English language may be due to many reasons. They further stated that the English language appeared as a *lingua franca*; hence many people learn English and it's the only way to move in society because of its importance in many fields. In supporting Crystal's idea, Cook (2005) stated that everyone is well aware of the fact that English is the only rapidly progressing language for global dealings and the medium of instruction in most developing countries including Ethiopia. According to Crystal (1997), English as a medium of instruction is a great deal of the world's information, more importantly in the fields of medicine, sciences, and technology. Most critics like Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, and Perraton (1999) said that English has turned into the primary mode of language of correspondence in business, political issues, organizations, sciences, and the students' community just as being the dominant language of globalization, which has been promoting popular culture. In supporting this idea, Benson and Lor (1999) thought that, as English is the language of business, politics, international communications, sciences in academia, and technologies it becomes the highest rank globally. These are some of the reasons that are too much important for everyone to learn the English language. It becomes the basic need of our routine to move in any society because it is the only way through which everyone interacts easily in the area of academia (Ardiyansah, 2019 Setegne, 2023).

When we talk about the English language, it seems to be that we are talking about the major window by which we get the whole view of the world since it is the first language used in most areas of life. One of the most important skills of this language that leads to effective communication between people is speaking skill. Lasekan (2018) argues that speaking skill is the ability to use oral language to explore ideas, intentions, thoughts, and feelings with other people as a way to make the message clearly delivered and well understood by the listeners. Lasekan (2018) further believed that speaking skills are the most important in a second language, particularly in academic areas at all levels. Therefore, this is why the researcher wanted to conduct the study on the contributing barriers to students' poor English language speaking skills in their senior essay presentations, open defenses, and advisory activities in research courses. Most people who learn the English language have in their minds that they like to master the goal of developing proficiency in speaking skills though it is a difficult task. Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) pointed out that in some ways speaking can be considered the most difficult skill to acquire as it requires command of speech production sub-skills like vocabulary retrieval, choice of grammatical patterns, and sociocultural competence. The

linguists tried to find an appropriate method for teaching the English Language according to the importance of skills from their Perspectives. The views of those who were interested in methods of teaching a language were various. For example, in the grammar-translation method, the concentration was on reading and writing skills whereas in the direct method, the focus was on speaking and listening. The supporters of each method believed that the skills varied according to their importance. Anyhow, they all agreed that any skill is developed through practice, that is (read to read, speak to speak....etc).

Moreover, Wongsuwana (2006) and Setegne (2023) believed that speaking skills can be trained and it does not depend on talent. The linguists and experts in languages wrote many articles and books about the difficulties of learning foreign languages in general and speaking skills in the English language in particular. In Ethiopia, the students started learning English language skills from preprimary schools, primary schools- Cycle I (grades 1 to 4) and Cycle II ( grades 5 to 8) as a subject whereas starting from general secondary schools (grade 9 to 10), preparatory schools (grade 11 to 12) to university level, the medium of instruction is English language. However, the levels of Ethiopian students at all levels have been seemed very weak in all aspects of English language skills in and outside of the classroom. From the researcher's experience as a teacher of preparatory and lecturer of a university for the last 21 years (2 years preparatory schools, 8 years colleges, and the rest 11 years in public universities) in teaching Edifferent English language courses, research courses, psychology courses, and statistical methods in education & psychology at undergraduate and postgraduate levels under the Ministry of Education in Ethiopia, he noticed that the students, in general, do not have the desire to study English language in general and English speaking skills in particular. The research of this paper believes that nowadays, students need to know that the knowledge and skills of the English language are the building blocks of knowledge because the medium of instruction in any field of specialization in the country except the local languages is the English language. Moreover, it is a source of information and the language of the current technologies nationally and internationally in the globalization world. Therefore, students must give special attention to English-language-speaking skills in their academic era for better jobs nationally and internationally as well as for quality information.

According to Khamkhien (2010), several barriers affect students' performance in speaking English fluently. For, instance, lack of adequate and appropriate vocabulary, shyness, nervousness, fear of speaking, and lack of confidence are some of them. Moreover, Harry (2006) stated that anxiety and depression are just two effective barriers that contribute to learning difficulties or are the result of learning difficulties. The impact of persistent failure can adversely affect a student's self-esteem, confidence, perceived self-efficacy, attitude, and motivation. When confronted by certain tasks students may develop anxious feelings and fearing they will fail. In supporting this finding, Setegne (2023) stated that some academic speaking skills such as giving an oral presentation or participating in classroom discussion require a much broader range of vocabulary knowledge, grammatical sophistication, and discourse competence than is the case with typical daily life conversation. Through the researcher's teaching experience under the Ethiopian Ministry of Education for the last twenty-one

consecutive years in different schools, colleges, and universities, he noticed that students have been suffered from using the English language fluently and accurately in presenting research papers and term papers. They have had too many problems that hinder them from mastering English language speaking skills. Therefore, this study was aimed at investigating contributing barriers to students' poor English language speaking skills in their senior essay presentations, open defenses, and advisory activities in research courses.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the contributing barriers to students' poor English language speaking skills in their senior essay presentation, open defense, and advisory activities at Haramaya University, Eastern Ethiopia. Specifically, the specific objectives of this study were to:

- Identify the status of the participants' psychological barriers contributing to their poor English language speaking skills.
- Compare if there are statistically significant mean differences among the five departments in the college on psychological barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills.
- Compare if there are statistically significant mean differences between female and male participants in English language speaking skills in senior essay presentations, open defense, and advisory activities in research courses.
- Compare if there are statistically significant mean differences among the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of participants on psychological barriers contributing to their poor English language speaking in senior essay presentations, open defense, and advisory activities in research courses.
- Find out the extent to which the psychological barriers contribute to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay presentations, open defense, and advisory activities in research courses as explained variable.

## **METHOD**

A descriptive survey research design was employed through a stratified random sampling technique to collect primary data from participants ( $n = 210$ ) by using a questionnaire. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the collected data. This study was conducted at the College of Education and Behavioural Sciences, Haramaya University, Eastern Ethiopia. All the undergraduate third-year education students were invited to participate in the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participation in the study was voluntary. For the present study, the psychological barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking questionnaire (CFQ) was used to determine the associating barriers of students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay presentation, open defenses, and advisory activities. It is a valid and reliable instrument that consists of 8 items representing the five psychological barriers: Lack of confidence, lack of motivation, shyness, fear of mistakes, and anxiety. Participants were asked to rate each source by choosing from five responses, "Strongly disagree", "Disagree", "Undecided", "Agree", and "Strongly agree".

“Agree” and “Strongly agree.” The scoring method assigns marks from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to each of the responses respectively.

Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean scores, percentages, standard deviations, and coefficient of variation) to make a summary of the findings. Moreover, inferential statistics (Independent t-test, One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and factor analysis) were used to compare the difference between two groups (female and male), mean differences among groups (five departments and five different CGPA), and variables explained in the study respectively. The contributing psychological barriers questionnaire was transformed, computed, and summed. The pilot test (reliability and validity) was made independently. A reliability test was made through Cronbach coefficient alpha to assess the internal consistency of the instrument by using SPSS version -20. Thus, the computed alpha value was .95 which was very excellent. It was a very high reliability of the internal consistency of the items so that it was believed that it could generate appropriate and pertinent data for the study.

Table 1  
Reliability test

No	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Standardized Items	No of Items
1	.95	.95	8

On the other hand, the validity of the instruments (content validity) was made by well-experienced professionals (psychologists and educational specialists) who reviewed and commented the items in the questionnaires. In their review, they identified that there were too long sentences and phrases that need to be reviewed and reduced to the manageable size so as to avoid unnecessary misunderstanding among the respondents. Accordingly the researcher amended the comments as per the comment given by these professionals. Long sentences for items 3 and 5 were shortened to accommodate the comments without changing the original meanings. Long phrases of items 2 and 7 were rechecked and amended accordingly without any change in meaning from the original ones. After all these amendments were made, the items were distributed to the participants for responses by the researcher himself.

## FINDINGS

This section of the paper dealt with the quantitative data analysis and its findings. Out of 442 undergraduate students in the College of Education and Behavioural Sciences, 230 students participated and 210 of them completed the questionnaire with a response rate of 91.30%. Out of the 210 complete responses of the participants, 135 (64.29%) of them were males whereas 75 (35.71%) of them were females. The overall mean age was 22.55 years (95% Confidence interval 21.65 - 23.86 years). The overall age ranged from 19 to 27 years. The mean age for the males (23.86 years) was higher as compared to the females (23.65 years). To interpret the Likert scales, the computed mean scores have been interpreted in Table 2. Mean and coefficient of variation scores were employed to determine the psychological barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills using the following range and its equivalent qualitative descriptions where the square bracket indicates inclusion ([]) whereas the bracket indicates no inclusion (Bluman, 2018).

Table 2

Qualitative descriptions of a range of mean scores and coefficient of variability

No.	No Range of scales (mean)	Qualitative Description Psychological Factor	Range of CV (%)	Qualitative Description Coefficient of Variation
1.	(1.00 - 1.50]	Strongly disagree	(0-15]	Very Low
2.	(1.50 - 2.50]	Dis agree	(15-30]	Low
3.	(2.50 - 3.50]	Undecided	(30-45]	Moderate
4.	(3.50 - 4.50]	Agree	(45-50]	High
5.	(4.50 - 5.00]	Strongly agree	Above 50	Vey High

Table 3

Descriptive statistical analysis on psychological barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking

No	Psychological Barriers Contributing' Items:	CV%	Mean	Std
6	I feel anxious when I try to speak in the English language in research courses while I am presenting.	31.54	3.40	1.07
1	I lack interest in English speaking skills in research courses while I am presenting	38.89	3.44	1.34
7	I hesitate when I try to speak the English language to avoid making errors in research courses while I am presenting.	34.44	3.44	1.19
8	I lack confidence when I try to speak the English language in research courses while I am presenting	35.16	3.45	1.21
	I lack English speaking skills in research courses while I am presenting	40.05	3.49	1.40
3	I feel shy when I speak in the English language in research courses while I am presenting.	40.29	3.60	1.45
4	I feel confused when I speak in the English language in research courses while I am presenting	34.08	3.79	1.29
5	I lack of motivation to speak in the English language in research courses while I am presenting	34.95	3.86	1.35

Table 3 revealed that the computed mean scores ( $M_6 = 3.40$ ,  $M_1 = 3.44$ ,  $M_7 = 3.44$ ,  $M_8 = 3.45$ , and  $M_2 = 3.49$ ) of the participants were undecided on items (6, 1, 7, 8, and 2). These indicated that the psychological barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking it was identified that most skills in research courses are more psychological (lack of confidence, lack of motivation, fear of committing mistakes, and stage anxiety) in which they were undecided. From observation checklists, it was identified that most students in the college under the study were very poor in English language speaking skills as the English language has been a medium of instruction in Ethiopian higher learning institutions. However, the computed mean scores ( $M_3 = 3.60$ ,  $M_4 = 3.79$ , and  $M_5 = 3.86$ ) of the participants were agreed upon items (3, 4, and 5).

The psychological barriers contributing to students' English language speaking skills in their senior essay presentation, defense, and advisory activities were more of psychological (lack of confidence, lack of motivation, fear of committing mistakes, and stage anxiety). This is mainly because the English language has been the medium of instruction in which students need to have good knowledge and skills for all Ethiopian

higher learning institutions in general and the study area in particular. Therefore, to be fluent English language speakers, students need to practice, avoid unnecessary fear, anxiety, and develop motivation to speak the language here and there so that they can improve it within a given period of time. Moreover, the computed coefficient of variation scores (40.29% of item 3) was the highest variability among the participants on one of the psychological barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills in research courses whereas the computed coefficient of variation scores (31.54% of item 6) of the participants were relatively a consistency on of the psychological barriers contributing to students poor English language speaking skills in research courses' presentation, defense and advisory activities. The responses found from open-ended questionnaire indicated that Speaking is considered as one of the most fundamental skills which every student learning English aims at improving in order to be communicatively competent in any field of their study. Despite the outstanding effort of the encouragement made by teachers, the majority of the higher institution learners learning English still with lack of abilities to express ideas in a classroom regardless of their understanding about linguistic features of the target language. They also tend to defend themselves against producing utterances or expressing their ideas in the way that cannot expected of them very poorly.

Table 4  
ANOVA on psychological barriers to students' poor English language speaking skills

Sources of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square (MS)	F	Sig.
Between Groups	639.01	4	159.75	1.69	.154
Within Groups	19380.59	205	94.54		
Total	20019.60	209			

Table 4 shows that there was no a statistically significant mean difference among the five departments (Adult Education & Community Development, Educational Planning & Management, Postgraduate Diploma in Secondary School Teaching, Psychology, Special Needs & Inclusive Education) on the contributing barriers to students' poor English language speaking skills in research courses' presentation, open defense, and advisory activities,  $F(4, 205) = 1.69, p > .05$ , one-tailed. This indicated that there were no differences among the five departments on the psychological barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay presentations, open defense, and advisory activities in the college under the study. The responses from the open-ended questionnaire supported the quantitative findings in that the problems of English language speaking skills across the five departments were vvery much similar. The responses of most students have difficulties to use language as a tool of communication to communicate with others, to express their ideas , feelings , and to know others ideas as well. Most students have good level in vocabulary or in grammar , but it is also a question of psychology, their belief, theirr confidence, their strong feelings in themselves. Most of the students have weak motivation, and always are afraid of making mistakes. They never developed confidence in themselves, some are shy, some hesitate just because they feel insecure while using the target language to communicate.

Table 5

Independent Samples t-test between psychological barriers and sex (n = 210, p &lt; .05)

Psychological Barriers	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	Sig.	df	Md	SE	LB	UB
Unequal variances assumed	3.40	.07	-2.12	.035	208	-2.97	1.40	-5.72	-0.21

Table 5 shows that there was a statistically significant mean difference between female and male participants on psychological barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay presentation, open defense, and advisory activities,  $t(208) = -2.12$ ,  $p < .05$ , two-tailed. The responses of the participants from the three open-ended questionnaire summarised that there were differences among female learners and male learners in English language speaking skills. It seemed that relatively females are better than their male counterparts in speaking skills while they have been forced to speak in front of the class by their teachers. The survey indicated that college students had spoken English barriers in two respects: language and non-language barriers. The language barriers included grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary barriers while the nonlanguage barriers mainly included psychological barriers (lack of confidence, lack of motivation, anxiety, fear, lack of interest, and shyness). This qualitative analysis results show that the average value of the non-language barrier was higher than that of the language barrier, indicating that the language barrier was more obvious. The average value of the psychological barriers was the highest, indicating that these barriers had the strongest influence on the spoken English.

Table 6

A descriptive analysis of students' CGPA against psychological barriers

No	CGPA	N <sub>i</sub>	Mean	SD	CV(%)
1.	Below 2.00	10	4.90	0.08	1.63
2.	2.00-2.50	96	3.86	1.31	33.94
3.	2.50-3.00	33	3.85	0.89	23.12
4.	3.00-3.50	27	4.82	0.90	18.67
5.	3.50-4.00	44	3.60	1.25	34.72
	Total	210	3.98	1.22	30.65

Table 6 reveals that the computed mean scores ( $M_2 = 3.86$ ,  $M_3 = 3.85$ , and  $M_5 = 3.60$ ) of the participants agreed upon the psychological barriers contributing to their poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay presentation, open defense, and advisory activities. On the other way, students who scored CGPA between 2.00-2.50, 2.50-3.00, and 3.50-4.00 agreed upon the psychological factor contributing to their poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay presentation, open defenses, and advisory activities. However, the computed mean scores ( $M_1 = 4.90$  and  $M_4 = 4.82$ ) of the participants strongly agreed upon the psychological barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay



presentation, open defenses, and advisory activities. On the other hand, students who scored CGPA below 2.00 and 3.00-3.50 strongly agreed upon the psychological barriers contributing to their poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay presentation, open defenses, and advisory activities. The combined mean score ( $M_c = 3.98$ ) of the participants agreed upon the psychological barriers contributing to their poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay presentation, open defenses, and advisory activities in their research courses. The computed coefficients of variation scores ( $CV_5 = 34.72\%$ ) of the participants were the highest variability among the participants who scored 3.50 – 4.00 CGPA.

However, the computed coefficients of variation scores ( $CV_1 = 1.63\%$ ) of the participants were the most consistent among the participants who scored below 2.00. The combined coefficient of scores ( $CV_c = 30.65\%$ ) of the participants was a medium variability among the participants on the psychological barriers contributing to their poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay presentation, open defenses, and advisory activities in their research courses regardless of their cumulative grade point average.

Table 7  
ANOVA on psychological barriers against CGPA

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2300.85	4	575.21	6.66	0.00
Within Groups	17718.75	205	86.43		
Total	20019.60	209			

\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 7 explains that there was a statistically significant mean difference among the participants' CGPA on psychological barriers contributing to their poor English language speaking skills in research courses' presentation, open defense, and advisory activities,  $F(4, 205) = 6.66$ ,  $p < .05$ , one-tailed. This indicated that students' CGPA were predicted mean differences among them on the psychological barriers contributing to their poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay presentation, defense, and advisory activities.

Table 8  
Multiple comparisons by HSD

(I) Specific Information	(J) Specific Information	Mean Difference(I-J)	SE.	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower bound	Upper Bound
Below 2.00	3.50-4.00	10.43*	3.26	.014	1.46	19.39
2.00-2.50		-7.70*	2.03	.002	-13.27	-2.12
3.00-3.50	3.00-3.50	7.77*	2.41	.013	-14.41	-1.13
2.00-2.50		7.70*	2.03	.002	2.12	13.27
2.50-3.00	2.50-3.00	7.77*	2.41	.013	1.13	14.41
3.50-4.00		9.78*	2.27	.000	3.53	16.04
3.50-4.00	Below 2.00	-10.43*	3.26	.014	-19.39	-1.46
3.00-3.50		-9.78*	2.27	.000	-16.04	-3.53

\*.  $p < .05$ .

Table 8 indicates that a one-way ANOVA result with Tukey test for multiple comparison performed using SPSS version 20. Groups 1, 2, 3, and 4 are compared. The Tukey honestly significant difference (HSD) test was performed under the significant result of ANOVA. Multiple comparison results presented statistical differences between the four groups (1, 2, 3, and 4) although a significant difference existed between groups, there were inconsistent interpretation could have originated from insufficient evidence.

Table 9a

## KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.74
Approx. Chi-Square	2643.27
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df
	28
	Sig.
	.00

Table 9a explains that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) reported a value of .74 which is too good as it approached one. Any value greater than .60 KMO measures of sampling adequacy is considered to be an indication that the data are suitable for factor analysis (Everitt and Hothorn, 2011). The next test result is Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, which reported a chi-square test of 2643.27 at the degree of freedom ( $df = 28$ ) and a significance level of .00. This is a positive result, and the researcher felt more confident that his final factor analysis was going to yield useful information about the factor analysis.

Table 9b

## Communalities

No		Initial	Extraction
1.	I lack interest in English speaking skills in research courses while I am presenting.	1.000	.915
2.	I lack wish in English speaking skills in research courses while I am presenting.	1.000	.881
3.	I feel shy when I speak in the English language in research courses while I am presenting.	1.000	.898
4.	I feel confused when I speak in the English language in research courses while I am presenting.	1.000	.929
5.	I lack the motivation to speak in the English language in research courses while I am presenting.	1.000	.842
6.	I feel anxiety when I try to speak in the English language in research courses while I am presenting.	1.000	.775
7.	I hesitate when I try to speak the English language to avoid making errors in research courses while I am presenting.	1.000	.905
8.	I lack confidence when I try to speak the English language in research courses while I am presenting.	1.000	.902

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

A table of estimated communalities, Table 9b, is used to estimate that part of the variability in each variable that is shared with others, and which is not due to measurement error or latent variable influence on the observed variable. For instance, it can be said that 91.50% ( $0.915 \times 100$ ) of the variance in the variable "Lack of interest in English speaking skills in research courses while they were presenting" can be

explained by the very high loading. This means that 91.50% of the variance in "Lack of interest in English speaking skill in research courses while they were presenting" can be accounted for by the first two components. This is also a positive result, and the researcher felt more confident that his final factor analysis was going to yield useful information about the factor analysis to identify the explained variable. All of the eight variables varied between high to very high loading (.775 to .929).

Table 9c  
Rotated component matrix

	Components	
	1	2
1. I lack interest in English speaking skills in research courses during my presentations, open defenses, and advisory activities.	.931	.220
2. I feel shy when I speak in the English language in research courses during my presentations, open defenses, and advisory activities.	.906	.243
3. I lack of wish in English speaking skills in research courses during my presentations, open defenses, and advisory activities.	.886	.334
4. I feel confused when I speak in the English language in research courses during my presentations, open defenses, and advisory activities.	.737	.621
5. I lack confidence when I try to speak the English language in research courses during my presentations, open defenses, and advisory activities.	.200	.928
6. I hesitate when I try to speak the English language to avoid making errors in research courses during my presentations, open defenses, and advisory activities.	.227	.924
7. I feel anxiety when I try to speak in the English language in research courses during my presentations, open defenses, and advisory activities.	.536	.699
8. I lack for motivation to speak in the English language in research courses during my presentations, open defenses, and advisory activities.	.609	.686
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization; a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.		

Table 9c indicates that the two rotated components were good indicator of psychological barriers in explaining and reproducing the observed correlation matrix. The rotated component-1 contains four items (1, 2, 3, and 4), all of which have a high to very high positive loadings on the first component and low positive loadings on the second components whereas component-2 contains four items (6, 7, 8, and 9) in which all of them have had from a medium to a very high positive loadings on the second components and low positive loadings on the first components. These data again provided good information so as to further factor analysis of the variables under the study.

Table 9d  
Component transformation matrix

	Components	
	1	2
1. Lack of self-confidence	.742	-.670
2. Lack of motivation	-.670	0.742
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization		

Here, the researcher has named the 8 items into two components as per the rotated component matrix of Table 9c. Component-1 includes four items (1, 2, 3, and 4) named “lack of self-confidence” and Component-2 includes four items (6, 7, 8, and 9) named “Lack of motivation”. These were the two well-transformed matrices that the factor analysis identified as the most psychological barriers negatively contributing to students’ poor English language speaking skills in the area under study. From this analysis, it can be identified that the most common psychological barrier contributing to students’ poor English language speaking skills was a lack of confidence. Poor English proficiency, fear of being laughed at, preferring silence, and refusing to be the first to answer questions are all common issues that arise from students' lack of confidence.

The second findings of this analysis was that the second psychological barriers contributing to students’ poor English language speaking skills their lack of motivation. It affects students' motivation to graduate or seek job opportunities, their opinions of the importance of English, their ability to communicate with others, and their confidence in speaking classes. However, a lack in motivation may contributed to an insufficient goal-oriented desire. In the framework of students’ speaking task, motivation is defined as the ability to stay focused on a task for an extended period of time. Moods are the main drivers of motivation, and students who are motivated are more enthusiastic and happy with their assignments, presentations, and other related activities in the classroom as well as outside of the classroom. Students who are highly motivated are more likely to remain engaged for longer periods of time than students who are not motivated. That is why motivated students come up with their whole focus to their tasks by continually learning (Osabiya, 2015; Dahliana, 2019).

Table 9e

## Total variance explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.90	73.79	73.79	3.77	47.08	47.08
2	1.14	14.29	88.08	3.28	40.99	88.08

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Table 9e shows that the researcher saw the eigenvalues for the 8 components out of which only two most important components were extracted. Look at the column called Initial Eigenvalues, and notice the value of 5.90 for Component-1. These eigenvalues (5.90) are equivalent to 73.79% of the total variance when all 8 components are considered. The second row shows the eigenvalues of 1.14 for Component 2, which means that it accounted for 14.29% of the total variance for all 8 components. These percentages were not related to the variance of the first component and the second extracted psychological barriers contributing to students’ poor English language speaking skills all together; therefore, cumulatively, these two components accounted for 88.08% of the variance for all 8 components whereas 11.92% of the variances were not explained ( a unique variance).

## DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate the psychological barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay presentation, open defenses, and advisory activities in research courses. The items that delivered from the lowest to the highest mean scores were shyness, fear, anxiety, lack of interest, lack of motivation, and lack of self-confidence (the major psychological barriers) contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay presentations, open defense, and advisory activities. Contrary to this finding, Juhana (2012) and Siti (2020) found that psychological barriers such as fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, and lack of motivation hinder students from English speaking skills in research courses' presentations, open defenses, and advisory activities. Those barriers, like fear of making mistakes were commonly caused by their fear of being laughed at by their friends. The possible solutions to overcome those psychological barriers that most students believe were motivating them to be more confident in speaking English are worth considering. This finding suggests that teachers should be more aware of their students' hindrance to speaking in research courses' presentations, defense, and advisory activities. They added that motivating students to speak in English, to some extent, encourages them to actively participate in speaking it in the classrooms.

Another research done by Ariyanti (2016) showed that students tend to feel anxious when performing their speaking because they were afraid of making mistakes. The feeling of fear of making mistakes is somehow related to the students' low self-esteem in using English so they often combine their speaking with their mother tongue. These were some of the psychological barriers that hindered students to participate in discussions and presentations because they were too afraid of making mistakes, their being low self-esteem, and low motivation. Hence, they preferred to keep silent in the classroom. From the natural phenomenon that happened in the speaking class, it can be said that students were too worried psychologically to make mistakes in presentations of their senior essays in the research courses. By looking at this phenomenon, teachers should give their students assistance to perform their English speaking better. A previous study by Occhipinti (2009) has also shown that foreign language anxiety was a common debilitating feeling of students in a variety of ways. This was also frequently happening to foreign language learners in many grades from high schools to universities. Particularly, during speaking activities frequently, she thought that the awareness of such a feeling should be heightened and not to be undervalued by teachers and learners. This could be realized through workshops or the adoption of certain teaching methodologies aimed at creating a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom, especially during speaking practices.

The other impressive finding of the study was that there were no differences among the five departments on the psychological barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay presentations, open defense, and advisory activities. Prior research by Matthew & Lawrence (2020) and Al-Khasawneh, (2013) suggested that students' average level of English language speaking skills (49.02%) is significantly inferior to their overall average level of academic performance

(GPA = 64.57%). However, it was identified that there was a statistically significant mean difference between female and male participants on psychological barriers contributing to their poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay presentations, open defense, and advisory activities. Previous research by Lasekan (2018) showed that female learners are more proficient in English language speaking skills during their presentation and debate than their male counterparts. He argued that female learners' attitudes toward English language speaking skills and their self-confidence in most groups are higher than those of male learners.

Several reasons have been given for this trend; one is from a neurobiological point of view which states that two brain areas that deal with language processing are larger in females, and that language is processed in both hemispheres of the female while males favor a single brain half (Scarpino, Hammer, Goldstein, Rodriguez, & Lopez, 2019; Hermaniar & Azkiya, 2021). In agreement with this research finding, Fadhillah's research (2015) found out that students' lack of confidence in studying a foreign language is frequently happens due to their experiences of difficulties while interpreting and interacting with others. Due to this problem, many students in the class are remaining silent. According to Al Nakhlah (2016) and Prasetyaningrum, Jaelani, Asrobi, & Rohmah (2023), the main reason why students lack confidence is because they are not proficient in English, which causes them to feel insecure and ashamed. Another causes of students' poor English speaking skills lack of motivation. Giving students a challenging but manageable task has implications for helping them become persistent or motivated. After successfully finishing one challenge, a student gets motivation and a strong desire to take on new ones. As a result, motivated students will select a task that challenges them appropriately while maintaining an enjoyable challenge. Students feel extremely happy when they complete a task similar to it. Individuals lacking motivation (those who have not experienced early success) will choose a task that is relatively simple and ensures immediate success. Another sign of motivation also was defined by Putri's research (2016). She found that an adult's motivation is significantly impacted by students' degree of dependency. Put another way, students' learning and achievement could be affected from an over-reliance on adults. For example, generally motivated students don't need continual guidance when they experience it difficult to work independently, nor do students who lack motivation. However, Özhan & Kocadere (2020) suggest that teachers' motivation can significantly impact engaging conversations. For example, gaining proficiency in English may help them increase motivation. In addition to these, developing a character basis, confidence, persistence, discipline, and cultural understanding are all useful strategies. To learn a foreign language, students must be motivated by an interest to improve their academic achievement, communication skills, and individual progress (Özhan & Kocadere, 2020; Gulzira, Aysuliu, & Aybek, 2021).

On the other hand, research conducted by Matthew & Lawrence (2020) concerning gender showed that the mean scores of the two sets of English speaking skills on psychological barriers were significantly different, as females ostensibly outperformed their male counterparts. From the factor analysis, it was identified that lack of self-confidence and lack of motivation which contributed about 88% as explained variables

were the two identified psychological barriers contributing to students' poor English language speaking skills. Previous research by Fernando (2007) and Setegne (2023) stated that basically, self-confidence is a psychological and social phenomenon in which an individual evaluates his/her competence and own-self according to some values, which may result in different emotional states, and which becomes developmentally stable but is still open to variation depending on personal circumstances and may also occur in a classroom.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it would appear that the students in the College of Education and Behavioural Sciences, Haramaya University, Eastern Ethiopia, were suffering from psychological barriers (lack of self-confidence, lack of motivation, lack of interest, fear of committing mistakes, shyness, and anxiety) in English language speaking skills during their senior essay presentations, open defences, and advisory activities. Seventy-five percent of them agreed upon the psychological barriers contributing to their poor English language speaking skills during their senior, essay presentations, open defenses, and advisory activities in research courses whereas twenty-five percent of them strongly agreed upon psychological barriers contributing to their poor English language speaking skills during their senior essay presentations, open defenses and advisory activities in research courses. Teachers should identify that the impact of persistent failure in English language speaking skills can adversely affect a student's self-esteem, confidence, perceived self-efficacy, attitude, interest to learn, and motivation. When confronted by certain tasks, students may develop anxious feelings and fear they will fail; however, they have to feel responsible for the weakness in English language speaking skills in their senior essay presentations, open defenses, and advisory activities in research courses. Both students and teachers have to work together to solve the problems that they face in their academic communication skills. Attention should be given to students since they face many obstacles in English language speaking skills by encouraging and motivating them to participate in learning English language speaking skills in any courses that they have been given either in class or outside of the classroom to minimize fear of committing mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of motivation and lack of self-confidence.

The study implied that students frequently experience psychological problems when learning to speak, such as lack of motivation, confidence, fear, shyness, lack of interest to the language, and anxiety. These problems negatively impacted their ability to speak effectively in English, as they often dealt with low self-esteem and anxiety while speaking in front of others. Then, it was led to lack of confidence which was the main cause of their psychological problems and the most important factor influencing their ability to speak English. This means students' lack of confidence in their communication skills comes primarily from their fear of making mistakes, being judged, and being teased by peers in forgetting that learning cannot be happened without committing mistakes. Through committing mistakes that someone learns. Furthermore, students' lack of motivation was also caused by their ignorance of the importance of learning English for personal development, their anxiety when speaking in front of the class, and their belief that their pronunciation was incorrect. Finally, the

study recommends that future researchers look into psychological barriers to English proficiency, taking into account teaching techniques, learning styles, anxiety levels, and dealing with students' speaking difficulties.

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