

Dirassat & Abhath
The Arabic Journal of Human
and Social Sciences



مجلة دراسات وأبحاث
المجلة العربية في العلوم الإنسانية
والاجتماعية

EISSN: 2253-0363
ISSN : 1112-9751

The Impact of Instant Messaging on Decreasing EFL Learners'
Communication Apprehension in 'Comprehension and Oral Production'
Class: The Case of Second-Year Students of the Department of English of the
University of Tlemcen

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تاريخ القبول : 2021-04-22

تاريخ الاستلام : 2020-10-24

ملخص

يسعى هذا البحث إلى فحص أعلى مصادر قلق التواصل لدى متعلمي اللغة الأجنبية في درس " الاستيعاب والإنتاج الشفوي " وذلك من أجل استقصاء نجاعة المراسلة الفورية في خفض مخاوف متعلمي الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية من التواصل. أجريت هذه الدراسة على طلبة السنة الثانية ليسانس بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة تلمسان باستخدام سلم مخاوف درس اللغة الأجنبية (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope,) (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) (1986). ولقد تم استخدام استبيان مراسلة فورية خاصة بالطلبة كأدوات لتجميع البيانات. وأظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن الطلبة الذين أجريت عليهم الدراسة اعترفوا بفعالية المراسلة الفورية في خفض مخاوف التحدث في دروسهم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المراسلة الفورية؛ مخاوف التواصل في الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية؛ درس الاستيعاب والإنتاج الشفوي؛ طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية.

Abstract:

The present research paper aims to examine foreign language learners' top sources of communication anxiety in their 'Comprehension and Oral Production' (COP) class and to investigate the efficacy of Instant Messaging on reducing English Foreign Language (EFL) learners' communication apprehension. The study was conducted with second-year students of the Department of English at the University of Tlemcen using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) and a students' Instant Messaging questionnaire, as data collection tools. The results of the study reveal that the research informants confess the effectiveness of Instant Messaging in decreasing their speaking anxiety in their class .

Keywords: instant messaging; EFL communication apprehension; COP class; EFL students .

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays English, as a universal language, is seen as a vital medium for international communication which enables people around the globe to keep up with today's age of information. Actually, this non-stop need leads to a growth of interest in the foreign language teaching profession. Abundant studies have tackled effective approaches to foreign language teaching and

curriculum development and most assume that effective EFL learning and use is more than a matter of linguistic competence. Yet, it seems to be common practice that foreign language teachers frequently neglect the conclusions drawn from such studies and give great importance to the development of students' four basic language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading and writing; focusing on student's test-taking skills and neglecting their communication

apprehension, which seems the most threatening aspect that poses particularly great difficulties to EFL learners. Up till now, countless research has been carried out on the concept of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) due to the negative connection between high levels of anxiety and foreign language achievement in general and communication in particular.

2. Research Problem and Strategy

This article among many others is conducted to find out a way to help EFL students reduce anxiety and grow more confident while speaking English. A factor one believes may help to reduce speaking anxiety is a sense of informal learning environment by means of synchronous computer-mediated communication on English; namely online social networks such as Facebook, MSN, Skype and the like. The researcher believes that when an EFL learner speaks in English in the presence of his mates and teacher, he feels anxious because he is more self-conscious and chatting in writing (text) and/or speech (audio, video) appears to reduce anxiety for anxious learners first outside the classroom and then inside it since the less formal setting these online social networks have, creates a relaxing communication and learning environment that engage EFL learners into more speaking and less anxiety. Accordingly, this research tends to answer three questions: a) Are there any statistically significant differences in the degree of learners' communication apprehension among EFL who use IM and those who do not? b) Does IM help decreasing EFL learners' communication apprehension in their OP class? c) What are the target learners' perceptions on the impact of IM in reducing their speaking anxiety? But before

finding out about all of this, the article will proceed with a review of the related literature.

3. Literature Review

This theoretical section begins with the review the literature on the concept and the effects of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) on learners, in general and communication apprehension in particular, followed by definitions and benefits of some popular I.M. services, as mediated tools for the problem in question.

3.1. Defining Foreign Language Anxiety

A considerable amount of research has dealt with the term 'anxiety' and most studies consider it as a negative factor that affects the process of second and foreign language acquisition. To start with, Spiel Berger (1983) defines anxiety as the state of tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry connected with the excitability of the nervous system. Yet, Scovel (1978) argued the point that anxiety is not easy to define in a simple sentence though we all have experienced anxiousness. For Scovel, anxiety can only be "associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt apprehension or worry" (as cited in Brown 2000, p. 151).

In foreign language learning situation, Gregersen (2005) admits that anxiety has a negative effect on anxious learners as it reduces their proficiency and makes their study less enjoyable due to the arousal of uneasiness feelings. According to McIntyre (1995, p. 96) anxiety can create a division in the anxious learners' attention as they need to focus on both the task at hand and people's reactions on it. A good example is when an EFL student is asked by his/her teacher to answer a question. In this situation, the anxious student's attention is

divided between finding an answer to the target question and evaluating the social reactions done by the student's classmates once the response is given. As a consequence, this student cannot do well in his/her learning and this pushes him/her to perceive the learning of English as difficult.

Horwitz , Horwitz and Cope 1986 argue that FLA belongs to situation-specific anxiety (one of the three perspectives from which research studies on anxiety are conducted). Unlike the other two perspectives, namely trait anxiety and state anxiety, situation-specific anxiety and as its name implies, it is situational and provoked (rose) from particular sources. To better identify and measure FLA Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1986, developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (F.L.C.A.S). The latter contains 33 question items which ask informants to respond to situations peculiar to foreign language learning anxiety and reflects the three component of FLA, namely, (1) communication apprehension, (2) fear of negative evaluation and (3) test anxiety. These parts are identified by researchers like (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope 1986; McIntyre & Gardner, 1989) in order to divide the concept of FLA into researchable issues. As EFL learners' classroom communication apprehension is the scope of this research, only two components of F.L.A., namely, communication anxiety and fear of negative evaluation are given attention in this research paper.

3.1.1. Communication Apprehension

According to McCroskey (1987) communication apprehension refers to a fear or anxiety experienced in real or anticipated communication with other people. He adds

that this anxiety is obviously relevant in second or foreign language learning milieus. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) explained that in English classes where learners have little control of oral communication and their language performance is all the time controlled by both the teacher and the classmates, communication apprehension or anxiety is subject to progress since EFL learners' oral tasks include not only learning the target language but also performing the target language as well. Now, it is clear that communication anxiety in foreign language classrooms is different to other language learning situations. To put it in another word, speaking is anxiety provoking in foreign language activities (McIntyre & Gardner, 1991). In a study conducted by Daly (1991) and Young (1986) results showed that most foreign language learners are especially anxious when they speak in front of their teacher or classmates. As to listening, it seems to be another anxiety-provoking situation since students often have difficulty in understanding others. Similarly, McIntyre and Gardner (1989) indicate that foreign language learners' communication apprehension is reflected in learners' inability to understand others and make themselves understood alike, as oral communication involves listening and speaking.

3.1.2. Fear of Negative Evaluation

Watson and Friend (1969, p. 449) define fear of negative evaluation as "apprehension about others' evaluation, distress over their negative evaluations and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively". Frequent occurrence of this anxiety is in tests and in whatever social evaluative situations like job interviews or while speaking in a foreign language class.

For this, McIntyre and Gardner (1991) propound that fear of negative evaluation is closely related to communication apprehension. Actually, fear of negative evaluation is likely to occur when foreign language students are less sure and/or not fully prepared to speak, since they doubt about their ability to make a good impression on their teacher and classmates. Aida (1994, p. 157) finds out that some students with extreme fear evaluation might avoid attending foreign language classes to keep away from anxiety situations, while others “sit passively in the classroom, withdrawing from classroom activities that would otherwise enhance their improvement of the language skills.” Therefore, foreign language learners feel fear of negative evaluation partly due to their lack of confidence on themselves and partly because of the expectation of being negatively evaluated by their teachers and peers.

To take a step forward helping out anxious EFL learners grow with more confidence and less anxiety while speaking in public, listening or learning a verbal message in their English class, the investigator believes that the target language learners' frequent use of Instant Messaging networks may decrease such learners' difficulties in speaking English. In other words, the researcher supposes that the less controlled, i.e., informal, environment of Instant Messaging enables learners to grow with more control of oral communication in English outside the classroom to later grow more confident and less apprehensive while interacting in English with their mates and teacher in the EFL classroom.

3.2. Instant Messaging

Instant Messaging, abbreviated IM, is a form of synchronous Computer Mediated Communication¹. IM enables oneself to create a sort of private chat-room with another participant in order to interact through the Internet at a given point of time using text-based communication. While often confused with chatting, there exist some clear cuts between IM and chat-rooms. IM conversations take place between two people who exist on each other's buddy or contact list whereas chat-room conversations involve multiple people who can be anonymous and do not need to be invited into the conversation. A buddy list in IM allows oneself to see which of your friends is online to start a conversation with. Some IM programs like Skype, for instance, allow you to use a webcam and microphone to make audio and video chats. MSN Messenger, Yahoo! Messenger and Skype are among the well-known IM applications. Unlike many social networking websites, Facebook has Instant Messaging integrated and that makes it among the top IM applications.

3.2.1 Facebook

Facebook is a social networking website that allows registered users to keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. Besides, it enables members who have common interests to find each other and interact. People use Facebook to create profiles, post photos and video, share links, and exchange information. That is to say, people can elaborate within the

¹ Its short form is CMC. It refers to human-human communication that uses computer network communication in the Internet and

the World Wide Web to exchange text, images, audio and video. CMC can be synchronous or asynchronous. In synchronous CMC all participants are online at the same time, such as Skype. Asynchronous CMC, however, occurs with time constraints like, emails.

system and chat with others (Steller, 2008). Facebook chat is a free service that enables its users to conduct instant message-based conversations with other Facebook friends. In 2008, this social network added a chat sidebar that facilitates the initiation of both Facebook chat and Facebook video chat.

3.2.2 Windows Live Messenger (WLM)

Windows Live Messenger, previously called MSN Messenger ¹, is an IM that offers text messaging, file sharing, voice and video calling and offline notifications. WLM users can instant message with each other and with Yahoo! Messenger users, too. (Windows Live Messenger; 2003-2018).

3.2.3 Yahoo! Messenger

Yahoo! Messenger, which is sometimes, abbreviated Y! M or YM was originally launched under the name Yahoo! Paper on March 9th, 1998 by Yahoo as an IM service (Yahoo! Messenger, 2018). Other features of Yahoo! Messenger include PC-to phone calling, PC-to PC phone calling, plug-ins, voice mail, file sharing, webcams and chat-rooms (Yahoo! Messenger, 2003-2018).

3.2.4 Skype

Skype is a free Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service and software application. It was founded in August 2003 (Skype, 2018). It offers free calls between

subscribers across Internet connection. In addition to standard telephone calls, Skype allows file transfers, IM, video chat and videoconferencing using desktop, computers, notebooks, tablet computers and other mobile devices, including mobile phones (Skype, 1999-2018).

¹ It is an IM service. It was launched in the mid-1990s. MSN Messenger evolved into Windows Live Messenger in 2007.

4. Research Methodology

The research methodology of the current study will be presented under the main headings that follow: research objectives; research questions; research hypotheses; participants; data collection instruments; data collection procedures and data analysis procedures.

4.1. Objectives of the Research

This research is conducted to:

- Investigate on whether there is significant difference in the degree of speaking anxiety between EFL students who use IM and those who do not.
- Examine EFL students' opinions towards IM in decreasing their speaking anxiety.

4.2. Research Questions

The present study seeks to find answers to the following questions:

- Are there any statistically significant differences in the degree of learners'

communication apprehension among EFL who use IM and those who do not?

- Does IM help decreasing EFL learners' communication apprehension in their COP class?
- What are the target learners' perceptions on the impact of IM in reducing their speaking anxiety?

4.3. Research Hypotheses

Preliminary answers to the above questions are embedded in these hypotheses:

- There might be considerable differences in the degree of learners' EFL communication apprehension between students who IM and those students who do not.
- IM might decrease EFL learners' speaking anxiety in the OP class?
- EFL learners' would acknowledge the impact of IM in reducing their speaking anxiety.

4.4. Participants

A total of 40 students enrolled on the academic year 2018 -2019 participated on the study. The students were second year undergraduate learners of the Department of English at the University of Tlemcen (country of Algeria). Second year students were selected in conducting this research as they are relatively more experienced than first year students for having taken two semesters of learning English classes in general and that of COP in particular in their first year university studies. Male and female participants composed 15 % (n= 6) and 85% (n=34) of the population respectively. Their age ranged between 18 and 21 years-old.

4.5. Data Collection Instruments

Two instruments were used to investigate the effectiveness of IM in decreasing the students' level of speaking anxiety when in the COP classes. The first one was the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) which was designed by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope in 1986. This scale was used for its high validity and reliability in measuring foreign language classroom anxiety. The FLCAS is a standardized 33-item survey that assesses levels of anxiety related to three areas: (1) communication apprehension, (2) test anxiety and (3) fear of negative evaluation. As COP is the underscored on this study, the researcher attempted to modify some words in this survey and wrote, for example, 'COP class' instead of 'English class' or 'my class'. The researcher used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 "Strongly Agree" to 5 "Strongly Disagree" to score 9/33 statements which are negatively keyed for anxiety in FLCAS (these are items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28 and 32). The others are negatively keyed to anxiety and they are 24 items. These were also calculated using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 "Strongly Disagree" to 5 "Strongly Agree". The range of this scale is from 33 points (minimum) to 165 points (maximum). Therefore, the higher the total points were, the more anxious student was.

The second research tool was a students' IM experience questionnaire. It was completed only by the students who use IM. This questionnaire intends to investigate the participants' general IM experience, especially those experiences related to the learners' COP learning, and their EFL communication skills and speaking anxiety when in COP class.

4.6. Data Collection Procedures

To collate the necessary data, forty (40) printed copies of both FLCAS survey and an IM experience questionnaire were stapled together and distributed by the investigator to the participants in question while adequate time was given to them to complete them with the required information. Before handling the questionnaires to the sample population; the students were informed that the completion of the research instruments was purely voluntary. In addition, they were asked to rank their opinions in the FLCAS survey and to answer the questions in the IM experience questionnaire as frankly as they can if they choose to take part in this study.

At first, all the research subjects were asked to fill in FLCAS survey and then the IM experience questionnaire on condition that they are active users of IM network services or application. Therefore, the students who do not use IM networks fell in only the FLCAS survey not the IM experience questionnaire. To increase reliability of the questionnaires, an oral explanation of the written instruction in both questionnaires was given by the researcher to the participants in each time they started to fill in a questionnaire.

4.7. Data Analysis Procedures

The data for the forty (40) FLCAS surveys were coded and calculated to answer the first research question of the current investigation. It is worth to mention again that when the items to anxiety of FLCAS were negatively keyed to anxiety; the scores were computed using a 5-point scale with 1 being 'Strongly Agree' to 5 being 'Strongly Disagree'. Responses were reversed and then calculated when the items of the designed questionnaire were positively

keyed to anxiety (see section 4.4 on page 5). To answer the second and third research questions, descriptive statistical analysis (for example, frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation) was used to quantitatively analyze the total responses of all items in FLCAS survey using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 16). While the results of the questions of the IM experience questionnaire were compiled in pie-charts.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To examine the students' speaking anxiety level in COP class, all research informants' scores of the FLCAS were computed. In this study, the mean of the whole participants' communication apprehension was 92.53. In fact, the findings in former studies which used the FLCAS to examine learners' language anxiety at high school level, Aida (1994), Liao (1999) and Chang (1999) got 96.7, 97.79 and 97.78 respectively for the mean of all their research subjects, which means that they were more anxious in comparison with the participants of the current research. This is may be because the majority of the participants of the present study were active users of IM networks and applications (see Table 1).

Table 1. Research Participants: IM Users and Non IM Users

Group	Participants' Number
IM Users	25
Non IM Users	15
Total	40

To answer the first research question of this study, the minimum, maximum and mean scores obtained from FLCAS of IM users and non-IM users were calculated, as it was described earlier in the section of data analysis procedures, to find out whether there were any differences on students' level of anxiety in COP class between those students who use IM and those who do not. Descriptive statistics in table 2 shows that the participants did not report mutual amounts of foreign language communication anxiety for the two categories in question. As can be observed in the table below, the

non-IM users reported the overall mean score of 93.86 for the FLCAS survey with a minimum of 58 points and a maximum of 132 points. While, IM users got the overall mean score of 91.2 for the same survey with a minimum of 51 points and a maximum of 124 points. It should be mentioned, therefore, that IM users experienced less communication anxiety in their COP class (mean = 91.2) in comparison with non-IM users (mean = 93.86). The percentage and mean scores of each item in FLCAS of IM users and non-IM users are presented in Tables 3 and 4 correspondingly.

Table 2. A Comparison of the overall Minimum, Maximum and Mean Scores in EFCAS between IM Users and Non IM Users

Scores in FLCAS	Non-IM Users			IM Users		
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
	58	132	93.86	51	124	91.2

5.1. Discussion of IM Users' FLCAS Top Five Results

In this investigation, the top five situations that make students (IM users' group) more apprehended when in COP class are embodied in items 10, 33, 15, 29 and 20, respectively. Initially, the results in Table 3 demonstrate that COP test anxiety is the situation that makes IM users the most anxious with a top mean of 4.12 for item N° 10 'worry about the consequences of failing my COP class.' These participants do worry more about their COP test than their COP class due to the high coefficient of the module itself, being 5, the excessive expectation of test results or for an unlikable test experience in the past. Furthermore, the participants attribute low apprehension in COP class in comparison with COP test for the fact that they are active users of different IM services and applications. That is to say, such students have developed some communication skills and learned a set of English words and frequent expressions through the use of IM and this have helped them grow on more confident in speaking English and in managing communicative discussions.

Later, the participants experienced a relatively significant amount of speaking anxiety (mean = 3.48) whenever they were asked to answer abrupt questions given by their COP teacher (item N° 33). Subsequently, the participants endorsed the statements *'I get depressed when I don't understand what the OP teacher is correcting'* (Mean = 3.44) and *'I get nervous when I don't understand every word the OP teacher says'* (Mean = 3.40) to show that anxiety in COP can impede even their listening comprehension. Another communication anxiety provoking situation was identified in this study was represented in item N° 20, *'I feel my heart pounding when I am going to be asked to speak in O.P. class'* (Mean = 3.36). These students were embarrassed and anxious while speaking because they felt afraid of being negatively judged by everyone looking at or listening to them.

Table 3. IM Users' Mean and Percentage Scores of FLCAS

N	Items	IM users					Mean
		Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Average %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking my COP class.	-	16	16	40	28	2.20
2	I don't worry about making mistakes in the COP class.	20	32	16	16	16	2.86
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be asked to speak in the COP class.	08	08	36	40	08	2.68

4	I am afraid when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the COP class.	16	36	12	28	08	3.24 •
5	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more COP class.	60	24	16	-	-	1.56
6	In the COP class, I think of things that are unrelated to the lesson.	08	20	28	36	08	2.88
7	I think that my classmates 'English' is better than mine.	24	24	28	04	20	3.00 •
8	I am usually at ease during tests in the COP class.	-	44	36	20	-	2.72
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in the COP class.	20	12	44	20	04	3.24 •
10	I worry about the consequences of failing my COP class.	40	44	08	04	04	4.12 *
11	I don't understand why						

	some people get so upset over COP class.	16	44	28	08	04	2.36
12	In COP class, I am so nervous that I forget what I know.	20	24	32	16	08	3.36 •
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my COP class.	04	12	32	28	24	2.44
14	I will not be nervous when speaking with native English speakers.	20	28	36	12	04	2.52
15	I get depressed when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	16	44	20	12	08	3.44 •
16	Ever if I am well prepared for COP class, feel anxious about it.	16	16	28	20	20	2.84
17	I often feel like not going to my COP class	-	04	16	24	56	1.68
18	I feel confident when I speak in COP class.	44	24	24	04	04	2.00
19	I am afraid that my English teacher will	20	16	16	32	16	2.92

	correct every mistake I make.						
20	I feel my heart pounding when I am going to be asked to speak in COP class.	28	20	20	20	16	3.36 •
21	The more I prepare for an English test, the more confused I get.	20	16	16	28	20	2.80
22	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for COP class.	20	24	32	08	16	2.76
23	I always feel that my classmates speak better English than I.	12	12	40	28	08	2.96
24	I feel shy when speaking English in front of other students.	24	04	24	08	40	2.68
25	COP class moves so quickly that I worry about getting left behind.	24	20	28	16	12	3.28 •
26	I feel tenser and have more pressure in COP class than in	04	24	08	28	36	2.28

	other classes.						
27	I get nervous when I speak in my COP class	08	12	28	28	24	2.40
28	Before O.P. class, I feel confident and relaxed.	36	40	24	-	-	1.80
29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the COP teacher says.	16	24	36	20	04	3.40 •
30	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.	08	20	48	24	-	3.12 •
31	I am afraid that my classmates will laugh at me when I speak English.	04	20	12	16	48	2.08
32	I feel easy when native English speakers are with me.	20	24	40	16	-	2.52
33	I get nervous when the COP teachers ask questions which I haven't prepared in	16	32	36	12	04	3.48 •

	advance .						
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COP = Comprehension and Oral Production

* = Mean is ≥ 4 .

● = $3 \geq \text{Mean} < 4$.

5.2. Discussion of Non-IM users' FLCAS Top Five Results

The top five speaking-anxiety provoking situations for the group of non-IM users are represented by statements: 28 (mean=4.40), 17 (mean=4.33), 10 (mean=4.27), 25 (mean=3.80) and 20 (mean=3.33). The results of their FLCAS reveal that statements 28 '*Before OP class I feel confident and relax*' and 17 '*I often feel like not going to my OP class*' are highly supported by the group under question. Unlike IM users, these students are extremely stressed because they do not simply feel anxious about their COP test or while speaking English in COP class, but they do not want to even attend this class despite the fact that the COP class has a coefficient of 5 and has a great impact in their general average. The researcher believes that the non-IM users' top anxiety situation may be different if they were active users of IM services and applications. This is because, the group of IM users' top anxiety provoking situation was rather COP test anxiety, which was totally different from the top anxiety provoking situation of the group of non-IM users. As it can be observed from Table 4, in statement N° 10 the participants' COP test anxiety is the second source of their apprehension (mean= 4.27). With regard to IM users, the mean of the same statement in Table 3 is relatively lower (4.12) than the group of non-IM users.

Based on the results of both groups, IM use proves to have an impact in decreasing students' COP class and test anxiety. Nevertheless, the results responding to item N° 20 in Table 4 and 3 are with no significant difference between both categories. Actually, the mean score of statement N° 20, '*I feel my heart pounding when I am going to be asked to speak in COP class*' is 3.36 for the category of non-IM users and of 3.33 for the category of IM users. This means that non-IM users and IM users experience almost similar amount of fear of negative evaluation.

Table 4. Non-IM Users' Mean and Percentage Scores of FLCAS

N	Items	Non- IM users					Mean
		Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Average %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking my COP class.	7.1	28.6	21.4	28.6	14.3	2.86
2	I don't worry about making mistakes in the COP class.	42.85	7.1	14.3	21.4	14.1	2.57
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be asked to speak in the COP class.	13.3	40	13.3	13.3	20	3.07 •
4	I am afraid when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the COP class.	26.7	6.66	33.3	26.7	6.66	3.20 •
5	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more COP class.	53.3	33.3	13.3	-	-	1.60
6	In the COP class, I think of things that						

	are unrelated to the lesson.	-	6.66	20	20	53.33	1.80
7	I think that my classmates 'English' is better than mine.	6.66	26.6	26.6	20	20	2.80
8	I am usually at ease during tests in the COP class.	20	6.66	40	6.66	26.66	3.13
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in the COP class.	20	6.66	13.3	40	20	2.67
10	I worry about the consequences of failing my COP class.	53.3	33.3	-	13.3	-	4.27 *
11	I don't understand why some people get so upset over COP class.	40	13.3	26.66	13.3	6.66	2.33
12	In COP class, I am so nervous that I forget what in know.	26.66	13.3	13.3	20	26.66	2.93
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer	13.3	-	20	33.3	33.3	2.27

	answers in my COP class.						
14	I will not be nervous when speaking with native English speakers.	26.66	33.3	13.3	13.3	13.3	2.53
15	I get depressed when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	26.66	20	20	20	13.33	3.27 •
16	Ever if I am well prepared for COP class, feel anxious about it.	33.3	-	33.3	20	13.3	3.20 •
17	I often feel like not going to my COP class	53.3	26.66	20	-	-	4.33 *
18	I feel confident when I speak in COP class.	40	26.66	20	-	13.3	2.20
19	I am afraid that my English teacher will correct every mistake I make.	26.66	-	20	13.3	40	2.60
20	I feel my heart pounding						

	when I am going to be asked to speak in COP class.	40	-	26.66	20	13.3	3.33 •
21	The more I prepare for an English test, the more confused I get.	20	13.3	13.3	20	33.3	2.67
22	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for COP class.	20	33.3	13.3	26.66	6.66	2.67
23	I always feel that my classmates speak better English than I.	6.66	6.66	46.66	20	20	2.60
24	I feel shy when speaking English in front of other students.	26.66	20	26.66	-	26.66	3.20 •
25	COP class moves so quickly that I worry about getting left behind.	46.66	20	6.66	20	6.66	3.80 •
26	I feel tense and have more pressure	13.3	13.3	13.3	33.3	26.66	2.53

	in COP class than in other classes.						
27	I get nervous when I speak in my COP class	-	-	26.66	6.66	66.66	01.60
28	Before COP class, I feel confident and relaxed.	-	-	13.3	33.3	53.33	4.40 *
29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says.	26.66	20	20	13.3	20	3.20 •
30	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.	33.3	-	33.3	26.66	6.66	3.27 •
31	I am afraid that my classmates will laugh at me when I speak English.	6.66	6.66	13.3	6.66	66.66	1.80
32	I feel easy when native English speakers are with me.	26.66	20	40	6.66	6.66	2.47

33	I get nervous when the English teachers ask questions with I haven't prepared in advance .	20	26.66	13.3	26.66	13.3	3.13 ●
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COP = Comprehension and Oral Production

* = Mean is ≥ 4 .● = $3 \geq \text{Mean} < 4$.

To find out whether IM services and applications use have an impact on decreasing speaking anxiety in COP class (research question 2), the minimum and maximum mean scores of all items in the FLCAS of both IM and non-IM users were compared. As it can be observed in Table 4, there are three items that have a mean ≥ 4 while there is only one item in Table 3 that has such score value. The symbol * was used to mark these scores while this symbol ● was used to spot the items that their mean is $3 \geq$ and < 4 as it is shown at the end of both tables. The minimum and maximum mean scores of these items in the FLCAS of non-IM users vary between 1.60 and 3.80 whilst those of IM users are between 1.56 and 3.48. Now it is clear that non-IM users exceed IM users in terms of the different reported amount of speaking anxiety in COP class and these findings prove that communication apprehension decreased in the IM users' group.

5.3. Discussion of the Participants' Perceptions on IM Usage

To answer the third research question involving the current study, namely 'what are the target learners' perceptions on the impact of IM in reducing their speaking anxiety?' data of the students' IM experience questionnaire were considered. Actually, questions 1 – 3 intended to provide information on the type, seniority, and frequency of the IM network students use the most while questions 4 - 7 sought views of students on the impact of IM networks in boosting their communication skills and reducing their speaking anxiety when in COP class. Results of the first three questions of the questionnaire were tabulated while the results of questions 4 – 7 were compiled in the pie-charts below.

The findings of questions 1-3 of the students' IM experience questionnaire reveal that a great bulk of students are Facebook users who have used this site for a period ranging between four to six years so far as a daily activity (see Table 5).

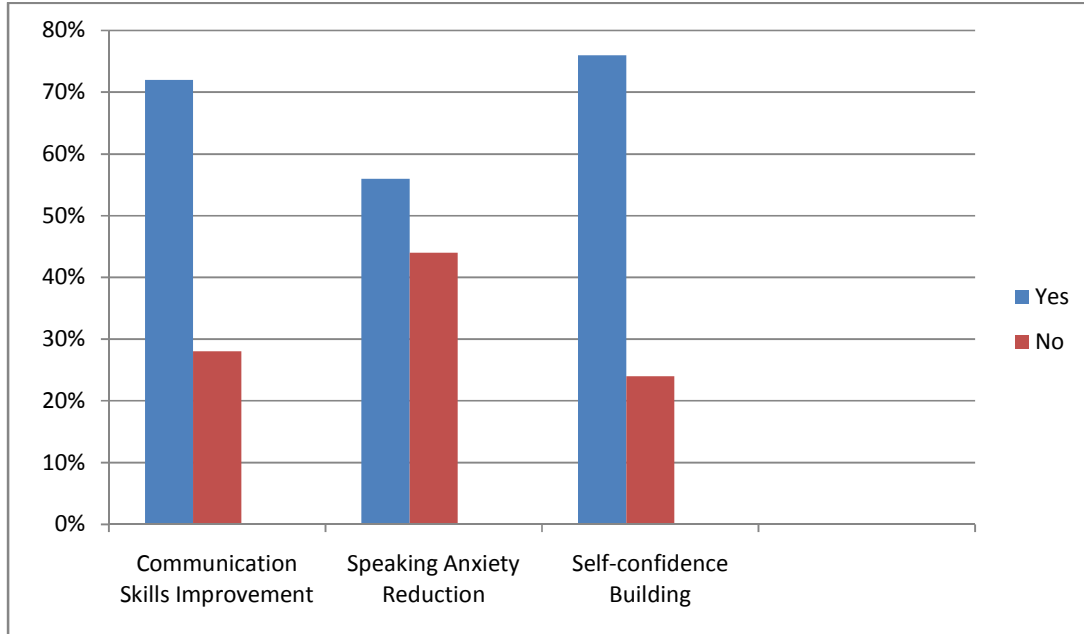
Table 5. Students' IM Network Type, Seniority, and Frequency of Use

IM Network	%	Seniority of IM Network Usage	%	Frequency of the IM Network Usage	%
Facebook	68%	4-6 years	56%	Often	56%
Skype	16%	1-3 years	32%	Always	12%
Windows Live Messenger	4%	7- 10 years	12%	Sometimes	32%
Other	/	Other	/	Never	/

These findings concur with the research of Tess (2013); Dahlstrom, et al. (2011); Duggan and Brenner (2012); Hargittal (2007); Sanchez, Cortijo and Javed (2014) where it was found that Facebook is the main social media preference amongst higher education students and with the study by Willey and Sisson (2006); Alhazmi and Rahman (2013); Junco (2012); Al-Dheleai and Tasir (2017) who reported about the daily activity of students on Facebook.

In regard to the query about the impact of IM networks in reducing students' speaking anxiety and fostering their communication skills together with self-confidence when in COP class (questions 4-7 of the students' questionnaire), the researcher has graphically presented the results in Figure 1 below. If looked in detail, the majority of respondents admitted the fact that IM networks serve in boosting their oral proficiency and self-confidence and in decreasing their speaking anxiety level in their COP classes to a greater extent. It is interesting to note that these findings are found logical seeing that most of the students did not simply affirmed that they are frequent users of IM networks but go further, in that they also state that they often use English whenever they have a chat.

Figure 1. IM Networks Impact on Students' Communication Skills, Speaking Anxiety and Self-confidence



Likewise, results of a study by Compton (2002, 2004); Kabilan, Ahmad, and Abidin (2010) uncovered that chatting results in an increase in students' motivation, self-confidence and willingness to be involved in discussions especially those with poorer level of oral proficiency.

6. CONCLUSION

On the whole, this research aimed to address the issue of whether or not IM, as a students' addiction, can be directed towards reducing EFL students' communication apprehension in COP classes. The main findings of this study suggested that IM (Facebook in this case) has a great deal to offer when it comes to boosting EFL learners' oral production and decreasing their speaking anxiety in their COP class. All of these facts considered, it must be concluded that EFL students hold positive attitudes towards Facebook as a good language learning tool when it comes to speaking skill. This is because it motivates students to be involved in discussions with others and decreases their speaking anxiety.

This means and recommends the integration of Facebook in the field of EFL learning and teaching in general and in speaking in particular owing to the high positive attitudes shown by students.

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