



## EFL Learners' Speaking Anxiety: An Analysis of a YouTube Video and Its Comments

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### Abstract

This study aims to explore how an English as a foreign language (EFL) learner's speaking anxiety is presented in a YouTube video. Primary data included a video showing how an EFL learner, born in Congo but raised in South Korea, completed her task in communicating with others in English in Itaewon and viewers' comments on the video. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) and thematic analysis were used for the data analysis. Findings demonstrated that the learner explicitly showed her speaking anxiety through verbal language and nonverbal cues. Her speaking anxiety was also observed while she talked to the staff shooting the video. Moreover, in most comments, viewers seemed to show empathy to the learner in the video or feel entertained by her performance. However, a few viewers in their comments showed negative and critical views of the way the show deliberately portrayed her speaking anxiety. Thus, the EFL learner's speaking anxiety is clearly presented and reproduced in the media, and interactive social media enables EFL learners to share their opinions more freely. This study discusses some pedagogical implications of using videos and social media for critical awareness of English learning and teaching.

## INTRODUCTION

Anxiety has been believed to be an important factor in learners' foreign language learning. Both teachers and students consider anxiety as a major obstacle in learning a foreign language. Horwitz et al. (1986) performed a pioneering study on foreign language anxiety and how it affects learners' foreign language learning. They defined foreign language anxiety as

“a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). The uniqueness of the language-learning process here is attributed to the limited range of communicative choices and authenticity in foreign language classrooms. Learners who perceive themselves as “reasonably intelligent, social-adept individuals, sensitive to different socio-cultural mores” can experience challenging situations in which their “communication attempts will be evaluated according to uncertain or even unknown linguistic and socio-cultural standards” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). Learners can become silent, self-conscious, fearful, and panicky. These researchers distinguished foreign language anxiety from anxieties in other fields, such as mathematics or science.

Until recent years, researchers have been interested in how foreign language anxiety is associated with learners’ language learning. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches are applied to explore foreign language learners’ language learning. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) has long been used as a measurement in the quantitative approach. The FLCAS was first introduced as a survey for 75 college students who took Spanish classes at the University of Texas, and it consists of 33 items identifying the specific scope and severity of foreign language anxiety. Specifically, it contains three performance anxieties: 1) communication apprehension, 2) test anxiety, and 3) fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension is “a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127). Test anxiety is “a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127). They define fear of negative evaluation as “apprehension about others’ evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). As for English learners’ English language anxiety, many studies have adopted the FLCAS as a measurement (Behforouz et al., 2022; Gordon, 2022; Jeong & Rha, 2018; H. Kim, 2022; Ko, 2018; G.-P. Park, 2015; J. Park, 2016; Peng & Kang, 2022; Donghee Shin, 2022). In the qualitative approach, the one-on-one interview has been generally applied. The interviews were often used to supplement the results of the quantitative analysis, as shown in many studies (Jeong & Rha, 2018; J. Park, 2016; Donghee Shin, 2022). The other methods of qualitative approach, such as narrative research and ethnography, have been rarely conducted, for several possible reasons. As anxiety includes subjective feelings along with psycho-physiological symptoms and behavioral responses (Horwitz et al., 1986), learners’ self-reports through surveys or interviews might be considered to be more important by previous researchers. It might have also been difficult to record and collect extensive data on language learners who feel anxious in the classroom setting.

This study aims to qualitatively analyze English learners’ language anxiety using a new method. Previous studies mainly focused on English learners’ perceptions of language anxiety in classroom settings, but little research has explored how English learners’ language anxiety is presented in the media. Media provides a window through which we can see how language learners participate in real-life communication situations with other people, especially outside of classrooms. This context can provide researchers the opportunity to observe language learners’ performances in various communication situations. This reveals another advantage of media analysis. In surveys or interviews, which are usually used in qualitative research on language learners’ speaking anxiety, the researcher should heavily rely on language learners’ descriptions or recalls of communication situations. The recording of language learners’ performances in communication situations allows us to observe learners’ actual conversations. However, it is also noted that the media is a result of the directors’ planning, recording, and editing. Television shows based on directors’ intentions could offer another source of media analysis. By analyzing the show’s director’s intention, the researcher can understand how language learning is perceived by society. Moreover, the interactive nature of media such as YouTube, which has been very popular in recent years, allows us to analyze how viewers react to videos. Compared to the shows in traditional media, in which the director’s intention is delivered through the show in one way (Lee, 2021), new media, such as YouTube, allows users to express their opinions more freely. For these reasons, this study aims to analyze how learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) present their language anxiety, especially speaking anxiety, in YouTube videos. The study also aims to analyze how viewers, specifically other EFL learners, react to the presented speaking anxiety through the comments on the show. The two research questions are as follows:

- 1) How is an EFL learner’s speaking anxiety presented in a video on YouTube?
- 2) How do viewers (i.e., other EFL learners) react to the presented speaking anxiety through the comments on the show?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### English Language Anxiety

A body of research has explored language anxiety among English learners. This section reviews some of these studies, mainly conducted in South Korea (Korea, henceforth) in the 2010s and 2020s. Specifically, Ko (2018) examined the English language anxiety of 102 Korean college students who had taken English classes taught by native or non-native English-speaking instructors. The FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986) was used as a measurement. The findings showed that all students had strong anxiety about speaking English, especially when speaking without preparation in language class. Notably, one group of participants who had taken courses from non-native English-speaking instructors felt less anxious and more comfortable in the classroom atmosphere than the other group of participants. Donghee Shin (2022) also examined the English language anxiety of 46 Korean college students majoring in English. She used the same FLCAS tool and interviewed five students. She found some significant instances when the students felt anxious: 1) when they were called on in language class, 2) when they kept thinking that other students were better at languages than they were, 3) when the language teacher asked questions which they had not prepared in advance, 4) when they were speaking the foreign language in front of other students, 5) when they had to speak without preparation in language class, and 6) when they thought of the consequences of failing their foreign language class. She reported no difference between their grades or time spent studying English. Furthermore, Gordon (2022) examined the relationships between English learning pleasure, anxiety, and achievement using the FLCAS. He found that English language anxiety and achievement showed a negative relationship, while English learning pleasure and achievement showed a positive relationship. More interestingly, the pleasure of learning English had a greater impact on achievement than the anxiety of learning English. Also, it had a more substantial impact on the male students' achievement than the female students' achievement. Overall, these studies using quantitative analyses confirmed that Korean EFL learners seem to have high language anxiety in their English classes, which demonstrated a negative relationship with their English achievement.

G. Kim and T.-Y. Kim (2022) conducted a meta-analysis of English learner anxiety based on 137 studies in Korea from 1991 to 2020. They pointed out that the number of studies had increased in the previous decade, and most of the participants in those studies were college students. Quantitative methods were mainly used, but the use of mixed methods has increased recently. The research showed that the topics of most studies centered on the reasons English learner anxiety decreased (65 studies), the reasons learners felt anxiety (46 studies), the relationship between anxiety and achievement (21 studies), and others (5 studies). This study confirms a recent trend of research on English learner anxiety in the Korean context.

Some research has been conducted on EFL learners' language anxiety outside of Korea. For example, Peng and Kang (2022) explored learner motivation and anxiety among 108 Chinese college students. The participants of this study were majoring in English and had taken courses from either native English-speaking instructors or non-native English-speaking instructors. In this study, the FLCAS was also used as a measurement. The researchers found that most students' motivation was high and their anxiety was low. Interestingly, their higher motivation and lower anxiety were found in the native English-speaking instructors' classes rather than those taught by non-native English-speaking instructors. In addition, Behforouz et al. (2022) explored the learner anxiety of 80 Oman college students. The participants of this study had taken either online or face-to-face classes. The FLCAS was also used as a measurement. Interestingly, lower learner anxiety was found among students in the face-to-face classes rather than in online ones. The female students also were found to be less anxious than the male students. In summary, the Chinese and Oman EFL learners seemed less anxious than Korean EFL learners in those studies, but it is hard to generalize based on these findings. The Chinese learners studied by Peng and Kang (2022) are English majors, so students with other majors might have different results. Behforouz et al. (2022) focused on the comparison of the effects of two different class modes on Oman learners' language anxiety rather than the degree of their anxiety.

### Speaking Anxiety Among Korean EFL/ESL Learners

This section focuses on a few studies on the speaking anxiety of Korean EFL and English as a second language (ESL) learners in the 2010s and 2020s. For instance, E. K. Kim and J. Y. Kim (2014) explored the causes and coping strategies of 73 English education major college students' speaking anxiety during class presentations. This study applied a mixed methods approach, using both questionnaires and interviews. The findings showed that the students' speaking anxiety stems mainly from unfamiliarity with the presentation topic, low language proficiency, and emotional factors. They also reported that the students coped with their speaking anxiety according to their self-efficiency. The findings showed that high-self-

efficient students used coping strategies such as looking at their close friends or instructors, preparing well for a presentation, and taking deep breaths. The low-self-efficient students used coping strategies such as memorizing the presentation scripts, avoiding looking at the audience, and taking deep breaths. This study further highlighted the role of teachers as facilitators who help students cope with their speaking anxiety.

G.-P. Park (2015) and J. Choi (2021) investigated the relationship between speaking anxiety and other factors. G.-P. Park (2015) focused on how learners' extroversion/introversion personality traits and speaking anxiety contribute to their speaking achievement. This study used the FLCAS and Brown's (1994) survey to measure 107 Korean EFL learners' anxiety and personality traits, respectively. The analysis showed that anxiety is partially related to the students' extroversion/introversion personality traits and speaking achievement. The findings highlighted the role of teachers in reducing introverted students' anxiety, especially in the aspect of understanding communication. J. Choi (2021) focused on the relationship between second language (L2) willingness to communicate (WTC) and first language (L1) WTC, L2 communication competence, intrinsic language learning motivation, L2 speaking anxiety, and classroom environments such as teacher support, task orientation, and peer support. He collected survey responses from over 1200 college and secondary students and tested a structural equation model of L2 WTC in Korean EFL classes. His findings confirmed that L2 anxiety had a negative indirect effect on L2 WTC mediated by competence. This study highlighted motivation, perceived competence, and L1 WTC as directly related to L2 WTC, while L2 anxiety, which influences perceived competence, is indirectly related to L2 WTC. This study also used survey questionnaires, and the measurement of L2 speaking anxiety was excerpted from Woodrow (2006).

H. Kim (2022) explored the conditions of 33 Korean EFL learners' speaking anxiety. The FLCAS was also used in this study. The results showed that students with various majors had little anxiety about speaking English. However, they seemed more anxious when they did not understand every word the language teacher said. They also seemed afraid that their language teacher was ready to correct every mistake they made and the other students would laugh at them when they spoke a foreign language. They also seemed worried that the language class would move so quickly that they would get left behind. The important point is that their speaking anxiety decreased as they became familiar with their colleagues in class during the semester.

Meanwhile, Jeong and Rha (2018) explored the anxiety 78 Korean college students felt when they had a conversation with native English speakers and international students outside the classroom. Using mixed methods research, the students' conversations in the English clinic were recorded, and the students were invited to complete the FLCAS survey. The six students among them were invited to participate in the additional interview. The survey results showed no clear pattern of the students' speaking anxiety among the native English speaker group and the international students group. The researchers reported that the individuals felt anxious with different patterns. From the recorded video of the students' conversation and the interviews with the students, they observed some evidence of the students' speaking anxiety, such as lip-smacking, swallowing drily, playing with their fingers, and having palpitations.

J. Park (2016) explored the speaking anxiety of Korean ESL students. The participants were 31 college students studying at a university in the United States. This study also used mixed methods, with the FLCAS survey and interviews with six students among the participants. Overall, the students in this study showed high anxiety, and intermediate-level students showed higher anxiety than either beginner-level or advanced-level students. They also seemed to feel the most anxious during a formal class presentation. To lower their speaking anxiety, the students used several strategies. For example, the highly anxious students mentioned that they studied English harder. The low-anxiety students mentioned using physical relaxation approaches such as taking a deep breath. Although this comes from one case, which means it is hard to generalize, the Korean ESL students' speaking anxiety and coping strategy show a similar pattern to Korean EFL students in the previous studies.

## Netnography

Netnography is a term coined from the word "net," shorted from networking or internet, and "ethnography." It is "a form of qualitative research that seeks to understand the cultural experiences that encompass and are reflected within the traces, practices, networks, and systems of social media" (Kozinets, 2020, p. 14). Although netnography originated from online consumer behavior analysis, it has also been adapted in L2 learning to explore the complex linguistic practices of web-based communities (Kessler et al., 2021). As more language learners interact with each other daily in online spaces, researchers need to pay more attention to their interaction in online communities.

Prior to the netnographic approach, media analysis was conducted by researchers in the field of language learning and applied linguistics. Although the number of studies is not very high, previous studies have covered various topics related to English language learning and various media such as newspaper articles, TV shows, and TV commercials. For example, J.

Kim (2019) and J. Kim (2020) analyzed the newspaper articles about the English section in the Korean College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT) and English-mediated instruction in universities, respectively. Both studies were done through critical discourse analysis (CDA). J. Kim (2019) found that the major agents who constructed the discourse around the CSAT were those who work in private education. Those agents' voices in the newspapers fostered private education and consumerism. J. Kim (2020) highlighted that the interviews in most newspaper articles were from university presidents and officials, while students' voices were not included. The analysis's dominant theme was that the internationalization level of Korean English education was low, and the neo-liberalistic hegemony gained control of education. Dongil Shin (2012) and Kim and Shin (2016) also analyzed newspaper articles. Dongil Shin (2012) examined how the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) crisis is presented in the newspapers within the discourse of market principles and social utilities. Kim and Shin (2016) analyzed media discourse on global talents and their English competence through CDA. They found that global companies' schema emphasized individuals' roles and efforts as important human resources. They also confirmed that the dialectical relationship between the discourse and society was inferred. Meanwhile, S. Choi (2009) analyzed an English education TV show called *English Cafe* through CDA and found that English had become a political hegemony for Koreans. She confirmed that the discourse around English hegemony in Korea was still prevalently represented in educational TV shows like *English Cafe*, even though there were counter-discourses, such as refusing the English hegemony. Moreover, Lee and Shin (2023) analyzed the symbolic meanings of the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), which were represented in TV commercials. They found that TOEIC was symbolized by problem-solving skills, support and return, and the AI database, through three commercials.

Although Lee and Shin (2023) partially analyzed the visuals and hidden meanings of TV commercials, many previous studies focused on analyzing written texts in newspaper articles. In other words, looking at nonverbal and verbal language in the media is necessary. Furthermore, the previous studies rarely looked at the newest interactive media, allowing viewers to create their own voices. In traditional media, the voice flows one way from the directors/writers of the shows/newspapers (Lee, 2021). However, new media on the internet, such as YouTube, enables viewers to express their opinions freely. Research must examine what users think and talk about regarding the pre-made content in the media. To analyze their opinions, such as comments on the shows, a netnographic approach is needed. Before beginning the current study, the researcher conducted a few studies on English language learning within a new media platform such as YouTube. For example, the researcher analyzed how English was represented in terms of World Englishes and Konglish on YouTube videos and how the representations were perceived by various English language users (Ahn, 2020, 2023). The researcher wanted to add research within a new media in the field of English language learning and applied linguistics. In the current study, the researcher wanted to focus on how an EFL learner's language anxiety is presented in a video on YouTube and how viewers react to the presented speaking anxiety through the comments.

## METHOD

### Data Collection

The netnographic approach is used as a research methodology for this study. In particular, the video entitled *Patricia's US trip, but with Itaewon vibe itself* (Studio LuluLala, 2022) was chosen as the primary data. This video shows how an EFL learner, Patricia, who was born in Congo but raised in Korea, tries to communicate with people only in English on the street of Itaewon, Seoul. She is quite a well-known celebrity in Korea, especially among young adults. Patricia and her family moved to Korea when she was around five, and she has lived in Gwangju with her parents, two brothers, and two sisters. Her family became famous when they appeared in a TV documentary called *Screening Humanity* in 2013 and 2014. After that, Patricia and one of her brothers, Jonathan, appeared on many TV shows and on YouTube as celebrities (Kwon, 2023). Patricia has been fully educated in the Korean educational context. From her parents, she learned basic French and some African languages, such as Lingála, which are the official languages of Congo. However, she and her siblings have used Korean as their home language (Yang, 2023). The duration of the video is 17 minutes and 3 seconds, and it was uploaded on July 22, 2022. The video generated approximately 120,000 views, and the number of comments on the video was 81 as of April 27, 2024. The languages of its subtitles and the comments were mostly in Korean. This video was one of the video series, *Patricia's journey to mastering English* on Channel Bbasha, a YouTube channel from Studio LuluLala. This professional entertainment channel was founded by JTBC in May 2016. As of April 27, 2024, the approximate number of subscribers to the channel was 863,000, and the approximate number of total views was more than 400 million.

Among some similar media content, this video was selected as data for this study for three reasons. First, the topic of the video is directly related to anxiety in English speaking. Second, the video includes actual communication situations in which speakers should use English. Patricia needed to have real-life conversations with foreigners to find a place to order food. The recordings of such real-life communication allow researchers to observe how language learners actually perform in the communication setting more accurately. It also offers the opportunity to observe nonverbal language as well as verbal language. Third, the video was popular, so many language users could consider the content and leave their opinions, providing researchers with enough data to analyze. The popularity was measured by the number of views and comments on the video. In fact, in the process of searching data, other videos were considered, such as *English anxiety is only for Koreans?! It can be overcome with confidence. What is the truth about English conversation?* (tvN Joy, 2018) and *My stories that I ran away after a foreigner spoke to me in English on the street* (Jonathan, 2022). These videos directly discuss the English anxiety that celebrities experience in Korea. However, they do not include real-life conversations, so it was hard to analyze their verbal and nonverbal language in real-life communication situations.

The comments were also selected as data for the study. In total, there were 81 comments, including 79 original comments and two replies. Among them, 59 comments were used as data for two reasons: First, the relevance of the comments on the topic of content was considered. General comments on the selected channel and the host were excluded from the data. Second, the clarity of content was considered. Vague or unclear comments were excluded.

## Data Analysis

CDA and thematic analysis were used for the data analysis. First, CDA informed by interactional sociolinguistics (IS) was used to determine how the verbal and nonverbal languages of the speakers are presented in the video. The IS approach for CDA helps us investigate how people use language in different contexts, as it shows the significant differences that small, subtle, non-linguistic elements of verbal communication can have in meaning-making (Cameron, 2001). In order to identify the contextual meaning of all of the messages conveyed within the video, this study focused on contextualization cues such as intonation, pitch, stress, pause, hesitation, speed, and volume (Gumperz, 1982).

Second, thematic analysis was used to analyze the comments on the video. The researcher read the comments carefully several times and specified several codes. Some key categories and themes were developed from those codes based on their repetition and importance in the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). More specifically, the researcher created specific codes first. Then, those codes were sorted into four categories: enjoyment with her speaking anxiety represented in the video, alignment with her speaking anxiety represented in the video, evaluation of her speaking proficiency represented in the video, and critical opinions about the show. Finally, the categories were sorted into two key themes: positive attitudes and negative attitudes toward the learner's speaking anxiety in the video and the show. To increase the validity of the data analysis, the researcher used a rich and thick description to convey the findings. The rich and thick description covers the setting, participants, methods, data collection and analysis, interpretations, and the researcher's role (Becker, 1970; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In addition, since the comments are short, the number of comments was added to show how particular codes were mentioned frequently compared to others.

## FINDINGS

### Representation of an EFL Learner's Speaking Anxiety

#### *Speaking Anxiety Through Verbal Language*

The English learner, Patricia, presented a high level of speaking anxiety in the video. First of all, Patricia shows her speaking anxiety explicitly through verbal language. She seemed very embarrassed when the director of the show advised her to use only English to complete her task. Her task was to find a place she had never visited and order food. She spoke to strangers to ask where the place was located and to order what she wanted to eat in Itaewon. Many people in the show and viewers of this video are familiar with Itaewon as a special place in Seoul, Korea, where many international people come to visit, so there is a high chance that people can use English for communication. This must be why the director encouraged Patricia to test her English communication skills. Even before starting her task, she did not hide her anxiety. She explicitly said, "I suddenly feel sick" (See Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1**

*Speaking Anxiety Through Verbal Language: "I suddenly feel sick."*

As Patricia started walking and tried to ask somebody where the place was located, she struggled to speak even a word for a long while. She seemed very anxious and shrunk from talking to others. She repeatedly showed her speaking anxiety by describing her anxious status in Korean instead of talking to someone in English. As shown in Figure 2, she said, "My heart is pounding."

**FIGURE 2**

*Speaking Anxiety Through Verbal Language: "My heart is pounding."*

Her statement, "My heart is pounding," supported the recall of a few college students from J. Park's (2016) study and Jeong and Rha's (2018) study. In J. Park (2016), a student described that her heart began to pound when each student was called on to share his or her opinions in English class. Another student in the same study also said that facing an oral presentation in front of the class made his heart pound. Similarly, in Jeong and Rha (2018), two students recalled that they felt their heart pounding when they had to have a conversation with a foreigner in the English clinic. Based on these findings, the description of the heart beating faster is one of the most significant indexes of language anxiety for Korean EFL learners.

### *Speaking Anxiety Through Nonverbal Language*

In addition to her verbalized anxiety, Patricia's nonverbal language, including facial expressions and gestures, showed her strong speaking anxiety. As she could not talk to anyone, she used hand gestures to show she was not confident speaking in English. As shown in Figure 3, she put her left hand on her throat. As shown in Figure 4, she also combed her hair with her left fingers.

**FIGURE 3**

*Speaking Anxiety Through Nonverbal Language: Putting a Hand to Her Throat*

**FIGURE 4**

*Speaking Anxiety Through Nonverbal Language: Combing Hair with Fingers*

In Figures 3 and 4, Patricia's hand gestures indicated her speaking anxiety. She knew that she needed to talk to a stranger in English, but she was not confident doing so. She put her hand to her throat and combed her hair through her fingers without speaking. Those hand gestures were also found in previous research. In Jeong and Rha (2018), a student repeatedly smacked his lips, swallowed drily, and played with his fingers when he talked with foreigners in the English clinic. Similar lip gestures were mentioned in the study of J. Park (2016). In this study, a student confessed that her mouth dried up when she stood and spoke in front of the class. At the same time, her facial expressions also showed her speaking anxiety. She did not smile while she was doing those hand gestures. In general, hand gestures, lip movements, and a lack of a smile are popular examples of nonverbal language that EFL learners use to display their speaking anxiety.

### *Speaking Anxiety and a Coping Strategy*

Another interesting finding is that Patricia kept asking for help from the people recording this video. Watching the video, you would notice that there were several staff members, including the director, who planned the show and led the whole process while recording her performances. Since she struggled to talk to strangers in English, she tried to talk to the staff in Korean. She said, "Uh... how can I ask a question?" as shown in Figure 5, and "Ah... am I right?" in Figure 6.

**FIGURE 5**

*Asking for Help from the Staff: "Uh... how can I ask a question?"*



**FIGURE 6**

*Asking for Help from the Staff: "Ah... am I right?"*

Asking for help from the staff was interpreted as a strategy for her to cope with anxiety. To some extent, this behavior is in line with EFL learners' coping strategies, such as looking at their close friends or instructors in English classes, as found in the study of E. K. Kim and J. Y. Kim (2014). In the video, the staff members seem to be Patricia's close friends. She clearly looked at staff members rather than strangers whom she was tasked with talking to. This is why her face went toward the left side rather than the central side of the camera both in Figure 5 and Figure 6.

## Viewers' Reactions to Speaking Anxiety Represented in the Video

### *Positive Attitudes Toward the Learner's Speaking Anxiety in the Video*

Some of the viewers of this video reacted to this video through the comments. It is assumed that most of them are Korean EFL learners based on the fact that they left their comments in Korean. Many viewers expressed their enjoyment with Patricia's speaking anxiety which is represented in the video. Table 1 shows the two specific codes of this category. The first code is that they thought Patricia is fun and cute when she cannot speak to someone in English. The second code is that they cheered for Patricia as she faced this task.

**TABLE 1**

*Enjoyment with Her Speaking Anxiety Represented in the Video*

Code	Example comments	Number of comments (%)
Thinking that Patricia is fun and cute	hahahahahahahahahahahahahahaha. I really love her. hahahahahaha. It is so adorable that she can't speak English. Haha. hahahahaha... She, as a foreigner, is afraid of other foreigners... hahaha	29 (49%)
Cheering for Patricia	Patricia, go for it! Funny girl Patricia. Hahaha. Study English hard and be an international reporter!	5 (8%)

*Note:* All comments were originally written in Korean and translated into English by the researcher.

Related to the first code, the main point is that the learner in this video is an EFL learner originally from Congo. Although English is not an official language in Congo, many viewers, mostly Koreans, would expect her not to be afraid to speak in English to foreigners. It is typically assumed that foreigners who are not Korean would not be afraid of speaking to other foreigners regardless of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. However, Patricia moved to Korea when she was five and learned English as a foreign language, like other English learners in Korea. Also, she used French and Lingála, an African language in Congo, to communicate with her parents at home. Not knowing her life history and linguistic background, Korean viewers might apply stereotypical judgment about Patricia's English-speaking skills. That might be an expected reaction from viewers that the director of this show intended to make. The director might want to make the audience feel amazed or entertained by this situation in the show.

On the other hand, some viewers showed alignment with Patricia's speaking anxiety represented in the video. Table 2 shows the two specific codes of this category. The first code is that they feel empathy for Patricia's speaking anxiety. The second code is that they just learned how to speak English for a specific situation when English is used.

**TABLE 2**  
*Alignment with Her Speaking Anxiety Represented in the Video*

Code	Example comments	Number of comments (%)
Feeling empathy for Patricia's speaking anxiety	hahahahahaha. I also have an English anxiety. I feel the same with her. (crying) (crying) (crying) (crying) (crying) (crying). Go for it, Patricia!!!! Patricia is not a foreigner. She is just Korean.	5 (8%)
Learning how to speak English for a specific situation when English is used	I also learned how to speak English, hahaha. I just memorized the phrases and will use them later. So far, I enjoyed learning English (?) with Patricia. Hahaha. 😊	3 (5%)

*Note:* All comments were originally written in Korean and translated into English by the researcher.

The first code is related to how the director of the show intended to make the audience feel while watching the show. Once again, Patricia's appearance gives the impression that she speaks English very well and never feels anxious, which is different from most Korean English learners. However, the reality is that Patricia acts like a very typical Korean English learner who is afraid of speaking to someone in English. For this reason, many viewers, mostly Koreans, can deeply empathize with Patricia.

### *Negative Attitudes Toward the Learner's Speaking Anxiety in the Video and the Show*

Moreover, a few viewers commented on Patricia's speaking proficiency represented in the video. The specific code is that they evaluated Patricia's speaking in a negative way as shown in Table 3.

**TABLE 3**  
*Evaluation of Her Speaking Proficiency Represented in the Video*

Code	Example comments	Number of comments (%)
Evaluating her speaking negatively	Patrica should not go to America. (crying) (crying) Patricia~ you did your best, but it was too bad. You are a college student...	5 (8%)

*Note:* All comments were originally written in Korean and translated into English by the researcher.

Although the negative sentiments were only 8% of the comments, it is important to note that the viewers become evaluators of Patricia's English-language speaking. It is somewhat related to the findings from H. Kim (2022), in which the Korean English learners feel afraid that other students would laugh at them when they speak a foreign language. Under such peer pressure, learners cannot be free from making mistakes when speaking English. If Patricia had read this comment, she would have felt the same peer pressure.

Finally, some viewers presented critical opinions about the show itself, which led the viewers to laugh at Patricia's speaking anxiety. As shown in Table 4, a specific code of this category includes that they feel sorry for Patricia as she faces a stressful situation in the video. Another code is that they suggest other activities for the show that Patricia is good at.

**TABLE 4**  
*Critical Opinions About the Show*

Code	Example comments	Number of comments (%)
Feeling sorry for Patricia's stressful situation of speaking English	It must be so hard for her to make the audience happy with her stressful situation... (crying) (crying) Thank you for the video that is just like a hidden camera show for Patricia, who can be stressed about her identity as a foreigner in Korea. *I feel so sorry for her for the first time. (crying)	4 (7%)
Suggesting other activities for the show that Patricia is good at	I would like to see another activity that Patricia is good at, not the one she is not good at and feel stressful about, like learning English. (crying) (crying) (crying) I feel like she can't show her charming point because of that English-only rule... It would be better for Patricia to have her own channel... and engage in various activities, including English learning.	4 (7%)

*Note:* All comments were originally written in Korean and translated into English by the researcher.

As shown in Table 4, the viewers seemed to understand the sociocultural context of Korean English learners' speaking anxiety and a stereotype about foreigners in Korea. They also seemed to understand the intention of this show, which was to make the audience feel amazed or entertained by the situation. One viewer described this show as a "hidden camera show" by pointing out Patricia's unique case, having been born in another country but educated from kindergarten to college in Korea, which could raise an identity crisis. In traditional media, such viewers' reactions would not be displayed publicly, while only directors' intentions are delivered through one-way communication (Lee, 2021). However, in new media, YouTube allows viewers to express their opinions more freely and interact with others. This is another noteworthy finding of this study, which was not found in previous studies based on media analysis.

## CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study was designed to explore how EFL learners' speaking anxiety is presented in a video and its comments on YouTube. Specifically, the video showed how Patricia, an EFL learner born in Congo but raised in Korea, completed her task of communicating with others in English in Itaewon and how viewers, other EFL learners, reacted to it through their comments on the video. Based on the netnographic approach, CDA was applied to analyze the video, and thematic analysis was applied to analyze the comments.

Findings showed that the EFL learner in the video demonstrated her speaking anxiety explicitly through verbal language, saying, "I suddenly feel sick," and "My heart is pounding." She also used nonverbal language, including hand gestures and facial expressions, to show her speaking anxiety. She put her hand on her throat and combed her hair with her fingers without saying anything. At the same time, she could not hold a smiley face and kept a straight face. These nonverbal cues showed that she was not feeling confident speaking in English. Moreover, she kept asking for help from the staff members who were behind the camera in this video. For example, she said in Korean, "Uh... how can I ask a question?" and "Ah... am I right?" These phrases showed her speaking anxiety as well as her coping strategy to overcome the challenge. Overall, she presented a high level of speaking anxiety, like many Korean English learners discussed in Jeong and Rha (2018), Ko (2018), J. Park (2016), and Donghee Shin (2022). More specifically, the English learners examined by Ko (2018) and Donghee Shin (2022) were highly anxious when they needed to speak in English without preparation. The situations in which a learner needs to have a conversation with a stranger in English are similar to the situations in which the students were not prepared to present. It is noteworthy that we can clearly observe her speaking anxiety in a real-life communication setting, which is rarely presented in previous studies.

The analysis of the comments on this video was sorted into two categories: positive attitudes and negative attitudes toward the learner's speaking anxiety in the video and the show. On the one hand, some viewers seemed to enjoy the show and the representation of Patricia's speaking anxiety. Most of the viewers expressed amazement or entertainment by her behaviors in the video. They thought Patricia is fun and cute, and they cheered for her. This might be the first expected reaction by the director of this show. Patricia is a beloved celebrity, and many viewers would assume she is not afraid to speak English to foreigners. The disparity between our stereotype about foreigners in Korea and her English-speaking proficiency/anxiety is

a source of enjoyment or entertainment. Moreover, some viewers aligned with her speaking anxiety as represented in the video. As English learners, they empathized with her, and some said they learned some English while watching the show. On the other hand, a few learners negatively evaluated her speaking proficiency in the video. Such negative attitudes toward the learner's speaking anxiety are related to the peer pressure of speaking a foreign language, which was partially discussed in E. K. Kim and J. Y. Kim (2014). Furthermore, some viewers seemed to relate to the sociocultural context of the show and presented critical opinions about the show, which made watching the learner's speaking anxiety fun and supportive of a stereotype about foreigners in Korea.

In conclusion, the findings of this study confirm how the EFL learners' speaking anxiety is represented and reproduced through the media. It is typically assumed that foreigners in Korea are not afraid of speaking in English regardless of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. That was what the director of this show intended to make the audience laugh at and feel empathy or alignment with the EFL learner. However, the interactive format of this show—a video with viewers' reactions—made it possible for the viewers to present their opinions more freely. In other words, the viewers did not adopt the show's director's intentions in every way, and they can freely share their different opinions with other viewers. As found in this study, some viewers critically pointed out the show's intention and suggested other activities for the show. This is not possible in traditional media such as TV shows.

Furthermore, this video and comments can be valuable materials for English classes and teacher education. In class, by allowing students to watch this video and explore its comments, they can understand how speaking anxiety is represented in the media and how viewers, other English learners, display their reactions in the comments. They can compare and discuss their own experiences with speaking anxiety with their classmates after watching the video. They also learn how to express their opinions and interact with other people in online communities by leaving their comments on the video. By introducing this video to their students, teachers can understand the difficulty English learners experience when speaking English and think of possible ways to help them reduce anxiety. They can search for more videos related to this topic and introduce them to their students. Pre-service teachers can also use such videos and comments to understand learners' speaking anxiety and plan ways to deal with it in their classes. Such videos and comments on social media can be powerful pedagogical materials to use in English classes and English teacher education.

Some limitations of this study are attributed to the small data set. This study focused on only one video, but similar content can be found on YouTube or other media, including TV shows or commercials. Future studies should collect more cases to generalize the findings of the study. Also, since the comments were written by anonymous users, the users' specific linguistic, cultural, or educational backgrounds were not clearly identified. As most comments were written in Korean, it was assumed that most viewers of this video were Korean EFL learners. However, it would be more beneficial to collect reactions from various English learners whose first language is not Korean and compare them to the comments written in Korean.

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