

**A STUDY INVESTIGATING SPEAKING ANXIETY AND ITS
EFFECT ON SPEAKING PERFORMANCE AMONG ESL FIRST
YEAR SPORTS SCIENCE UNDERGRADUATES OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF KELANIYA.**

T.H. Nethini Ishara Hettiarachchi¹

The relationship between speaking anxiety and speaking performance is complex and multifaceted. The ability to communicate fluently in English is crucial for many English as a Second Language (ESL) learners because of anxiety. However, many ESL learners face challenges in developing their speaking skills, such as a lack of self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, feeling nervous, panicking, and difficulties in applying grammar and vocabulary knowledge in spontaneous speech. This research study delves into the intricate relationship between speaking anxiety and speaking performance among first-year Sport Science ESL undergraduates at the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. The primary objective of this research study is to investigate the reasons for speaking anxiety and its effect on speaking performance. This study included 50 first-year undergraduates from the Sports Science Department of the Faculty of Science and the English Language Teaching Coordinator. The data collection was performed by incorporating questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and observations. The study was conducted using a mixed-method research method, where the collected qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, while SPSS 23.0, is used to analyze the quantitative data. As a result of the research findings, it was determined that there is a lack of speaking performance due to anxiety, and reasons for speaking anxiety are discovered. According to the researcher, the study's findings can be used to identify the reasons for speaking anxiety and this can be used as a guideline to reduce speaking anxiety by upgrading the speaking performance of the ESL undergraduates of the Sports Science Department.

Keywords: Speaking anxiety, Speaking performance, Undergraduates, Second Language

¹ University of Kelaniya. nethini99ishara@gmail.com