Speaking Anxiety, Motivation, and Learning Autonomy Among Chinese Non-English Majors

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Abstract

Aim: This study determined the relationship among the three variables: the non-English majors' speaking anxiety, speaking motivation, and speaking learning autonomy in the process of oral English learning.
Methodology: The descriptive research method was adopted in the research. The respondents were 385 first-year and second-year college students chosen from 20 colleges and universities in Shaanxi, China.
Results: There were highly significant relationships among the students' speaking anxiety, speaking motivation, and speaking learning autonomy in the process of oral English learning. The less anxious the college students are while speaking English, the more motivated and autonomous they are in oral English learning.
Conclusion: Speaking anxiety, motivation, and learning autonomy are the three vital factors which can affect EFL learners' English-speaking performance, achievement and English proficiency in oral English learning. So, an oral English program was proposed to help Chinese non-English majors from three aspects: relieving the students' speaking anxiety, stimulating their motivation and cultivating their learning autonomy in the process of oral English learning for the improvement of oral English proficiency.

Keywords: *Oral English learning, Speaking anxiety, Speaking motivation, Speaking learning autonomy, Chinese non-English majors*

INTRODUCTION

Education in the 21st century should meet the needs of becoming a world citizen. In this regard, language teaching has an important role to promote and maintain necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to prepare learners for interacting effectively with people of other languages and cultures (Özdemir, Pehlivan Şişman & Büyükkarcı, 2021). Since China has joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, the economic globalization has dramatic influence on the China's economic and social development. Meanwhile, as a global language, English has played an increasingly crucial role in the trade cooperation and exchanges between China and the other foreign countries around the world. Thus, English teaching and learning has gained great popularity in China. Research indicates that out of our total communication time, an average of 45% is spent listening compared to 30% speaking, 16% reading and 9% writing. (Adler, R. et al. 2001).

Hence, in an ever-changing society, being proficient in oral English has become a strength for the college graduates to find a decent job with satisfying salary in the increasingly harsh employment market.

However, in China, the exam-oriented education system has affected thinking and behaviors of the parents, teachers, and the students greatly. First, because of the existence of the college entrance exam in China, English is one of the subjects to be tested in such a competitive exam and it accounts for 150 points in the college entrance exam, which has the same significance as the Chinese and Mathematics. Such an important exam is usually held in June every year, and all the students of Grade 3 in the high schools all over China usually take part in the exam. And their performance in the exam will determine their whole life because their scores in the exam will be the only criteria for the colleges and universities to enroll the new students. Under such a pressure, Chinese teachers and parents have all attached unprecedented importance to cultivate the students' ability to deal with various kinds of exams to be admitted by the key universities in China since they start to learn English when they were little kids. In such a

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language teaching and learning environment, a vast majority of Chinese college students tend to attach too much importance to learning the English vocabulary, listening, reading, writing, translation, and grammar, which makes the current college students of non-English majors neglect oral English learning and lead to their poor capability of communication in English. The result is that most Chinese college students usually have a good command of basic knowledge of English, but they cannot speak English fluently when they need to communicate with others in English, especially when faced with the foreigners, which has caused the phenomenon of the "dumb English" of many Chinese college students.

Moreover, the national English exams for the non-English majors mainly include the CET4 and CET6, which both pay much attention to the English listening, reading, writing, grammar and translation rather than the test of oral English. Most students have put particular emphasis on these two exams and worked extremely hard to pass the CET4 and CET6 because the employment units usually require the graduates to pass these two exams and they frequently use the scores of the students in the two exams to measure their English level. Therefore, the current exam-oriented education system has caused most of the college students not to attach much importance to the oral English learning and their poor communicative ability in English.

Additionally, the English language is spoken all around the world and has therefore gained the status of a global language. It is also among other languages widely used in various fields, such as scientific research, international trade, cultural exchange, social media, travel (Ahmed, 2021). English has become an important language as it is the most dominant international language in international cooperation and communication among the countries in the world. It is evident that the current world is an open world and there are numerous communications and exchanges in many aspects among different countries in the world, such as political, economic, social, cultural aspects. It is natural and necessary for college students and graduates to be involved in such kinds of communications and exchanges in future. Hence, it is of great necessity for them to attach much significance to the oral English learning, improve their oral English proficiency, cultivate their awareness of cross-cultural communication, which can make them become competitive in the future and adapt to the ever-changing world better.

Furthermore, English speaking skill refers to the ability to communicate effectively and fluently in the English language. This skill is crucial for individuals who want to interact, express ideas, and understand others in English-speaking environments, both socially and professionally. Shabani (2013) confirmed that speaking a foreign language is often considered more challenging than other language skills due to the real-time nature of the task and the need for quick access to relevant knowledge. Difference between English and Chinese, cultural difference, thinking pattern difference between the English-speaking natives and the Chinese all have a huge impact on the English proficiency of the EFL learners.

Moreover, up to now, the learning environment for Chinese college students to learn oral English is not ideal. In China, English is the second language for Chinese college students, and English is only used by them in oral English class to communicate with each other, so they lack the native environment to learn and practice their oral English, which has increased the difficulty of learning and improving their oral English to some extent, and had negative impact on their motivation and inspiration to learn oral English. Hence, in the oral English class, when the students are required to speak in English in some class activities, the students usually fail to express their opinions clearly not only because of some linguistical errors, such as being afraid of making some vocabulary or grammatical mistakes, but also because of some affective factors, such as their anxiety, or lack of motivation.

Based on what has been mentioned above, it can be concluded that the problems that the college students have confronted with in the process of oral English learning and speaking are as follows: First, the students may have different levels of anxiety in speaking English in oral English class. The majority of the non-English majors are usually afraid of being asked by the teacher to speak English in oral English class or make a speech mainly because they have a poor command of basic English knowledge, such as limited vocabulary, not having mastered the grammatical knowledge well, not having enough accumulation of the English sentence structures. Furthermore, in oral English class, the students fear that they may be laughed at by their classmates for making of some simple mistakes, which may make them reluctant to participate in the class activities actively and voluntarily for fear of negative evaluation from the teacher and other peers. Besides, the Chinese non-English majors are usually not confident enough to open their mouth and speak English clearly in class. Moreover, the non-English majors are usually over 18 years old and have a certain degree of self-respect. They fear that their poor performance in oral English may affect their self-image in others' minds.

Second, it is very common that most of Chinese non-English majors may show little interest in oral English and have different levels of motivation in oral English learning. Among them, only a smaller proportion of them have

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had a good command of English and mastered a large number of English words, which makes this group of students capable of speaking English fluently and have more motivation in oral English learning. Furthermore, most of them show little interest and love in oral English learning, and they have not much motivation in oral English learning because they all hold the idea that it is useless for them to learn and speak English, only hoping to pass the final exam of oral English course, meet the university's requirement of the graduation from college, and get their bachelor's degree smoothly. In addition, most of the non-English majors claim that whether they can speak fluent English will not have an enormous influence on their future employment. So, they do not care about whether they can improve their oral English or not. Therefore, all these factors have caused them to have different degrees of speaking motivation in oral English class.

Third, learning autonomy is another factor which can affect the students' speaking performance and achievement in oral English course. However, among the non-English majors, only a small group of students who are excellent in English course have greater learning autonomy in oral English learning because this small group of students claim that fluent oral English may bring them a bright and promising future. So, they are willing to pay more effort to utilize activities to practice speaking English as much as possible, set learning goals for their oral English learning, and even self-evaluate their English-speaking performance and learning processes in order to enhance their oral English proficiency.

On the contrary, there are still a large number of the Chinese non-English majors are not autonomous learners in oral English learning, which has adversely affected their motivation of learning and practicing oral English. This large group of students are usually passive in oral English learning, such as not having sufficient preparation for the class, not take part in class activities voluntarily, not interacting with the teacher actively in class activities, not having the habit of setting learning goals or plans for their oral English learning, let alone self-evaluate their English-speaking performance and learning processes.

In view of this, the author, as a college English teacher, is eager to know what kind of anxiety the non-English college students have in speaking English in the college English classroom activities, what kind of motivation the students have in oral English learning, and how autonomous the students are in oral English learning and speaking. Based on these questions, the author wants to propose an oral English program for the non-English majors in the universities of Shaanxi, China, more so specific programs or strategies that will help relieve the students' anxiety in speaking English, enhance their interest and motivation in oral English, develop autonomous learning habit, and finally improve the comprehensive communicative ability in English of the Chinese non-English majors in the cross-cultural environment.

The significance of the research lies in that in China, there are millions of college students who are non-English majors, this research might propose an oral English program for Chinese non-English majors to enhance their oral proficiency on the basis of the results of questionnaires. The study in this research could be conducive for English teachers to transform their traditional teaching philosophy in teaching oral English for the college students, so as to build a teaching model which would be applicable to the students in China.

Research Questions

This research mainly aims to determine the students' comprehensive communicative ability in English by applying the correlation among the three variables to this study and develop an oral English development plan for the Chinese college students of non-English majors.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:
1. What is the demographic profile of respondents in terms of
    1.1. Sex;
    1.2. Grade;
    1.3. Major;
    1.4. School
2. What level of speaking anxiety do the Chinese non-English majors experience in the process of oral English learning?
3. What level of speaking motivation do the Chinese non-English majors experience in the process of oral English learning?
4. What level of speaking learning autonomy do the Chinese non-English majors experience in the process of oral English learning?
5. What is the relationship between the students' speaking anxiety and speaking motivation?
6. What is the relationship between the students' speaking anxiety and speaking learning autonomy?

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7. What is the relationship between the students' speaking motivation and speaking learning autonomy?

Hypothesis

Given the stated research problem, the following hypotheses were tested on 0.05 level of significance:

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between the students' speaking anxiety and speaking motivation satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between the students' speaking anxiety and speaking learning autonomy.

the workplace.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant relationship between the students' speaking motivation and speaking learning autonomy.

METHODS

Research Design

Quantitative research method was adopted in the research to survey 385 non-English majors with questionnaire instruments to examine the three variables of the students' speaking anxiety, motivation and learning autonomy in the process of oral English learning.

Population and Sampling

This study was conducted in 20 universities in Shaanxi, China from March to June, 2023 with 385 respondents. After the questionnaires were finished designing, a pilot study was carried out among the universities in Xi'an, China. The questionnaires were handed out to 20 students in 8 different universities in order to examine the reliability and validity of the questionnaires designed in this research. On Mar. 8, 2023, the pilot test was conducted by the author, who distributed the survey with three questionnaires to 20 non-English majors in 8 typical universities and colleges in Xi'an, China.

Instrument

Survey questionnaire was used to collect the necessary data for this study. And the instrumnet was validated by experts in the field.

Data Collection

The data were gathered, read, and analyzed according to the objective of the study and in adherence to all protocols in the coduct of research.

Treatment of Data

Data analysis has played a critical role in the quantitative research which determines the scientific property of a study. Quantitative data collected through the questionnaires were encoded into the database of SPSS 28.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to synthesize and analyze.

Ethical Considarations

The researcher ensured that all research protocols involving ethics in research were complied with for the protection of all people and institutions involved in the conduct of the study.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Table 1 arrived at a composite mean of 2.37, which indicates the respondents' disagreement with all the above 4 indicators. Among these items cited, speaking activities got the highest composite mean score of 2.41 and raked the first in the table. This indicates that in the process of oral English learning, the students have suffered the least degree of speaking anxiety as to the speaking activities.

Compared to the other subdomains of the speaking anxiety in the process of oral English learning, English speaking activities make the students more relaxed than those of the other subdomains of speaking anxiety. Speaking anxiety, also known as glossophobia, is a common challenge faced by many individuals when it comes to

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public speaking or speaking in a foreign language. Students prefer to avoid speaking in the target language because they lack vocabulary, pronunciation, and knowledge of how to express ideas in acceptable grammatical structures (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). However, the oral English teacher should know how to arrange different English-speaking activities in class according to the difficulty degree of these speaking activities to the non-English majors. Additionally, when the teacher arranges the different English-speaking activities to the students, he or she has to take the students' oral English level, interests and characteristics of the students majoring in different majors. This means that the oral English teachers should teach students in accordance with their aptitude, especially the non-English majors because they have a weak foundation in basic English knowledge and oral English. If the speaking activities can be arranged like this reasonably, the students may suffer less speaking anxiety in oral English class.

Table 1

Speaking Anxiety

Key Result Areas	Composite Mean	VI	Rank
Verbal Communication	2.38	Disagree	2
Non-verbal Communication	2.32	Disagree	4
Fear of Evaluation	2.37	Disagree	3
Speaking Activities	2.41	Disagree	1
Grand Composite Mean	**2.37**	**Disagree**	

Legend:3.50-4.00=Strongly Agree;2.50-3.49=Agree;1.50-2.49=Disagree;1.00-1.49=Strongly Disagree

It was followed by verbal communication that shows a composite mean score of 2.38 and explained as disagree, which indicates that the students have experienced higher speaking anxiety in the oral English learning. In the verbal communication, the teacher may require the students to be familiar with the content of the oral English class and make full preparations to prepare their class presentation or report. The well-prepared students may have less pressure and speaking anxiety in the process of verbal communication of oral English class than those who haven't prepared before class. That is to say, the content of the verbal communication in oral English class needs to be read and prepared fully before the class by the students, which can lower the difficulty of verbal communication and make the verbal communication handled by the students more easily.

Fear of evaluation got the third rank with the weighted mean of 2.37. There is only a 0.1 difference between verbal communication and fear of evaluation. So, it can be said in the process of oral English learning, the students may suffer almost the same speaking anxiety during the verbal communication as that of having fear of negative evaluation. it very normal for them to experience a certain degree of speaking anxiety because they fear their bad performance in English may make an unfavorable impression on the teacher and their peers, which may hurt their personal image among them. Therefore, they usually have a certain speaking anxiety because of fear of negative evaluation from others. Ariyanti (2016) maintain that many students think that they will receive negative criticism from their peers. Such fears are common among EFL students, which causes most students stop participating in classroom interactions due to the fear of being laughed at by others or receiving negative feedback from the teacher. Therefore, it is important for the teachers to make the students tolerate the non-English majors' mistakes to some degree and realize that it is natural to make some mistakes in oral English learning.

Non-verbal communication came in four on the list with the average value of 2.32 and explained as disagree, which shows that the non-English majors may experience highest degree of speaking anxiety in the process of non-verbal communication in oral English learning. The reason is that in oral English class, the students may behave like the following actions: tense body language, such as crossed arms, fidgeting, or avoiding eye contact. It is very common for the oral English teacher to notice these actions and gestures in the oral English class activities mainly because of the students' insufficient preparation before class and their poor oral English. But the such kinds of speaking anxiety can be lowered or controlled if the non-English majors can preview the content, be familiar with what they would like to say in oral English class as the teacher required. The more sufficiently the students have prepared for the oral English class, the more relaxed they may feel, and the less anxious they may feel while speaking English. So, the speaking anxiety of non-verbal communication ranked the fourth on the table.

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Table 2

Speaking Motivation

Key Result Areas	Composite Mean	VI	Rank
Amotivation	2.33	Disagree	3
Extrinsic Motivation	2.73	Agree	2
Intrinsic Motivation	2.81	Agree	1
Grand Composite Mean	**2.62**	**Agree**	

Legend:3.50-4.00=Strongly Agree;2.50-3.49=Agree;1.50-2.49=Disagree;1.00-1.49=Strongly Disagree

This table summarizes the assessment of the students' speaking learning motivation in the process of oral English learning. Intrinsic motivation has got a composite mean of 2.81 and was ranked the first in the table. And the respondents generally agreed on the item, which indicates that the students are motivated in oral English learning. Oral English learning is a long journey, in which the students, especially the non-English majors really need to have the intrinsic motivation to sustain their love and interest in oral English learning, which are the source for them to carry on their oral English learning and make greater progress and success in oral English learning. In order to realize the students' long-term goal of oral English learning, they have to maintain their love and interest in oral English learning, which may bring them much pleasure, happiness, even satisfaction because of participating in oral English learning activities.

Extrinsic Motivation has got the second highest composite mean (2.73), and participants generally agreed with it. It's ranked 2nd. Extrinsic Motivation mainly involves engaging in an activity or behavior due to external factors or rewards. These can include tangible rewards such as money or grades, or intangible rewards such as praise or recognition. Extrinsic motivation can be effective in encouraging behavior or activity, but it may not be as enduring or self-sustaining as intrinsic motivation. Once the external reward is removed, the motivation may also disappear. So, compared to the intrinsic motivation, the students' extrinsic motivation in language learning may drive the students to realize the smaller tasks in the oral English learning activities. However, it cannot stimulate the students to accomplish their long-term goal in oral English learning. Hence, it ranked the second in the table.

Amotivation with the lowest composite mean (2.33) was ranked the last in the table, indicating it's the least agreed upon form of motivation. However, the verbal interpretation is "Disagree", which means participants generally disagreed with the statements related to amotivation. Amotivation refers to a state of lacking any motivation to engage in an activity or behavior. Individuals who are amotivated do not see a link between their actions and the outcome, and they typically feel incompetent or ineffective. They do not perceive any value in the activity, and they do not believe that the activity will satisfy any of their intrinsic or extrinsic needs. In the context of oral English learning, the students' amotivation could be due to a lack of interest and love in the oral English learning, or a feeling of being overwhelmed by the difficulty of the tasks. So, the item ranked the last in the table.

In summary, amotivation, extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation are three key subdomains of the students' speaking motivation in the process of oral English learning. According to the findings in the summary table, extrinsic and intrinsic motivation can be used to stimulate the students to learn and speak English better and better gradually.

Table 3

English-speaking Learning Autonomy

Key Result Areas	Composite Mean	VI	Rank
Setting learning goals/ plans for English speaking improvement	2.65	Agree	1.5
Utilizing activities to perform oral English learning actions for English Speaking Improvement	2.65	Agree	1.5
Self-evaluating English-speaking performance	2.59	Agree	3

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and processes

Grand Composite Mean	**2.63**	**Agree**

Legend:3.50-4.00=Strongly Agree;2.50-3.49=Agree;1.50-2.49=Disagree;1.00-1.49=Strongly Disagree

This table summarizes the assessment of the students' speaking learning autonomy in the process of oral English learning. The first subdomain Setting learning goals/ plans for English speaking improvement and the second subdomain Utilizing activities to perform oral English learning actions for English Speaking Improvement with the same composite mean of 2.65 were ranked 1.5 in the table. It can be seen that the respondents agreed on the issue. The main reason for these two subdomains to be ranked 1.5 in the table may be that the respondents have realized that it setting up learning goals/plans and making full use of oral English activities for speaking and practicing English has played an important role in the process of oral English learning. So, in order to improve their oral English, the students have sufficient learning autonomy to be willing to actively set up learning goals/plans for the improvement of their oral English learning. Furthermore, the students can seek opportunities to actively participate in the learning activities to speak and practice English as much as possible. So, these two subdomains were ranked top in the table.

The third subdomain Self-evaluating English-speaking performance and processes has got the composite mean 2.59, and was ranked the third in the table. As observed from the table, the respondents generally agreed. The major reason why this subdomain has been ranked the third in the table may be that the respondents for this research are all the non-English majors, they usually specialize in the majors in other fields. Their learning interest and concern is usually their majors and the development of their own major and the related areas rather than oral English improvement, which may not have a huge impact on their future career and life. Therefore, the respondents lack enough learning autonomy in oral English learning, and most of them usually don't self-evaluate their English-speaking performance and oral English learning processes.

In summary, these three subdomains are very important in the process of oral English learning, and the respondents have different degrees of learning autonomy in the three aspects because of the wider difference of their learning interest and focus. The more autonomous the respondents are in oral English learning, the more actively they may do in the three areas of oral English learning.

Table 4

Relationship Between Speaking Anxiety and Speaking Motivation

Variables	rho-value	p-value	Interpretation
Verbal Communication			
Amotivation	0.818**	0.000	Highly Significant
Extrinsic Motivation	-0.572**	0.000	Highly Significant
Intrinsic Motivation	-0.626**	0.000	Highly Significant
Non-verbal Communication			
Amotivation	0.793**	0.000	Highly Significant
Extrinsic Motivation	-0.599**	0.000	Highly Significant
Intrinsic Motivation	-0.647**	0.000	Highly Significant
Fear of Evaluation			
Amotivation	0.867**	0.000	Highly Significant
Extrinsic Motivation	-0.653**	0.000	Highly Significant
Intrinsic Motivation	-0.700**	0.000	Highly Significant
Speaking Activities			
Amotivation	0.770**	0.000	Highly Significant
Extrinsic Motivation	-0.562**	0.000	Highly Significant
Intrinsic Motivation	-0.607**	0.000	Highly Significant

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**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 4 presents that there is a strong direct relationship between speaking anxiety and speaking motivation in oral English learning. Specifically, it reflects that the relationship between speaking anxiety and different types of motivation (amotivation, extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation) in four different areas: verbal communication, non-verbal communication, fear of evaluation, and speaking activities. Such kind of strong relationship between anxiety and motivation in English learning has been proved in the following several studies. He (2022) explored the relationship between the learner's learning anxiety and learning motivation. The findings confirmed that the learner's learning anxiety and learning motivation was significantly related with each other and their motivation resulted from their learning anxiety to some extent. Huang (2023) investigated the relationship between learners' learning anxiety and learning motivation in online environment in China. The research indicated that there was a significant relationship between the learners' learning anxiety and their learning motivation in the virtual environment.

As seen in the table, the computed rho-values ranging from 0.770 to 0.818 indicate a strong to very strong direct relationship between amotivation and subdomains of speaking anxiety. The data in the table suggest a strong positive correlation between speaking anxiety and amotivation. This means that as speaking anxiety increases, so does amotivation. The major reason can be described as follows: firstly, the non-English majors usually claims whether they can speak English better or not will not have a huge impact on their study and future career, so they will not pay much effort and attention to learn and practice it; secondly, the non-English majors are usually poor at oral English, and they don't have enough confidence in themselves while speaking English; thirdly, they fear they may get negative evaluation from their teacher and classmates. So, for this group of students may feel overwhelmed and timid while speaking English before others in class activities because of their poor oral English level. The higher speaking anxiety they have in speaking English, the more amotivation they experience in the process.

The computed rho-values ranging from -0.562 to -0.653 indicate a moderate to strong indirect relationship between extrinsic motivation and sub variables of speaking anxiety. The data show a strong negative correlation between speaking anxiety and extrinsic motivation. This suggests that as speaking anxiety increases, extrinsic motivation decreases. The more speaking anxiety the non-English majors have while speaking English, the less motivated they feel because of the external rewards or outcomes.

Likewise, the computed rho-values ranging from -0.607 to -0.700 indicate a strong indirect relationship between intrinsic motivation and sub variables of speaking anxiety. It shows a statistically significant relationship between speaking anxiety and speaking motivation since the obtained p-values were less than 0.01. Similarly, the table data reveals a strong negative correlation between speaking anxiety and intrinsic motivation. This means that as speaking anxiety increases, intrinsic motivation decreases. The more anxious they feel in speaking English, the less enjoyable and satisfying they are when participating in the oral English class activities and practices.

In summary, this table suggests that there is a strong direct relationship between speaking anxiety and speaking motivation in oral English learning. These relationships shown in the table suggest that speaking anxiety can have a significant impact on both the students' extrinsic and intrinsic motivation in oral English speaking. Therefore, it is very important for the teachers to take some effective measures to address or relieve the students' speaking anxiety in language learning process and enhance their oral English level as it has a significant impact on student's motivation and engagement in class activities. The useful strategies to reduce speaking anxiety may include providing a supportive, interactive and encouraging learning environment, offering students enough opportunities for practice and communicate with each other, and teaching them anxiety management strategies.

Table 5

Relationship Between Speaking Anxiety and Learning Autonomy

Variables	rho-value	p-value	Interpretation
Verbal Communication			
Setting learning goals/ plans for English speaking improvement	-0.664**	0.000	Highly Significant
Utilizing activities to perform oral English learning actions for English Speaking Improvement	-0.641**	0.000	Highly Significant
Self-evaluating English-speaking	-0.492**	0.000	Highly Significant

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performance and processes

Non-verbal Communication			
Setting learning goals/ plans for English speaking improvement	-0.571**	0.000	Highly Significant
Utilizing activities to perform oral English learning actions for English Speaking Improvement	-0.529**	0.000	Highly Significant
Self-evaluating English-speaking performance and processes	-0.414**	0.000	Highly Significant
Fear of Evaluation			
Setting learning goals/ plans for English speaking improvement	-0.640**	0.000	Highly Significant
Utilizing activities to perform oral English learning actions for English Speaking Improvement	-0.605**	0.000	Highly Significant
Self-evaluating English-speaking performance and processes	-0.467**	0.000	Highly Significant
Speaking Activities			
Setting learning goals/ plans for English speaking improvement	-0.509**	0.000	Highly Significant
Utilizing activities to perform oral English learning actions for English Speaking Improvement	-0.490**	0.000	Highly Significant
Self-evaluating English-speaking performance and processes	-0.382**	0.000	Highly Significant

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 5 shows a statistically significant relationship between speaking anxiety and learning autonomy since the obtained p-values were less than 0.01. As reflected in the table, the computed rho-values ranging from -0.382 to -0.664 indicate a weak to strong indirect relationship among the subdomains of speaking anxiety and learning autonomy.

The relationship between anxiety and learning autonomy has been proved by the relative study. Kabiri and Mansouri's (2018) research investigated the relationship between EFL learners' autonomy, anxiety and their motivated strategies for learning and the findings confirmed a highly significant negative relationship between learners' anxiety and autonomy levels, meaning high levels of anxiety were associated with low levels of autonomy.

Specifically, as observed from the table, there exist highly significant negative correlations between verbal communication and the three subdomains of speaking learning autonomy in oral English learning (setting learning goals/plans (rho=-0.664, p<0.01), utilizing activities (rho=-0.641, p<0.01), and self-evaluating English-speaking performance and processes (rho=-0.492, p<0.01)). Furthermore, there are highly significant negative correlations between non-verbal communication and the three subdomains of speaking learning autonomy (setting learning goals/plans (rho=-0.571, p<0.01), utilizing activities (rho=-0.529, p<0.01), and self-evaluating English-speaking performance and processes (rho=-0.414, p<0.01)). Moreover, there are highly significant negative correlations between fear of evaluation and the three subdomains of speaking learning autonomy (setting learning goals/plans (rho=-0.640, p<0.01), utilizing activities (rho=-0.605, p<0.01), and self-evaluating English-speaking performance and processes (rho=-0.467, p<0.01)). Besides, there are highly significant negative correlations between speaking activities and the three subdomains of speaking learning autonomy (setting learning goals/plans (rho=-0.509, p<0.01), utilizing activities (rho=-0.490, p<0.01), and self-evaluating English-speaking performance and processes (rho=-0.382, p<0.01)).

In conclusion, the table suggests that speaking anxiety has a highly significant negative relationship with speaking learning autonomy in oral English learning process. This suggests that as speaking anxiety increases, students' ability to set learning goals/plans, utilize activities for learning, and self-evaluate their performance decreases. This is supported by Ceyhun and Omer (2022). His research confirmed that there was a significant and

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negative relationship between learner autonomy and foreign language anxiety (FLA). This suggests that learners who are more autonomous may experience less anxiety when learning a foreign language.

Table 6

Relationship Between Speaking Motivation and Learning Autonomy

Variables	rho-value	p-value	Interpretation
Amotivation			
Setting learning goals/ plans for English speaking improvement	-0.703**	0.000	Highly Significant
Utilizing activities to perform oral English learning actions for English Speaking Improvement	-0.683**	0.000	Highly Significant
Self-evaluating English-speaking performance and processes	-0.517**	0.000	Highly Significant
Extrinsic Motivation			
Setting learning goals/ plans for English speaking improvement	0.727**	0.000	Highly Significant
Utilizing activities to perform oral English learning actions for English Speaking Improvement	0.667**	0.000	Highly Significant
Self-evaluating English-speaking performance and processes	0.548**	0.000	Highly Significant
Intrinsic Motivation			
Setting learning goals/ plans for English speaking improvement	0.769**	0.000	Highly Significant
Utilizing activities to perform oral English learning actions for English Speaking Improvement	0.726**	0.000	Highly Significant
Self-evaluating English-speaking performance and processes	0.596**	0.000	Highly Significant

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Table 6 displays a statistically significant relationship between the students' speaking motivation and learning autonomy in oral English learning process since the obtained p-values were less than 0.01. This was proved by the related studies. Okumus Ceylan (2021) investigated the relationship between learner autonomy and motivation in a state university prep school in Turkey in a non-native context. The findings demonstrated a moderate positive correlation between motivational beliefs and learner autonomy. Desi and Wilany (2023) explored the relationship which existed between learner autonomy and motivation in higher education. It was proved that the learner's learning autonomy and their motivation in EFL speaking classes was positively related.

Specifically, as observed from the table, there are highly significant negative correlations between amotivation and the three subdomain of speaking learning autonomy: setting learning goals/plans (rho=-0.703, p<0.01), utilizing activities (rho=-0.683, p<0.01), and self-evaluating English-speaking performance and processes (rho=-0.517, p<0.01). Furthermore, there are highly significant positive correlations between extrinsic motivation and the three subdomains of speaking learning autonomy: setting learning goals/plans (rho=0.727, p<0.01), utilizing activities (rho=0.667, p<0.01), and self-evaluating English-speaking performance and processes (rho=0.548, p<0.01). In addition, there are highly significant positive correlations between intrinsic motivation and the three subdomains of speaking learning autonomy: setting learning goals/plans (rho=0.769, p<0.01), utilizing activities (rho=0.726, p<0.01), and self-evaluating English-speaking performance and processes (rho=0.596, p<0.01). Fatemeh Khonamri, et al. (2020) investigated the relationship between EFL learners' motivation and autonomy. And the findings showed that there was a significant positive correlation between autonomy and intrinsic motivation, while the correlation between autonomy and extrinsic motivation was significant but negative.

Take the non-English majors to learn the oral English learning for example. The non-English majors usually haven't much interest in oral English learning, they haven't had a good command of basic English knowledge, and they are poor at oral English. It is just because of their low interest and English proficiency that makes the students have a smaller motivation in oral English learning, which make the students lack the learning autonomy in oral English learning, such as they are usually not willing to set feasible and realistic goals for their oral English learning, haven't had the awareness to participate in English class activities actively and volunteer to interact with the teacher or other classmates regularly, let alone self-evaluate their English-speaking ability and their learning processes. Furthermore, they usually work hard especially at the end of each semester because they want to pass the final exam for the oral English course. So, passing the final exam for the oral English course may be the students' extrinsic motivation to work hard. Moreover, the non-English majors have to pass the CET4 or CET6 for graduation from college, but such exams are all written tests of English listening, reading translating, and writing and have no requirement of their oral English level. Hence, the non-English majors haven't much study pressure in their oral English learning. Without the pressure, the students haven't had enormous motivation and learning autonomy in oral English learning because a large number of them only aim to pass the final exam of the course rather than enhance their oral English proficiency. This phenomenon of oral English class reveals that the lower the speaking motivation for the non-English majors to speak English, the less autonomous they are at oral English learning. On the contrary, the higher motivation the students have to speak English, the more autonomous the students will be at oral English learning. Only with larger motivation and autonomy in oral English learning, the students pay greater efforts to speak and practice English as much as possible, thus, they can improve their oral English and realize their goal of oral English learning.

In summary, the table reflects that there exists a statistically significant relationship between the students' speaking motivation and learning autonomy in oral English learning process. For the non-English majors in China, it is very urgent and necessary for the Chinese oral English teachers to take a series of effective measures to design and work out some interesting and meaningful class activities, choose the suitable teaching materials for the students to discuss and talk about in class, and post the relative teaching and learning materials of oral English course on online platform, and suggest the famous and interesting MOOC resource for the students to learn at their convenient time, which all can help enhance the students' interest and motivation in oral English learning. And at the same time, such measures may instruct the students to cultivate their learning autonomy of oral English learning rather than only learn and speak English according to the requirement of the oral English teacher. After all, study is their own business, and they should be responsible for their own oral English learning.

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In summary, the research conducted a thorough study of the three aspects of oral English learning: speaking anxiety, speaking motivation and speaking learning autonomy, established the relationship among the three variables: the students' speaking anxiety, speaking motivation and speaking learning autonomy, and proposed an oral English development plan for the non-English majors in the colleges and universities in China. The questionnaire proves helpful in assessing the students' speaking anxiety, speaking motivation, and speaking learning autonomy in oral English learning.

The findings revealed that female respondents exceed the male ones in number. They are all the first-year and second-year college students from 20 colleges and universities in Xi'an, China.

A large number of respondents agreed that the students' speaking anxiety has a enormous influence on their speaking motivation and learning autonomy. The findings confirmed that the more anxious the students are while speaking English, the less confident they are in speaking English, and the less achievements they will make in oral English learning.

Speaking motivation has played a very important role in the students' oral English learning process. Intrinsic motivation is the internal drive to promote students' oral English learning for long, while the extrinsic motivation is also a great impetus to urge the students to realize their short-term goal in oral English learning. The more motivated the students are in oral English learning, the greater achievement they can make in oral English learning.

Similarly, the students' learning autonomy in oral English learning is critical in the process of oral English learning. The more autonomous they are in oral English learning, the more effort the students make in oral English learning and the greater progress they can achieve in oral proficiency, which may make them more motivated in oral English learning.

Highly significant relationships exist among the three variables: students' speaking anxiety, speaking motivation and learning autonomy, suggesting that the less anxious the students are while speaking English, the more motivated and autonomous they are in oral English learning.

Finally, an oral English program was proposed from the three aspects of oral English learning: relieving the students' speaking anxiety, strengthen their speaking motivation, and cultivate their learning autonomy in oral English learning process to enhance the non-English majors' English proficiency.

In future research, it is recommended that the respondents may be expanded to all college students in a larger region and more universities may be included in the whole country in order to ensure the diversity and representativeness of samples; more personal information of the respondents may be included in the survey questionnaire, such as personality, English proficiency, school regions, etc.; the future research may focus on the more efficient programs or measures to relieve the students' speaking anxiety efficiently, develop their speaking motivation, and cultivate their speaking learning autonomy in oral English learning process.

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