

# The Effect of Learning Cycle to Reduce Speaking Anxiety in Chinese Language Learners

Dessy Astutiningtyas<sup>1</sup>, Hamamah<sup>1</sup>, Sahiruddin<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Brawijaya University*

169 Jl. MT. Haryono, Ketawanggede, Lowokwaru Sub-District, Malang, East Java, 65145, Indonesia

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Corresponding Author:

Dessy Astutiningtyas

[dessy.astuti@student.ub.ac.id](mailto:dessy.astuti@student.ub.ac.id)

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**Abstract.** This study aims to assess the level of speaking anxiety among Mandarin learners at Malang State Polytechnic and evaluate the effectiveness of the Learning Cycle (LC) model in reducing speaking anxiety during Mandarin language learning. The research follows a quasi-experimental approach and focuses on students enrolled in the Business Administration Study Program at Malang State Polytechnic. One class was selected as the experimental group, while another was the control group using the intact classes technique. Data collection involved observation and post-tests. The findings revealed that: 1) The Independent Sample T-Test indicated a significant difference in anxiety levels between the control and treatment groups, with the treatment group exhibiting a higher mean value of 34.40 compared to the control group's mean value of 9.12. Thus, it can be concluded that the anxiety level of the treatment group is better than that of the control group; 2) The Paired Sample T-test results demonstrated a significant influence between the group's Pre Test and post-test, with an increase in mean values from 53.32 to 62.44. Additionally, the Pre Test mean value was smaller at 45.79, while the Post Test mean value was 79.00.

**Keywords:** Learning Cycle; Speaking Anxiety; Mandarin Language.

## INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the progress of Mandarin in Indonesia has seen remarkable growth. Not only has Mandarin been integrated into the curriculum of primary, secondary, and higher education institutions, but some elementary schools have also included it in their local content curriculum [1]. This expansion of Mandarin education results from the Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy, which aims to equip students with relevant knowledge and skills for the workforce. In the context of Chinese language learning in Indonesia, independent learning is emphasised, giving students the freedom to think critically, innovate, and create while teachers act as facilitators [2]. Implementing Outcome-Based Education (OBE) principles further enhance the learning experience by focusing on learning outcomes, flexible curriculum design, and diverse learning opportunities. These outcomes are developed based on the university's vision and mission, study program objectives, and desired graduate profile. Learning outcomes, assessments, and activities are aligned to

ensure coherence and effectiveness. Students have various learning opportunities, including assignments, projects, practical activities, e-learning platforms, and mentoring [3].

Authors [4] emphasised the significance of speaking in foreign language proficiency indicators in the context of foreign language proficiency indicators. They highlighted that the ability to engage in conversations in the target language is a crucial measure of success in language learning. Fluency in speaking plays a vital role in communication within and outside the classroom [5].

Speaking in public is intricately tied to a student's self-assurance. It's important to understand that feeling a lack of confidence when speaking is quite common and not a significant issue, as long as the person can manage their anxiety and ensure it doesn't hinder their ability to communicate effectively. According to [6, 7], foreign language anxiety has a detrimental impact on learners' performance. Their research reveals that most learners encounter moderate levels of anxiety when studying a foreign language.

The concept of anxiety is a significant issue in personality theory. The level of self-confidence can be reduced partly because one does not have competence in that area. Speaking anxiety can be substantial in foreign language acquisition (FLA). Anxiety arises in learners due to external aspects and internal aspects. External factors include grammar and material learned.

Meanwhile, internal elements such as fear of making mistakes, mispronunciation, misspelling, and so on are sufficiently embedded in the learner's memory to cause anxiety in the learner [8]. Speaking is also considered the most stressful and anxiety-producing skill for foreign language learners [9]. Learners' foreign language anxiety is highly manifested in situations where they need to speak or deliver presentations in public [10], and FLA inevitably hinders their communication. Although FLA is a widely studied affective construct in second language acquisition [11], classroom-based assessment of learners' FLA is complex due to its dynamic and intricate nature. Effective formative assessment practices can potentially accelerate learner performance and learning outcomes [12, 13, 14] and thus help alleviate FLA. Several studies have shown the positive effects of formative activities on relieving learners' FLA and improving oral presentation or public speaking skills [15].

Several studies on foreign language anxiety in Indonesia show that there are adverse effects of anxiety on the language learning process. Some of the reasons that make Chinese classes challenging to master and also have an impact on many students are gradually losing interest in learning Chinese and ultimately not being able to learn Chinese well [16]. Research findings [17] show that international students in Mandarin experience modern levels of anxiety, and communication fear is the dominant aspect. This study found that the duration of learning Mandarin affects the anxiety level of learners, while the anxiety level of learners does not affect gender. The results of the analysis show that communication anxiety has a value of 31.00 and fear of negative evaluation with a mean value of 24.29.

Authors [17] provide an overview of efforts to identify new student anxiety to prepare preventive and curative measures to carry out higher education well. The study focused on how students respond to various stimuli that trigger anxiety. It is essential to follow up on the survey by [18] as their research does not provide detailed

information about the anxiety experienced by Mandarin learners. In addition, authors [17] only investigated differences in anxiety based on gender, study program and ethnicity.

Communication skills can be trained by involving students in active learning through Learning Cycle-oriented learning strategies [19]. The Learning Cycle (LC) model is a learning model that prioritises students to be more active in learning. The teacher throws a problem topic at students, and then students are asked to provide as many opinions, ideas, or suggestions as possible from a topic or problem. Unfortunately, the implementation or application of the Learning Cycle is very little or even nonexistent in Chinese language learning. This research was conducted to complement the repertoire of knowledge in the field of the Chinese language to overcome problems related to speaking anxiety [20].

In teaching students public speaking/oral presentation skills, feedback and assessment are essential parts of the learning cycle. The available research on feedback in public speaking has focused on the effects of different feedback sources on the acquisition of speaking skills [21, 22], the development and validation of public speaking assessment instruments [23], the validation of self-assessment or peer assessment of speaking ability [24, 25].

To promote academic success and eliminate the possible adverse effects of anxiety, it is necessary to consider curriculum design and delivery. Moreover, instructors may consider a student-centred learning (SCL) approach to fostering these emotions. Several studies, such as [26–29], show that SCL is effective in various models and methods. This approach entails content and delivery of instruction that is focused on individual students by providing each with the opportunity to develop using skills and abilities that are unique to each student. While anxiety is a construct that encompasses many areas, its prevalence in the act of public speaking (a common task or activity in some academic subjects) makes it essential for educators. Therefore, this study explores the effect of SCL learning design on student anxiety in public speaking courses.

Although studies have identified the relationship between anxiety and academic achievement [8, 16, 17, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36], they have not yet fully explored improvement strategies in the area of course design that would take into account various learners with different anxiety levels. To

bridge the gap in such research, this study will explore the Learning Cycle method in several beginner-level Chinese Public Speaking classes to determine the effect of each design on anxiety levels. Despite knowing that this problem exists, lecturers cannot help their students manage anxiety if an understanding of how course design can affect emotion is not thoroughly considered. Demands for future research have called for exploring how instructional design can influence emotions and discover potential influences, treatments and processes that will reduce anxiety and lead to tremendous student success.

Politeknik Negeri Malang (Polinema) was chosen as the object of research because Polinema is one of the polytechnics that teaches its students Mandarin as one of the foreign languages. One of the study programs that get Mandarin learning is DIII Business Administration because the achievement of DIII Business Administration graduates is a secretary or personal assistant. Some graduates are expected to work in multinational companies, which most likely require Mandarin to speak or communicate with foreign clients. Mandarin in Polinema, especially in the DIII Business Administration study program, is taught from semesters II to IV.

Based on the background and problems above, this study aims to bridge the gap with an in-depth discussion of anxiety levels and the methods teachers use to improve speaking skills or techniques to reduce speaking anxiety in Mandarin. Therefore, this study was conducted to see how speaking anxiety in Malang State Polytechnic students and the use of the Learning Cycle to reduce speaking anxiety.

## Theoretical Basis

*Experiential learning theory.* Experiential learning, defined by [37], involves engaging participants in active environments to enhance their knowledge and skills. This theory, proposed by [38], builds upon the ideas of Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget. According to [38], experiential learning is a transformative process where knowledge is actualised through experience.

Kolb further explains that experiential learning theory aims to continuously improve learning outcomes by leveraging experiences. This approach seeks to impact students in three ways: a) reshaping their cognitive structures, b) influencing their attitudes, and c) expanding their existing

skill sets. These three aspects are interconnected and mutually influence each other. If one element is missing, the effectiveness of the other two elements will be compromised.

*Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety.* Foreign language anxiety refers to the tension and anxiety experienced by language learners in a foreign language setting [39]. It is a psychological process characterised by dissatisfaction, distress, uneasiness, and worry. This anxiety is often accompanied by physiological responses from the autonomic nervous system [40, 41]. Understandably, individuals with anxiety issues may feel uncertain or insecure when they need to communicate in a second or foreign language. Research has shown that trembling, restlessness, rapid heartbeat, distraction, carelessness, excessive sweating, palpitations, and insomnia are common symptoms experienced by anxious individuals. Unfortunately, foreign language anxiety can have detrimental effects on the language competence of these learners.

*Learning Cycle.* The Learning Cycle is a teaching method that is deeply rooted in the principles of scientific inquiry. Its main goal is to empower students to grasp scientific concepts and delve deeper into their understanding independently. The classroom environment facilitates this process [4].

Based on constructivist epistemology, the Learning Cycle is a pedagogical framework that encourages conceptual change [42]. Obert Karplus, a renowned physics professor and a pioneer of the modern learning cycle, proposed a model highlighting the importance of students' observations and experiences. At the same time, the teacher guides in analysing these observations. In 1962, Karplus and Atkin from the University of Illinois introduced two phases without explicitly using the term "learning cycle." The first phase, known as invention, involved the initial introduction of a concept, while the second phase, referred to as discovery, focused on subsequent verification.

Since students cannot independently discover complex scientific concepts, the teacher must introduce them based on interpreting students' initial observations. Following the introduction of an idea, students will uncover new patterns that can be further analysed using the same concept [43].

## METHODS

*Research Design.* The method used in this research is a mixed-method Explicatory Sequential Design.

This method is a quantitative and qualitative data collection design that is carried out sequentially. In this research design, only two experimental groups are formed based on the results of the public speaking anxiety scale test: the treatment and control groups.

This research was conducted at Politeknik Negeri Malang in the Business Administration Study Program, Commercial Administration Department. Researchers researched two classes in the fourth semester with heterogeneous academic abilities. The two classes became the control and treatment classes, with 53 students.

*Data Collection.* In implementing the research, the researcher will conduct four stages to improve students' speaking skills. In treatment, the researcher applies the Learning Cycle Method. Treatment is used in four meetings, each lasting 100 minutes.

The first stage is reading. The second stage is listening. The third stage is writing. At this stage, students in two groups make a simple dialogue about buying and selling material. The fourth or final stage is speaking.

In the control group, the lecturer treated the students as usual. In the next meeting, the lecturer repeated the previous material and appointed some students to pronounce the vocabulary in the module. In the last meeting, the lecturer asked the students to make a simple dialogue in two groups. In this activity, more students asked the lecturer how to string sentences.

After administering the treatment, a post-test was conducted to assess students' speaking ability improvement. In pairs, students engaged in a simple dialogue on buying and selling material, presenting it to the class. Subsequently, researchers conducted interviews to follow up on treatment outcomes and post-test results.

*Data Analysis Technique.* The analysis used in this experimental research is quantitative. The results of the data that have been obtained will then be tested using the t-test, also known as the T-test. The t-test shows how far a cause variable's influence individually explains the dependent variable. The entire data computation was done through the SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solution) computer facilities for Windows Release version 16.0 program.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Observation Results of Learning Implementation in Treatment Group and Control Group.* In the post-test of the Treatment class, students in groups of two presented a simple dialogue in front of the class to be assessed by the lecturer. Students felt more comfortable at this stage because the dialogue material was repeated several times in the four stages of the Learning Cycle method. Students were not nervous when speaking in class, as seen by their fluency and facial expressions. Whereas in the control class, there were still some students who were nervous when dialoguing in front of the class. It was seen when they stood nervously and could not remember sentences. Students who are less familiar with the material and vocabulary prefer to come to the front of the class before the class hours are over because they feel unprepared. However, some students come to the front of the class earlier because they are ready.

*Speaking Anxiety Level.* The anxiety level was measured twice during the research process, namely during the pre-test and post-test. Table 1 below shows the pre-test and post-test results of pronunciation and vocabulary for fourth-semester Business Administration Study Program students at Malang State Polytechnic by applying the Learning Cycle Method.

Table 1 – Description of Pre-test and Post-test Scores in Treatment and Control Groups

<b>Control Group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. deviation</b>
Pre-test control	25	15	86	53.32	22.536
Post-test control	25	25	90	62.44	19.797
Valid N (listwise)	25				
<b>Treatment Group</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. deviation</b>
Pre-test control	25	15	45.79	20.408	45.79
Post-test control	25	25	79.00	13.129	79.00
Valid N (listwise)	25				

The table above shows that the pre-test of the control group obtained a minimum value of 15, a maximum value of 86, and an average value (mean) of 53.32. Meanwhile, the post-test obtained a minimum value of 25, a maximum value of 90, and an average value (mean) 62.44. In the Treatment group, the pre-test obtained a minimum value of 15, a maximum value of 80, and an average (mean) of 45.79. Meanwhile, the post-test obtained a minimum value of 45, a maximum value of 98, and an average value (mean) of 79.00.

Therefore, applying the Learning Cycle Method in teaching speaking effectively improves speaking skills.

*Normality Test.* The analysis results in Table 2 show that the data is usually distributed in the control class if the sig value is  $> 0.05$ . The results obtained are 0.084 and  $0.096 > 0.05$ . Then, the data is generally distributed. In the Treatment class, 0.097 and  $0.079 > 0.05$  were obtained. Then, the data is usually distributed.

Table 2 – Normality Test on Treatment Pre-test, Control Pre-test, Treatment Post-test, and Control Post-test

		Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Control Group	Pre Test	.115	25	.200*	.929	25	.084
	Post Test	.143	25	.199	.932	25	.096
Treatment Group	Pre Test	.166	28	.047	.938	28	.097
	Post Test	.140	28	.167	.934	28	.079

Notes: a) Lilliefors Significance Correction

*Comparison Test.* The statistical analysis of the data presented in the table produced significant findings. The homogeneity test results indicate that the anxiety levels between the control and treatment groups are not significantly different, suggesting that the data used in this study are homogeneous.

Additionally, the Independent Sample T-test results reveal a significant difference in anxiety levels between the control and treatment groups. This finding is supported by the obtained significance value (sig) of 0.000, which is less than the predetermined threshold of 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the treatment or intervention provided to the Treatment group has a distinct and significant effect in reducing anxiety levels compared to the control group.

Moreover, when examining the mean values of the two groups, it is evident that the Treatment group has a mean anxiety level of 34.40. In contrast, the control group has a mean value of 9.12. This indicates that, overall, the anxiety level in the Treatment group is lower than that in the control group. Consequently, it can be inferred that the intervention or treatment administered to the Treatment group effectively reduced anxiety levels in comparison to the control group.

*Significance of Students' Speaking Skills.* To determine the significance level of the pre-test and post-test scores, researchers used t-test analysis at the significance level ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.05 with degrees of freedom (df) = N-1, where N = the number of subjects.

Table 3 – T-Test Results

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Anxiety Level	Equal variances assumed	2.656	.110	6.638	48	.000	-25.280	3.808	-32.937	-17.623
	Equal variances not assumed			6.638	43.175	.000	-25.280	3.808	-32.960	-17.600

The Paired Sample T-test results revealed a noteworthy impact between the pre-test and post-test

in the group. The significance value (sig) obtained ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ) indicates that the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores is not by

chance, but rather, there is indeed a significant effect.

The average value of the two tests demonstrated that the pre-test average was 45.79, while the post-test average was 79.00. This indicates a significant increase in anxiety levels from before (pre-test) to after (post-test) the treatment or intervention provided. Therefore, it can be concluded that the treatment or intervention administered to the group had a positive influence in reducing anxiety levels. These findings suggest that the treatment or intervention was successful in enhancing the mental state and reducing anxiety levels in the group.

***Speaking Anxiety Level of Chinese Language Learners at Malang State Polytechnic.*** The students' speaking accuracy was extremely low before the treatment. This could be attributed to various factors such as the teaching method, lack of speaking practice, and teachers who relied on traditional methods for teaching speaking. The teacher would provide the material, explain it, and then give examples and exercises. However, this approach proved ineffective as it left the students bored and unable to improve their speaking skills, especially in communication and conversation. Consequently, their speaking achievement suffered.

However, after the treatment, there was a significant improvement in the students' speaking accuracy and fluency, as evidenced by the post-test scores. In the pre-test, it was observed that most students needed help to express their opinions or arguments on the given topic. They were unsure of using appropriate words, afraid of making mistakes, and lacked confidence to speak in front of their peers. Nevertheless, after receiving the treatment, their abilities showed remarkable progress.

The researcher faced challenges while implementing the Learning Cycle method during the treatment. All students needed to master each phase before moving on to the next one. This posed difficulties in ensuring that every student could grasp the concepts effectively. Nonetheless, the overall outcome of the treatment was highly positive, leading to significant improvements in the students' speaking abilities.

The preparatory phase is the initial stage of the learning process, which focuses on preparing the learner for the upcoming journey of acquiring knowledge. This phase is highly significant as it sets the foundation for effective learning. The

learning process may become sluggish or even halt without adequately preparing the learner.

Following the preparatory phase is the presentation phase, which marks the second stage of the learning cycle. Its purpose positively engages learners in the learning material, igniting their curiosity and enthusiasm. Although the term "presentation" typically implies the role of the facilitator, in this phase, it is essential to associate it with the collaborative efforts of both the facilitator and the learners. A presentation is not merely a one-sided act performed by the facilitator; instead, it involves a dynamic interaction between the facilitator and the learners, varying based on the specific circumstances. This aspect must be revised to ensure the effectiveness of this phase in the learning cycle.

The practice (integration) phase constitutes the third stage, serving as the core of accelerated learning. This phase is indispensable for genuine learning to occur. It can contribute to approximately 70% or more of the learning experience. It is during this phase that authentic learning takes place. The learner's thoughts, words, and actions play a pivotal role in the learning process, surpassing the influence of the instructor's thoughts, words, and actions.

Lastly, the implementation phase ensures the retention and proper application of the acquired knowledge and skills. Having gone through the first three phases of the learning cycle, it is crucial to ensure that individuals not only perform but also continuously enhance their newfound knowledge and skills in the workplace, thereby generating tangible value for themselves and others.

These results are in line with the findings of [17], which show that every aspect of anxiety in learning Chinese is at a moderate level. Then, the most dominant element experienced by students in Chinese learning anxiety is communication anxiety.

Using the Learning Cycle Method, students can improve their speaking accuracy, including pronunciation and vocabulary. Students' pre-test data shows that students need some help with pronunciation and vocabulary. In the pre-test, the student's average score could have been higher because they always made mistakes pronouncing the words when presenting the topic. After the treatment, the students' scores in the post-test were more significant than those in the pre-test.

Students' achievement improved in speaking practice by using the Learning Cycle Method. The Learning Cycle is a teaching model based on scientific inquiry. This model encourages students to develop their understanding of a scientific concept, explore and deepen that understanding, and be effective in the classroom.

The students' post-test scores were higher than the average pre-test scores. Therefore, using the Learning Cycle Method effectively improves students' fluent speaking skills and can help language learners build. This shows that the Learning Cycle is a learning model that facilitates conceptual change [42].

Based on the analysis results, the data collected through the test, as described in the previous analysis results section, showed that students' speaking ability improved significantly when the Learning Cycle Method was used in the classroom.

As explained earlier, students presented material on the theme during the pre-test and post-test. In the pre-test, the researcher found that most students still struggled to speak. In the post-test, students followed the same procedure as the pre-test. Throughout the post-test, the researcher found that students presented the material fairly.

From the Independent Sample T-Test test, the sig value is  $0.000 < 0.05$ ; it can be concluded that there is a difference in anxiety levels between the control group and the treatment group. The treatment group has a higher mean value, with a mean value of 34.40, compared to the Control group, with a mean value of 9.12. So, it can be concluded that the Anxiety Level of the Treatment Group is better than the Control Group.

As explained above, the average value in the pre-test increased in the post-test. This shows that using the Learning Cycle Method improves students' speaking skills. Students are stimulated to speak without feeling reluctant, awkward, or anxious anymore (more hesitation and pauses).

The higher the students' anxiety, the lower their speaking ability. This is also supported by [31], who mentioned that anxious students lack concentration, forgetfulness, and sweat, which can lead to negative behaviours such as avoiding class or procrastinating on homework. In the end, these behaviours will affect their cognitive competence because students who have high anxiety will perform lower than those who have low anxiety in class.

The researcher found two factors causing students' speaking anxiety, namely linguistic factors and non-linguistic factors. First is the linguistic factor. This occurred because the students had low pronunciation, lack of ideas, and lack of vocabulary. This finding is consistent with [44], who found that lack of language, low English proficiency, and memory disassociation are sources that cause English-speaking anxiety. As a result, students sometimes decide to avoid interaction or become passive in the classroom when facing speaking anxiety because they have no idea about the subject matter. This also relates to [45] statement that language anxiety can be both the result and the cause of a lack of mastery of the target language. In other words, language anxiety can be experienced due to linguistic difficulties in learning and using a second or foreign language.

The second factor that causes students' speaking anxiety is non-linguistic factors such as lack of confidence, lack of preparation, shyness toward peers, and fear of being laughed at. This happens because students feel embarrassed to be watched by their friends. In addition, students also feel anxious for fear of being laughed at by their friends, especially if students know that their friends who present in front of the class have low abilities. Authors [6] stated that students will feel anxious when they have to perform in front of the class and be watched by their classmates. This situation can increase students' anxiety levels in foreign or second language learning. This is also supported by [46], who states that students fear being laughed at by their friends when they make speaking mistakes. Furthermore, [47] states that communication apprehension is a person's level of fear or anxiety associated with actual or anticipated communication with others. This can be caused by general personality traits such as being quiet, shy, and reserved in an individual's personality.

It was anticipated that the participants would have some knowledge of Chinese speaking anxiety due to its significant impact on language learning. Surprisingly, during the interviews, it became evident that the participants were not familiar with the term "Chinese speaking anxiety" itself. However, they did display an understanding of its existence and how it can influence language learning on a deeper level. This understanding stemmed from their own experiences and the discomfort they felt in certain language-learning situations. This is noteworthy because even though the participants had never been formally

introduced to the concept of Chinese speaking anxiety, they were able to express both the positive and negative effects it can have on language acquisition. Hence, it can be inferred that the participants possessed an intuitive grasp of Chinese-speaking anxiety despite never having been explicitly educated about it.

Language learners must familiarise themselves with the concept of Chinese speaking anxiety. By understanding this concept, they can make sense of their feelings of nervousness, worry, and fear during language classes. Moreover, they can identify the root causes of their fear of communication, fear of negative evaluation, and fear of exams in the context of language learning. This understanding is vital so that students know the challenges they may encounter. By enhancing language students' knowledge of Chinese speaking anxiety, they can gain insight into how it operates. This, in turn, normalises Chinese speaking anxiety and helps students realise that it is a common experience among language learners in various contexts. Armed with this knowledge, students may feel more at ease, knowing that they are not alone in facing Chinese-speaking anxiety. Furthermore, this awareness may inspire them to explore strategies to overcome or minimise Chinese-speaking anxiety.

***Effectiveness of Learning Cycle Strategies / Methods in Chinese Language Learning to Reduce Speaking Anxiety.*** Based on the results of the hypothesis testing conducted, it can be concluded that applying the Learning Cycle Method in Chinese language learning effectively reduces students' speaking anxiety. The Null Hypothesis (H0) is rejected, which means there is no significant difference before and after the application of this method. At the same time, the Alternative Hypothesis (H1) is accepted, which indicates a substantial improvement in improving students' speaking skills.

Speaking anxiety can often hinder students from actively participating in oral communication when learning Chinese. However, the Learning Cycle Method offers a solution to this challenge. Students can enhance their speaking skills by following the stages of observation, questioning, experimentation, reflection, and synthesis. In Chinese language learning, this method allows students to observe and learn from spoken language models through direct interaction, ask questions to clarify concepts, practice speaking through experiments, reflect on their learning experiences,

and synthesise the knowledge they acquire. Through this approach, students can gain confidence and familiarity in communicating in Mandarin. The repetitive learning process gradually improves speaking skills and helps alleviate students' fear or anxiety.

Applying the Learning Cycle Method to fourth-semester Business Administration Study Program students at Malang State Polytechnic yielded promising results. It was discovered that this method effectively reduced speaking anxiety and enhanced Mandarin speaking skills. This finding holds significant implications for developing more efficient Chinese learning strategies that can assist students in overcoming their fear of speaking. Numerous studies have demonstrated that foreign language speaking anxiety can hinder language acquisition. Therefore, learners must be aware of the factors that may impede their progress in the target language. This emphasises the importance of fostering a greater understanding of anxiety about foreign language speaking within the language classroom. This understanding should encompass the recognition of foreign language speaking anxiety as a commonly associated concept rather than merely acknowledging it as a capacity to discuss anxious feelings. By acknowledging foreign language speaking anxiety as a phenomenon universally experienced during language learning, students can normalise their experiences and gain insight into how it impacts their language acquisition. Consequently, students can take proactive measures to manage and overcome foreign language speaking anxiety effectively. Conversely, students who remain oblivious to the influence of foreign language speaking anxiety on their language learning may continue to suffer its consequences without comprehending the underlying reasons.

Language teachers should leverage their supportive and guiding role to raise awareness of anxiety about foreign language speaking in language classes. For instance, teachers can initiate a class discussion on foreign language speaking anxiety to prompt students to think and talk about the issue. Additionally, teachers can introduce the concept of foreign language speaking anxiety, briefly explaining to students what it is and how it can impact language learners and learning. Teachers may also highlight strategies and skills students can employ to overcome anxiety when speaking a foreign language. Increased awareness of this issue improves understanding, benefiting both students and language teachers. If students can

successfully overcome foreign language speaking anxiety, such knowledge can help minimise it, contributing to a low-anxiety classroom atmosphere. Reducing foreign language speaking anxiety can enhance language achievement, retention, and learner motivation [48]. However, for teachers to effectively raise awareness of foreign language speaking anxiety, they must first be aware of the issue. Therefore, knowledge about foreign language speaking anxiety should be disseminated among language teachers before and during their training [49]. Anxiety is a factor that cannot be eliminated from the language learning context, but specific strategies can help minimise it. This study suggests that foreign language speaking anxiety can be reduced if teachers speak slowly, both in terms of their speaking speed and the pace at which they read content. Therefore, language teachers should check on their students to ensure they speak at a pace students can follow. Teachers should also confirm that students have understood before moving on to new material, and they should convey that meeting and making new friends is a fun aspect of their Chinese class, which can help reduce anxiety. Teachers should also encourage students to work in small groups inside and outside the classroom to create a more relaxed atmosphere.

Researchers have discovered that student speaking anxiety can have both positive and negative effects. As stated by [50], facilitating anxiety benefits the learners by increasing their attentiveness, motivating them to put in more effort, and ultimately aiding them in completing the task. On the other hand, debilitating anxiety has the opposite effect, causing the learner to become excessively anxious and potentially hindering their ability to perform the task to the best of their abilities. Sometimes, it may even instil fear in the learner, preventing them from attempting the task.

The initial impact is to alleviate anxiety, which in turn lightens the load for students when speaking in front of the class. This type of anxiety drives students to improve their speaking skills, boost their confidence, and study diligently. Moreover, students also acquire the ability to minimise their anxiety. According to [51], this anxiety encompasses uncertainties about what to say, nervousness, speech impediments, and the fear of being ridiculed by peers. The author [52] suggests that overwhelming anxiety can hinder learning and skill development. Researchers commonly encounter debilitating anxiety as a prevalent issue.

Additionally, resource [53] asserts that debilitating anxiety is detrimental as it hampers student performance, leading to reduced participation and avoidance of language use. However, anxiety at an appropriate level plays a positive role by motivating students to persist in their learning journey. Furthermore, [54] highlights that fear, when adequately managed, inspires students to resist the adverse effects and encourages them to put in extra effort to overcome anxiety's impact.

One of the drawbacks of this study is the limited number of participants. It would have been more beneficial to recruit a larger sample. Despite being a small-scale study within a short timeframe, the sample size is adequate for comprehensively understanding the participants' perspectives on Chinese speaking anxiety. However, due to the small sample size, the findings cannot be generalised to the entire population of Chinese learners at Malang State Polytechnic. Nevertheless, the results do suggest new themes that warrant further investigation. To generate more data and achieve a better representation of the Chinese learner population at Malang State Polytechnic, future research should involve a larger sample of students.

Additionally, using questionnaires and the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale as data instruments in this study can be considered a limitation. Future qualitative studies can explore using journals and classroom observations to gain deeper insights into language learners' awareness and understanding of Chinese speaking anxiety. Furthermore, conducting a comparative analysis would be valuable in examining how Chinese-speaking anxiety may evolve at Malang State Polytechnic.

This study has shed light on the Chinese language learners at Malang State Polytechnic and their understanding of foreign language speaking anxiety and its impact on their language learning. It explores how these learners experience foreign language speaking anxiety and to what extent it affects them. However, this research has raised several questions, particularly regarding the awareness of foreign language speaking anxiety among Mandarin learners at Malang State Polytechnic. Do the majority of these learners know about this anxiety, or are they unaware of its existence? Are they only familiar with its effects based on their experiences in language classes, or have they been informed about this phenomenon? Despite the significant attention given to foreign language speaking anxiety in the fields of Second Language

Acquisition (SLA) and Second Language Education (SLE), the awareness of language learners regarding this anxiety remains an area that requires further exploration. Future research should investigate the understanding of anxiety about speaking a foreign language among college students. Moreover, examining the role of friendship in foreign language-speaking anxiety would be enjoyable. Exploring the impact of friendship in language classes and its connection to foreign language speaking anxiety could provide valuable insights and a deeper understanding of this issue.

## CONCLUSIONS

Implementing the Learning Cycle Method in Chinese language learning at Malang State Polytechnic has proven to be highly effective in enhancing students' speaking abilities and reducing their anxiety levels. Incorporating various stages of the learning cycle, including observation, questioning, experimentation, reflection, and synthesis, allows students to enhance their speaking skills steadily. Before implementing this method, students struggled with speaking accuracy, likely due to ineffective teaching methods, limited speaking practice, and a lack of diverse speaking techniques. However, the Learning Cycle Method has instilled confidence and familiarity in students regarding communicating in Mandarin.

The analysis of the results revealed that students' average scores in the post-test were significantly higher than those in the pre-test, particularly in terms of speaking accuracy and fluency. This demonstrates a remarkable improvement in students' speaking abilities after undergoing the Learning Cycle Method. Students who utilised this

method also experienced advancements in pronunciation and vocabulary mastery. Previously, students often needed to correct their pronunciation of words and deliver presentations. However, following the treatment, their scores in the post-test exhibited significant improvement.

Based on this study's findings, several recommendations can be implemented to alleviate speaking anxiety in Chinese classes. Teachers must acknowledge the presence of foreign language anxiety. Similarly, students should actively participate in efforts to reduce speaking anxiety inside and outside the classroom. A key aspect is fostering a respectful environment where students support one another instead of ridiculing those who struggle. This will create a sense of comfort and camaraderie among them. Moreover, anxious students must understand that making mistakes is a natural part of language learning and should not deter them from speaking Chinese.

However, it is essential to note that this study has limitations, and further research is necessary to delve deeper into students' anxiety when speaking Chinese. Conducting similar studies in the future with larger participant groups or different student demographics would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issue. Additionally, future research could explore more specific learning strategies, such as role-playing, simulating real-life communication scenarios, or structured speaking exercises, to reduce students' anxiety. Furthermore, investigating other factors that contribute to speaking anxiety, such as instructor assessment and feedback, social support within Chinese learning environments, and compelling psychological approaches, would also be beneficial.

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