

## Self-Esteem and Gender as Predictors of Glossophobia Among Lagos State University (FCESPECIAL Oyo) Students

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### Abstract

The study examine self-esteem and gender as predictor of glossophobia among Lagos State University FCE special, Oyo students. It is pertinent to investigate the effects of Self-esteem and gender as predictors of glossophobia among Lagos state university in affiliation with federal college of Education special, Oyo. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Three hundred participants were selected using stratified random sampling technique. The ages of the participants ranged between 19 and 35 years with a mean of 19.47 years ( $SD= 26.26$ ). Four research questions were tested using linear regression and Multiple regression. The finding revealed that self-esteem significantly predicts glossophobia,  $F(1, 298) = 48.16, p < .001$ . Also, gender is a significant predictor of glossophobia,  $F(1, 298) = 29.59, p < .001$ . The model accounts for 8.1% of the variance in glossophobia. The females have higher glossophobia scores than males by about 4.32 points. The The multiple regression model shows that self-esteem and gender jointly predict glossophobia,  $F(2, 297) = 66.87, p < .001$ , among students. The relative contribution of independent variables on dependent variable was considered: self-esteem ( $\beta = -0.431, p < .001$ ), gender ( $\beta = 0.256$ ) had significant relative contribution. It is recommended that the College of Education counseling centers and student affairs units should develop structured self-esteem enhancement programmes. By equipping students with tools to build their self-worth, institutions can help reduce anxiety related to public speaking and foster a more confident student body. The institutions should design communication training sessions that are sensitive to gender-based anxieties

**Keywords:** Self-esteem, Gender differences, Glossophobia, Students

## Introduction

Public speaking has long been recognized as a critical communication skill, essential for personal, academic, and professional success. However, for many individuals, the mere thought of addressing an audience triggers intense anxiety and fear. This overwhelming fear of public speaking is termed glossophobia, a condition that has drawn the attention of researchers across communication studies, psychology, and education due to its debilitating impact on individuals, especially students in academic environments. The present study seeks to examine *self-esteem* and *gender* as predictors of glossophobia among students of Lagos State University, Federal College of Education (FCE) Special, Oyo Campus. This inquiry is vital because it situates glossophobia not merely as a communicative challenge but as a psychological phenomenon that interacts with internal factors such as self-concept and social constructs like gender roles, especially within a Nigerian tertiary education context.

Glossophobia, derived from the Greek word "glossa" meaning tongue, and "phobos" meaning fear, refers to the fear of speaking in public (Dwyer & Davidson, 2012). According to Bodie (2010), glossophobia is "a form of social anxiety marked by a significant and persistent fear of public speaking situations, often resulting in avoidance behaviors, cognitive disruptions, and physiological symptoms such as sweating, shaking, and rapid heartbeat." However, the term "glossophobia" has only gained recognition in recent decades, largely due to increased awareness of psychological conditions and social anxieties (Dwyer & Davidson, 2022). Glossophobia is classified as a social anxiety disorder, characterized by intense fear, nervousness, or discomfort when required to speak in front of an audience (Matsuda & Gobel, 2019). The anxiety associated with glossophobia is not just limited to the act of speaking in front of others but also extends to the anticipation of the event (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 2015).

Several studies have underscored the prevalence of glossophobia among students in higher education. A study by Marinho et al. (2016) in Brazil found that over 63% of university students experienced some level of public speaking anxiety, with a notable portion experiencing severe anxiety. In Nigeria, similar trends have been observed. The prevalence of glossophobia among students is significant. Studies suggest that approximately 75% of people experience some form of anxiety related to public speaking, with a considerable portion of this population experiencing severe fear or avoidance behaviour (Dwyer & Davidson, 2022).

Among students, particularly those in secondary and tertiary education, the prevalence of glossophobia can be even higher. Research has shown that about 60% to 80% of students report experiencing anxiety when asked to speak publicly (McCroskey, 2019). This is true in cultures where academic success is closely linked to verbal expression and presentation skills. In addition, the severity of glossophobia among students can vary widely. Dwyer and Davidson (2022) revealed that nearly 85% of college students report feeling anxious before public speaking. High school and middle school students also demonstrate similar levels of anxiety when faced with speaking tasks (Zhao et al., 2020). However, two psychological and sociological factors self-esteem and gender have emerged as particularly significant in influencing public speaking anxiety. Given this gap, this study intends to examine the self-esteem and gender as predictors of glossophobia among students in Oyo state.

Gender is another salient factor in the discourse on glossophobia. Gender differences in communication behaviors have been well documented, with many studies suggesting that societal expectations and gender socialization patterns contribute to varying levels of communication apprehension between males and females (Ogunleye & Adeyemi, 2020). Traditionally, men are socialized to be assertive and outspoken, while women are often encouraged to be more reserved and submissive. These normative expectations can create internalized beliefs that affect speaking behavior. Research by Wrosch and Schiner (2018) found that female students often reported higher levels of public speaking anxiety compared to their male counterparts, a finding that resonates with more recent studies conducted in African contexts, including Nigeria (Ogunleye & Adeyemi, 2020).

It is part of the broader sociocultural context, described as social characteristics, relationship and prospects connected with being female or male students. These characteristics, relationship and opportunities are socially fashioned and are acquired through socialization (Jibril, Olayinka, Omeiza and Babatunde, 2018). With regards to the nexus between gender and job commitment, a substantial body of literature has been able to evince gender disparities in the perception of experience and tolerance of glossophobia among male and female students. Gender differences in relations to job commitment, have been explicated by some scholars, to stem from the belief that female have better job commitment, higher ethical expectations and are less likely to risk the common good for personal benefit (Wrosch and Schiner 2018).

Another important predictor that can also predict glossophobia is self-esteem. Self-esteem refers to the appraisal a person makes of their value as a worthwhile individual (Brinkman, 2015). Self-esteem,

broadly defined as the individual's overall evaluation of their worth or value (Rosenberg, 1965), plays a crucial role in shaping students' confidence and ability to face socially evaluative situations such as public speaking. Students with high self-esteem are generally more self-assured, resilient, and willing to take risks in social interactions, including public speaking. In contrast, those with low self-esteem often struggle with negative self-perceptions, fear of failure, and self-doubt, which can amplify their anxiety in public speaking scenarios. According to McCroskey and Richmond (1995), low self-esteem is a consistent predictor of communication apprehension, including glossophobia. This suggests that fostering higher levels of self-esteem may serve as a protective factor against public speaking anxiety. According to Overholser (2019) people who have high self-esteem tend to be positive in their attitudes about themselves and are thought to be satisfied with their lives. Self-esteem is considered as one of the main topics in the field of psychology, where it plays an important role in the formation of behaviour as it affects development processes, as well as it prevents the occurrence of mental health problems (Baumeister, 2013) as it forms an assessment in which individuals express their acceptance or refusal for themselves, as this is an image that the individuals realizes themselves (Guillon, 2017). Existing literature on glossophobia in Nigeria, though growing, remains relatively sparse and generalized. Most studies tend to focus on general university populations without considering specific academic faculties or campus dynamics (Ajibola & Okunade, 2021). There is also a lack of research that empirically examines the psychological predictors of glossophobia in Nigerian tertiary institutions, particularly self-esteem and gender as interacting variables. Moreover, many of the available studies rely heavily on quantitative surveys without deeper qualitative insights or localized analysis. This has left a void in understanding how cultural expectations, peer dynamics, and personal insecurities influence the prevalence and intensity of glossophobia in Nigerian campuses. The current study aims to fill these gaps by offering a comprehensive analysis of how self-esteem and gender predict glossophobia among this targeted student population.

### **Statement of Problem**

Despite the increasing emphasis on communication skills in higher education, a significant number of students at Lagos State University, FCE Special, Oyo continue to struggle with intense fear and anxiety when required to speak in public. This condition, glossophobia, undermines not only their academic engagement such as oral presentations and class discussions but also their preparedness for future

professional roles, especially as educators who must effectively communicate in classrooms. The persistent occurrence of glossophobia among these students signals a deeper psychological and socio-cultural issue that has been insufficiently addressed. Existing institutional efforts often focus on surface-level interventions like public speaking workshops, without examining underlying psychological predictors such as self-esteem or exploring how gender norms and expectations influence communication anxiety. Moreover, while some studies have examined public speaking anxiety among university students, few have focused on the unique demographic and contextual features of the FCE Special, where students are being trained as educators in a setting marked by cultural conservatism and limited resources. This oversight presents a critical gap in the literature. Thus, there is an urgent need to investigate how self-esteem and gender jointly predict glossophobia in this specific student population, in order to inform targeted interventions and academic support systems.

### **Research Questions**

- i. Does the self-esteem have any significant prediction on glossophobia among Lagos State University students?
- ii. Does the gender difference have any significant prediction on glossophobia among Lagos State University students?
- iii. What is the joint contribution of the self-esteem and gender on glossophobia among Lagos State University students?
- iv. What is the relative contribution of the self-esteem and gender on glossophobia among Lagos State University students?

### **Methodology**

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design, which is most suitable for examining relationships among psychological and demographic variables within a natural setting. The choice of this design is based on its strength in capturing data on existing phenomena without manipulation or experimental intervention (Creswell, 2014). Since the goal of this study is to investigate the predictive influence of self-esteem and gender on glossophobia among students of Lagos State University, FCE Special, Oyo, the descriptive survey allows for the systematic collection of quantifiable data through standardized instruments, making it appropriate for hypothesis testing and statistical analysis.

The population of the study comprises all undergraduate students of Lagos State University (LASU) affiliated with the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo. According to data retrieved from the Academic Planning Unit of FCE Special, Oyo (2024), the affiliated programme hosts an estimated student population of 2,850 across various departments, with male and female students distributed relatively evenly. These students are being trained primarily as future educators, making their competence in public speaking critical for their professional development. To ensure a manageable and representative sample, a total of 351 students were selected as the sample size, using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size from a known population. According to the Krejcie-Morgan formula, a population of 2,850 requires a sample of approximately 340–351 to achieve a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, making the selected sample statistically adequate for generalization.

The study employed a stratified random sampling technique, justified by the need to ensure proportionate representation across gender and departmental affiliations. Stratification helps address potential imbalances in the distribution of respondents and controls for the influence of confounding variables such as department and level of study (Etikan & Bala, 2017). Within each stratum (e.g., male and female; Department of Guidance and Counselling, Special Education, etc.), participants were randomly selected using a computer-generated random number method to avoid researcher bias and ensure objectivity. The approach ensures the reliability, validity, and generalizability of the findings within the academic context of FCE Special, Oyo. A total number of three hundred (300) questionnaire were retrieve back and served as population of the study.

Two research instruments were adopted. The instrument were divided into two sections. Section A contains the bio-data which sought demographic information such as age, gender, class, parent marital status, parent's educational qualification & occupation, person responsible for education, the other section contains the following:

### **Glossophobia Scale**

The Glossophobia scale was developed by James, C. McCroskey in 1970. This questionnaire is one of the most widely used instruments for measuring communication apprehension, including glossophobia. It is a 24-item self-report questionnaire that assesses an individual's level of anxiety related to speaking in public, small groups, meetings, and interpersonal conversations. The author reported a range from

.86 to .93. However, the adopted version of the instrument was re-validated by the researcher and Cronbach alpha of .89 was obtained in a pilot test which involves an administration of the instrument to a selected sample of thirty (30) Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo State, Nigeria. This self-esteem was developed by Sorensen (1995). It consists of 20-items which measures teachers' self-esteem by assessing both positive and negative feelings about the self. The scale contained questions in which respondents described themselves on a 5-Point Likert Scale where (1) SA-Strongly Agree (2)A-Agree(3)N-Neutral(4)D-Disagree (5) SD-Strongly Disagree. The author reported a range from .76 to .83. However, the adopted version of the instrument was re-validated by the researcher and Cronbach alpha of .88 was obtained in a pilot test which involves an administration of the instrument to a selected sample of thirty (30) students at Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo State, Nigeria.

## Results

**Research Question One:** Does the self-esteem have any significant influence on glossophobia among Lagos State University students?

**Table 1: Simple Linear Regression Summary: Prediction of Glossophobia by Self-Esteem**

Model	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p
(Constant)	62.431	1.928	-	32.37	< .001
Self-Esteem	-0.541	0.078	-0.47	-6.94	< .001

$R = .470, R^2 = .221, F(1, 298) = 48.16, p < .001$

Result from Table shows revealed that self-esteem significantly predicts glossophobia,  $F(1, 298) = 48.16, p < .001$ . The model explains 22.1% of the variance in glossophobia scores. The negative beta coefficient( $\beta = -0.47$ ) indicates that students with higher self-esteem tend to report lower levels of glossophobia. For every one-unit increase in self-esteem, glossophobia scores decrease by 0.541 units, which is statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ).

**Research Question Two:** Does the gender difference have any significant influence on glossophobia among Lagos State University students?

**Table 2: Simple Linear Regression Summary: Prediction of Glossophobia by Gender**

Model	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p
(Constant)	55.122	1.634	–	33.74	< .001
Gender	4.321	0.794	0.285	5.44	< .001

$R = .285, R^2 = .081, F(1, 298) = 29.59, p < .001$

Tables 2 presents results on the regression analysis shows that gender is a significant predictor of glossophobia,  $F(1, 298) = 29.59, p < .001$ . The model accounts for 8.1% of the variance in glossophobia. The positive B value ( $B = 4.321$ ) suggests that females (coded as 1) have higher glossophobia scores than males (coded as 0) by about 4.32 points. This implies that female students are more likely to experience glossophobia than their male counterparts, and the result is statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ).

**Research Question Three:** What is the joint contribution of the self-esteem and gender on glossophobia among Lagos State University students?

**Table 3: Multiple Regression Model Summary**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	SE	F	df	p
1	.558	.311	.307	6.745	66.87	(2, 297)	< .001

Table 3 above showed that the joint contribution of the of the self-esteem and gender on glossophobia among Lagos State University students was significant. The multiple regression model shows that self-esteem and gender jointly predict glossophobia,  $F(2, 297) = 66.87, p < .001$ , explaining 31.1% of the variance in glossophobia among students. This indicates a moderately strong combined effect of both predictors

**Research Question Four:** What is the relative contribution of the self-esteem and gender on glossophobia among Lagos State University students?

**Table 4:** Multiple Regression Coefficients: Joint Prediction of Glossophobia by Self-Esteem and Gender

Predictor	B	SE B	$\beta$	T	p
(Constant)	60.145	1.788	–	33.63	< .001
Self-Esteem	-0.497	0.673	-0.431	-6.81	< .001
Gender	3.876	0.743	0.256	5.22	< .001

Table 4 reveals the relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable that self-esteem remains a significant negative predictor ( $\beta = -0.431, p < .001$ ), meaning higher self-esteem is associated with lower glossophobia. Gender also remains a significant positive predictor ( $\beta = 0.256, p < .001$ ), implying that female students are more likely to have higher glossophobia. Self-esteem has a stronger effect on glossophobia ( $\beta = -0.431$ ), meaning it is a more powerful predictor than gender. Gender ( $\beta = 0.256$ ) also significantly contributes but to a lesser extent than self-esteem.

### Discussion of findings

In response to research question one revealed self-esteem significantly predicts glossophobia among students of Lagos State University, FCE Special, Oyo. This implies that individuals with lower self-esteem are more prone to experience fear and anxiety associated with public speaking. This outcome aligns with several empirical studies and theoretical frameworks which suggest a close psychological connection between one's self-worth and communication apprehension. A major reason for this finding lies in the psychological disposition of individuals with low self-esteem. Such individuals often evaluate themselves negatively, feel inadequate in social settings, and fear negative evaluation from others (Rosenberg, 1965). Public speaking, being a highly evaluative activity, exposes them to potential criticism or perceived judgment, thereby triggering glossophobia. This is consistent with the cognitive model of social anxiety by Clark and Wells (1995), which posits that individuals with negative self-schemas are more likely to experience anxiety in social performance situations due to their preoccupation with self-monitoring and fear of negative appraisal.

Moreover, the result aligns with previous research conducted by McCroskey and Richmond (1995), which confirmed that self-esteem is inversely related to communication apprehension. Individuals with high self-esteem tend to possess greater confidence and resilience, which enable them to handle public

speaking situations with less anxiety. In support of this, Oyedeji and Salawu (2020) found a statistically significant correlation between self-concept and glossophobia among Nigerian undergraduates. From a theoretical standpoint, the Self-Efficacy Theory by Bandura (1997) provides further support for this finding. Bandura argued that individuals' belief in their ability to execute specific tasks such as public speaking can influence their emotional responses. Low self-esteem may correlate with low self-efficacy, resulting in heightened anxiety and avoidance of public speaking situations. On the other hand, individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to perceive public speaking as a manageable task, reducing their glossophobia.

In response to research question two revealed that gender significantly predicts glossophobia among students of Lagos State University, FCE Special, Oyo, with female students reporting higher levels of glossophobia than their male counterparts. This finding underscores a persistent gender-related disparity in communication apprehension, especially in public speaking contexts. It aligns with prior studies indicating that women are more prone to public speaking anxiety than men (Behnke & Sawyer, 2000; Bodie, 2010). In many cultures, including Nigeria, males are often socialized to be assertive, outspoken, and dominant, while females are encouraged to be modest, reserved, and passive. This early socialization process may result in men having more confidence and fewer inhibitions in public speaking situations, while women may be more self-conscious and prone to fear judgment (Bodie, 2010). These gendered communication styles can contribute significantly to the heightened experience of glossophobia among females.

Additionally, the expectations and pressure placed on females to appear flawless and avoid mistakes in public forums can increase anxiety levels. According to the Stereotype Threat Theory (Steele & Aronson, 1995), when individuals are aware of negative stereotypes about their social group in this case, women being perceived as less articulate or confident they may perform worse due to anxiety about confirming those stereotypes (McLean & Anderson, 2009).

In response to the research question three revealed that the joint contribution of self-esteem and gender on glossophobia among Lagos State University, FCE Special, Oyo students was statistically significant. This suggests that both psychological and demographic factors interactively influence the degree of public speaking anxiety experienced by students. The significant joint effect can be explained by the fact that self-esteem determines how individuals perceive their communicative competence, while

gender influences societal expectations and the confidence levels students display in public contexts. For instance, female students with low self-esteem may experience a compounded effect, being more susceptible to anxiety due to internalized gender norms and a diminished sense of personal worth (Rosenberg, 1965; Steele & Aronson, 1995). This aligns with Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that behavior is shaped by the reciprocal interaction of personal, environmental, and behavioural factors. Arguably, while each variable independently affects glossophobia, their joint impact reflects a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon. However, some critics suggest that other factors such as personality traits, prior speaking experience, and cultural exposure may exert greater influence than gender alone. Daly et al. (1997) argue that anxiety in public speaking is often more situational than dispositional.

The result of the fourth research question revealed that self-esteem and gender each made significant relative contributions to the prediction of glossophobia among Lagos State University, FCE Special, Oyo students. Specifically, self-esteem emerged as a negative predictor, meaning that students with higher self-esteem reported lower levels of glossophobia. Conversely, gender was found to be a positive predictor, indicating that female students are more likely to experience higher levels of glossophobia than their male counterparts. The inverse relationship between self-esteem and glossophobia aligns with established psychological theory. Rosenberg (1965) posited that individuals with high self-esteem tend to have a more stable self-concept and are less threatened by evaluative situations such as public speaking.

Similarly, Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy suggests that individuals with greater confidence in their abilities are less likely to experience anxiety in performance settings. Thus, students who perceive themselves as competent and worthy are less likely to fear public speaking scenarios. The positive predictive role of gender suggests that female students are disproportionately affected by glossophobia. This may be attributed to cultural norms that often discourage assertiveness and public expression in females, particularly within the Nigerian socio-cultural context (Donovan & MacIntyre, 2004).

## **Conclusion**

This study has established linking pathways between some variables and glossophobia. These gender and self-esteem among lagos state university FCES, Oyo Study Centre. Changing the face of glossophobia among lagos state university FCES, Oyo Study Centre in Oyo state requires a lot of

psychological re-orientation especially considering interventions that employ the independent variables in this study (gender and self-esteem). This research work has established that, there is a significant influence between gender and self-esteem on glossophobia. Positive joint contribution between gender and self-esteem on glossophobia. Also, there is no positive relative effect between gender except self-esteem that has relative effect on glossophobia.

### Recommendations

1. The College of Education counseling centers and student affairs units should develop structured self-esteem enhancement programmes. These can include workshops on self-acceptance, public speaking skills training, and assertiveness coaching. By equipping students with tools to build their self-worth, institutions can help reduce anxiety related to public speaking and foster a more confident student body.
2. The institutions should design communication training sessions that are sensitive to gender-based anxieties. Female-only workshops or support groups could provide safe spaces for women to practice public speaking without fear of judgment.
3. Public speaking activities should be formally integrated into course assessments and classroom activities. Early and repeated exposure to speaking tasks in a low-pressure academic environment will help normalize the experience and desensitize students to public speaking-related anxiety.
4. The university should strengthen psychological support services, particularly targeting students identified as struggling with communication apprehension. Peer-led groups or public speaking clubs like Toastmasters could also provide continual practice opportunities and emotional support for students working to overcome glossophobia.

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