

Foreign Language Anxiety in Student's Speaking and Writing Skills

(A Case Study of Undergraduate Students At Banten Jaya University)

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Abstract

This research is focusing on the level of Foreign Language Anxiety that experienced by students. In this research, the researcher was use the Qualitative research as the method in implementing case study. The sources of data were 30 students of the second semester of Banten Jaya University. For collecting data that used in this study include classroom observation, questionnaires and interview. The questionnaire used to obtain specific information data was gathered from the participants by FLCAS of Horwitz et all (1986). From the result of FLCAS questionnaire, there were 10 students who felt very anxious with percentage 33.33%, 8 students felt anxious with the percentage 26.67%, 8 students felt mildly anxious with the percentage 26.67%, 4 students felt relaxed with the percentage 13.33% and there was no student who felt very relaxed. Then, the result of WAT questionnaire were 7 students felt very anxious with percentage 23.33%, 8 students felt anxious with the percentage 26.67%, 9 students felt mildly anxious with the percentage 30%, 6 students felt relaxed with the percentage 20% and there was no student who felt very relaxed. Based on the findings of the present study, several conclusions can be made: First, students' anxiety in speaking showed that the students never felt quite sure of themselves when they were speaking in foreign language class. Second, students' anxiety in writing above showed that most of students avoided writing in English.

Keywords: Foreign Language Anxiety, Speaking Skill, Writing Skill

INTRODUCTION

Research into the distinctive nature of FLA has found evidence for its debilitating effects on foreign language learning. In terms of cognition, anxious students were found to have difficulty processing meaningful input, and to be less responsive to language

output (Krashen, 1981, p. 29). Additionally, various levels of foreign language learners' achievements might be influenced by motivation and anxiety. It is, therefore, significant to explore the relationship between motivation and anxiety in terms of students' English learning

achievement (Hao, M., Liu, M., and Hao, R. P., 2004, p. 93).

Contrary to what happening in abroad, fewer studies in Indonesia have been conducted and acknowledged the effects of anxiety on foreign language learning. Only some empirical studies have touched on the source of anxiety and focused in student's speaking skill. In the previous studies found that most of students are unhappy in learning foreign language. The students feel frustrated, pressured, and nervous during some English classes. These uncomfortable feelings can be triggered by the instructor's attitudes or characteristics. The students suffer high levels of language anxiety in class when the teachers are rigid, serious and authoritarian, or when students are ridiculed and humiliated by these grim teachers.

On the other hand, students feel relaxed, motivated and less anxious when having the humorous, easy-going, amiable and patient teacher's classes. Students would do the best and perform well in classes. These

experiences demonstrate that there might be a certain degree of connection between learner's foreign language anxiety and instructor's behaviors and personalities. Besides learners variables such as self-esteem, beliefs, motivation, language proficiency and so on, the current study attempts to examine to what extent the teachers influence student's foreign language anxiety as these feelings impede their ability to perform successfully in English learning. So it is quite necessary to have an investigation on foreign language anxiety level, identify the contributing factors, and identify foreign language speaking anxiety and writing anxiety that experienced by students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Anxiety is an emotion that affects every person. Many factors can cause a person to experience feelings of anxiety. Adults may experience anxiety caused by their jobs while students may experience heightened levels of anxiety as a result of peer

pressure or an impending important test or project. English language learners, as well as those students learning a foreign language, experience anxiety when it comes to such classroom activities as speaking in front of a group of their fellow students, or taking a test in a language other than their first language (L1). English language learner students present a particular set of problems that native speakers of English do not (Snyder, 2011, p. 1)

Horwitz et al separate Foreign Language Anxiety into three form of it. The first is communication apprehension, it means that speaker feels uncomfortable when communicate with other. The second is test anxiety, it happens when students will face some tests or quizzes. Which mean that student is fear of failure in test. The last is fear of negative evaluations; this anxiety is experienced in any language-learning situation, no matter which language skill is used. Because students realize that s/he will be evaluated by his/her teacher.

In a close review of the literature on anxiety in language learning, at least six potential sources of language anxiety can be identified. Some are associated with the learner, some with the teacher, and some with the instructional practice. From an analysis of this research, language anxiety arises from: 1) personal and interpersonal anxieties; 2) learner beliefs about language learning; 3) instructor beliefs about language teaching; 4) instructor-learner interactions; 5) classroom procedures; and 6) language testing (Young, 1991).

In the last decade, as cited in (Occhipinti, 2009, p. 16) foreign language anxiety research has focused on the examination of the relationship between anxiety and learners' variables, often taking several directions. Investigations have been quantitative studies (Chastain, 1975; Gardner et al., 1976), focusing on the correlation between anxiety and language proficiency (Young, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989) in written and oral tests and production. In

MacIntyre and Gardner's study (1989) one hundred and four subjects were tested in two different groups. Employing nine scales, measuring various forms of anxiety, they conclude that production would suffer in those students with a high level of anxiety.

A clear and well established description of the components of foreign language anxiety has been outlined by Horwitz et al. (1986). In their study, considered by many researchers as one of the most reliable guidelines in this psycholinguistic area (Campbell & Ortiz, 1991; Aida, 1992; Onwuegbuzie et al., 1999), Horwitz et al. (1986) identify three related types of anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, as cited in (Occhipinti, 2009).

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Communication apprehension may occur in several situations: in using one's own mother tongue (L1) or in using a foreign language, or in both cases. It has been proved that persons who are usually talkative and relaxed in their L1 may become embarrassed or even silent when communicating in the foreign language (Lucas, 1984; Horwitz et al. 1986). Likewise vice versa: people who ordinarily express inhibition in L1 communication, become comfortable when using the second language, as they have the feeling that someone else is speaking. This last phenomenon may be explained in the same way as for those stutterers who are able to sing or act normally (Elaine K. Horwitz, Michael B. Horwitz, Joann Cope, 1986). Hence, the modes of behaviors outlined above lend support to the idea

that foreign language anxiety is a kind of “situation specific tension”.

Research has also consistently demonstrated the negative correlation between communicative apprehension and self-esteem (J. Daly et al, 1997a). Caccioppo, Glass & Merluzzi (1979) affirm that negative perceptions about the self are closely related with social anxiety. Thus, anxious students tend to underestimate their ability to speak and they focus more on their failures instead of their successes in the foreign language. In a study conducted in 1985 McCroskey, Fayer and Richmond in (Aida, 1994) observe the self-perceived competence of Spanish speaking students receiving instruction in English. The conclusion is that highly communicative apprehensive students have lower levels of self-perception in English.

The second component, identified by Horwitz et al. (1986) as a characteristic of foreign language anxiety is Test Anxiety. Described by Horwitz et al. (1986) as “a type of anxiety stemming from a fear of failure” and by Sarason (1978) as “the

tendency to view with alarm the consequences of inadequate performance in an evaluative situation”, test anxiety has involved several researchers through the years (Doris & Sarason, 1955; Wine, 1971; Sarason, 1984; MacIntyre & Gardner., 1989) as cited in (Occhipinti, 2009, p. 19).

Originators of test anxiety theory are Mandler & Sarason (1952), who developed a 33 item Test Anxiety Questionnaire (TAQ) in order to measure the self-oriented responses experienced by students prior to and during examinations, evaluative and stressful situations. They have found that high levels of test anxiety have debilitating effects on students’ task performance. Highly test-anxious subjects have the tendency of drawing their attention inward, to self-deprecatory thoughts and worries about the performance, instead of focusing more fully on the task itself. These findings lend support to Marlett & Watson’s assertion (1952): “The high-test anxious person spends a part of his task time doing things which are

not task oriented.” Along similar lines, Sarason (1984) describes test anxiety as produced by “intrusive thoughts”, like the insecurity of responding adequately, which lessen the attention toward the actual task thus causing a poor performance (Occhipinti, 2009). The third main component identified by (Elaine K. Horwitz, Michael B. Horwitz, Joann Cope, 1986) as relating to foreign language anxiety is the Fear of Negative Evaluation. (Watson, D., & Friend, R., 1969, p. 448) Define this factor as the “apprehension of other’s evaluations, distress over their negative evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectations that others would evaluate oneself negatively.” Fear of negative evaluation differs from test anxiety in that it is a tension which is not limited to testing situations; rather, it may occur in any social, evaluative context, like a job interview or speaking in public (Elaine K. Horwitz, Michael B. Horwitz, Joann Cope, 1986). Interestingly, subjects with high FNE do not necessarily evaluate themselves

negatively. However, when interacting with others they tend to avoid initiating conversations and they give a minimum contribution to the conversation (Cheek & Buss, 1981) as cited in (Occhipinti, 2009).

In the case of foreign language learners these students may reduce participation in those activities which could force them to be more exposed to others’ judgments (Aida, 1994), like giving volunteer answers or talking about personal opinions (Ely, 1986). Therefore the classroom is a breeding ground for fear of negative evaluation, with instructors as critical evaluators (Occhipinti, 2009, p. 21).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, the researcher was use the Qualitative research as the method in implementing case study. According to Sturman as cited in (Bassey, 1999, p. 26) 'Case study' is a generic term for the investigation of an individual, group or phenomenon. While the techniques used in the investigation may be varied, and may include both

qualitative and quantitative approaches, the distinguishing feature of case study is the belief that human systems develop a characteristic wholeness or integrity and are not simply a loose collection of traits.

The sources of data were 30 students of the second semester of Banten Jaya University. Based on the researchers' experience, the first year in university was the toughest moment. Because in the first year, the students must be able to adapt with a new environment. Therefore the possibility of anxiety is higher in English learning process. For collecting data that used in this study include classroom observation, questionnaires and interview.

The researcher did the classroom observation to observe the event or process related to the study, and gaining tacit understanding, theory in-use, and participants' point of view which might not probably explored by interview or questionnaire (Alwasilah, 2001).

In this case, the observation was done to observe the natural occurrences, the students were anxious when asked to come forward, nervous when being asked by the teacher, shame speaking in front of class, worried about pronunciation, forgot the English words when speaking, remained silent, got difficulties in fixing the tenses.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Description of Data and Analysis

Based on the observation which done on May 4th, 2018, by the researcher in speaking class of 2nd semester at English department of Banten Jaya University. From the observation, it was known that the students' expression during speaking class is different. Most of students showed that they were more confidence when the class was divided into some groups for doing the task given by speaking lecturer. They're look stress and worry

if the lecturer asked them to do the task individually.

Questionnaire level used to categorize the anxiety level in speaking class was FLCAS, where the range scale was as follow:

Level Of Anxiety	Total Respondent	Percent age
Very Anxious	10	33.33 %
Anxious	8	26.67 %
Mildly Anxious	8	26.67 %
Relaxed	4	13.33 %
Very Relaxed	0	0 %
Total	30	100 %

Table 1. Students' Anxiety Level in Speaking

From the result of questionnaire in table 1 above, there were 10 students

who felt very anxious with percentage 33.33%, 8 students felt anxious with the percentage 26.67%, 8 students felt mildly anxious with the percentage 26.67%, 4 students felt relaxed with the percentage 13.33% and there was no student who felt very relaxed.

The researcher drew the diagram of anxiety level of speaking below:

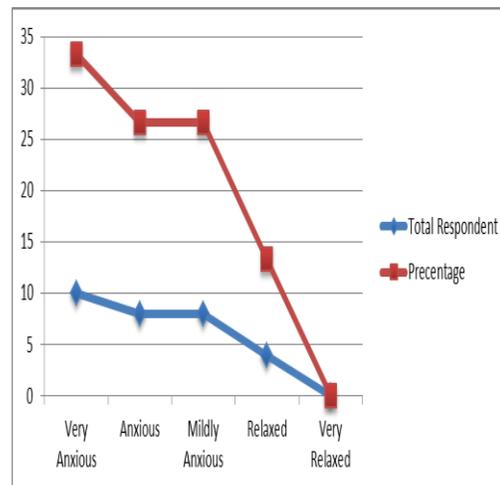


Figure 1. The Diagram of Student's Anxiety Level of Speaking

Questionnaire level used to categorize the anxiety level in writing class was same as speaking class, where the level used was WAT, and range scale was as follow:

Level Of Anxiety	Total Respondent	Percentage
Very Anxious	7	23.33 %
Anxious	8	26.67 %
Mildly Anxious	9	30 %
Relaxed	6	20 %
Very Relaxed	0	0 %
Total	30	100 %

Table 2: Students' Anxiety Level in Writing

From the result of questionnaire in table 2 above, there were 7 students felt very anxious with percentage 23.33%, 8 students felt anxious with the percentage 26.67%, 9 students felt mildly anxious with the percentage 30%, 6 students felt relaxed with the percentage 20% and there was no student who felt very relaxed.

The researcher drew the diagram of anxiety level below:

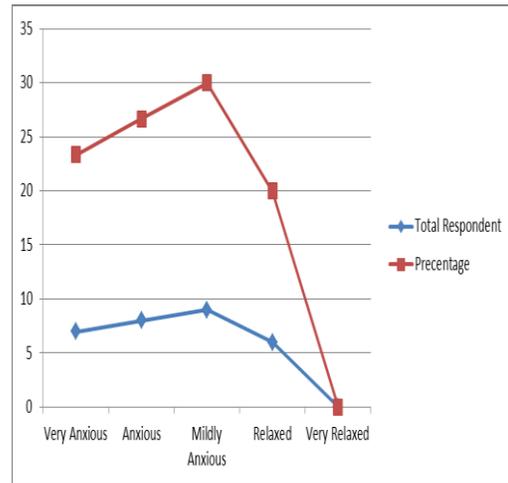


Figure 2. The Diagram of Student's Anxiety Level in Writing

Discussion

Regarding the 1st research question, the researcher got the level of students' anxiety from the questionnaire which given to the students on 11th may, 2018. From the result of questionnaire, there were 10 students who felt very anxious with percentage 33.33%, 8 students felt anxious with the percentage 26.67%, 8 students felt mildly anxious with the percentage 26.67%, 4 students felt relaxed with the percentage 13.33% and there was no student who felt very relaxed.

The data gotten was supported by the result of observation. The data showed that for most of students, anxiety bothered them at all to take more foreign language classes. During language class, they found themselves thinking about things that had nothing to do with the course. They just kept thinking that the other students were better at languages.

Some of them felt difficult during tests in the language class. Since, the more they studied for a language test, the more confused I got. It could be seen when they were panic to speak without preparation, when the language teacher asked questions which they hadn't prepared in advance. Even if they were well prepared for language class, they felt anxious about it, because they felt pressure to prepare very well. It was happened when the teacher asked them to speaking the foreign language in front of other students. So, it made them very self-conscious. They were afraid that the other students would laugh at them when they spoke.

Moreover, they were seen nervous, they forgot things they knew. So, it embarrassed them to volunteer answers. They were also got upset when they didn't understand what the teacher was correcting.

Anxiety was also happened when language class moved so quickly, and they didn't understand every word the language teacher said and make them felt worry about getting left behind. It made them more tense, nervous and confused. They felt overwhelmed by the number of rules that they had to learn to speak a foreign language.

But on the other hand when they were on their way to language class, they felt very sure and relaxed. They would also probably felt comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language. Since they felt when they interact with native, it wouldn't make them so nervous and embrace because native would understand why they did a mistake, and they believed they natives will teach them about how to speak well without laughing at them

because the mistakes they did in speaking.

Regarding the 2nd research question, the researcher got the level of students' anxiety from the questionnaire which given to the students on May 8th, 2018, there were 7 students felt very anxious with percentage 23.33%, 8 students felt anxious with the percentage 26.67%, 9 students felt mildly anxious with the percentage 30%, 6 students felt relaxed with the percentage 20% and there was no student who felt very relaxed.

The data showed that in students' mind, they seemed to go blank when they started to work on a composition in English, especially when they had to hand in a composition in English, they looked confuse to look forward to writing down the ideas.

Just several of them who liked to write the ideas and felt confident in their ability clearly expressed their ideas when writing in English. It could be seen from their interest, just 20% of total number of respondents who felt

relaxed and enjoyed sending English writing to magazines for evaluation and publication, they liked to have their friends read what they had written in English. Since, they also felt that some people seemed to enjoy what they wrote in English and they felt enjoy too in writing in English because it had a lot of fun. They also liked seeing their thoughts on paper in English. For these little students, discussing my English writing with others is an enjoyable experience.

On the other hand, for most of them, expressing ideas through writing in English seem to be a waste of time, especially when they felt nervous about writing. They felt that they never seemed to be able to clearly write down their ideas and did poorly in English composition classes. They had a terrible time organizing my ideas in an English composition course. When they handed in an English composition they knew that they were going to do poorly, because for them, wrote good compositions in English was so difficult. It was happened because they

didn't like English compositions to be evaluated and they were not good at writing in English.

In this study, from the observations and interviews, it is found that there are two types of foreign language anxiety i.e. trait anxiety and state/situational anxiety. Both types of anxieties occurred on the students when they had to perform speaking & writing tasks.

On the other hand, there are three main sources of foreign language anxiety that the researcher detected from the study; communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the present study, several conclusions can be made:

First, students' anxiety in speaking showed that the students never felt quite sure of themselves when they were speaking in foreign language

class. It can be seen from the students' activity in the classroom. Second, students' anxiety in writing above showed that most of students avoided writing in English. They were afraid of writing essays in English when they knew it would be evaluate, and they felt feared of their English writing being evaluated. Third, from the observations and interviews, it is found that there are two types of foreign language anxiety i.e. trait anxiety and state/situational anxiety. Both types of anxieties occurred on the students when they had to perform speaking & writing tasks. There are three main sources of foreign language anxiety that the researcher detected from the study; communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation.

Suggestion

So knowing that foreign language anxiety exists and that it can have negative effects on the learning process, what can we do as teachers to reduce it – and thus increase student engagement – in the classroom? The

first step is to simply be aware of the possibility of language learning anxiety. The students sitting in the back row not saying anything may not be bored or disinterested or unmotivated; rather they might just be very anxious. We might be able to help these students succeed in learning the language if we can reduce their anxiety.

For anxiety stemming from learner characteristics, teachers should have students recognize their irrational beliefs and fears through activities designed for this purpose. Teachers should also recommend that highly anxious students participate in some form of supplemental instruction, such as getting individual tutoring (from the

teacher and/or advanced language students) or joining a language club. More exposure to the language, outside of the classroom, may help anxious students become more comfortable with the language and thus help reduce the anxiety.

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