

Student Anxiety in Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

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Abstract: Anxiety is one main factors that may affect students' performance in learning English. In this study, anxiety is categorized into three subscale, which are, communication apprehension, test anxiety, and negative evaluation. This study is very significant for English teachers to know the level of students' anxiety in learning English. This descriptive quantitative study aims at finding out the level of student's anxiety in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), and comparing the level of students' anxiety through student's grade and gender. This study used FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) as the instrument by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986). The respondents were 156 students from SMA X that enroll in the first semester 2017/2018 academic year. The result of this study shows that students experienced a moderate level of anxiety (communication apprehension $M = 3.17$; test anxiety $M = 3.07$; negative evaluation $M = 3.50$ in learning English, there is a significant difference between the levels of students' anxiety in learning English based on gender.

Keywords: Anxiety, Learning English, EFL

Introduction

Anxiety is a circumstantial feeling in a particular situation. Suleimenova (2013) explained that "general anxiety is the excessive and exaggerated worry about everyday things" (p.1860). Anxiety holds the important part in the process of learning foreign language. Based on Lian and Budin (2014) "one of the important problems that cause students not to perform well in spoken English is language anxiety" (p. 68). Since English is taught as the foreign language in Indonesia, there are lots of reason that make students have difficulties in learning English for instance "competition, real difficulties in language processing and production, personal and interpersonal anxieties and beliefs" (Waseem & Jibeen, 2013, p. 176). It can be consider that anxiety is a part of learning process as specially in learning English. Foreign language anxiety can be related to the following: communication apprehension (the fear of communicating with other), test anxiety (the fear of exams, quizzes, and other activities used to evaluate one's competence) and the fear of negative evaluation (the worry about how others view the speaker) (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Communication apprehension was a type of shyness characterized by fear of communicating with people. Suleimenova (2013) noted that "anxious students may not be able to take in a spoken dialogue fast enough because anxiety interferes, with their ability to process information" (p. 1862). Difficulty in speaking in groups such as oral communication anxiety or in public speaking, or in listening to our learning a spoken message (receiver anxiety) are all manifestations of communication apprehension. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) stated that "communication apprehension or some similar reaction obviously pays a large role in foreign language anxiety" (p. 127). As speaking skill is one of the most essential skills in language learning anxiety in speaking is among the most significant factors in foreign language classroom.

Test-anxiety refers to a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) argue that "students who are test-anxious in foreign language class probably experience considerable difficulty since tests and quizzes are frequent and even the brightest and most prepared students often make errors" (p. 128). Moreover, test-

anxiety such as an oral test in learning English is a part of learning English. While many people experience some degree of stress and anxiety before and during exams, test anxiety can actually impair learning. Test-anxiety related with fear of negative evaluation. Students felt anxious through the results of the test and make their anxiety levels increase. Thus, students experienced the poor performance in learning English.

Negative evaluation is broader in scope because it is not limited to test-taking situation and it may occur in any social, evaluate situation such as interviewing for a job or speaking in English or foreign language. Lian and Budin (2014) stated that “generally they felt they were being judged and cast in poor light by teacher and peers” (p. 73). In other words, students become a passive learner in learning English because of other student evaluation and teacher evaluation.

Although fear of negative evaluation is similar to test anxiety, it is not limited to test taking environments, but rather, it is present in a wider variety of situations which require evaluation, such as being interviewed for a position or speaking out in a foreign language class. In particular, the foreign language classroom is an environment which constantly requires evaluation either by the teacher or the student’s peers.

Foreign language anxiety may affect students’ self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behavior toward the learning process. Stroud and Wee (2006) assumed that “students become anxious because they are insecure about their language abilities, and because of this, are concerned about how their use of the target language will be evaluated by the teacher” (p. 299). In addition, Horwitz et al. (1986) stated that “they have difficulty concentrating, become forgetful, sweat, and have palpitations” (p. 126). The difficulty level of English subjects affects the level of student anxiety because “anxious students may also have difficulty grasping the content of a target language message” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 126). According to some English teachers, one of the biggest challenges for them is to integrate student participation in the classroom. Some of the students are considered passive because they do not participate in classroom activities such as, asking questions, answering to a question, giving explanation, commenting in a discussion, and sharing their opinions in the classroom activities. One of the reasons of that thing is because of the anxiety in learning English as a foreign language. The teaching and learning process will be more effective when the students are actively participating in every classroom activity.

Moreover, gender and the grade level is the other part of the obstacles for the level of student anxiety in

learning English. In existence the way of learning language of male and female students can be seen by their difference performance in learning. Based on, Gaibani and Elmenfi (2014) “female students were more anxious than male students when expected to speak in English language which is a foreign language to them” (p. 108). Male and female students have different way of learning specifically in learning English as the foreign language. The different way of learning will give different impact of the result in language learning. This condition leads the researcher to study and to find out more about student anxiety in learning English and the comparison between grade, grade level and the level of students anxiety. Based on that perspective, there are some reasons to find out about anxiety of learning English as a foreign language through the student level of anxiety.

There are three research questions in this study about anxiety in learning English as a foreign language in the classroom:

1. What is the level of student anxiety in learning English as a foreign language?
2. Is there any significant difference of student anxiety in learning English as a foreign language based on the grade level of student?
3. Is there any significant difference between students anxiety in learning English as a foreign language based on gender?

Methodology

The researcher used quantitative design which involved descriptive method. Therefore, the quantitative design was used by the researcher to analyze numeric data. According to, Gaibani and Elmenfi (2014) “the descriptive provides the summary of statistics such as the minimum and maximum values, mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis in relation to each of the variable” (p. 10). Moreover, the descriptive method gave description and interpretation of students’ anxiety in learning English as a foreign language in the classroom. To complete this study the researcher used comparative research method in order to compare the level of anxiety between grade level and gender of the students.

Respondents / Sampling Technique

The population of this study was SMA X in Bitung, North Sulawesi. The respondents of the study were the students of SMA X with the amount of 156 students who enrolled in SMA X in the first semester 2017/2018 academic year, consisted of 69 males and 97 females. There were 49 students from grade X, 48

students from grade XI, and 59 students from grade XII. The students were from 6 classes of science class X 1 and 2, XI 3 and 5, XII 1 and 2. This study used convenience sampling technique and purpose sampling technique. Parekh and Pishchenko (2013) stated that “the difficulties in reaching the entire population and the lack of information of the population” p. 15. To select the respondents of this study, the researcher used this convenience sampling method in which sampling by obtaining units or respondents who are most conveniently available. The researcher chose convenience sampling because the respondent of this study students from 6 classes in that high school who were available at that time. To analyze the items of the questionnaire, the researcher used purposive sampling method in which the researcher chose some of the questionnaire to analyze the items.

Instrument / Data Collection

The instrument of this study used a questionnaire to get the factual information from the respondents. In this study the questionnaire was adapted from Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986). The theory Mahnoodzadeh (2012) suggested that “the most well-know instrument for measuring FL classroom anxiety has been *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)* during the last decades due to its high validity and reliability” (p. 469). Furthermore, this questionnaire contains of 33 items and 9 items 2, 5, 8, 14, 18, 22, 24, 28, 32 were inversely coded, 9 items 3, 7, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25, 31, 33 were negative evaluation, 8 items 1, 9, 14, 18, 24, 27, 29, 32 were communication apprehension, 5 items are 2, 8, 10, 19, 21 were fear of test, and 11 items are 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 16, 17, 22, 26, 28, 30 were anxiety of English classes. Before the researcher used the questionnaire, the researcher translated all of the 33 items of the questionnaire into Indonesian and gave the questionnaire to some English teachers to read the questionnaire to make sure if all of the translated items were correct and ready to be distributed.

In the process of data collection, the researcher performed all the procedures of the data collections: firstly, the researcher received a recommendation letter from the dean of education faculty. Then, the researcher submitted the recommendation letter to the principal of SMA X. Later, the questionnaire was brought to SMA X to be distributed. Finally, the researcher explained the procedures of answering the questionnaire and the researcher analyzed the items of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis Techniques

In the process of analyzing the data, the researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Science 20.0 (SPSS) software to answer the questions in this study. The researcher was expected to answer: the level of student anxiety in learning English, the difference levels of anxiety in learning English based on grade level of the student, the third difference between levels of anxiety based on gender. For the first research question, the researcher has descriptive research questions and used mean score to find out the result. The second research question the researcher used ANOVA to find out the comparative level of students anxiety based on grade level of the students and the last research question the researcher used T-test to find out the comparative level between students anxiety based on gender.

The level of students' anxiety in learning English

Table 1 *The Mean Score of Students' Anxiety in Learning English*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mean Anxiety	78	1.92	4.00	3.12	.529
Valid N (listwise)	78				

Table 1 shows the level of students' anxiety in learning English. The result in this table answered the research question number 1. The result showed the mean score of students' anxiety in learning English was 3.12. The mean score of 3.12 in range 2.50 – 3.49 of Likert Scale indicated that the students' anxiety in learning English was moderate.

Table 2. *The Mean Score of Three Types of Anxiety.*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation

Communication Apprehension	78	2.00	4.00	3.1667	.47064
Test Anxiety	78	1.00	5.00	3.0769	.78757
Negative Evaluation	78	2.00	4.71	3.4982	.66877
Valid N (listwise)					

The mean score of students' anxiety in learning English as a foreign language based on the grade level of student as presented in table 2.1 showed that grade 10 was 3.10, grade 11 was 3.05 and grade 12 was 3.21. It indicated that the mean score of grade 10, 11 and 12 students was moderate.

The level of students' anxiety, which includes communication apprehension, test anxiety and negative evaluation, are categorized in moderate level of anxiety. Furthermore, communication apprehension ($M=3.17$), test anxiety ($M=3.07$) and negative evaluation ($M=3.50$). It can be clearly seen that the students are more anxious in negative evaluation ($M=3.50$). According to Horwitz et. al (1986), negative evaluation is the fear of rejection. For example, the students are being anxious to speak English because the teacher may consider it wrong.

This result is similar to the finding of Lian and Budin (2014) which shows that communication apprehension, test anxiety, and negative evaluation in moderate level. The same finding by Lian and Budin (2014) mentioned that the level of students' anxiety in learning English was moderate level ($M=2.93$). Another finding was Hwa and Peck (2017) reports the same findings in their study about the level of students' anxiety in learning English. There were 147 respondents (62%) experienced a moderate level of anxiety in learning English. It means students of SMA X are generally anxious to learning English as a foreign language.

The difference level of anxiety in learning English as a foreign language based on the grade level of student

Table 4 Anova Student's Anxiety in learning English based on the Grade Level

Mean Anxiety					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.342	2	.171	.602	.550
Within Groups	21.282	75	.284		
Total	21.624	77			

Table 3. The Mean Score of Students' Anxiety in learning English based on Grade Level

Mean Anxiety			
GL	Mean	N	Std. Deviation

The result in the table 4 showed that $P=0.55$ which was higher than 0.05. It means there is no significant difference level of students' anxiety in learning English as a foreign language based on the grade level of students. This indicated that grade 10, 11 and 12 had the same level of anxiety in English language classroom. Furthermore, this finding proved the first hypothesis which was there is no significant difference of student anxiety in learning English based on grade level was accepted.

The difference between the levels of anxiety in learning English as a foreign language based on gender

Table 5. The Mean Score of Students' Anxiety in learning English based on Gender

Gender	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Male	2.8876	3	.50329
Female	3.3570	9	.45018
Total	3.1223	3	.52993
		7	
		8	

Table 5 showed the mean score of male was 2.88 and female was 3.35 revealed that the level of anxiety was moderate.

Table 6 T-test Analysis the Difference of Students' Anxiety in learning English based on Gender

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Gender	26.325	77	.000	1.500
Mean Anxiety	52.036	77	.000	3.12229

The table 6 showed that $P = 0.00$ lower than 0.05 which mean that there was significant difference between the levels of students' anxiety in learning English as a foreign language based on gender. This result is similar to Ozturk and Gurbuz (2013) found out that there is a significant difference between female and male students in term of foreign language anxiety.

Interestingly the result of this study regarding level of anxiety based on gender is similar to other studies. For example, Ozturk and Gurbuz (2013) found out that there is a significant difference between female and male students in term of foreign language anxiety. While female students experience a higher level of anxiety ($M=54.4$) than male students ($M=47.15$). In the other hand, Lian and Budin (2014) found out that male students' level of anxiety is higher than female. It is also found out that the students are

more anxious in negative evaluation which is similar to the present study.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it is concluded that students of SMA X had moderate level of anxiety ($M=3.12$). It means that students were anxious in learning English since. Moreover, the level of students' anxiety in learning English from grade X is the same as the grade XI and XII. Grade X showed moderate level in anxiety ($M=3.10$), grade XI showed moderate level in anxiety ($M=3.05$) and grade XII also had moderate level ($M=3.21$). Therefore, there was no significant difference level of students' anxiety in learning English. Could be seen, the level of students' anxiety of male students is the same as the female students. The result showed that anxiety level of the male students were ($M=2.88$) and anxiety level of the female students were ($M=3.35$). Interestingly, there was a significant difference between the levels of students' anxiety in learning English.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and discussions, there are several recommendation that are needed to be considered. The first is English teachers ought to make English classes more interesting/creative so that the students will not refuse to follow the class. It helps to reduce the level of anxious of the students. The second is English teacher ought to often encourage students' to speak English daily. In other words, to make the moderate level of anxiety become low level of anxiety based on the practice speaking English every day. The last, for the further study, it is recommended to use the same variable and the same methodology, but different schools and use other subjects and equal male and female students.

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