



A Correlation between Students' Anxiety Levels and Oral Presentation Performance in EFL Speaking Class

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Abstract

This research was aimed to find out whether there is a correlation between students' anxiety level and oral presentation's performance in EFL speaking class. The population of this research was the 4th semester students in English Education Study Program of Bengkulu University class A, B and C with 51 students randomly chosen as the sample. The design of this research was descriptive quantitative with questionnaire and presentation test as the instruments. The questionnaire of this research was FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scales) by Horwitz (1986) meanwhile the presentation test was a presentation test rubric evaluated by two raters in order to find the reliability of the test. The result of this research showed that there was a significant negative correlation between students' anxiety level and oral presentation test score from rater 1 and rater 2. Based on the result, the strength of this correlation was moderate. On the other hand, both of the results were in negative directions. The finding also showed that most of the students had "Mildly Anxious" level of anxiety and "Basic" category from presentation test score. It can be concluded that anxiety can influenced the students' speaking skill especially while performing a presentation in front of the class. Some factors as like fear of making mistakes, being seen by a lot of people, or being interrupted by the lecturers can increase the students' anxiety.

Keywords : Anxiety Levels, Oral Presentation, Speaking.

Introduction

Anxiety is the main problem of learning process in foreign language especially in oral communication. This is supported by the words from the students who feel anxious when their lecturer called them to speak in front of their friends. The students also refused to sit on the front row of the class because they are afraid to be asked and avoided eye contact from their lecturer. The definition of public speaking anxiety can be gained from the definition of public speaking itself and anxiety.

Foreign language anxiety is a common situation which can be found in EFL learners. Foreign language anxiety is a situation when the students feel anxious, afraid or worry when using foreign language. According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), foreign language anxiety (FLA) is the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning. Horwitz et al. (1986) also defined foreign language anxiety as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process".

Foreign language anxiety also divided into three components based on the aspects of speaking. Horwitz et al. (1986) classified foreign language anxiety into three components. The first is communication apprehension, which arises from learners' inability to adequately express mature thoughts and ideas. The second is the fear of negative social evaluation, which arises from a learner's need to make a positive social impression on others. The third is test anxiety, an apprehension about academic evaluation. Through the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) questionnaire developed by Horwitz (1986), the anxiety levels were separated into five stages started from the highest into the lowest. There are: very anxious, anxious, mildly anxious, relaxed and very relaxed.

On the level of college learning, oral presentation is mostly used by the lecturers to encourage their students in practicing their speaking in English. Meanwhile, many students are not confident and feel anxious with their performance in front of the class when delivering the presentation in the foreign language. The fear of making mistakes and seen by a lot of people in the class can influenced the students' presentation performance.

In English Education Study Program of Bengkulu University, there was a subject to improve student's performance in presentation called "English for Presentation" subject. This subject can be found on the 4th semester. In this subject, the students learned about how to present their presentation properly, to prepared the material and then ways to deliver it to the audiences. The performance of oral presentation in this subject was influenced by the students' anxiety. Even though they already master the presentation, many factors such like the fear of making mistakes, being interrupted by the teacher or lecturer during the performance or being seen by a lot of people made the students could not concentrate well and it could ruined their performance in oral presentation. In conclusion, the anxiety from the students affected their performance in speaking for presentation subject.

Based on the statement above, this research was focused on the fourth semester students from English Education Study Program of Bengkulu University. The students were experienced Speaking for Presentation subject on this semester. The objective was to find whether there was any correlation between students' anxiety level and oral presentation performance based on their performance.

There were several previous studies related to this research. First, the research from Yanita Puspita Sari, Joko Nurkamto and A. Handoko Pudjobroto (2013) entitled "A Correlation Study between Students' Anxiety, Vocabulary Mastery and Speaking Skill". The findings showed that there was a positive correlation between students' anxiety and speaking skill. The speaking skill tend to go up or to go down together with students' anxiety and vocabulary mastery.

The second previous study was from Yuliana Mauludiyah (2014) entitled "The Correlation between Students' Anxiety and Their Ability in Speaking Class". The result showed that there was a positive correlation between students' anxiety and their performance in speaking class. Though the r showed very low correlation interpretation, the result explained that the language anxiety has negative influence on students' speaking apprehension and achievement to the students of English Education Study Program of IAIN Tulungagung. Students with low anxiety have been good in speaking score, and students' in high anxiety would have low speaking score.

Based on the previous studies above, the correlation between anxiety and students' speaking could be positive or negative and significant or not significant based on different sample, environment, or instrument of the

research. The researcher wanted to conduct a research entitled "A Correlation between Students' Anxiety Level and Oral Presentation Performance in EFL Speaking Class". The reason was because the researcher was interested to know is there any positive correlation between the students' anxiety towards their performance in English speaking class. The researcher expects that the result of this research was negative correlation so that it can be used to improve students' ability in oral presentation and decrease the students' anxiety while performing English as Foreign Language during the presentation.

Method

The design of this research was descriptive quantitative, where researcher presents data in numerical and descriptive form. Descriptive quantitative was used in this research because the data obtained by the researcher based on quantitative data, then the researcher explains the results of the data into descriptive form. Moreover, quantitative method can also statistically measure and evaluate a great numbers of participants using a particular questionnaire and standardized answer categories. Sudijono (1987) stated that descriptive quantitative method is a method that described the state of a phenomenon that has been done by the measuring instrument then, processed in accordance with the function. In other words, descriptive quantitative have to organize and analyze the numeric data, in order to provide a view regularly, concise, and clear about a phenomenon or event.

In this research, questionnaire and test were used as the instruments. The questionnaire was an anxiety scales FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) adopted by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). Meanwhile the test was a presentation test using presentation scoring rubric adopted from Iowa State University held in Speaking for Presentation subject in the 4th semester of English Education Study Program.

Results and Discussions

Results

After collecting the data of anxiety level and presentation test score, the researcher analyzed the correlation using Pearson Product Moment in SPSS 23 Software. The result of both raters was, there was a correlation between students' anxiety levels and oral presentation performance and the correlation was significant even though the correlation was moderate.

This is the result of correlation between students' anxiety level and presentation performance in EFL speaking class by Rater 1.

Table 1
Correlations between Students' Anxiety Levels and Presentation Performance Rater 1 & Rater 2

		SPEAKING_ SCORE	ANXIETY_ LEVEL
SPEAKING_SCORE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.475**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	51	51
ANXIETY_LEVEL	Pearson Correlation	-.475**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	51	51

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the table above, the calculated r for the correlation between anxiety level and presentation score from rater 1 & rater 2 were -0.475 which is lower than R table 0.357. So it can be concluded that there was a correlation between the anxiety level and presentation score from both raters. Moreover, the Pearson Correlations above are negative because the relationship between two variables is opposite, it means that if the anxiety level is high, the presentation score will be low or opposite.

Also, based on the level of probability (p) significance (sig.2-tailed) value between the anxiety level and speaking score of rater 1 & rater 2, the number obtained is 0.000 which is lower than alpha 0.01, which means there was a significant correlation between the relationship of anxiety levels and presentation score. Furthermore, the R value is -0.475 which resided between 0.400-0.600 means the strength of this correlation was moderate.

In general, both based on rater 1 or rater 2 score, there was a significant correlation between students' anxiety level and oral presentation performance in EFL speaking class on the 4th semester students of English Education Study Program of Bengkulu University based on the sig.2-tailed (0.000). Therefore, the correlation showed negative direction. Negative correlation or inverse correlation is a relationship between two variables which move in opposite direction. If variables X and Y have a negative correlation (or a negatively correlated), as X increases in value, Y will decrease. Similarly, if X decreases in value, Y will decrease. In this research, if the students' anxiety levels were high, the presentation score will be low and vice versa.

Discussions

During the presentation performance, the students showed various behaviors, such as mumbling, pronouncing wrong words, shaking and trembling. These were caused by the students did not ready to perform in front of the class because of they practice less. Even so, there were some students who have good performance. They behaviors were calm and the words were correctly spoken. the students behaviors were influenced by the students' anxiety itself, the more they have high anxiety the more it can influence their performance in front of the class. As stated from Horwitz (1991), anxiety caused an affective filter, which will prevent students from receiving language input. And then their language acquisition will fail to make progress.

When language learners become highly anxious, acquisition of a foreign language is unlikely to be successful. It was proven by the results of this research which showed that students with lower level anxiety have better result with their speaking test than those who have higher level of anxiety.

In other words, the students with good speaking performance tend to have less anxiety because they feel confidence with their performance so that it goes well. Instead, speaking anxiety is negatively associated with the quality of the message encoded (Burgoon and Hale , 1983) and with individuals actual speaking behavior. It was found that the effects of speaking anxiety can be observed when the students talk in front of the class.

Moreover, anxiety still could not be the only factor that can influence speaking performance. Knowing your own level of anxiety might be useful for yourself. Scovel (1978) also pointed out that anxiety has quite facilitative effect on language learning. Some certain level of discomfort and unpleasant feeling would keep the students alert. Thus, anxiety could also be the radar for the students to act more careful and paying more attention to anything that could trigger their anxiety. Students that could overcome their anxiety will surely be able to learn anything, as they have nothing to block their comprehensible input from being used for acquisition (Krashen, 1981).

Anxiety can also influence by the students' speaking itself, because the students have fear to speak, such as fear of making mistakes in pronunciation, fear of making mistakes in grammar and also fear of choosing the wrong vocabulary during the performance. The students can also think that their English is not enough to express themselves clearly and this makes them feeling anxious.

This research was similar with Yuliana Mauludiyah (2014) entitled "The Correlation between Students' Anxiety and Their Ability in Speaking Class". The result showed that there was a positive correlation between students' anxiety and their performance in speaking class while in this research the results showed that there was a negative significant correlation. It means that the students' anxiety effect their presentation performance but in negative direction. Nevertheless, as the researcher stated before, if the students had high anxiety, it might impact or influence their speaking acquisition or their test. The students can be failed in their speaking test when they have high anxiety

Conclusion and Suggestion

Conclusion

After calculated the data above, the results showed that there was a significant negative correlation between the students' anxiety level and presentation score. The negative result showed that there was opposite direction between two variables. For this research, when the students' anxiety level high, their presentation score was low and if the anxiety level was low the presentation score was high. In addition, the result of this research accepted the alternative hypothesis (Ha) and rejected the null hypothesis (Ho). The (Ha) which said "There is a significant correlation between students' anxiety level and oral presentation's performance in EFL speaking class" answered the research question.

Moreover, the r showed moderate correlation interpretation and the result showed most of the students' anxiety level were in "Mildly Anxious" level and their presentation score were also in "Basic" category. The result of this research showed that there was a significant correlation between students' anxiety level and oral presentation performance in EFL speaking class in the 4th semester students from English Education Study Program of Bengkulu University.

It can be concluded that anxiety can influenced the students' speaking skill especially while performing a presentation in front of the class. Some factors such like fear of making mistakes, being seen by a lot of people, or being interrupted by the lecturers can increase the students' anxiety.

Suggestion

Based on the result of this research, the researcher wants to give some suggestions to the readers, especially for the lecturer and future researchers:

For the lecturer, the lecturer can be more careful in selected the material in speaking class which suitable to help the students improve their speaking ability. The lecturer can also motivated the students to practice speaking more without feeling anxious and worried when performing oral presentation. As we know, learning foreign language is harder than learning our mother language, many students feel anxious when they need to speak in foreign language in front of many people. The fear of making mistakes, being evaluated by the lecturer could be the reason of students' anxiety. That is why the suitable material for improving students speaking acquisition is needed.

For future researchers, this research can give more information about the anxiety levels of FLA students, the students' presentation performance in speaking class and also the correlation between students' anxiety levels and oral presentation performance which can be used as the reference for further research with similar topic and variables. Moreover, the future researchers can learn and get motivation in solving the same problem in foreign language class. As this research only used questionnaire and presentation test as the instruments in order to collected the data, it is recommended for the future researchers to add interview with the students so that the data could be more valid.

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