

The Level of Male and Female Students on Situation-Specific Anxiety in EFL Speaking Class

Indah Viqrianti Ramli^{a,1*}

¹ STAI DDI Pinrang, Indonesia
Email: ^aindahviqrianti71@gmail.com

*Corresponding Author

DOI:

ABSTRACT

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Situation-specific anxiety has an attenuate effect toward students' speaking in EFL classroom. This study investigates the situation-specific anxiety level of male and female students. The researcher conducted this study at SMAN 6 Pinrang, in academic year of 2019/2020. There were 32 eleventh grade students as the subjects of this study, consisted of 11 male and 21 female students selected by using cluster sampling and the data were analyzed by using SPSS version 22. The result showed that situation-specific anxiety levels of male and female students are varied (low, moderate, and high). Most of male students had low anxiety level; most of female students had moderate anxiety level. In addition, there was no statistically significant difference found regard to students' gender and their level of anxiety. The finding of this study can be a reflection for the teacher in treating the students with anxiety based on their level.

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INTRODUCTION

There are still a lot of attempt that teacher give to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in the class, especially in English teaching. English is a foreign language in Indonesia. Students need more effort in learning the four skills in English. Speaking is considered as crucial part in students' academic need, it requires students' ability and urge. The students can have a good communication if they are used to speak more in English. In attaining this goal, students' should be brave and having a confidence in order to speak up their mind to their friends. Trang, Moni, and Baldauf (2012) states some factors that can influence foreign language learning by the students when learning a foreign language such as attitude, motivation, anxiety, and beliefs. Then, anxiety becomes the most influencing factor. Anxiety is not a new thing in this world issue. Students' anxiety is a real problem that majority of students face in learning English as a foreign language and they cannot avoid to have an anxiety in some conditions. Passer and Smith (2009) defined anxiety as a circumstance of tension and apprehension as a natural response to some conditions. It takes into account that people can experience anxiety naturally when they are gotten some treatments and it refers to the feeling of fear or unease in several conditions namely social and learning contexts.

The researcher views anxiety issue as something that should be investigated more, not only on college students but also the students in the early age who already involve to the class activity which require the ability to speak their mind and perform in the broader area.

Literature Review

Anxiety can give bad influence or negative effect toward the students in foreign language class. As known, the students should have a high self-confidence in delivering their speaking performance. In speaking anxiety, in terms of situation-specific anxiety, there are three levels of students in experiencing anxiety such as low, moderate and high level of anxiety. Anxiety can affect the students and disturb them in their speaking effort and performance. The students who have anxiety will be limited in giving their best performance because they think less clearly and it leads them in making mistakes. In order to avoid this difficulty, the students should practice more so that their readiness can support them. Ormrod (2003) states that anxiety influenced by some aspects of cognition in speaking process. The students with anxiety can be disrupted in paying attention while the learning process held, processing information, and gaining information. The statement from Ormrod (2003) is in line with MacIntyre (1999) as he says that anxiety can give any impact toward students' cognitive processing. He

proposes Tobias model of the effects of anxiety on learning which consists of three stages such as input, processing, and output.

At the input stage, speaking anxiety has a role as a filter in preventing the information to be processed into the students' cognition. It is similar with the concept proposed by Krashen (1982) named "affective filter". In his book, anxiety is described as the influencing factor in the process of students' language acquisition. For instance, the students with anxiety will face the difficulty in gaining the information about speaking rules and any vocabularies. Then, in processing stage, anxiety acts as a distraction in processing any information. While in learning process, the students may worry and it leads them in digesting the new words, phrases, sentences, grammar, etc. Lastly, in the output stage, anxiety can affect the students' performance in speaking. The anxious students may be disabling to presenting what kind of information they have gotten and learned before. They do not know how to express their idea because anxiety limits their mind in constructing their words.

The students frequently cannot enhance their confidence while speaking in front of the classroom, this condition well known as situation-specific anxiety. Situation-specific anxiety refers to anxiety in a well-defined situation (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991). It is related to their anxiety which concern with the condition where the students have to speak in public or participating in a language class, it may prevents them in speaking in front of their friend because they have a lot of things in their mind. Psychologist uses the specific reaction term to distinguish people who are commonly anxious in a variety of situations from people who are anxious only to one specific situation. The perspective explores anxiety reactions in a "well-defined situation" such as public speaking, test-taking, or class participation. It is related to personal tendency to become anxious in particular type of situation or context. Each situation is different, therefore, a person can be nervous in one situation but not in others. Anxiety over language is an example of situation-specific anxiety because it is associated with specific situation (Oxford and Ehrman, 1992). In this type, the students would experience their anxiety when they are facing the situation where they have to perform or asked to do some test. It might be come from their fear because they are afraid if the situation does not run well or they cannot finish anything as they want.

Studies about anxiety have been conducted by some researchers. Horwitz, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) first conduct the study about anxiety in foreign language classroom. It introduces the way of anxiety affect the EFL learners in learning language. Then, that theory leads some researcher to explore students' anxiety widely. Cui (2011), for example, finds that high anxiety can make the students lose their confidence and faith for their abilities, avoid to participate in classroom activity, and it can lead them to lose their zeal in learning language.

Students in EFL Classroom have their own way in involving their self in teaching and learning process. They also can be identified by their gender in receiving and applying their ability or knowledge. It is also obtained in the way they communicate using a foreign language to have an interaction. Speaking anxiety can give the bad effect to the students because they can be obstructed in learning and performing their speaking. The study that is related to gender difference in speaking anxiety had been conducted in several ways. The results are varied, whether male or female student which is more anxious than another.

Studies on anxiety in relation with gender were also conducted by Park and French (2013) who examined the gender differences in language anxiety and feasible influence students' gender and anxiety on L2 performance. They found that female students tended to have higher anxiety levels than male students which were explained by socio-cultural views on anxiety. Then, another related study conducted by Debreli and Demirkan (2016) in English Preparatory School which explored the EFL students' levels of anxiety in speaking and EFL students' varying levels of foreign language anxiety which concerned to proficiency level and gender. The findings revealed that, in general, more than half students were in the same position as low level speaking anxiety. Besides, the difference was not statistically significance between male and female students' anxiety in terms of gender.

Students cannot be separated from anxiety issues, notably in EFL speaking class. The main focus of this study refers to the secondary students in Indonesia which is using English as a foreign language. The researcher aimed to know the level of students' specific-anxiety to help them acknowledge what kind of treatment they should be given. It is necessary for the teachers to know their students' lack clearly. The previous studies are in line with the researcher's aim which focuses on anxiety level. Nevertheless, the previous researchers did not specify the type of anxiety that they explored. Assisting the students in recognizing their anxiety level can help them notice their lack and it can trigger them to develop their speaking skill. Then, this study intends to focus on the male and female secondary students' level of situation-specific anxiety in EFL speaking class.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research design used was quantitative method because the goal of this study is to get the clear data about male and female students level in experiencing speaking anxiety. This study was conducted at SMAN 6 Pinrang at the eleventh grade students. This study used cluster sampling in defining the sample of the research. The participants consist of 32 students (11 males and 21 females) in academic year of 2019/2020. The

researcher distributed the questionnaire of Public Speaking Class Anxiety Scale (PSCAS) which was adopted from Yaikhong and Usaha (2012) to the students. The researcher used questionnaire in the form of likert-scale which related to the anxiety in the speaking classroom. This questionnaire consists of two kinds of statement which is positive and negative. This questionnaire had been used by some researchers before, so it is considerable to be chosen as an appropriate instrument. The items analyzed as a measurement of speech anxiety, communication apprehension, and anxiety associated to speaking English in the classroom context of individual self-report. The data from questionnaire were calculated by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program version 22.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The level of students’ situation-specific anxiety in term of male and female were determined by the result of the PSCAS questionnaire. The results were calculated by using *SPSS version 22*. It conceived 17 questions or items, then each item was answered based on five-point of likert-scale. The range is from 5 “Strongly Agree” to 1 “Strongly Disagree” for positive statement and vice versa. The total score for 17 items in PSCAS questionnaire is 85, and then it was divided into some categories based on the score achieved. Scores lower than 51 were categorized as low anxiety, between 51-68 were categorized as moderate anxiety, and higher than 68 were categorized as high anxiety. The PSCAS questionnaire was distributed to the student at first semester on November. There were seventeen questions answered by the students. After calculated the students’ response of the questionnaire, the students’ scores as follows

60	53	50	58	40	60	60
66	49	35	50	55	70	63
55	70	66	48	40	54	58
42	52	69	47	50	62	63
49	58	64	47			

The students’ scores above lead the researcher in determining the level of situation-specific anxiety of male and female students in speaking, besides the relationship of students’ profile and their level of anxiety also take into account. More

detail information as follows:

Level of Situation-specific anxiety in Speaking on Male Students

The researcher used the PSCAS questionnaire to figure out the level of situation-specific anxiety on male students at the eleventh grade. Then, the result showed that the minimum score of speaking anxiety on male students was 40 and the maximum score on male students was 70, the mean score was 52.64 and standard deviation was 9.490.

Table 1. Frequency of situation-specific anxiety levels on male students

Score	Frequency	Percentage	Level
17-50	6	54.6 %	Low Anxiety
51-68	4	36.4 %	Moderate Anxiety
69-85	1	9 %	High Anxiety
Total	11	100 %	

The table above shows three levels of situation-specific anxiety which were experienced by male students. It covers the result that 54.6% (six male students) obtain low anxiety, moderate anxiety obtained 36.4% (four male students), and high anxiety obtained 9% (one male student). From these results, the researcher concludes that the level of situation-specific anxiety on male students is low anxiety with the percent of 54.6%

Level of Situation-specific anxiety in Speaking on Female Students

The result showed that the minimum score of speaking anxiety on female students was 35 and the maximum score on female students was 70, the mean score was 56.38 and standard deviation was 8.953.

Table 2. Frequency of situation-specific anxiety levels on female students

Score	Frequency	Percentage	Level
17-50	6	28.5%	Low Anxiety
51-68	13	62 %	Moderate Anxiety
69-85	2	9.5 %	High Anxiety
Total	21	100 %	

The table above shows three levels of situation-specific anxiety which were experienced by female students. It covers the result that low anxiety obtained 28.5% (six female students), moderate anxiety obtained 62% (thirteen female students), and high anxiety obtained 9.5% (two female students). From these results, the researcher concludes that the level of situation-specific anxiety on female students is moderate anxiety with the percent of 62%.

Male and female students' level of anxiety as pointed out in the previous section shows a distinction. The scores differ to one another and the level of anxiety also put the different value. In order to investigate the male and female students differ from each other in terms of anxiety level, an independent sample t-test was conducted.

Table 3. Independent sample t-test of gender difference on situation-specific anxiety in speaking

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P
Male	11	53.64	9.64	30	- 0.802	0.66
Female	21	56.38	8.95			

As seen in table 3, mean of anxiety level on male students is 53.64 and on female students is 56.38 where the significance level is 0.66 ($p > 0.05$). From these significance level values, it can be said that the gender difference of male and female students in terms of situation-specific anxiety is considered to be not statically significant. It means that the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted and the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is rejected. Eventually, the result shows that between male and female the gender difference is not significant in terms of anxiety in speaking. No gender is classified as most anxious between both male and female students. In general, all of the subjects (male and female students) are in the same condition. Based on the finding, it can be said that the gender difference of male and female students in terms of situation-specific anxiety is considered to be not statically significant.

Discussion

Anxiety is a condition which is related someone's emotion that leads him/her in becoming afraid when it is associated with some objects accidentally. Spielberger (1972) stated that anxiety is a term which concern with the miserable emotional condition which is characterized by subjective strain or feeling, apprehension, even feel worry about many things happened by arousal of the automatic system of nervousness. Moreover, there on of the type of anxiety named situation-specific anxiety which represent anxiety as an apprehension in specific situations and events.

The result shows that the levels of situation-specific anxiety on male and female students are varied. The male students were categorized as having low, moderate, and high anxiety level, then most of male students were experienced low level of anxiety. Female students were also categorized as low, moderate, and high anxiety level, then most of female students were experienced moderate level of anxiety. This result is in line with several studies (Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2013; Mohtasham & Farnia, 2017). These studies also find out that male students tend to have low level of anxiety and female students have moderate level of anxiety in speaking.

In defining the most anxious students between male and female, the researcher also tended to figure out the gender difference. Then, it is found out that the gender difference between male and female students in terms of situation specific-anxiety is not statically significant. No gender is classified as most anxious between both male and female students; they are in the same condition. This result is in line with the several studies (Gaibani & Elmenfi, 2014; Debreli and Demirkan, 2016). These studies also found that the gender difference was acknowledged as not statically significant.

CONCLUSION

The result of this study shows that the level of situation-specific anxiety of male and female students is varied. All of the three levels are found in this study such as low, moderate, and high level of anxiety. All of the male and female students experience various level of anxiety due to their different skill and ability. To be more specific, male students mostly have low level of anxiety and female students mostly have moderate level of anxiety. Moreover, this study finds out that there is no significant different between male and female students in experiencing anxiety, there is no gender biased. Based on the result and discussion, it is suggested to the teacher to give any contribution to emboldening the students to share their feelings and difficulties regarding to how often they were experiencing anxiety in speaking.

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