

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SPEAKING ANXIETY

Perbedaan Gender dalam Berbicara Kecemasan

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Abstrak: Kecemasan berbicara menjadi hal yang substansial dalam pembelajaran bahasa asing. Banyak peneliti yang membahas kecemasan berbicara pada siswa. Namun, penelitian tersebut tidak banyak diujikan di tingkat SMA. Penelitian ini membahas Kecemasan Berbicara Bahasa Asing pada siswa SMA yang dikaitkan dengan perbedaan gender. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah gender memberikan perbedaan yang signifikan pada tingkat kecemasan berbicara siswa atau tidak. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi diferensial. Penelitian ini melibatkan 43 siswa kelas IX dari SMA Terpadu Darussalam Tasikmalaya. Pemilihan sampel pada penelitian ini menggunakan teknik probability sampling. Kuesioner tertutup yang diadopsi dari Horwitz dkk. (1986) diujikan kepada peserta untuk memeriksa Kecemasan Berbicara Bahasa Asing mereka. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa tidak ada perbedaan statistik yang signifikan antara siswa laki-laki dan perempuan. Meskipun tidak ada perbedaan statistik yang signifikan, temuan tersebut menunjukkan bahwa perempuan menunjukkan kecemasan yang lebih tinggi daripada laki-laki.

Kata Kunci: kecemasan berbicara bahasa asing, kecemasan berbicara, gender.

Abstract: Speaking anxiety becomes a substantial matter in foreign language learning. Many studies have been discussed foreign language anxiety. Nevertheless, slight research has been undertaken on senior high school level. This research investigated Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA) associated with gender difference in senior high school level. This study aims to investigate whether gender gives the significant difference on students' speaking anxiety level or

not. Differential research method was used. 43 students of SMA Terpadu Darussalam Tasikmalaya (grade IX) were participated in this study. Probability sampling was used as the technique for selecting sample. A close-ended questionnaire adopted from Horwitz et.al (1986) was administrated to the participants to examine their Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety. The result indicated that there is no statistically difference between male and female students. Although there was no statistically difference, the finding represents that females demonstrated a higher anxiety than males.

Keywords: *foreign language anxiety, speaking anxiety, gender.*

INTRODUCTION

Mastering speaking becomes the most important aspect in foreign language learning. However, learning speaking is harder than other three skills (listening, reading and writing) (Harmer, 2007). In English learning, students are expected to speak well in English. In order to achieve the goal, the teacher provides English learning in various ways. Moreover, many schools provide greater treatments, such as giving students some vocabulary before class starts, organize language activities (public speaking, drama contest, storytelling contest, etc.) and even some schools create language environment by requiring students to speak foreign languages in school. Nevertheless, communicating English fluently is consistently difficult for language learners. It is influenced by a number of factors including anxiety which is a part of affective factor.

Anxiety apparently becomes the crucial factor that has been debilitating students' oral performance. Na (2007) argued that anxiety considered as one of the most important factors that influence foreign language learners. Many learners claim that anxiety becomes a mental block on their language learning. Thus, it is obvious that anxiety prevents learners to achieve their language learning goals.

Learners may suffer from speaking anxiety caused by a number of aspects of learning process, including getting feedback from the teacher, speaking in front of other learners, mispronouncing some words, or arranging ungrammatical sentence. It is relevant with a research by Rajitha *et.al* (2020). They argue that factors causing speaking anxiety classified into psychological and physiological categories. That classification

divided into two different groups as internal and external factors. In addition, Brown (2000) believed that gender is a psychological factor which influences language learning.

The research regarding the cause of speaking anxiety as well as speaking anxiety based on gender has been conducted by several researchers. Mohtasham and Farnia (2017) conducted a study on the effect of gender to students' speaking anxiety. The result indicated that there are significant differences between males and females of Iranian EFL University Students' speaking anxiety. Another study on speaking anxiety between male and female was carried out by Abrar *et. al* (2016). They examined student teachers' Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety (FLSA) associated with gender and proficiency differences. The result indicated that there is no statistical difference in males' and females' speaking anxiety of EFL student teachers. Apparently, both studies showed contradictory result. Hence, with regard that contradictory result on gender differences in speaking anxiety and due to the fact that studies focusing on gender differences in speaking anxiety are rare in senior high school level, this study is an attempt to bridge this gap. The study will attempt to investigate whether male and female have the significant difference on students' speaking anxiety level in grade XI students of SMA Terpadu Darussalam Tasikmalaya or not.

The problem that can be formulated in this study as follow is: Is there a significant difference of students' speaking anxiety level based on their gender?

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Speaking is known as the process of delivering language by using speech organs, such as the mouth, vocal tract, vocal cords, tongue, teeth, and lips. Many definitions of speaking that have been proposed by some expert in language learning. According to Nunan (2015) speaking is a productive oral skill which consist of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning. Speaking is an oral activity producing verbal utterance which is systematically arranged. Besides, the utterance is produced to carry meaning. Speaking

is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997).). Its form and meaning are depend on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. In addition, Rajitha and Alamelu (2020) stated that speaking is a process to share the ideas, views, opinions and other information. They said that speaking activity is used to take out ideas or opinions from the brain. It can be concluded, speaking is an interactive process includes producing, receiving and processing the ideas, views, opinions and other information delivered by speech organs and emotions. The structure and meaning of the speech are depend on the context. Undeniable, speaking becomes an important aspect in language learning, yet it is harder than other skills. Evidently, the crucial factor that has been debilitating students' oral performance was anxiety.

According to Carlson and Buskist (1997) “anxiety is a sense of apprehension or doom that is accompanied by certain physiological reactions, such as accelerated heart rate, sweaty palms, and tightness in the stomach”. Horwitz *et al.* (1986) believe that anxiety is “the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system”. May (1997) as cited in Bekleyen (2004, p.50) stated that anxiety is “an emotional response to a threat to some value that the individual holds essential to his existence as a personality”. Anxiety as an emotional state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object. (Scovel, 1978, cited in Cheng, 2005, p. 8). From the definition above, it can be concluded that anxiety is a feeling of being nervous, worry, apprehensive and threatened accompanied by some physiological reactions as a response to a particular situation that someone consider as a threat.

Foreign language anxiety becomes one of the subjects widely explored in language learning and teaching area (Hedge, 2001; Horwitz, 2001). For years, numerous studies have been researched the effect of anxiety on language learning. In this regard, many of

them have found a sticky connection between language anxiety and foreign language learning (Bless and Fiedler, 2006; Yule, 2006). Horwitz *et al.* (1986) classified foreign language anxiety into three components: a) Communication apprehension which refers to feeling worry about oral communication. b) Fear of negative evaluation which refers to individuals' worries about them and believing that these thoughts are usually negative (Horwitz & Young, 1991). c) Test anxiety, refers to learners' negative expectations about their performance in upcoming test.

In language learning students are expected to master speaking well. However, According to Placious (1998) as cited in Tercan and Dikilitaş (2015, p. 19) speaking causes the most anxiety among language learners. Melouah (2013) believed that speaking anxiety has a negative effect on students' speaking performance of English. It negatively impacts students' learning atmosphere and their achievement (Mohammed & Wahid, 2009). Hence, many students are afraid to use foreign language orally. Aydin (2001) categorized the reasons of speaking anxiety into four groups: personal reasons, the teacher's manner in teaching process, learners' beliefs and testing and teaching procedures. Rajitha & Alamelu (2020) revealed factors causing speaking anxiety classified into psychological and physiological categories. It divided into two different groups as internal and external factors. The Internal factors are stage fear, lack of confidence and shyness factor. Besides, the External factors are language factor, grammar factor, pronunciation factor, and peer factor. In addition, Brown (2000) believes that gender is a part of psychological factor or personal factor which has a role in foreign language learning.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a differential research method approach to investigate whether male and female have the significant difference on students' speaking anxiety level or not. The research was conducted in grade XI students of SMA Terpadu Darussalam Tasikmalaya.

The population of this study was 77 students of grade IX that consist 51 female students and 26 male students.

This research used probability sampling as the technique for selecting sample. It is a sampling technique which provides equal opportunity for each element (member) of the population to be selected as a sample member. To determine the number of samples, the writer used Slovin's formula with 5% level of significance and standard error 10% or 0.1. Hence, 43 sample was taken based on the result of the calculation. It consists 28 female and 15 male students. The participants were chosen randomly.

In this research, the writer used a questionnaire to examine whether gender gives the significant difference on students' speaking anxiety level in grade XI students of SMA Terpadu Darussalam Tasikmalaya or not in the form of multiple-choice questions. A questionnaire is also used to find out students' level of anxiety in English language learning. The questionnaire is adopted through FLCAS questionnaire from Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986).

In this research, the writer is concern with the validity and reliability for the instrument in order to get the result of the research. Validity is constructed to determine whether the scores serve a useful purpose and have positive consequences when they are used in practice. Besides, reliability is constructed to determine whether there is consistency in test administration and scoring (were errors caused by carelessness in administration or scoring?). Therefore, the statements in questionnaire was tested to non-sample students having similar characteristics with the subjects of the research. The construct validity test of the instrument was conducted by using Pearson Product Moment Correlations via SPSS 25.0 (Statistical Package of Social Sciences) and then consulted the value with the table-value of r Product Moment. From the result of SPSS for the item validity's calculation, there were 17 invalid items of FLCAS, and those items were deleted.

Furthermore, the reliability test was analysed by using Cronbach's Alpha method. Cronbach's alpha generally increases as the inter correlations among test items increase,

and is thus known as an internal consistency estimate of reliability of instrument. The reliability of FLCAS instrument is 0.859 which prove that it is higher than 0.6. That means the questionnaires are reliable. Yet, the value of 0.859 was proven that this questionnaire is greatly reliable.

After collecting data, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) was used to analyze quantitative data. Independence T-Test was applied to find out the differences between male and females score in foreign language speaking anxiety scale. Inferential statistics was also used to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of two groups, which may be related in certain features.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The participants of this research, 43 (15 males and 28 females) students of grade IX of SMA Terpadu Darussalam Tasikmalaya, have been answered the questionnaire completely. Since the questionnaire is a 5-grade Likert scale, the total score ranged from 17 to 85. According to the literature review that the researcher did, there were no precise guidelines to analyze the responses given to the existing foreign language anxiety scales. To analyze levels of anxiety using FLCAS, Yaikhong & Usaha (2012) suggested to multiply the point of 17 item five-point Likert scale only a value of 5 (strongly agree), and then subtract the total multiplied scores to the total item. Thus, the total multiplied scores were 85 and then subtracted by 17; scores higher than 68 were categorized as high anxiety, between 50-67 as medium anxiety, and lower than 50 as low anxiety.

Based on the scoring and categorizing of FLCAS scale, here is the result of students' anxiety level:

MALE		
Range	Level	Result
68-85	High Anxiety	0 Respondent (0%)
50-67	Medium Anxiety	2 Respondent (13%)
17-49	Low Anxiety	13 Respondent (87%)

FEMALE		
Range	Level	Result
68-85	High Anxiety	0 Respondent (0%)
50-67	Medium Anxiety	16 Respondent (57%)
17-49	Low Anxiety	12 Respondent (43%)

After analyzing the data, the writer found two males experiencing “medium anxious” with a range score of 50-67, other 13 male students experiencing “low anxious” with a range of 17-49. Besides, there are 16 female students experiencing “medium anxious”, and other 12 experiencing “low anxious”. it can be said that most of males experienced low anxiety. In the contrary, most of females experienced medium anxiety. Nevertheless, since the highest anxiety score of male was 58 and female was 60, both males and females are experiencing medium anxiety. In addition, based on the average, female got higher speaking anxiety (Mean= 49) than that of male students (Mean= 41.5).

The research question created to investigate whether there is a significant difference in speaking anxiety level between male and female senior high school students. The analysis was done through inferential statistics. The independent-samples t-test was used to test the following alternative hypothesis.

Hi: There is a significant difference in male and female students’ speaking anxiety level.

Students' Speaking Anxiety	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)

Equal variances assumed	1,2	0,289	-2,924	41	0,006
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According to the table above, the test statistic $t=-2.924$, the degree of freedom $df=41$ with a significant level $p=0.006$. The probability value ($p=0.006$) is greater than 0.05, so the result is not statistically significant. Hence, the alternative hypothesis is rejected which states that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female students in relation to their speaking anxiety level.

Regarding to the result, it pinpoints that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female grade IX students of SMA Terpadu Darussalam Tasikmalaya. Hence, the alternative hypothesis is rejected. This finding contradicts the majority of previous studies (Mohtasam & Farnia, 2017; Fariadian, Azizifar & Gowhary, 2014). In addition, the result of this study shows parallelism with the study of Abrar *et.al* (2016) in Indonesian context. He also found that there is no statistically difference between male and female's speaking anxiety level of student teacher in Jambi.

Although there is no statistically difference, the writer found more findings stated that most of grade IX male students (87%) of Darussalam Tasikmalaya experience low level of anxiety while most of females (57%) experience medium anxiety. There result indicated there is no students experience high level of anxiety, both male and female.

Besides, looking on the average of the result (Male= 41,5333; female = 49,1071), female got higher speaking anxiety level than male. The result showed the different anxiety level between male and female students. However, this study still not discuss the reason of it. In general, the finding might be in line with Mohtasam & Farnia (2017), Fariadian, Azizifar & Gowhary (2014), Ali & Fei (2017) Öztürk & Gürbüzwho (2013) who investigated foreign language anxiety level associated with gender. With regard to these results, it can be said that female students are more anxious and worried while speaking English in classroom. In addition to this, the result of this study shows parallelism with the study carried out by Ali and Fei (2017) in Iraqi context. They found

that female students were more anxious in three aspect of anxiety test (communication apprehension, negative evaluation and test anxiety). As a result, in the light of different studies, although the significant difference on male and female students' speaking anxiety level was not found, it can be seen that male and female have a big role on speaking anxiety.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis and the result of the study, the writer can conclude as followed. According to the result of T-test, the writer found that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female grade IX students of SMA Terpadu Darussalam Tasikmalaya. Hence, the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

The result of this research showed that most of male students experience low anxiety level while female experience medium anxiety level. There are 2 (13%) male students who experience medium anxiety, and 13 (87%) others experience low level. Besides, 16 (57%) female students experience medium anxiety level and 12 (43%) others experience low level. Moreover, based on the average, female got higher anxiety than male.

Having conducted the research, the researcher would like to give some suggestions as follows. (1) Although there is no statistically difference between male and female speaking anxiety level, the teacher still should put the attention to students' speaking anxiety. The teacher should give a different treatment to teach each class. Since SMA Terpadu Darussalam applied single sex class, it might be easier for teachers to treat students. Especially for female students, the teacher can give more cheerful atmosphere to reduce students' anxiety. (2) Looking on the higher score from male and female, students experience medium anxiety level. Hence, students need to reduce the anxiety and try to be more relaxed along English learning process. Students must realize that making mistake is not a mistaken in learning process. That is a normal thing to make them

better in the future. (3) The stakeholders are expected to give attention to this matter. Since speaking anxiety becomes a substantial matter, it should be one thing to be concerned. School might can give teachers more training to created good atmosphere along English learning process to help students reducing their anxiety. (4) The writer hopes that the future researcher can conduct a better and deeper research about speaking anxiety related to male and female difference and develop with other three skills, listening, reading and writing.

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