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Factors Influencing Students' Anxiety in English as a Foreign Language Classroom

Sukardi Weda and Andi Elsa Fadhilah Sakti

English Department, Universitas Negeri Makassar Makassar, 90224, Indonesia

sukardi.weda@unm.ac.id

Abstract. There are some influential factors contribute to the low English proficiency of students at higher education. Those influential factors are: teachers' low competence, lacks of facilities and learning aids, and the most intriguing factor is students' anxiety. Foreign language anxiety is interesting phenomenon in the second or foreign language study and the researchers make study on students' anxiety to develop interesting teaching-learning process. Students' anxiety ranging from answering questions to asking questions to the instructor in class. This study aims to explore influential factors towards the students' anxiety in the English as a Foreign Language classroom at higher education in Indonesia. There were sixty four English learners as participants of this research. The participants were the students of English Literature Study Program Faculty of Language and Literature Universitas Negeri Makassar who attended Pronunciation Practice Subject. This study employed descriptive statistics showing the mean, standard deviation, percentage of the students' responses to the questionnaire. Through the use of questionnaire as the instrument of this study, this study identified some contributing factors to students' anxiety: they are (1) students' self-confidence; (2) lecturers' role in the classroom, (3) students' beliefs about material, and (4) lecturers' arrogance in the teaching-learning process in which the teacher presents the material very quickly without considering students' situation.

1. Introduction

Teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) in Indonesia is a mandatory subject from secondary schools to tertiary levels. The target of English teaching at schools and universities in Indonesia is to achieve English language communicative competence. To achieve the curriculum objectives as stated in the Indonesian curriculum policy seems to be difficult, eventhough the norms have been employed in the classroom setting by the teachers.

One of the influential factors contributing to the low English proficiency of English learners not only in Indonesia but also some countries outside Indonesia which put English as a compulsory subject in their schools is the anxiety. In the world today, some studies have been conducted in classroom anxiety relating to students' socio-economic and family background, students' self-confidence, lecturers' role in the classroom, students' beliefs about materials, lecturers' arrogance in the teaching-learning process and other forms of anxiety. In Indonesian context, very little studies on anxiety have been studied by researchers, especially in English language learning anxiety.

Foreign language anxiety has been studied by some researchers from some countries focusing on foreign language anxiety in the classroom setting in a wide variety of topics and language skills [1-12].



Trang, Moni & Baldauf [1] reveal that there are a variety of factors that might influence foreign language learning faced by a number of students when learning a foreign language; attitude, motivation, anxiety, and beliefs. Of these affective factors, anxiety has been given much attention.

With a focus on Indonesian Undergraduate English majors at the Faculty of Languages and Literature Universitas Negeri Makassar (UNM), the present study aims to investigate students' perception on factors influencing students' anxiety in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom as one of the affective variables in EFL classroom.

2. Reseach Method

2.1. Participants

The participants for this study were the undergraduate students of English Literature Study Program Faculty of Languages and Literature Universitas Negeri Makassar (UNM) Indonesia. There were 105 students participated in this study (N= 105, male: 27 or 25,71% and female: 78 or 74,29%).

2.2. Instrument

The instrument of the study was questionnaire. The questionnaire consisting of 20 statements to be responded by the participants. The instrument used to evaluate the students' perceptions of language anxiety in the classroom setting was adapted from Liu and Cheng [2]. Each of the 20 items was rated on a five-point Likert scale, which ranged from 1 to 5 referring to Woodrow [3] ranging from Not at all anxious (1), Slightly anxious (2), Moderately anxious (3), Very anxious (4), and Extremely anxious (5).

The items for students' perception are as follows: 1. I never feel very confident when I am studying English in class (SP-1), 2. I feel uneasy when I know that I am going to be called on my English class (SP-2), 3. It frightens me when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in EFL classroom (SP-3), 4. I feel panic when I have to speak in group presentation (SP-4), 5. I feel nervous when I have to express ideas and thoughts in EFL classroom (SP-5), 6. I feel never very confident when I am listening in EFL classroom (SP-6), 7. I feel never very confident when I am speaking in EFL classroom (SP-7), 8. I feel never very confident when I am reading in EFL classroom (SP-8), 9. I feel never very confident when I am writing in EFL classroom (SP-9), 10. I get nervous when my English teacher asks me questions that I am not able to prepare in advance (SP-10), 11. I feel very embarassed when I have to speak English in front of the class (SP-11), 12. I get nervous when I do not understand what my English teacher says (SP-12), 13. I get overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to study English (SP-13), 14. During my English class, I find myself thinking about other things that have nothing to do with the subject (SP-14), 15. The more I study English, the more confused I get (SP-15), 16. My English class move so quickly that I worry about being left behind (SP-16), 17. In my English class, I forget things I know when I get nervous (SP-17), 18. I worry that I will fail my English course (SP-18), 19. I get nervous when asked to contribute to a rol-play or discussion in class (SP-19), and 20. I get nervous if the English teacher is a a native speaker (SP-20).

3. Pertinent Ideas

Some studies on anxiety have been conducted by researchers. Liu and Cheng [2] argue that the combination of speaking anxiety and fear of negative evaluation acted as a primary source of language anxiety in the Taiwanese EFL classroom. Saito and Samimy [4] reveal that their study reveals that the influence of foreign language anxiety becomes more important as Japanese learners' instructional levels increase. They emphasize that it is clear that in order to reduce the debilitating effect of language class anxiety, teachers of Japanese need to become aware of these differences in terms of the learners' affective states and respond to them accordingly. Trang, Moni, & Baldauf [1] state that awareness of the importance of English and volition were two important factors that influenced anxious students' determination to study English. Abu-Rabia [5] agrues that anxiety was negatively and ssignificantly correlated to FL achievement on all FL tests. Woodrow [3] says that the most

frequent source of anxiety was interacting with native speakers. Young [6] states that there was significant negative correlations between anxiety and the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), but once the effects of ability was accounted for, the correlations were no longer significant. In other words, once the effect of an individual's language proficiency was accounted for, oral performance no longer decreased as anxiety increased. Timina [7] argues that over half of the respondents in her study feel speaking in an English classes either all the time or almost all the time.

The major causes of student English speaking anxiety belong to three interrelated and intersect groups: psychooogical, educational, and socio-cultural. Timina therefore adds that with regard to the main psychological cause, the overwhelming majority of first-year students noted they feel reluctant to speak English aloud for fear of not understanding or misunderstanding the teacher's question or task.

4. Results and Disussion

The means and standard deviations of students' perception on factors influencing students' anxiety in EFL classroom are displayed in table 1. The findings indicating that the students achieved a mean of 1,7714 and SD = 0,82342 for SP-1. They achieved a mean of 1,9429 and SD = 0,85292 for SP-2. The students achieved a mean of 2,3905 and SD = 0,82620 for SP-3. The studengs achieved a mean of 2,1810 and SD = 0,94849 for SP-4. Therefore, means and SD for SP-5 to SP-20 are clearly stated on table 1. Finally, a normal distribution can be observed for all scales in the present study as revealed by skewness and kurtosis value as presented in table 1.

The study aimed to explore students' perception on factors influencing students' anxiety in EFL classroom and the study conluded that from the 20 items of the instrument, the highest response on how anxious students feel when they learn English was "They worry that they will fail their English course." Other influencing factors on students' anxiety were the statements "They get nervous when they do not understand what their English teacher says," "The students get nervous when their English teacher asks them questions that they are not able to prepare in advance," "Their English class move on quickly that they worry about being left behind," "In their English class, they forgot things they know when they get nervous," and "It frightens them when they do not understand what the teacher is saying in EFL classroom.

Table 1. Students' Perception on Factors Influencing Students' Anxiety in EFL Classroom (N= 105)

Code	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	1 (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	5 (%)
SP-1	1,7714	,82342	,660	-,607	45,7	33,3	19,0	1,9	0
SP-2	1,9429	,85292	,679	-,079	33,3	44,8	16,2	5,7	0
SP-3	2,3905	,82620	,619	,323	9,5	53,3	26,7	9,5	1,0
SP-4	2,1810	,94849	,730	,341	23,8	45,7	21,0	7,6	1,9
SP-5	2,1905	,87810	,224	,109	21,0	41,9	31,4	3,8	1,0
SP-6	2,1143	,91267	,002	-1,017	29,5	30,5	35,2	3,8	0
SP-7	2,1143	1,03138	,410	-,619	33,3	29,5	26,7	8,6	1,0
SP-8	1,7905	,93742	1,004	1,007	46,7	29,5	20,0	1,0	1,9
SP-9	1,9048	,89361	,519	-,439	37,1	37,1	20,0	4,8	0
SP-10	2,5524	1,00939	,197	,056	13,3	33,3	38,1	10,5	3,8
SP-11	2,0857	,93144	,555	,150	26,7	43,8	21,0	6,7	1,0
SP-12	2,3429	1,02684	,407	-,289	19,0	41,9	22,9	13,3	1,9
SP-13	2,0190	,82019	-,036	-,973	28,6	39,0	30,5	1,0	0
SP-14	2,1810	,87465	,164	,030	21,9	40,0	33,3	1,0	0
SP-15	1,8476	1,04496	1,188	1,255	46,7	28,6	18,1	1,9	3,8

SP-16	2,1810	1,02639	,280	-,913	29,5	32,4	24,8	12,4	0
SP-17	2,4762	,93124	,216	,162	11,4	41,0	34,3	10,5	1,9
SP-18	2,6190	1,15510	,371	-,274	15,2	32,4	32,4	10,5	8,6
SP-19	2,1238	,87371	,372	,288	22,9	44,8	26,7	3,8	1,0
SP-20	2,1714	1,10469	,481	-,611	33,3	28,6	23,8	11,4	1,9

5. Conclusions and Implications

Therefore, some important implications derived from this present study, those are: Firstly, fear of failing the English course seemed to be main causes of students' anxiety in EFL classroom. Secondly, the students became nervous when the teacher asked questions in which they do not understand the answer of the questions. Thirdly, they became nervous when the class runs quickly without paying attention to students' different ability. Finally, the students tended to be nervous when they did not understand materials explained by the teacher in EFL class.

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