

English Language Speaking Anxiety of Lower Secondary School Students

Caesa Rifandini Leksono Putri

English Education Department, Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo, Indonesia

*) Correspondence: crifandini@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Anxiety is a feeling of worry and anxious when it comes to doing something. Especially in learning English, students seem to feel anxious since English is used as a foreign language. It is very important to analyze students' anxiety in learning English to find out the contributing factors and to learn suitable teaching strategies for anxiety. This study aims to identify students' fear of speaking in English. A descriptive quantitative study was applied and the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was used as an instrument. The questionnaire was adapted from Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). This questionnaire was shared to 31 students of grade nine at one of the state's lower secondary schools in Sidoarjo. The results show that the highest level is the Test Anxiety factor with an average score ($M=2.90$). While the second highest level is the communication apprehension factor with an average score ($M=2.87$). Then the anxiety level with the lowest score in these three important factors is Fear of Negative Evaluation with an average score ($M=2.59$). The results obtained from this study are panic anxiety caused by test anxiety which usually happens when learners are asked to speak English without preparation. The researcher hopes this paper helps teachers to be able to use teaching strategies recommended by experts, and hopefully, it is useful for EFL learners' insight until they can deal with anxiety better.

Keywords: *speaking; anxiety; English as foreign language*

INTRODUCTION

Theoretical Background

Not all learners are good at public speaking, some learners have confidence problems when they speak in front of many people. Some of them choose to avoid that situation, especially in Foreign Language classes, but there are times when they can't avoid it and are forced to speak in public. According to (Raja, 2017), some people feel insecure when they have to speak in public, and they often find themselves experiencing feelings of fear and anxiety.

Foreign language learners tend to think that speaking is a criterion for success in mastering a foreign language. However, anxiety has become a problem for foreign language learners even since the 1900s in conveying messages and establishing communication in their environment (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986).

Speaking is one of the ways to communicate which consists of at least two people, they are the speaker and the listener, and the purpose is to send and receive messages (Jurmasari, Assiddiq, & Mustari, 2021). Speaking using English is also a communication that aims to express opinions and exchange information with others. Communication itself serves to make it easier for the speaker to convey his message (Ahmad, 2016).

In several previous studies, a large number of studies were conducted on speaking skills which suggested that speaking is a most complex ability to learn than other abilities, and this is caused by many factors (Sutarsyah, 2017).

English is not a daily language that is always spoken, at the same time it is rarely heard by learners. Apart from that, learners feel anxious about their daily preparation for learning foreign languages, as they wonder about what other people's responses and reactions are when they speak English, or how interesting the topic of speaking when speaking English in front of other people is their ability to speak in English, and some of these factors make English hard to be learned (Sutarsyah, 2017).

Most lower secondary school learners think that English is a foreign language that is difficult to understand, and speaking skills are not easy to master. It has been stated that feelings of anxiety and nervousness are the basis of problems when learning a foreign language in the ability to speak field (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Learners cannot express their ideas because of the limited vocabulary they know, judging from the language they used in their daily is Indonesian, so they know very little English vocabulary. The vocabulary they know is very little which causes them difficulty in arranging the words used to communicate in English. English lessons are a difficult subject for them, so it is hard for them to understand the material taught in English. Students also feel that they are not very confident when speaking English rather than speaking Indonesian which is the language they use every day. The lack of self-confidence of the students is mostly because they are afraid of making mistakes in the arrangement, structure also good and correct English pronunciation in front of the class. In addition, students do not do exercises in speaking class. Most of the students just memorized all the sentences in the conversation book without knowing the meaning and how to pronounce the sentences correctly. The last is students only learn English in their class. They don't try to learn English from other sources such as reading knowledge books about English, joining an English club, or taking private classes.

In this case, anxiety is very influential in speaking skills, anxiety itself weakens students when speaking English and can obstruct students' performance in getting achievement in class (Mahmoodzadeh, 2012).

Defining Language Anxiety

According to (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986), the definition of FLA (Foreign Language Anxiety) is a form of complex reaction that everyone shows with different reactions according to their self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors caused by someone related to learning English with all its processes.

(MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989) also defined FLA as the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second or foreign language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning, or the worry and negative emotional reaction when learning or using a second or foreign language.

(MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989) believed that a learner's anxiety in learning foreign languages is not anxiety in general. The anxiety experienced by EFL is unique because learning English is not like learning in other classes or other subjects, because English is a foreign language that learners do not know before and do not use in daily life, also the level of difficulty cannot be equated with another lesson.

Factors Contributing to Anxiety

According to Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986), three factors contribute to anxiety speaking of English Learners: 1) Communication Apprehension 2) Fear of Negative Evaluation 3) Test Anxiety.

Communication apprehension is a type of shyness characterized by fear of and anxiety about communicating with people (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989).

Regarding the fear of negative evaluation, as (Young, 1991) argues, "students are more concerned about how or how often their mistakes are corrected rather than whether error correction should be administered in class".

Test anxiety is likewise believed to be one of the most important aspects of negative motivation. It can be defined as an unpleasant feeling or emotional state that has physiological and behavioral concomitants and that is experienced in formal testing or other evaluative situations (Sarason & Sarason, 1990).

METHODS

Type of Research

This research was conducted to determine the level of anxiety of learners in speaking English. In this study, the researcher used non-experimental quantitative methods. This research was designed by the researcher using a survey. Survey is one of the retrieval techniques in quantitative methods conducted by researchers through questions or questionnaires given to respondents (Priyono, 2016)

The researcher chose anxiety as the topic in this study because it is problem that is often experienced when speaking and can happen to anyone. The researcher feels that there are not many previous studies that discuss learner anxiety in middle-level education during language classes, especially in speaking skills. Based on the problems that have been described in the background above, the researcher sets the formulation of the problem as the level of learners' English speaking anxiety

Research Location

This research was conducted at SMPN 3 Sidoarjo. The subjects of this study were grade 9F learners with a total of 31 learners, of which 19 women and 12 men were involved in this study. Participants are from different levels of proficiency, such as high, medium and low levels of English proficiency.

To determine the sample, the researcher used cluster random sampling (Kothari, 1990). Taking samples through this sampling is done based on a certain area or place. The purpose of this sampling is to find out the results of tests conducted to identify the level of anxiety in learners from a cluster.

Data Collection Techniques

The survey conducted in this study used a questionnaire as a data collection instrument. According to (Winarno, 2018) questionnaire is several written questions that are used to obtain information from respondents about something to be studied. In general, questionnaires are used to reveal data that relates to the respondent's data, opinions or other information related to research problems.

The questions adopted (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) were only 11 of the 33 questions. From the total questions, only 11 were taken. Because the researcher only chose the question that related to the case of speaking.

Table 1. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

No	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English class. (<i>Saya tidak pernah merasa yakin pada diri sendiri ketika saya berbicara di kelas Bahasa Inggris saya</i>)					
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class. (<i>Saya gemetar ketika saya tahu bahwa saya akan dipanggil saat kelas Bahasa Inggris</i>).					
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am. (<i>Saya terus berpikir bahwa siswa lain lebih baik dalam Bahasa Inggris daripada saya</i>).					
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class. (<i>Saya mulai panik ketika saya harus berbicara tanpa persiapan di kelas Bahasa Inggris</i>).					
15	In English Class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know. (<i>Di Kelas Bahasa Inggris, saya bisa menjadi sangat gugup sehingga saya lupa hal-hal yang saya tahu</i>).					
16	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class. (<i>Saya merasa malu untuk memberikan jawaban secara sukarela di kelas Bahasa Inggris saya</i>).					
22	I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make. (<i>Saya takut guru Bahasa Inggris saya siap untuk mengoreksi setiap kesalahan yang saya buat</i>).					
23	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in English class. (<i>Saya bisa merasakan jantung saya berdebar ketika saya akan dipanggil saat kelas Bahasa Inggris</i>)					
26	I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do. (<i>Saya selalu merasa bahwa siswa lain berbicara bahasa asing lebih baik daripada saya</i>)					
29	I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes. (<i>Saya merasa lebih tegang dan gugup di kelas Bahasa Inggris saya daripada di kelas saya yang lain</i>)					
33	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English. (<i>Saya takut siswa lain akan menertawakan saya ketika saya berbicara Bahasa Inggris</i>).					

Each item has a value range of 1-5, 1 is indicated for "strongly agree", 2 is indicated for "agree", 3 is indicated for "neither agree nor disagree", 4 is indicated for "disagree" and 5 is indicated for "strongly disagree". This survey is intended for foreign language learners.

Data Analysis Techniques

The researcher chooses Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope's (1986) as an instrument. The techniques of analysis are as follows:

- 1) Using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) questionnaire as an instrument is adapted from (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) and translated into Indonesian.
- 2) Check each statement carefully until no errors and the questionnaire is easy to understand.
- 3) Using Google Forms to collect the data.
- 4) Share the link to 31 learners 9F of SMPN 3 in WhatsApp's group.
- 5) After the data was received from Google Forms, the researcher used SPSS and Microsoft Excel to analyse and calculate the data.
- 6) After the data is collected, the researcher determines the Standard Deviation (SD) and Mean.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Communication Apprehension

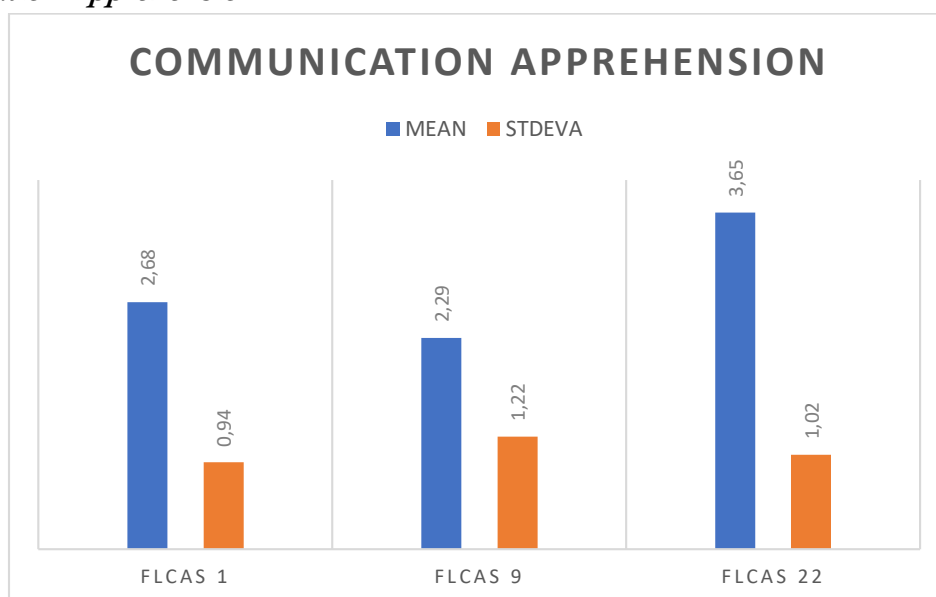
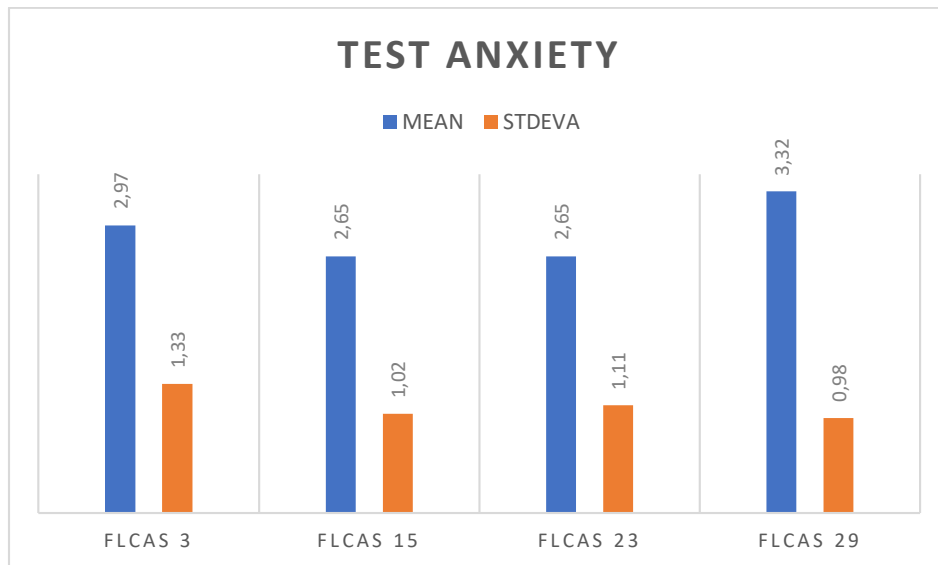
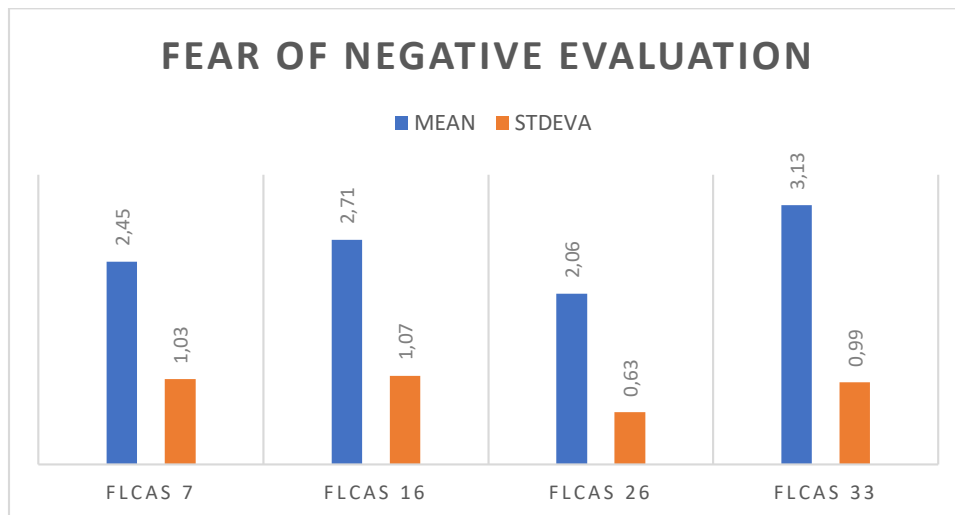


Figure 1. Communication Apprehension Chart

According to the data of the chart above, the result for the highest Communication Apprehension was found on the FLCAS 22 with a mean ($M=3.65$) and standard deviation ($SD=1.02$). This statement is about feeling afraid if their teacher corrects every mistake in front of other classmates, learners prefer if corrected directly by their teacher. Meanwhile, the result for the lowest Communication Apprehension was found on the FLCAS 9 with a mean ($M=2.29$) and standard deviation ($SD=1.22$) and the statement about feeling panic and anxiety if learners were asked to speak English without any preparation.

Test Anxiety**Figure 2.** Test Anxiety Chart

According to the data of the chart above, the result for the highest Test Anxiety was found on the FLCAS 29 about feeling more tense and nervous in English class than in other classes, with a mean ($M=3.32$) and standard deviation ($SD=0.98$). Meanwhile, the result for the lowest Test Anxiety was found on the FLCAS 15 and 23 about feeling very nervous in the language class, until learners forget things they already know, with a mean ($M=2.65$) and standard deviation ($SD=1.02$) for FLCAS 15, feeling of heart pounding when they get called in front of the class with a mean ($M=2.65$) and standard deviation ($SD=1.11$) for FLCAS 23.

Fear of Negative Evaluation**Figure 3.** Fear of Negative Evaluation Chart

According to the data of the chart above, the result for the highest Fear of Negative Evaluation found on the FLCAS 33 about the feeling afraid that the other students will laugh at them when speaking English, with a mean ($M=3.13$) and standard deviation

(SD=0.99). Meanwhile, the result for the lowest Fear of Negative Evaluation was found on the FLCAS 26 about feeling that other learners speak the foreign language better than I do, with a mean ($M=2.06$) and standard deviation ($SD=0.63$).

FLCAS Result

General Findings

In general, the highest factor that causes anxiety in speaking English is FLCAS 22 about feeling afraid if their teacher corrects every mistake in front of other classmates with a mean ($M=3.65$) and standard deviation ($SD=1.02$).

The factor that causes the lowest anxiety in speaking English is caused by feeling that other learners are better at speaking English than the learner itself, with a mean ($M=2.06$) and standard deviation ($SD=0.63$) on FLCAS 26.

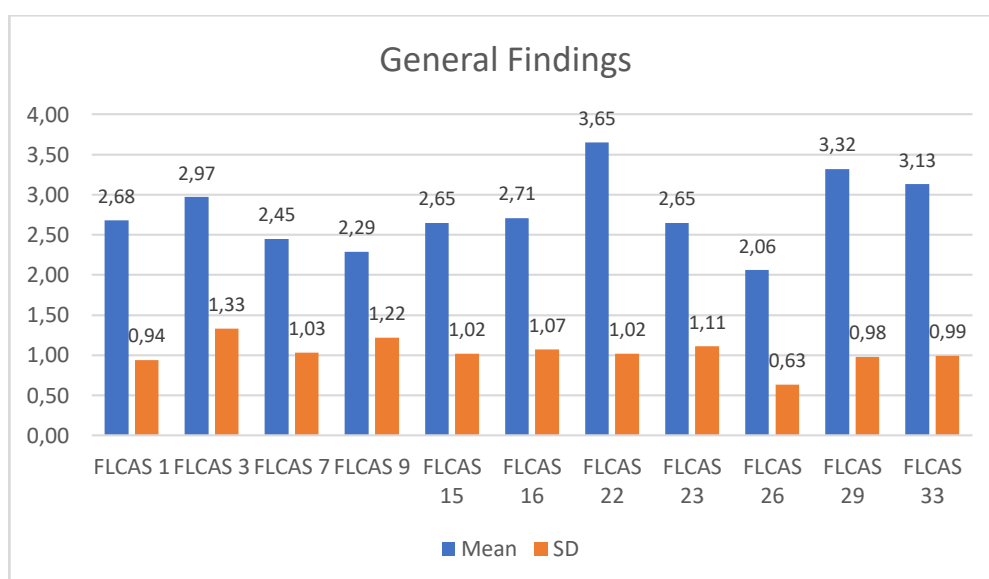


Figure 4. General Finding

Level of Anxiety

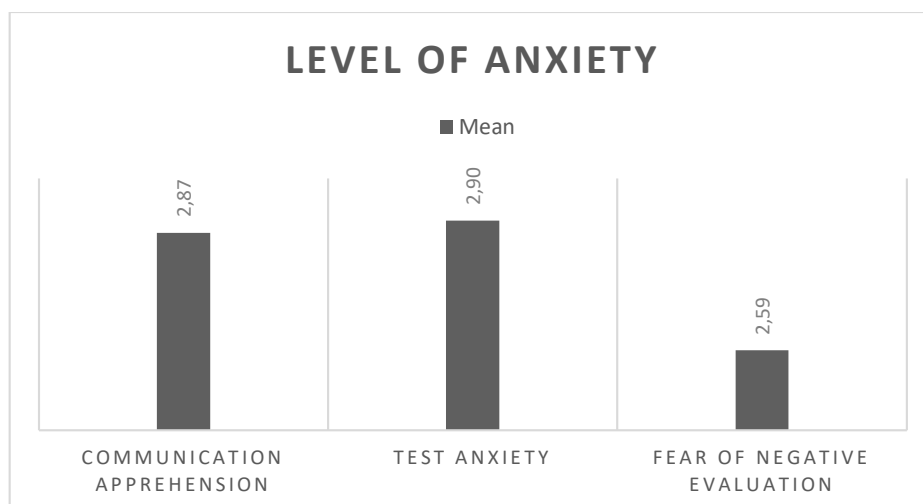


Figure 5. Level of Anxiety

In general, it can be calculated that the anxiety factor most often felt by learners is Test Anxiety with an average value of 2.90. Then after that, the second highest level of anxiety is communication apprehension with an average value of 2.87. And the lowest anxiety level was achieved by Fear of Negative Evaluation with a value of 2.59.

DISCUSSION

The result of the research stated that the biggest factor that causes speaking anxiety in learners is the Test Anxiety factor, where learners feel anxious or panicked and even nervous when asked to speak English without preparation as well as the result of (Asparanita, 2021)'s research that the highest anxiety factor in class XI senior High School Muaro Jambi is an Anxiety Test. The lowest factor from the results of the research above is Fear of Negative Evaluation. Fear of Negative Evaluation can be assumed as a feeling of fear of negative reactions from others when speaking English. Which is the same as the results of (Utomo, 2018)'s research for second-semester students majoring in English Education, in which from the results of the study, Fear of Negative Evaluation is the lowest factor that affects speaking anxiety in English.

CONCLUSION

The factor that often affects learners' anxiety is test anxiety, with the highest average score of ($M=2.90$) which is a feeling of anxiety that comes at a certain time, which causes learners to lose some memory about things they already know. The second highest factor, with an average value of ($M=2.87$), is communication apprehension. It can be found that students' unpreparedness in a foreign language class causes anxiety and self-doubt when speaking a foreign language. And the factor with an average score of ($M=2.59$) being the lowest level of anxiety is fear of negative evaluation. This can be found when learners who speak a foreign language have anxiety or fear of other people's negative reactions.

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