

Foreign Language Anxiety and Its Impacts on Students' Speaking Competency

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Anxiety may either have negative or positive impacts on one's learning process. It is possible that anxiety may deteriorate the quality of learning process by making the learner intellectually and psychologically disturbed. In other cases, anxiety may increase students' learning motivation due to the feeling of pressure. This study aimed to investigate the factors that contribute to students' foreign language anxiety and its impacts on their speaking competency. The participants are university students taking English Conversation Class. Classroom observations were done to evaluate students' speaking performance. Other instruments were Foreign Language Class Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) questionnaire and interviews. The results showed that the students had slightly high anxiety level; and there was an invert relationship between the anxiety level and the speaking scores. Several major factors that cause anxiety among the students have been identified, and it was also seen that anxiety has its most negative impacts on students' communicative and interactive ability.

Keywords: language anxiety, factors causing foreign language anxiety, speaking competence, language learning, foreign language class anxiety scale (FLCAS)

Kecemasan mungkin memiliki dampak yang negatif atau positif pada proses pembelajaran seseorang. Ada kemungkinan bahwa kecemasan dapat menurunkan kualitas proses pembelajaran dengan membuat pelajar terganggu secara intelektual dan psikologis. Dalam situasi lain, kecemasan dapat pula meningkatkan motivasi belajar siswa karena adanya tekanan untuk melakukan yang terbaik. Studi ini bertujuan mengetahui faktor-faktor yang berkontribusi terhadap kecemasan bahasa asing siswa dan dampaknya terhadap kompetensi berbicara mereka. Partisipan studi ini adalah mahasiswa Kelas Percakapan Bahasa Inggris. Observasi kelas juga telah dilakukan untuk mengevaluasi kompetensi berbicara siswa. Instrumen lain yang digunakan berupa kuesioner *Foreign Language Class Anxiety Scale* (FLCAS) dan wawancara. Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa siswa memiliki tingkat kecemasan yang sedikit tinggi; dan ada hubungan terbalik antara tingkat kecemasan dan kompetensi berbicara. Beberapa faktor utama yang menyebabkan kecemasan di kalangan mahasiswa telah diidentifikasi, dan hasil studi juga memperlihatkan bahwa seringkali kecemasan memiliki dampak negatif terhadap kompetensi komunikatif dan interaktif siswa.

Kata kunci: kecemasan bahasa, faktor penyebab kecemasan berbahasa asing, kompetensi berbicara, pembelajaran bahasa, *foreign language class anxiety scale* (FLCAS)

It is part of a language learning process that at some point, learners experience anxiety. E. K. Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope (1986, p. 128) 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."

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This experience of anxiety is most likely to determine the academic performance of students inside the classroom.

In 1992, Phillips stated (cited in Shams, 2006, p. 8) that anxiety is "a complex, multi-faceted construct," and thus, anxiety may either have its debilitating or facilitative effects, depending on the students' situations. Facilitating anxiety triggers the learner to "fight" in performing the provided task; it pushes the learners to be more motivated and determined in learning. Debilitating anxiety, in contrast, impels the learner to "flee" from the given task, sti-