

Exploring Fear of Negative Evaluation in Foreign Language Anxiety: Photovoice of Undergraduates in Speaking Class

Alif Viana Furry Agata, Anindyastuti Wardhani, Fanisa Amanda Putri, Nur Arifah Drajadi*

University of Sebelas Maret

Email : *anindyastutii@gmail.com

Abstract. Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) is a common situation happens in EFL classroom. This phenomenon usually causes the students' anxiety while they are learning English. The previous study proved that language learners performed significantly better on oral foreign language if they were in less anxious situations. Students' unwillingness for participating speaking activities in the classroom caused by their assumption of being judged negatively and lack of mastering the speaking skill. The objective of this research is to explore whether there is foreign language anxiety problem among Indonesian undergraduates in speaking class. The researchers collected and processed the data using Photovoice. The participants of this research were 14 undergraduate students in the 5th semester. The findings indicated that the students have anxiety during performing speaking activity in classroom. As the implication, teachers can facilitate the students by creating a conducive, comfortable, and non-threatening class to help alleviating the students' foreign language anxiety.

Keyword: *anxiety, photovoice, speaking skill.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) is common condition which occurs in English as a foreign language classroom. The FLA concept is considered to be associated with an individual's affective filter who concentrated on the second language (L2) acquisition process (Krashen, 1982). Krashen (1985) claimed that comprehensible input and a state of the affective filter that allows the input lead to L2 acquisition. This filter is usually activated by various psychological affective variables such as motivation, attitudes, self-confidence, and anxiety (Krashen 1981).

In the context of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research over the past few decades, the effect of FLA on students language acquisition and performance has been studied extensively in which most negative effects being released (Gregersen, 2003; Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012; Horwitz, 2001; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). As one of the

broad psychological emotions, understanding anxiety is said to be an initial requirement to provide the support needed for anxious second language learners (Zheng, 2008). An apprehension of language anxiety in the different contextual situation serves a principle for the further yet measured research of Indonesian English learners. In Indonesia, foreign language anxiety specifically the fear of negative evaluation in higher education, have not been investigated by any researcher. The previous study only focused on foreign language anxiety in general (Asnur, 2013; Weda, 2018). To address the research gap, this study conducted a qualitative study in order to explore and understand the students' anxiety, specifically fear of negative evaluation, in speaking class. The research question guided this study is:

How is the students' perspective of the fear of negative evaluation in speaking

class?

Foreign language anxiety is a common situation which is not just occurred in the English language classroom (Kondo, 2005; Sila, 2010). MacIntyre (1998) found that language anxiety is such kind of tentative nervousness, and underlined that research on the topic should utilize the measurement of anxiety found in particular second language (L2) contexts, e.g., in classroom settings. He figured the language anxiety as the worry and negative emotional reaction stimulated when learning or using a second language (p. 27). Horwitz (1986) also stated that situation-specific anxiety set off by learning or using a foreign language was widely independent of other situation-specific anxieties. Foreign language anxiety is status-specific anxiety coming from the attribute of formal learning of foreign language, specifically in low self-assessment of communicative skills in the target language (Rodríguez & Abreu, 2003).

Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) felt that since anxiety can have a significant negative impact on the learning of a foreign language, teachers have to be able to determine particularly anxious learners in the foreign language class. They defined Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviours related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128). By “distinct” they meant that it was a specific type of state anxiety (rather than trait anxiety). Foreign language learners who experience FLCA have the trait of feeling state anxiety when participating in language learning and/or using it (Horwitz, 2017, p. 68). Meanwhile, in an overview of foreign language anxiety research, Dewaele (2017) argued that the effects of various psychological variables on levels of FLA/FLCA are not constant but dynamic

and often language specific (p. 444).

Yoshida (2010) stated that students mostly enter the foreign language classroom with anxiety. Whilst, Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009) found that students who experience anxiety in the classroom were unwilling to take a role in speaking activities because they had an assumption of being not good when speaking and would be evaluated negatively by their classmates. In fact, speaking is one of the most important language skills because individuals who learn a language are referred to as the speaker of that language (Ur, 1996). Brown (1994) and Burns and Joyce (1997) defined speaking as an interactive process of making meaning that includes constructing, gaining, and proceeding information of making meaning. Speaking skill in both first or second language is deserving concentration because the success of each student is rated depending on the students' capability to make communication in the language (Nunan, 1995).

Another research has supported the idea that students can experience various levels of anxiety in different classroom contexts — for example, Kim (2009) found that students in an FL conversation class experienced higher levels of anxiety rather than the students in an FL reading class. Specifically, Matsuda and Gobel (2004) found that “confident learners experience low anxiety and feel that they have the ability to do well, whereas less confident learners claim higher anxiety and feel that they lack the ability to perform well.” Many students who experience FL anxiety display a wide range of negative behaviours and symptoms. For example, such students may avoid class and homework assignments, as well as avoid direct eye contact with their teachers (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope 1986; Phillips 1991). Additionally, Kruk's (2018) current investigation showed that language anxiety

changes not only over a longer period but also during a single class and from one language lesson to another.

Horwitz et al. (1991) in Toyama and Kamazaki (2018) described FLA as an individual elaboration of perceptions, insights, apprehensions, faiths, and actions that appears as a phenomenon in a class where someone masters and utilizes foreign languages. To measure FLA in classrooms, Horwitz et al. (1986) constructed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) consists of three performance anxieties, they are communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension described as the scare of participating in a communicative activity with the others. Some cases of communication apprehension cover the students' difficulty not only in speaking in pairs, in groups, or in public but also in listening to or learning the spoken messages (Horwitz et al. 1986). When a person has the difficulty in speaking or listening to foreign language, their communication apprehension will be increased (Horwitz et al. 1986). Test anxiety actualizes because of a fear of oversight. It causes the students to concern about and feel depressed by foreign language tests because foreign language classes often give students tests or quizzes. This can make the students with test anxiety experienced many performance troubles (Horwitz et al. 1986). While the ideas of test anxiety include the objective assessment, fear of negative evaluation prioritizes the perception about others evaluations or outlooks (Horwitz et al. 1986). This third construct has a broader scope in connection with social evaluation situations such as interviews, oral presentations, or speaking contests (Horwitz et al. 1986). Thus, the fear of negative evaluation is not constrained to test-taking situations in classrooms

(Horwitz et al. 1986). The person who has a strong fear of negative evaluation may be very sensitive to the views of others in the classroom such as teachers, native speakers, fluent L2 speakers, and peers (Horwitz et al. 1986).

The essential point of the third construct of FLCAS concerns on the individuals' perception of others' negative evaluations. In further detail, rather than an immediate psychological response to interactive situations like a feeling of shyness, this construct is thought to involve a person considering or conceiving that others will evaluate him or her badly as a result of a projection or an unstable psychological condition such as moodiness or neuroticism (Toyama and Yamazaki, 2018).

II. METHOD

In this study, we use photovoice as a tool to gather and analyze the data on exploring the issues of foreign language anxiety among Indonesian undergraduate students in speaking class. Photovoice can be defined as a participatory action research strategy based on educational theories and health principles to contribute to social issues and community change (C.Wang & M.A. Burris, 1997). Likewise, photovoice refers to qualitative research which utilizes storytelling of the photograph that has been gathered. Strack, Magill, and McDonagh (2004) state that participants in the photovoice process learn how to use cameras and are asked to capture some photographs regarding weaknesses and strength in the society. Photovoice allows people to utilize the camera as a tool to take photographs in social life. It also helps the teacher to figure out of what is really happening in the teaching and learning process through photographs.

While conducting this study, the

researchers doing several stages to achieve the objective of this study. The researchers utilize document analysis, observation, and interview. The first thing that the researchers do is doing the observation relating to the classroom conditions. Next, the researchers continue the activities to utilize photovoice technique by taking some photographs. There are several criteria of the photo, they are: (a) the photos should have the permissions of the partners who become the object, (b) the photos should be taken in the classroom, (c) the photos should show that there are public speaking activities in the classroom, and (d) the photos should represent the students' feeling, specifically the feeling on fear of negative evaluation. After some photographs have already been taken, the researchers conducting the interview. The interview includes 9 indicators of fear of negative evaluation provided by Horwitz (1986).

The participants of this study were 14 university students of English Education Department in the speaking course; consisting of four males and ten females in the age between 19-21 years old. They were preparing their speech material before the course. The researchers asked the participants to represent their point of view towards the material that they have delivered in front of the class. In showing their opinion, participants were guided by using SHOWeD which is the acronym of six questions that can guide to the results of the study:

- S : What do you see here?
- H : What is really happening here?
- O : How does this relate to our lives?
- W : Why this situation exist?
- E : How could this image educate the community?
- D : What can we do about it?

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

The third construct of fear of negative evaluation considered to be associated with Indonesian EFL situations. It shows the similarity with test anxiety; but, it differs in a broader context from social to evaluative situations like speaking in front of the class. It is related to students' assumption that they will fail to achieve the social impression. In the foreign language classroom, students experience fear of negative evaluation to avoid participation in such activities like giving a speech that requires them to be judged.

The findings present the data analysis that gathered under this research. This research is conducted to explore the students' perspective towards fear of negative evaluation in the public speaking classroom. The researchers found that students experienced the foreign language anxiety, specifically the fear of negative evaluation, in the public speaking classroom.

The public speaking class was being held in a series of activities. First, the students were deciding the topic of the speech. The second, they were creating the outline of the speech then followed by creating and revising the draft. Third, the lecturer was explaining the requirements and examples of good public speaking. The next activity was the students were doing the rehearsal twice. After they rehearsed, the lecturer corrected and provided feedback to make them better in the test. The last activity was the students were doing the real public speaking test. Before the students did the test, they were given time for the preparation in one week. The preparation included some aspects to be scored, such as fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, and intonation. The students did the test in a random turn.

All of the pictures were taken when the students did the test of public speaking.

The audience of the public speaking test was the lecturer and the other students. This test was held in two sessions in the different days. At the end of the test, the lecturer gave the feedback of the test to improve the students' performance. The researchers found that there were some students experiencing foreign language classroom anxiety. It was proven by the fact that there were some students who were asked to create a video of their speech because when they were doing the public speaking test in the class, they were too focused on their notes and stopped for a

minute in the middle of their speech. The video was used as the remedial test in order to cover the students' insufficient score.

Figure 1 shows that the public speaking test is held in front of the classroom as one-way communication. Actually, in this test, it is better for the students to not bring their notes while giving the speech. Student A (see figure 1) brings the notes containing the draft of her speech. Meanwhile, figure 2 shows that Student B (see figure 2) tries to remember her speech in order to avoid the negative evaluation from the lecturer.

Fig 1. Student A does the public speaking test.

S : What do you SEE here?

I deliver my speech and look at my notes.

H : What is really HAPPENING here?

I try to recall my memories about the sentences that I should say.

O : How does this relates to OUR lives?

It is important for us to give extra efforts in preparing everything so that we will not be nervous and anxious when delivering the speech.

W : WHY this situation exist?

I look at my notes because I am lack of preparation. Also, the situation is beyond my expectation which the other performers make it more competitive and it creates a higher pressure for me.

E : How could this image EDUCATE the community?

For the students, do the preparation. It is important to memorize the content of the speech and improve the self-confidence.

D : What can we DO about it?

Be prepared for every evaluation that will be gotten to improve the speaking skill.

Be ready for improvisation if you stop at the middle of your speech and just be relax.



Credit: Student A

According to the observation of student A, she started the speech with shaky hands and quivering sound. While she was doing the speech, she often looked at her notes. This behaviour showed in few times. In addition, based on the interview held after student A had done the speech, she admitted that she often looked at her notes because of avoiding the eye contact with the lecturer. She also said that she was a little bit forgot the part of her speech and decided to look at her notes rather than stop in a long time.

The other evidence gained from the interview was the student A confessed that she felt anxious even though she had been

prepared for the test. Moreover, in the foreign language class, she stated that she could get nervous when she forgot the things she knew. The other things she experienced in public speaking class were the fear of other students who would laugh at her when she spoke the foreign language and the fear of misunderstood about lecturer's corrective feedback for her performance. There was the fact that she felt if the class moved so quickly then she worried about getting left behind. Based on the data above, there was a fear of negative evaluation detected in the public speaking class.

Fig 2. Student B does the public speaking test.

S : What do you SEE here?

What I see is myself performing a speech in front of the class.

H : What is really HAPPENING here?

I was nervous while performing the speech.

O : How does this relate to OUR lives?

I think, sometimes a person will nervous when he/she performs something in front of many people.

W : WHY this situation exist?

Because people get anxiety.

E : How could this image EDUCATE the community?

Make people avoid anxiety because it will make people nervous.

D : What can we DO about it?

We can create a situation that is free from anxiety.



Based on the observation of student B during a public speaking test, she often looked to any side of the class indicating that she was nervous and confused. This behaviour occurred several times during her speech. Furthermore, based on the interview that we conducted after student

B had done the speech, she confirmed that she was feeling nervous during her speech and looking around the class to memorize what sentence that she would deliver next. She was having anxiety especially at speaking class, therefore, she decided not to

make eye contact with the lecturer with a hope it would release her anxiety.

The further information that we got from the interview, student B stated that she was still feeling anxious even when she had prepared well before the test. She said that when she performed in front of many people, she would get really nervous and anxious. Additionally, she felt more anxious in the foreign language class especially when she made mistakes. She was afraid that the other students would mock, criticize, and even laugh at her when she spoke the foreign language. According to the data above, there was a fear of negative evaluation indicated in the public speaking classroom.

3.2. Discussion

The findings of the research show that there is a fear of negative evaluation during the public speaking class. The factors influencing the fear of negative evaluation according to the data collection are the audience of speaking activity, lack of preparation, and lecturer's negative evaluation possibility. The relation between indicators as stated in Horwitz's instruments (1986) and the result of interview confirms the emerging of fear of negative evaluation in the public speaking classroom.

Another factor of the fear of negative evaluation in the speaking class gained from the finding is students' minimum self-confidence. Students who are lack of self-confidence confessed that they experience the speaking anxiety, specifically because of the fear of negative evaluation. This is in line with Matsuda and Gobel (2004) who found that "confident learners experience low anxiety and feel that they have the ability to do well, whereas less confident learners claim higher anxiety and feel that they lack the ability to perform well."

The symptoms of language anxiety arise in the public speaking class and this

relates MacIntyre (1998) statement that language anxiety shows the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language (p. 27).

The other theory from Horwitz (1986) suits the classroom's situation, the first is the students feared when they know that they are going to be called in the speaking class. The result of the interview reveals that most of the students experienced this kind of fear. The second point is it embarrasses the students to volunteer answers in their language class. The observation and the interview results show the evidence of this situation. Only a half from the total of students were voluntarily presenting the draft and rehearsing their speech. Thus, the students with speaking anxiety will avoid classroom interaction which refers to the draft of speech presentation and speech rehearsal. Third, students get upset when they do not understand what the teacher is correcting. The corrective feedback from the teacher was given after every performance, both rehearsal and the real test. Students claim that sometimes misunderstanding happened when the lecturer give feedback. It is horrifying and embarrassing for students because they cannot revise the mistakes for better performance. Fourth, students always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than they do. Only some student who agree with this point and the students are the ones who lack self-confidence. This is covered in Matsuda and Gobel (2004) who found that less confident learners experienced higher anxiety and feel that they lack the ability to perform well. Fifth, students think that language class moves so quickly and they worry about getting left behind. Most of the students approve that they feel about this point. The sixth, students are afraid that other students will laugh at them when they speak the foreign language. In the

English public speaking context, the students claim that they have this kind of fear. Seventh, students get nervous when the lecturer asks questions which they have not prepared in advance. Students in further mentioned that this situation happened because they are lack of improvisation skill and feeling the high-nervousness which lead them into answering the lecturer's question incorrectly. Also, their assumption of being evaluated negatively by lecturer and the other students when delivering the wrong answer because of the advanced question is being one of the sources of nervousness in the public speaking class. The ninth, students can feel their heart pounding when they are going to be called on in a language class. This kind of anxiety cannot be seen physically but the students reveal that this situation happened when the lecturer was preparing for calling the students in turn.

The dominance of students' embarrassment of being volunteer in answering the lecturer's questions and students' nervousness of being called in public speaking class is in line with Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009) who stated that anxious students in the classroom were avoiding the speaking activities participation because they believe that they have not mastered the speaking skills and were being reared of negative evaluation from their classmates.

IV. CONCLUSION

According to the results and discussion of this research, the fear of negative evaluation is experienced by the students in public speaking class. The fear of negative evaluation can be caused by the lack of preparation before performing the speech, the tense from the audiences, and the possible negative evaluation from the teacher. The main causes of these

difficulties arise due to the lack of practising speaking skills especially in different social contexts and the lack of practising English language usage inside or outside the classroom. Moreover, this fact cannot be avoided that they feel anxious communicatively due to the fear of negative evaluation that affect the image or self-identity they have formed in their L1 language.

This study indicates the importance of the teacher's role in conducting the conducive classroom situation. The classroom situation will affect the students' performances, both the students and teacher take the role in conditioning the classroom atmosphere. The teacher can keep fostering and motivating students to speak English well in the class. In addition, the teacher should be more aware of students' anxiety and unwillingness to participate in the foreign language class. A classroom where there are free from anxiety will make the students more comfortable, thus, it will be resulting in the students' performance during the speaking class. They can be more relax and less anxious in performing in a foreign language speaking classroom.

The limitation of this study is formulated in two aspects. The first relates the representation of the findings is considerate because it is only 14 students of a public speaking class who participated in this study. The second concerns in the teacher's perspective of the study. Since that the main object of the observation and the interviewee of this study were not involving the lecturer, the findings may represent the students' viewpoint only. It will be more comprehensive if the lecturer takes place in the data collection process.

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