

## Contribution of Adversity Quotient, Anxiety, and Achievement Motivation toward Students' Speaking Competency

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the contribution of adversity quotient, anxiety, and achievement motivation towards students' speaking competency. The study involved three independent variables namely adversity quotient, anxiety, and achievement motivation and one dependent variable namely students' speaking competency. The design of this research was a correlational research with regression technique. The population was 146 students and the size of the sample was determined by using Kretjie and Morgan formulas. The findings revealed that the contribution of adversity quotient towards students' speaking competency was 6.94% while anxiety contributed to students' speaking competency by 26.90% and 33.71% for the contribution of achievement motivation towards students' speaking competency. The total contribution of the three independent variables towards the dependent variable was 67.55%. The degree of contribution proved that adversity quotient, anxiety, and achievement motivation contributed positively to the speaking competency of students of English Education Department.

Key words: adversity quotient, anxiety, achievement motivation, students' speaking competency.

### 1. Introduction

Indonesian School-based Curriculum has now contained elaborated and more sophisticated materials for EFL. It requires students to be able to communicate in English both passively and actively. Active communication includes speaking and writing (both spoken and written communication) while passive communication consists of listening and reading. Since the curriculum requires the mastery of all the four language skills, teachers should be able to determine appropriate methods for encouraging students to learn the four skills in English. The appropriate methods and techniques should enhance students' cognitive development, as well as their affective factors that may fully, partially, or vitally contribute to the success of their English language learning.

Speaking has become the most observable skill and it can be considered as an indicator for success of someone's learning a language, particularly English. A student's

ability to speak can be obviously judged when he/she is participating actively in the classroom interactions. In other words, how well a student participates in speaking class indicates how proficient she/he is in the target language. Generally, less motivated students are unconfident to speak in the speaking classes, and, in contrary, high-achieving students tend to be more confident, and therefore, have more chance to speak. As far as confidence to speak is concerned, a number of determining factors have been found such as those including external and internal factors. External factors may include teachers' teaching strategies, students' learning experiences, and environment while internal factors mostly refer to aspects such as students' motivation, anxiety and some other psychological states.

Recent research either by students undertaking bachelor degree program or postgraduate program such as Sugiartawan (2010) revealed that speaking skill has become a major concern as well as main hindrance for students in learning English since they are commonly reluctant to speak. It may be that they feel very anxious to speak or they do not know how to express the idea into words since they lack of motivation. This concludes that cognitive factors are not the only causes for students' reluctance or enthusiasm, but also the affective factors such as motivation, anxiety and stress.

Heckhausen et al. (2008) stated that one affective factor in learning English is motivation. There are several types of motivation, and one of them is proposed by Krashen (1996) that motivation can be *instrumental* and *integrative*. Instrumental means that students are motivated to study English because they want to gain more knowledge that contribute to their success in life, for example, passing a final test. Integrative motivation is triggered from the fact that the society around the students is English-speaking society. Therefore, students are eager to learn English because they want to be accepted in the society. For Indonesian students, the curriculum has determined that English which is applied as a subject matter in schools is English as a Foreign Language. It means that students are instrumentally motivated because the purpose of EFL is to obtain knowledge. Of this, Heckhausen, et.al. (2008) proposed different types of motivation: inner and outer motivation. Inner or internal motivation comes up from individual to reach goal while external motivation comes up from the situation or environment. This type of motivation occurs in every student either negatively or positively. Whether the goal is instrumental or integrative, internal and external motivations always exist. This is called motivation to achieve some goals in learning, and particularly in this case, achievement motivation in learning English.

Sometimes students are motivated in a particular circumstance but they are less motivated in different circumstances. There are some factors that influence this, for example difficulties of the tests or the subject matters. In dealing with difficulties, students have to maintain their adversity quotient, or their ability to endure, overcome, and reconstruct difficulties in learning. Recent research such as Basmantra (2010) investigated that students' motivation is influenced by fear that develops into reluctance. This fear is caused by high anxiety. Krashen (1996) stated that anxiety is essential in learning and it has to be present in proper percentage. As soon as anxiety is above its proper portion, the affective filter is increased, and learning will not occur.

Basmantra (2010) conducted research on how far anxiety influences writing competency of SMA students. In his research, he utilized performance assessment to assess students' pieces of writing. However, his variables did not step further to how far anxiety affects students' motivation and their ability to overcome their fear (adversity quotient). A recent research was also conducted by Mawa (2009) regarding how adversity quotient affects students' ability in studying Math. However, skills gained by studying math is different from what is expected by studying English, and the type of fear, motivation, and adversity quotient could also be different. English is a language subject which requires language active performance, but math would mostly require passive performance.

Inspired by the existence of interrelations amongst achievement motivation, anxiety and ability to endure difficulties (adversity quotient), further research is considered important to be conducted regarding to students' speaking competency. As previously mentioned, motivation can be triggered from outside and inside an individual student. Consequently, both should be measured in order to find out the actual level of motivation. In addition to motivation, a student may also have a certain level of anxiety at the same time. However, when he/she can endure in such anxiety by becoming fixed in his/her unflinching motivation, his/her success could be achieved. According to Basmantra (2010) when student has high motivation and low anxiety, his/her success is guaranteed in that scope, but if he/she cannot bear responsibility as a human being who can at any time commit mistakes, the probability for him/her to fail is greater. So, amongst motivation, anxiety and adversity quotient, there is an affective silver line that may affect greatly to students' success in learning English at school regardless of his/her cognitive capability.

This research aims to measure how far the above mentioned affective factors affect students' speaking competency. Those three factors, namely achievement motivation,

adversity quotient and anxiety have been studied by previous researchers such as Mawa (2008) and Basmantra (2010) in other field such as English writing, math and physics. In other cases, those three factors have rarely been studied and measured altogether on the scope of their combined and respective contributions towards students' participation in speaking. Basmantra (2010) suggested that anxiety is a highly determining factor that influences students' performance in writing. However, speaking is a different skill that requires interfacial and live interactions which is totally different from writing. Speaking needs more courage, self-confidence and ability to endure any possible live reactions from the audience. Therefore, the study on how adversity quotient, achievement motivation and anxiety together affect students' speaking competency is necessary and worthy to be conducted.

## 2. Method of Study

This research was conducted towards students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> semester of English Education Department, at Ganesha University of Education, Singaraja. Students in semester 3 were selected as samples because they were actually expected to master better English since they have been adjusting to English lessons and conversations with the lecturers for two years. Besides, students in semester 3 are practically trained for speaking classes in the whole semester. Therefore, they are meeting suitable criteria for this research to be objected to them. If students from other semesters had been selected, they have not been enrolled in speaking classes. It means that they do not have special and formal classes (or chances) in which their motivation, adversity quotient, and anxiety could be actively sustained and measured.

This research is an *ex-post facto* research with correlational design and regression technique. It aims to investigate the contribution of adversity quotient, anxiety and achievement motivation towards students' speaking competency. Population of this research was the fourth semester students of English Education Department of the Ganesha University of Education, Singaraja, Bali. While the sample of this research was determined by using table of Kretjie and Morgan (1970) and 106 students were decided as sample of this research.

In collecting the data, there were three questionnaires and one test employed. Questionnaires were administered to obtain the data for adversity quotient, anxiety, and achievement motivation and the test was conducted to collect the data of students' speaking competency. Before the instruments were used to collect the data, the process of validation

and reliability test were conducted. After validation process and reliability test of the instruments have been done, they were used to collect data intended in this research.

The data collected should be grouped into interval data before used for further analyses. The way of putting them into interval was by using Sturges' rule. After the data were grouped, they also cannot be further analyzed by using regression unless they were tested first. The test of data was called pre-requisite test of data. It included normality test, linearity test, multicollinearity test, autocorrelation test and heteroscedasticity test.

### 3. Review of Related Literature

According to Stoltz (2000), adversity quotient is an ability to overcome difficulties encountered by someone. The degree of how somebody is able to overcome such difficulty and change it into opportunity is divided into three levels, *quitters*, *climbers* and *campers*. Actually, everyone has a chance to develop Adversity Quotient as well as to increase existing adversity quotient within oneself. However, this study does not focus on how someone can develop adversity quotient. Instead, this study is only measuring the existing adversity quotient and testing it whether it has a positive and significant contribution towards speaking competency.

Speaking competence is the ability to communicate orally in clear, coherent, and persuasive language appropriate to purpose, occasion, and audience. Speaking competence is therefore called also the ability to perform oral communication (Harmer, 2001). Moreover, speaking competency is a kind of productive skill which needs an ability of interpersonal relationship. Many people are afraid to speak in front of other people and many others are very confident. This is because they have different level of adversity quotient,—ability to control oneself to get out from difficult situation and change it into success. In speaking also, the role of adversity quotient could enable one to develop confidence because adversity quotient does include how one could overcome stress and raise up to do better. Considering the theory of adversity quotient, if one's adversity quotient is high, it can contribute significantly and positively to someone's success in any kind of work one may perform.

Anxiety is based on three components: cognitive, affective and behavioral. Students who experience test anxiety from the cognitive perspective are worried of lacking of self-confidence. They may be preoccupied with negative thoughts, doubting their academic ability and intellectual competence (Sarason, 1990). Anxiety actually plays important role in determining someone's mastery in language. He defined low and high anxiety with relation to

motivation. If someone becomes anxious at a certain level, he has an opportunity to perform better, while if the anxiety is too high, he/she will be reluctant to learn anything because he/she might consider it too difficult or demanding.

Therefore, the level of anxiety must be always proportional for anybody, especially those who are learning languages. If the anxiety is too low, they will not perform better because there will not be any challenges for them to learn better. In relation to speaking competency, the existence of anxiety is needed and, at a certain level, anxiety can stimulate further and better performances of speaking.

Anxiety is based on three components: cognitive, affective and behavioral. People with achievement motivation will always try to increase their competence (Heckhausen and Heckhausen, 2008). Someone's motivation is tightly related to anxiety. Anxiety is somewhat useful for better performance. In speaking competence, the presence of motivation can trigger the willingness and the effort of the students to achieve more in speaking performances. If they are motivated, there will be self confidence, willingness to try better and self dignity which will influence their speaking ability.

When someone is motivated, he will try the best to achieve more. In order for someone to become motivated, he firstly must have anxiety at a certain level. In other words, the safety zone of someone's being equilibrium must be disturbed by anxiety. Anxiety will make the mind disequilibrium so that someone may try for his best to balance the mind and thus return to his safety condition of unstressed mind. In this process, motivation is the key to balance the situation.

When somebody becomes disequilibrium or lack of stability or imbalance or feel something that needs to be finished, because of the anxiety created by the environment, motivation emerges. Therefore, there is also a significant relationship between motivation and anxiety which thus influences the ability to perform better. In this way, someone who wants to be motivated must be firstly disequalized by anxiety. Anxiety in the form of willingness to be better will trigger someone's being a better achiever.

If someone becomes anxious, it depends on him/her whether he/she will trigger a positive change or do nothing. The decision someone will take depends on how good his/her adversity quotient is. Adversity quotient enables someone to see negative things happening around him/her as changes to become better. Therefore, there is a relation between adversity quotient and anxiety. If the adversity quotient is high and strong, the anxiety can turn into

self-motivation to achieve better results. However, if the adversity quotient is low, anxiety could turn into reluctance and there will not be motivation.

Speaking competence needs these three factors for it to become better. Adversity quotient will enable a speaking performer to see opportunities behind any failure and thus become motivated. Failure brings anxiety but if a performer can turn the anxiety by the assistance of his/her adversity quotient, there will be motivation and he/she can perform better.

#### **4. Findings**

In this research, all data could be used for regression analysis. In regression analysis, the hypotheses were tested. The first to the third hypotheses were tested by using simple regression, while the fourth hypothesis was tested by using multiple regressions. From the hypotheses testing, it was found that adversity quotient contributed 6.94% to the students' speaking competency, while anxiety contributed 26.9% towards students' speaking competency and achievement motivation contributed 33.71% towards students' speaking competency. When they were put together, the contribution of adversity quotient, anxiety and achievement motivation toward students' speaking competency was 67.55%. When the contribution of independent variables to dependent variable was seen separately, the highest contribution contributed by achievement motivation and the second position was anxiety and the last was by adversity quotient.

From the elaboration, all hypotheses were received and proved by data analysis. It means that adversity quotient, anxiety, achievement motivation could be used in this model regression and also become factor attached in students' speaking competency.

Based on the result of data analysis, some conclusions can be stated as follows:

1. There is contribution of adversity quotient towards students' speaking competency.
2. There is contribution of anxiety towards students' speaking competency.
3. There is contribution of achievement motivation towards students' speaking competency.
4. There is contribution of adversity quotient, anxiety, and achievement motivation toward students' speaking competency.

The result of this research shows that the variables under investigation especially dependent variables which stand as predictor could be determined as factors influencing students' speaking competency.

Based on data analysis of this research, it was found that adversity quotient contributed only 6.94% toward students' speaking competency. Although the contribution was not that higher, it still could be used as factor influencing students' speaking competency. Like what has been stated by Stotlz (2000) that adversity quotient is one's ability to endure obstacles or problem to reach his or her success, it implies that adversity quotient has something to do with psychological state. This psychological state plays an important role to someone's success. It means that to be successful students, they have to manage and develop his or her adversity quotient. Enduring the problem is one of adversity quotient characteristics. If students were given a test or challenges by his or her lecturer, those who have manage adversity quotient will take that challenge or test and turn it into opportunities to reach the success in learning because they endure the problem for their success.

## **5. Discussion**

Since this research dealt with psychological condition of students, the implication of this research was in the learners themselves since the learners have their own motivation, anxiety, and adversity in learning. As a result of data analysis in this research, anxiety contributes 26.9% toward students speaking competency. In comparison with other variable (adversity quotient), anxiety contributed more. The contribution of anxiety toward speaking competency is higher because the learners themselves felt anxious. Krashen (1996) stated that anxiety plays important role in someone's mastery in language. He also defined that low and high anxiety with relation to motivation. If someone feels anxious at certain level, he or she has chance to make or perform something better, while if the anxiety is too high, she or he will be unwilling to learn something or demanding and the thing to be learned is considered as difficult thing.

Therefore, anxiety should not be too high and should not be low in any learning environment. A proportional level of anxiety is needed by the learner of language. In relation to speaking competency, a certain level of anxiety can help the learner to stimulate better performances of speaking. Therefore, anxiety actually gives strong implication to students who learn language especially in speaking.

According to the research result, one more important factor contributes to students' speaking competency is achievement motivation. It is closely related to the students' psychological condition, because the students themselves are in the area of academic. In

academic area, the competition is very tight; this competition will trigger students' motivation to perform better. Based on this assumption, achievement motivation is believed to be an important factor in learning language especially in speaking. Based on the result of this research, achievement motivation contributes 33.71%. Compared to the other variables involved in this research, its contribution is concluded as the highest contribution. Based on that assumption, it can be seen that achievement motivation gives strong implication towards speaking competency. In relation to this, someone's motivation is tightly related to anxiety. Krashen (1996) stated that anxiety is somewhat useful for better performance. In speaking competency, the presence of motivation can stimulate the effort of students to perform better and achieve more in speaking competency.

When someone feels motivated, he or she will do great effort to achieve more. In order for someone to become motivated, he or she firstly must have a balancing anxiety in certain level. Sometimes, someone feels reluctant to do something because she or he is in safety zone, this safety zone will be disturbed by anxiety, and the anxiety will trigger someone to do something. In doing something, people especially in academic field will feel that the competition is very high. Then, in this phase the achievement motivation present.

Finally, based on the discussion above, students' speaking competency needs those three factors (adversity quotient, anxiety, and achievement motivation). Adversity quotient can bring someone to see any opportunity behind the obstacles and problems and thus become motivated. Failure may bring anxiety but if performer can turn the anxiety by the assistance of adversity quotient, they will be motivated to speak better.

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