

LANGUAGE ANXIETY, STRATEGY COPING, AND STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh interaksi antara tingkat kecemasan berbahasa asing siswa dan frekwensi penggunaan strategi untuk mengatasi kecemasan berbahasa asing terhadap nilai siswa. Sampel pada penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas tiga SMA Negeri 1 Pringsewu yang dipilih secara acak. Metode pengumpulan data pada penelitian kali ini adalah metode survei yang kemudian dianalisis menggunakan *Univariate-ANOVA*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tidak ada perbedaan yang signifikan terhadap nilai siswa berdasarkan interaksi antara tingkat kecemasan berbahasa asing dan frekwensi strategi untuk mengatasi kecemasan berbahasa asing yang digunakan. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa interaksi dari kedua faktor tersebut tidak menentukan tinggi dan rendahnya nilai siswa dalam belajar.

This study investigates the influence of interaction between students' foreign language anxiety levels and their frequency in using foreign language anxiety coping strategy on achievement. The samples were randomly chosen from the third year students of SMA Negeri 1 Pringsewu. The writer employed survey method to collect the data and analyzed them by using *Univariate-ANOVA*. The finding showed that there was no significant difference of achievement based on the interaction between their levels of foreign language anxiety and frequencies in using strategies to cope with foreign language anxiety. It indicates that the interaction between those variables do not determine students' high score in learning foreign language.

Keywords: *foreign language anxiety, strategies for coping, students' achievement*

INTRODUCTION

Affective variables might play important role to the failure of students in foreign language acquisition, that this problem cannot be seen in an easy way. Krashen (2013: p. 4) claims that this variable contribution in foreign language learning failure, even if not directly, still might happen since it prevents input from being processed by brain for language acquisition. Students with certain conditions of affective variable often face some difficulties in acquiring target language. They may have learnt English since early level and even some of them also attend English course to enrich their proficiency, but, at the end, they are unable to give their best performance because they are psychologically affected by this factor.

The presence of affective variables could determine the success of students in learning foreign language, and anxiety is one of these attitudinal factors. Anxiety could become a mental block for students in foreign language learning. MacIntyre, Noels and Clément (1997: p. 278) revealed that students with high level of anxiety tended to disparage their capability while students with low level of anxiety, in contrast, were more confident. As the consequence, the anxious students often feel that they are inferior to their friends, specifically during speaking class. They refuse to speak in English when their teacher asks to since they are afraid if they make mistakes. If this condition happens for long, not only will their performance be distracted, but also their achievement becomes far from satisfactory. Horwitz and Young (1991) as cited by Kondo and Ling (2004) have proven that student's performance during the process of learning foreign language might be affected and some problems might also appear such as deficits of comprehension

in listening, reduced word production, impaired vocabulary learning, lower grades in language courses, and lower scores on standardized tests as the results of foreign language anxiety.

Considering how important the existence and impacts of language anxiety are, some language experts have done various studies to explore this issue. By so doing, they could provide useful information for teachers and education practitioners to help them develop the best teaching techniques, materials, and strategies suited to cope with this situation. Thus, being inspired by the research conducted by Marwan (2007) who brought the issues related to foreign language anxiety and strategies to cope with foreign language anxiety employed by the students, the current study tried to investigate more deeply on several things, i.e. the influence of foreign language anxiety on students' achievement, the influence of anxiety coping strategies on students achievement, and the influence of interaction between foreign language anxiety and strategies for coping with foreign language anxiety on students' achievement.

Thus, the researcher believes that the present study might be contributive to the development of research in this field.

METHOD

The participants of this research were the third year students of SMAN 1 Pringsewu, Lampung. There were 90 students from eight classes and from this number, 24 students were male while 66 students were female. The class

programs chosen were natural science program and social science program that had four classes for each. In determining the sample, the writer applied simple random sampling method because he assumed that all students in SMAN 1 Pringsewu had almost similar English background that made them had the same chance to be chosen as the subjects.

To obtain the data, the writer used two *close-ended* questionnaires as the instruments. These types of questionnaire were chosen because it helped to avoid unnecessary answers from the respondents. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) was utilized to measure students' language anxiety. This 33-item questionnaire will have 5-point Likert scale: strongly disagree (1 point), disagree (2 points), uncertain (3 points), agree (4 points), and strongly agree (5 point). The total scores of the items determined the levels of students' anxiety. Levels of anxiety were classified into three: low, average, and high. In determining this level, the writer classified students with score from 22-75 as Low-Anxious category, 76-120 as Moderate-Anxious, and 121-165 as High-Anxious.

The second questionnaire employed was a modified version questionnaire (Marwan: 2007) of Foreign Language Anxiety Coping Scale (FLACS) invented by Kondo and Ling (2004) to measure students' strategies for coping with foreign language anxiety. Unlike the pilot project from Marwan (2007) which had 15 items with 3-point Likert scale, the writer modified the instrument for current study to have 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1 point),

disagree (2 points), uncertain (3 points), agree (4 points), and strongly agree (5 point) because the writer wanted to discover the possibility to have students' different answers. The scores obtained determined the into Negative Frequency, while scores from 46-75 were classified into Positive Frequency.

RESULT

Foreign Language Anxiety Scales and Strategies for Coping with Language Anxiety

Since there were 33-items with Likert's scale ranging from 1-5 in Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, the possible scores obtained were from 33 to 165. The lowest score for the present research was 52 while the highest score was 147. The mean score was 94.91, which implied that most of students were experiencing foreign language anxiety in moderate level.

To discover how many students fell into each level, the researcher calculated the frequency distribution of students for each category. From this procedure, the researcher found that there were 8 students (8.9%) were in High-Anxious level, 66 students (73.3%) were in Moderate-Anxious level, and 16 students (17.8%) were in Low-Anxious level. The finding indicated that the number of students who experienced high level of anxiety was the least compared to the last two categories, which indicated there were only few students who really suffered from foreign language anxiety.

Likewise FLCAS, Foreign Language Anxiety Coping Scale (FLACS) was also examined by using the same methods. The possible score obtained were from 15-75 as the questionnaire used Likert's scale ranging from 1-5. The lowest score for this test was 34, while the highest score was 62. The mean was 53.3 that indicated the tendency of students to have Positive Frequency in using strategies for coping with foreign language anxiety. The writer also figured out that 84 students (93.3 %) were classified themselves as Positive Frequency users, while in contrast only 6 students (6.7%) were Negative Frequency users. It inferred that most of students were quite frequent in using some strategies to cope with their anxiety problems in English class.

Foreign Language Anxiety Influence on Achievement

To answer the first research question, that is whether there is significant influence of foreign language anxiety on students' achievement, the researcher employed *One Way ANOVA* to analyze the data.

Table 1 One-Way ANOVA Test for Foreign Language Anxiety Levels Influence on Achievement

ANOVA					
Achievement					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	178.851	2	89.426	.722	.489
Within Groups	10777.871	87	123.884		
Total	10956.722	89			

The result shown by *ANOVA* table above revealed that the achievement of students were different to each other according to their language anxiety levels. Students with lower foreign language anxiety score have higher achievement amongst their friend. However, the difference between the groups seemed to be not significant since the $F_{\text{value}} (2, 87) = .722$ with $p = .489$ which was lower than F_{table} and $p > .05$. Post-Hoc Scheffe calculation below supported this result further since the means gap between each level were not really big and $p > .05$ for each group of students.

Table 2 Post Hoc Scheffe Calculation of Foreign Language Anxiety Levels Influence on Achievement

Multiple Comparisons

Achievement

Scheffe

(I) Foreign Language Anxiety	(J) Foreign Language Anxiety	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
High-Anxious	Moderate-Anxious	-2.99242	4.16683	.773	-13.3699	7.3851
	Low-Anxious	-5.62500	4.81956	.509	-17.6281	6.3781
Moderate-Anxious	High-Anxious	2.99242	4.16683	.773	-7.3851	13.3699
	Low-Anxious	-2.63258	3.10157	.699	-10.3570	5.0919
Low-Anxious	High-Anxious	5.62500	4.81956	.509	-6.3781	17.6281
	Moderate-Anxious	2.63258	3.10157	.699	-5.0919	10.3570

Strategies for Coping with Language Anxiety on Achievement

In investigating the influence of Strategies for Coping with Language Anxiety on achievement in order to answer the second research question, similar procedure of using *One Way ANOVA* was also administered by the researcher on Foreign

Language Anxiety Coping Scale (FLACS). It correlated the achievement of students with their frequency of using anxiety coping strategies so the writer could know whether the difference was there or not, and, it was found that the group of students with Positive Frequency of coping strategies using seemed to achieve better compared to the group of students with Negative Frequency. Nonetheless, the difference was not significant since the $F_{\text{value}} (1, 88) = .588, p = .457$ which was lower than F_{table} and $p > .05$ as shown by the ANOVA table below.

Table 3 One-Way ANOVA Test for Foreign Language Anxiety Coping Scale Influence on Achievement

ANOVA

Achievement

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	69.067	1	69.067	.558	.457
Within Groups	10887.655	88	123.723		
Total	10956.722	89			

This result proved that the null hypotheses for the second research question was also accepted which stated that there was no significant different of achievement from students with different frequency of using strategies for coping with language anxiety.

Interaction between Foreign Language Anxiety and Strategies for Coping with Language Anxiety Influence on Achievement

This study also tried to prove whether the higher frequency of using strategies to cope with foreign language anxiety on each level would result on the better

achievement, vice versa. The researcher conducted Univariate-ANOVA to answer this question and the results were on the tables below.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics of Interaction between Foreign Language Anxiety and Foreign Language Anxiety Scale on Achievement

Descriptive Statistics

Dependent Variable: Achievement

Foreign Language Anxiety	Foreign Language Anxiety Coping Scale	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
High-Anxious	Positive Strategies	71.6667	9.24482	6
	Negative Strategies	56.0000	16.97056	2
	Total	67.7500	12.44129	8
Moderate-Anxious	Positive Strategies	70.7143	11.50376	63
	Negative Strategies	71.3333	6.42910	3
	Total	70.7424	11.29235	66
Low-Anxious	Positive Strategies	72.9333	9.85224	15
	Negative Strategies	80.0000	.	1
	Total	73.3750	9.68074	16
Total	Positive Strategies	71.1786	11.00510	84
	Negative Strategies	67.6667	12.92543	6
	Total	70.9444	11.09546	90

Table 4 revealed that students from High-Anxious group with Positive Frequency had higher achievement compared to the students with Negative Frequency. In contrast, the results from Moderate-Anxious and Low-Anxious groups were different from the previous group. Students with Negative Frequency in using coping strategies achieved better even though in a very close margin.

Moreover, Table 5 below further confirmed that there was no significant different of achievement based on the interaction happened between foreign language anxiety and anxiety coping strategies as the $F_{\text{value}}(2, 84) = 1.512, p = .226$ which was lower than F_{table} and $p > .05$. Hence, the H1 was rejected and H0 was accepted for the last research question.

Table 5. Univariate ANOVA Test for the Interaction between Foreign Language Anxiety and Foreign Language Anxiety Scale on Achievement

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Achievement

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power ^b
Corrected Model	594.932 ^a	5	118.986	.965	.444	.054	4.823	.329
Intercept	85775.561	1	85775.561	695.357	.000	.892	695.357	1.000
Anxiety	396.940	2	198.470	1.609	.206	.037	3.218	.332
Coping	30.586	1	30.586	.248	.620	.003	.248	.078
Anxiety * Coping	373.056	2	186.528	1.512	.226	.035	3.024	.314
Error	10361.790	84	123.355					
Total	463937.000	90						
Corrected Total	10956.722	89						

a. R Squared = ,054 (Adjusted R Squared = -,002)

b. Computed using alpha = ,05

DISCUSSIONS

The Influence of Foreign Language Anxiety Levels on Students' Achievement

The finding of the current study implies that students' achievement will gradually become lower as their levels of anxiety increase. This finding is similar to the

research conducted by Aida (1994) to Japanese class in a university in America which proved that high level of anxiety resulted on lower grades. In a different study, Awan et al. (2010) who examined the relationship between the English achievement of Urdu-speaking students and their foreign language anxiety found that students with higher anxious level have poorer performance compared to the less ones. It inferred that anxiety debilitates student's capacity to acquire foreign language and this research was contributive to partially corroborate this theory.

Unlike the previous studies, however, the present research showed a non-significant difference of correlation between language anxiety and achievement. It means that only for this research, the difference of achievement was basically relative and did not really represent the influence of language anxiety levels on students' achievement. There might be certain factors that contributed to the difference of achievement obtained by the students, and one of them was form of the test. The test items did not really represent the most prominent source of language anxiety arousal, which is communication apprehension. Students could be more apprehensive in case of teacher asking them to speak using target language rather than doing multiple choices test which used by this school that possibly were assumed by the students to be easier and less anxiety-provoking compared to the speaking tests. This is like what Aida (1994) suggested that 'since the FLCAS appears to measure anxiety primarily related to speaking situations, use of a specific measure of oral skills may yield more profound relationships between language anxiety and achievement.'

The Influence of Strategies for Coping with Language Anxiety on Students' Achievement

The second issue brought by the present study was the influence of strategies for coping with language anxiety to the achievement of students. The result showed that there was different achievement of English between two groups of students based on their frequency in employing strategies for coping with language anxiety. Students in Positive Frequency group could achieve higher score than those of Negative Frequency group. Theoretically speaking, students who made more efforts to cope with their anxiety conditions apparently had better achievement compared to those who did not do the said efforts.

It might happen because language anxiety is caused by psychological factors and creating conditions that could decrease students' negative behavioral responses toward language learning might help them to compensate this feeling. Like what Kondo and Ling (2004) argue, students were basically willing to reduce the impacts of anxiety. By minimizing the impacts of anxiety such as worry, heart-beating, and fear to make mistakes, students will feel more comfortable to study. Thus, helping students to cope with language anxiety by telling them some strategies they can employ as well as maximizing the role of teacher to create a "low anxiety classroom atmosphere" (Underwood, 1984 as cited by Young, 1991) are needed in foreign language learning.

Similar to the first finding, the non-significant difference was also found in this second analysis. The achievement difference between students in Positive

Frequency group and those in Negative Frequency group could not represent the generalized assumption made by the writer. The fact that more than 95% students were in Positive Frequency group and not until 5% were in Negative Frequency group could be one of this factor. The unbalanced spread of number of students could also determine to the non-significant result, but it needed further research to answer this assumption.

The Influence of Foreign Language Anxiety Levels and Strategies for Coping with Language Anxiety Interaction on Students' Achievement

The last problem to be investigated was language anxiety and strategies for coping interaction in influencing English achievement. The writer assumed that on each level of students' anxiety, the difference of frequency in using anxiety coping strategies would result in a significant different achievement. Furthermore, it was assumed that students with Positive Frequency using of anxiety coping strategies on each level of language anxiety would achieve higher compared to those with Negative Frequency.

The first group, i.e. high-anxious students who achieved lowest among the three groups, proved this hypothesis. In the second group, even though the students could achieve better based on their anxiety level, the results were the opposite of the previous group if it was divided by two types of frequency in using anxiety coping strategies. Those with Positive Frequency achieved slightly lower than students in the remaining group in this level. As well as the latest, similar result was also found in low anxiety level. This last group indeed had the highest

achievement among others since students experienced the lowest level of anxiety, however, the highest score according to the type of strategies using was within Negative Frequency group, not that of Positive Frequency. It implied that the interaction between language anxiety and anxiety coping strategies did not influence the students to get better achievement, and the last hypothesis was rejected.

There were still no scientific proofs found by the writer to answer these findings. However, other factor such as cognitive capacity of students could perhaps contribute to the present results. Some students in the last two anxiety levels were possibly not really frequent in using anxiety coping strategies, yet still could achieve better score since they had better cognitive background and less anxious feeling. This is in line to what Mac-Intyre and Gardner (1991) believe that as “experience and proficiency increase, anxiety declines in a fairly consistent manner” (p. 111), and it might help them to have better achievement.

CONCLUSIONS

It was found that students with more frequent of using the strategies to cope with language anxiety tended to have better achievement in study. It means that students’ achievement was also influenced by their frequency in using the stated strategies. Yet the non-significant difference implied that this finding could not represent the assumption that this variable was the only factor in determining the difference of students’ achievement since there might be other factors contributed to this result. The last finding revealed that the interaction between language

anxiety and anxiety coping strategies did not determine the high score got by the students. The students' score was relatively different because there might be certain factors that made them achieve higher even though their use of anxiety coping strategies was not frequent.

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