

# ***THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE SECOND YEAR STUDENTS' FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY OF ENGLISH STUDY PROGRAM OF UNIVERSITAS RIAU AND THEIR SPEAKING ABILITY***

Khusnul Khotimah, Eliwarti, Novitri

email : khusnulkh@gmail.com, elieliwarti@gmail.com, novitri\_11@yahoo.com

contact: 081317220961

Students of English Study Program  
Language and Arts Department  
Faculty of Teachers Training and Education  
Universitas Riau

**Abstract:** *The objective of this research is to find out if there is any significant correlation between the second year students' foreign language anxiety of English Study Program of Universitas Riau and their speaking ability. This is a correlational research with two variables. In conducting this research, 40 students were selected to be the sample using convenience sampling technique. The instrument used to collect the data was a questionnaire adapted from the FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale designed by Horwitz et al, 1986). There were two kinds of data used in this study i.e. primary data which are the students' questionnaire responses and secondary data which are their speaking III scores taken from the third semester of 2016/2017 academic year. The calculation of the students' questionnaire responses resulted in a mean of 3,14, indicating a moderate level of anxiety. The correlation between the students' foreign language anxiety and their speaking ability were measured using Pearson Product Moment method using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 23. The data analysis shows that the correlation coefficient value is -.339 and the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) which means that there is a significant, low negative correlation between students' foreign language anxiety and their speaking ability. This shows that a student's speaking ability which is indicated by his/her speaking score tends to decrease as the increase of his/her anxiety level.*

**Key Words:** *Correlation, Foreign Language Anxiety, Speaking Ability*

# KORELASI ANTARA KECEMASAN BERBAHASA ASING MAHASISWA TAHUN KEDUA DI PROGRAM STUDI BAHASA INGGRIS UNIVERSITAS RIAU DENGAN KEMAMPUAN BERBICARA BAHASA INGGRIS MEREKA

Khusnul Khotimah, Eliwarti, Novitri

email : khusnulkh@gmail.com, elieliwarti@gmail.com, novitri\_11@yahoo.com

kontak : 081317220961

*Mahasiswa Program Studi Bahasa Inggris  
Jurusan Bahasa dan Seni  
Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan  
Universitas Riau*

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui apakah ada hubungan yang signifikan antara kecemasan dalam berbahasa asing mahasiswa tahun kedua di Program Studi Bahasa Inggris Universitas Riau dengan kemampuan berbicara Bahasa Inggris mereka. Desain penelitian ini adalah korelasi dengan menggunakan dua variabel. Dalam pelaksanaannya, 40 mahasiswa dipilih sebagai sampel dengan menggunakan teknik convenience sampling. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk memperoleh data adalah sebuah kuesioner yang diadaptasi dari FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale yang didesain oleh Horwitz et al, 1986). Ada dua jenis data yang dianalisis dalam penelitian ini yaitu data primer yang berupa hasil kuesioner yang diisi oleh mahasiswa dan data sekunder yang berupa nilai speaking III dari semester ketiga tahun ajaran 2016/2017. Kalkulasi dari hasil kuesioner mahasiswa menghasilkan nilai mean 3,14 yang menunjukkan level kecemasan yang sedang. Korelasi antara kecemasan berbahasa asing mahasiswa dan kemampuan berbicara mereka diukur dengan menggunakan metode Pearson Product Moment di SPSS versi 23. Data analisis menunjukkan bahwa nilai koefisien korelasi adalah -.339 dan korelasinya signifikan pada level 0.05 yang artinya ada hubungan negatif rendah yang signifikan antara kecemasan berbahasa asing mahasiswa dan kemampuan berbicara mereka. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan berbicara Bahasa Inggris mahasiswa yang ditunjukkan oleh nilai speaking III mereka cenderung menurun seiring dengan meningkatnya tingkat kecemasan berbahasa asing mereka.

**Kata Kunci:** Korelasi, Kecemasan Berbahasa Asing, Kemampuan Berbicara

## INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is a common feeling that everyone might have experienced in their life. Arnold (2006) defines anxiety as one of the most well-known and controversial concepts in psychology, which is regarded as a negative factor that has to do with feelings like fear, frustration, tension and insecurity. According to Callahan (2001), there are various forms of anxiety which include excessive worrying, a sense of fear, restlessness, overly emotional responses, and negative thinking. Anxious people may also experience some physiological discomforts which occur unexpectedly with or without being aware of it, such as increase in heart rate and blood pressure, dizziness, stomach discomfort, perspiration and other physiological manifestations.

Trang (2012) claims that anxiety is not uncommon in almost all disciplines of learning. Therefore, it is safe to say that this problem may be experienced by students in language classes as well. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) support this idea by stating that psychological factors such as motivation, anxiety and attitudes are believed to affect foreign language achievement. Other researchers have investigated the correlations between language anxiety and performance on language tests (e.g., Horwitz et al, 1986; Wilson, 2006) and have found interesting symptoms in the learners taking tests, particularly oral ones, such as trembling, freezing up, sweating, distortion of sounds, and going blank. As Wilson (2006) asserts, “the literature suggests that the speaking skill is extremely anxiety-provoking in many language students and that it is often seen to arouse more anxiety than the other skills”.

Foreign language anxiety has long been studied as a factor that influences foreign language learning. In several studies, such as one done by Phillips (1992), it is shown that foreign language anxiety can negatively affect the performance and achievement of foreign language learners. Horwitz et al (1986) state that since anxiety can have major effects on many aspects of foreign language learning, it is important to be able to identify the students who feel anxious in foreign language classes. They later define foreign language anxiety as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the unfamiliarity of the language learning process. Leary and Kowalski (1995) point out that the most anxiety-producing situations are those involving formal speaking and interaction. Examples of such situations are giving a talk in front of other people, performing on stage, doing a presentation, voicing opinions in a forum and the like.

Horwitz et al (1986) also claim that since foreign language anxiety concerns performance evaluation within an academic and social context, it emphasizes its correlation with three related performance anxiety i.e. communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension is the anxiety experienced when speaking to or listening to other individuals. Test-anxiety is a form of performance anxiety associated with the fear of doing badly or failing altogether in test-taking situations. Test anxious students often put unrealistic expectations on themselves and feel that not doing everything perfectly is considered a failure. Fear of negative evaluation, which is defined as apprehension about others' evaluations avoidance of evaluation situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively, is a third anxiety related to foreign language learning. Although similar to test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation is broader in scope because it is not limited to test-taking situations.

## METHODOLOGY

According to Gay (1987) population is the group of interest to the researcher, the group to which he or she would like the result of the study to be generalized. The population of the present study is the second year students of English Study Program of Teachers Training and Education Faculty of Universitas Riau. The total population of this study is 80 students. 40 students were selected as the sample using convenience sampling technique. The primary data were collected by administering a foreign language anxiety questionnaire to the students. The secondary data were the students' speaking III scores that were obtained from the administration.

The questionnaire used in this study was adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) designed by Horwitz et al (1986). Before administering the questionnaire to the sample, a tryout was conducted. To estimate the reliability of the questionnaire, the internal consistency method was chosen. The internal consistency coefficient of the questionnaire completed by the 40 English Study Program students turns out to be .93 with all items, indicating that the questionnaire is satisfactorily reliable. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 23 was also used to measure the validity of the questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 33 items and any item is considered as valid if its  $r$  value  $\geq 0,304$ . From the data process, it resulted in 31 valid items and 2 invalid items. The invalid items were revised.

In order to find out if there is any significant correlation between the students' foreign language anxiety and their speaking ability, the extent of the students' foreign language anxiety was computed using Microsoft Excel 2010. To determine the extent of anxiety, the questionnaire was valued according to the Likert scale with five score levels; 5 : strongly disagree, 4 : agree, 3 : neither agree or disagree, 2 : disagree, 1 : strongly disagree. Conversely, the items that expressed relaxation or confidence in using English (2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, 32) were assigned reversed values. The total score of all items in the questionnaire were calculated among each participant. The total score was divided by the number of the items in the questionnaire for the mean to determine each participant's level of anxiety. To examine the level of anxiety experienced by overall subjects, the participants' total scores were calculated for the mean. The higher the mean score was, the more anxious the participant would be. The measuring criteria applied in the questionnaire are shown in the following table:

Table 1 The Classification of Students' Levels of Anxiety

Mean	Extent of foreign language learning anxiety
1.00-1.49	No anxiety or very little anxiety
1.50-2.49	Little anxiety
2.50-3.49	Moderate anxiety
3.50-4.49	High anxiety
4.50-5.00	Very high anxiety

(Jiraporn, 2011)

The students' speaking ability was determined based on their speaking III scores of 2016/2017 academic year. The scores are classified into six categories that can be seen below:

Table 2 Classification of Students' Speaking Scores

No	Score	Ability Level
1.	81-100	Excellent
2.	61-80	Good
3.	41-60	Mediocre
4.	21-40	Poor
5.	$\leq 20$	Very Poor

*Adapted from Haris (1974)*

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient in SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 23 was used to measure the correlation between the students' foreign language anxiety and their speaking ability. This correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) is a measure of the strength of the association between the two variables. To determine the level of the correlation, the interpretation according to Sudjono (2004) below was used.

Table 3 The Level of Correlation

Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ )	Interpretation
0.00-0.20	Very Low Correlation
0.20-0.40	Low Correlation
0.40-0.70	Moderate Correlation
0.70-0.90	High Correlation
0.90-1.00	Very High Correlation

*Sudjono (2004)*

To identify the sources of foreign language anxiety, the percentage of the number of students who strongly agreed and agreed to each statement was calculated. Any item with high percentage was identified as the source of students' foreign language anxiety.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result of the Questionnaire

Based on the calculation of the students' responses, the mean of the students' total scores in the present study is 103,7 and the standard deviation is 22,5. The mean scores of the participants were also calculated, resulting in a mean of 3,14. The maximum score obtained is 150 (Mean = 4,55) and the minimum score is 51 (Mean = 1,55). The classification of the students' foreign language anxiety levels can be shown in the following table:

Table 4 The Percentage of the Students' anxiety level

No	Mean	Frequency	Percentage	Description
1	1.50-2.49	6	15%	Little anxiety
2	2.50-3.49	21	52,50%	Moderate anxiety
3	3.50-4.49	12	30% %	High anxiety
4	4.50-5.00	1	2,50%	Very high anxiety
Total means : 3,14		N=30	100%	

(Jiraporn, 2011)

It can be seen that from 40 students who filled the questionnaires, 15% of them (6 students) exhibit little anxiety. The mean scores of the other 21 students (52,5%) range from 2,50 to 3,49, indicating moderate anxiety. 12 students (30%) show high anxiety with mean scores ranging from 3,50 to 4,49. The remaining student show a mean score of 3,61 which indicates that among 40 participants there is one student (2,5%) who experiences very high anxiety. There is no student who exhibits very little anxiety. The data also indicates a total mean score of 3,14, therefore, it can be concluded the foreign language anxiety exhibited by the students in speaking English in the classroom is overall in moderate level.

### The Students' Speaking Ability

The students' speaking ability was measured based on their speaking III scores of 2016/2017 academic year collected by the lecturers. The scores were obtained from the administration. The classification of the students' speaking scores is presented in the following table.

Table 5 The classification of the Students' Speaking III Scores

No	Scores	Frequency	Percentage	Category
	81-100	15	37.5%	Excellent
	61-80	25	62.5%	Good
	41-60	6	0%	Mediocre
	21-40	0	0%	Poor
	≤20	0	0%	Very Poor
Mean Score: 78.73		40	100%	

Harris (1974)

Table 4.2 above shows the classification of the students' speaking scores. Among 40 students, it can be seen that there are 15 students (37.5%) who are categorized as excellent and 25 other students (62.5%) who are categorized as good. According to the result, there are no students who are in mediocre, poor or very poor level. The mean score is 78.73, therefore, it can be concluded that students' speaking ability is overall in good level.

## The Correlation between the Students' Foreign Language Anxiety and Their Speaking Ability

After making sure that the data were normally distributed and the two variables were linear, the correlation of the students' foreign language anxiety and their speaking ability were then measured with the help of Pearson Product Moment method using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 23. The result of the correlation is presented below:

Table 6 The Correlations between the Students' FLA and their Speaking Ability

		Anxiety	Speaking Ability
Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	1	-,339*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,032
	N	40	40
Scores	Pearson Correlation	-,339*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,032	
	N	40	40

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 shows the Pearson correlation value is -.339 and the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). Based on Sudjono's level of correlation criteria (2004), this result indicates that there is a low negative correlation between the students' foreign language anxiety and their speaking ability. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant, low negative correlation between students' foreign language anxiety and their speaking ability. Consequently, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is accepted and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ) is rejected.

## The Sources of the Students' Foreign Language Anxiety

The questionnaire used in this study consists of 33 items that are reflective of communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation in English classroom. Students' responses to the questionnaire are presented in Table 7. All percentages refer to the number of students who selected the alternative answers presented. The items are sorted based on the total percentages of the students who strongly agreed and agreed with the statements.

Table 7: Questionnaire Items with Percentages of Students Selecting Each Alternative

Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total %	SAA
Item 9	22.5	47.5	7.5	15	7.5	100	70
Item 10	25	40	25	7.5	2.5	100	65
Item 23	12.5	52.5	27.5	2.5	5	100	65
Item 7	15	45	25	10	5	100	60
Item 20	15	45	17.5	17.5	5	100	60
Item 3	15	40	22.5	17.5	5	100	55
Item 16	15	40	20	22.5	2.5	100	55
Item 33	17.5	37.5	25	15	5	100	55
Item 5	15	37.5	37.5	10	0	100	52.5
Item 15	17.5	35	32.5	12.5	2.5	100	52.5

\*SAA = The percentage of students who strongly agreed and agreed with the statements.

The result presented in Table 7 shows that the majority of the students (70%) agree that item 9 “I start to panic when I have to speak English in class without preparation” is an anxiety-inducing situation. therefore, it is safe to deem it as the biggest source of anxiety among all of the questionnaire items. The next foreign language anxiety factor identified from the results is test anxiety. Item 10 “I worry about the consequences of failing my English speaking tests” was selected by the students as the second biggest source of anxiety (65%). followed by item 20 “I can feel my heart pounding when I’m going to be called on in English classes” (60%). These students are anxious about making mistakes in English classroom. The results also identify fear of negative evaluation as another factor that has a big role to play in provoking students’ anxiety. They feel anxious about being less competent than other students for they endorse items such as “I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do” (65%) and “I keep thinking the other students are better at English than I am” (60%). They fear of being negatively evaluated by other students that they perceive as more competent than themselves.

## Discussions

The calculation of students’ questionnaire responses resulted in a mean score of 3.14, which according to Jiraporn (2011) indicates a moderate level of anxiety. Among the 40 second year students who participated in the study, it was found out that there are 6 students who exhibit little anxiety, 21 students with moderate anxiety, 12 students with high anxiety and 1 student with very high anxiety. There is no student who exhibits very little anxiety.

To answer the research question, the correlation between the students’ foreign language anxiety and their speaking ability were measured using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient in SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 23. The results of statistical analysis shows a significant, low negative correlation between students’ language anxiety and their speaking ability. This negative correlation between students’ level of foreign language anxiety and their speaking



ability indicates that a student's speaking ability which is indicated by his/her speaking score tends to decrease as the increase of his/her anxiety level.

The students' questionnaire responses were also analyzed to find out the main sources of their foreign language anxiety. The questionnaire used in this study consists of 33 items that are reflective of communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation in English classroom. From the results, it can be seen that the most anxiety inducing situation chosen by the students is speaking English in the classroom without preparation which belongs to communication apprehension. They fear that without a proper preparation, they may mess up when they speak English in the classroom. The other two factors i.e. test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation are also identified from the results. A statement which indicates anxiety about failing in English speaking tests follows closely behind as the source of students' foreign language anxiety. The students are anxious about the consequences if they fail in English speaking tests, endorsing test anxiety. An item reflective of fear of negative evaluation was also chosen by the students as a factor that provoked their anxiety the most. These students feel that the other students speak English better than they do. They fear of being negatively evaluated by the students whom they perceive are better than themselves.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the questionnaire result shows that the second year students of English Study Program of Universitas Riau overall exhibit a moderate level of anxiety in speaking English in the classroom. Furthermore, a significant, low negative correlation between students' foreign language anxiety and their speaking ability was found. The writer also found that the three components of foreign language anxiety i.e. communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation were all identified as the main factors that provoked the students' foreign language anxiety.

### **Suggestions**

#### **For Students**

Since the result of the foreign language anxiety questionnaires show that the students exhibit a moderate level of anxiety with a number of students being on high or very high level, the writer would like to recommend them to find ways or strategies to cope up with their anxiety. The students need to have more confidence in themselves because the way they perceive themselves may affect their performances when they speak English in the classroom. Challenging themselves and participating more in classroom's speaking activities may get them more used to speaking in the classroom and help them build their confidence as well.

#### For Lecturers

Based on the analysis of the questionnaire items, it was found out that being called on in the classroom, unable to comprehend what the lecturers said in English, fear of speaking English in the classroom without preparation could be the sources of students' anxiety. Therefore, it is safe to say that teachers or lecturers are responsible for this as well. Thus, it is recommended for lecturers to encourage the students and build up their confidence in English classroom. There are some effective methods they can do to encourage the anxious students such as developing teaching approaches that can be used for reducing the students' anxiety, praising the students in front of their classmates, constant acknowledgement of their progress, and having regular individual meetings with the anxious students to discuss about the issue. Giving the students more opportunities to speak in the classroom without making them feel pressured may be helpful as well. The writer hopes that the findings of this research can raise the awareness about this issue because the writer believes that being aware of this situation may encourage professionals to take measures in the language classroom to help anxious students.

#### For Future Researchers

Finally, the writer would also like to suggest that future researchers do further studies on this topic. They can do research focusing more on the sources of foreign language anxiety or the strategies to reduce it. Individual interviews with the anxious students may give them more detailed information as well. It would be great if we could find or develop strategies to create a classroom environment where students can speak English without being anxious about making mistakes and do not constantly worry about being negatively evaluated by their classmates or their lecturers.

### REFERENCES

- Arnold, J. (2006). Comment les facteurs affectifs influencent-ils l'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère? *Ela. Etudes de linguistique appliquée*, 4(144), 407-425.
- Callahan, R.J. (2001). The Impact of Thought Field Therapy on Heart Rate Variability (HRV). *Journal of Clinical Psychology*. 57 (10): 1153-1170.
- Gay, L. R. (1987). *Educational Research*. New York. Meril Publishing.
- Harris, PD. (1974). *Testing English as a second language*. New York: Mc.Graw Hill Book Company.
- Horwitz, E.K., Horwitz, M.B. & Cope J. (1986): Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70. 125–132.

- Jiraporn, Paranuwat. (2011). A Study of Foreign Language Learning Anxiety of the First Year Students at Srinakharinwirot University. MA Thesis. Srinakharinwirot University.
- Leary, M. R., & Kowalski, R. M. (1995). *Social anxiety*. New York: Guilford.
- MacIntyre, P. D. & Gardner, R. C. (1994). The subtle effects of language anxiety on cognitive processing in the second language. *Language Learning*, 44, 283-305.
- Phillips, E. M. (1992). The effects of language anxiety on students' oral test performances and attitudes. *The Modern Language Journal*, 76 (1), 14-25.
- Sudjono, Anas. (2004). *Pengantar Statistika Pendidikan*. Jakarta: PT. Raja Grafindo Persada.
- Trang, Thi T., Moni K., and Baldauf, R.B. (2012). Foreign Language Anxiety and Its Effects on Students' Determination to Study English: To Abandon or not to Abandon. *TESOL in Context Special Edition S3*.
- Wilson, J. T. S. (2006). Anxiety in learning English as a foreign language; Its associations with students variables, with overall proficiency, and with performance in an oral Test. La Directora, Universidad De Granada.