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A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON SPEAKING ANXIETY LEVEL BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS AT THE VIIth GRADE OF ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOL ASHHABUL YAMIN LASI

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Abstract

This research was conducted because of some problems related to speaking anxiety in male and female students in English learning. Some female students looked worried about being pointed out and there were a few students who were able to raise their hands to give opinions. Then, some female students showed anxiety when they became the center of attention. Third, some male students looked hesitant when they pronounced some words. Lastly, some male students felt more comfortable when giving opinions or answering teacher questions by using their first language rather than the English language. Because of these problems, the researcher intended to find out the significant difference on speaking anxiety level between male and female students, and to find out the dominant factor of speaking anxiety in male and female students at the VIIth grade of Islamic Boarding School Ashhabul Yamin Lasi. The research design was Ex Post Facto research. The data were collected by using 18 items of the FLSAS (Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale) questionnaire that were adopted from Ozturk and Gurbuz 2014. There were three indicators of speaking anxiety; Communication Apprehension, Test Anxiety and Fear of Negative Evaluation. The levels of speaking anxiety were low anxiety, moderate anxiety, and high anxiety. The population of this research was all of the seventh grade students which consisted of 3 classes. The sample was 80 students that were selected by using total sampling technique. The research was conducted in February 2022 in Islamic boarding School Ashhabul Yamin Lasi. Then, by using the SPSS program, an independent sample t-test was used to compare speaking anxiety level between male and female students, and a descriptive statistic was used to reveal the dominant factor of speaking anxiety in male and female students. The first result of the research showed that there was a significant difference on speaking anxiety level between male and female students at the VIIth grade of Islamic Boarding School Ashhabul Yamin Lasi. The researcher found the t-obtained (3.484) was higher than T-table (1.990). It means that Ha was accepted and Ho was rejected. The level of speaking anxiety in female students was moderate anxiety and male students were low anxiety. The second results that were the dominant factor of speaking anxiety in male students was test anxiety (18.12%), where it is because of students' perception about English language. Meanwhile, the dominant factor of speaking anxiety in female students was fear of negative evaluation (20.68%), where it is because of unpreparedness of students.

Keywords: *Speaking Anxiety Level, Male and Female Students*

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INTRODUCTION

Since the implementation of the 2013 curriculum as a refinement of the 2006 curriculum, the students have become the center in the learning process. Moreover, students learn English as a compulsory subject when they are in junior high school, where the English learning can assist the students to receive ease in the globalization era. It means that the role of English teacher in the 2013 curriculum is as a facilitator, and the students must develop their learning by using their background knowledge. In this context, there are four English skills that students have to develop such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. When students develop these four skills, they could find some problems, especially in speaking and writing skills or productive skills.

As a part of productive skill, students use speaking as a way to express their knowledge, sharing their thoughts and demonstrating their abilities. In English language learning, speaking is a crucial skill that should be mastered. The success of mastering English can be said when students are capable of carrying out the conversation. Therefore, according to brown, speaking is productive skill that can be directly and empirically observed; however, these observations are invariable influenced by a test taker's listening skill to listen accurately and effectively(H. Douglas Brown, 2003). Moreover, speaking in classroom involves the interaction between teachers and students or among the students which depends on how classroom activities are organized. Thus, Ur claimed that to encourage students' speaking skill, they should talk a lot in classroom activities which means students must be involved as much as possible(Penny Ur, 2012). It means to develop students' speaking skills, they have to be active and participate in classroom activities a lot.

Unfortunately, encouraging students to become active in English learning is challenging. Thus, it would be difficult to make students master speaking skills. In addition, there are various factors that inhibit students' speaking skills. Bulan sari finding in her research; cognitive factor (conceptualization, formulation, and articulation), affective factors (anxiety, self-restriction, and lack of motivation) and linguistics factors (vocabulary) is considered as the factors that has inhibited students' speaking skill in Islamic boarding school Ashhabul yamin lasi(Bulan Sar, 2021). It means that these three factors that occur in English learning must be well understood. Thus, it has to be taken into consideration deeply in order for the students to be able to increase their performance and become active in English learning.

Moreover, the affective factor is one of the crucial factors that often appear, because it relates to the student's personality. As Juhana stated in his research, fear of making mistakes, shyness, anxiety, lack of confidence, and motivation are all common psychological or affective factors that contribute to students' difficulty in practicing their spoken English . In this case, so many factors are related to students' psychology in the learning process. One of the affective factors is the students' anxiety. Many researchers have constructed this issue and it is an interesting issue that has been proven as a barrier that hinders students in language learning. In other words, anxiety is one of the intrinsic affective variables that influence foreign language learning . It means that learning English can be more challenging when the students also face anxiety. Moreover, the term anxiety is a type of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry caused by arousal of the autonomic nervous system . Thus, anxiety is a crucial factor that needs to be considered because this feeling can appear in various situations, especially in English learning.

In general, anxiety is a psychological condition that most students face. Students who face this condition can be observed from the reaction and the symptoms. According to Hurlock in Saputro explained that the sign of anxiety begin with the emergence of affective symptoms, namely apprehension and other feelings that are lacking pleasant, such as feelings of lack of confidence, feeling inferior and not being able to deal with the problems. It means the anxiety can be observed from the psychic response that is showed from the students. In addition, Fischer el al. in Saputro explained that the physiological symptoms that often accompany anxiety include the emergence of movements that are not controlled and mischievous. While the cognitive symptoms of anxiety will affect the ability of thinking processes, such as difficulty concentrating, difficulty making decisions, worrying about something terrible may happen. So, this psychological issue can be observed if it was considered from the cognitive, physiological and affective response of the students(Dewie Retno Eko Saputro, 2012).

Furthermore, this feeling does not only have a negative effect which is called debilitative anxiety but it also gives a positive effect which is called facilitative anxiety on the students' performance . In other words, anxiety can become a problem for the students to develop their speaking skill, if it decreases students' performance. In Gattuso's literature reported that anxious students are more likely to avoid fatal accidents than students without anxiety . It means that the anxiety can give a good side to the students, if the students are

able to control their feelings and deal with this anxiety by becoming anticipated and putting extra effort into their performance. Hence, the anxiety can influence the quality of oral language either increase students' performance or decrease students' performance.

This phenomenon can be seen from the preliminary research. In June 2021, the researcher interviewed one of the English teachers of Islamic Boarding School Ashhabul Yamin Lasi. According to the English teacher, in English learning, anxiety was a common feeling that arose when students were asked to speak in speaking activities. For example, students became anxious when they were asked to practice the English language. They also felt fear of being laughed at by other students. So that it influenced students' performance(Dolly Jesusita Young, 1998)

In August 2021 the researcher observed the VIIth grade students of Islamic Boarding School Ashhabul Yamin Lasi. In this school, male and female students were separated in different classes. Hence, it was divided into 3 classes, namely VII.1 consisted of male students, VII.2 consisted of female students, and VII.3 consisted of male and female students. The researcher joined the classes and observed students' activities, the researcher found some indications that male and female students experienced language anxiety.

Based on the observation, the researcher found in female class (VII.2), the students experienced anxiety especially in speaking activities. In the first context, anxiety appeared when the teacher gave questions or asked opinions to the students. Some female students looked worried about being pointed out such as they avoided eye contact with the teacher. In addition, there were only a few students who were able to raise their hand to give their opinion. In the same way, when the teacher gave the questions, female students tended to answer simultaneously rather than raise their hands before answering the questions. Moreover, when the teacher asked to repeat students' answers, they suddenly became shy or sometimes declined to repeat the students' answers. Meanwhile, when students felt able to answer teacher questions, they often showed hesitation to raise their hands. For example, before they answered the questions, they asked their peers to make sure that was the correct answer(Reina Gattuso, 2006).

The second context can be seen when female students became the point center of the attention. Some female students looked uncomfortable while speaking in front of the class. The anxiety can be seen from their gestures such as not making eye contact with the

audience. Some female students looked blushing and shaking. Moreover, when they were thinking, the students often used filler words such as "um", "err", etc. Thus, from the finding of the female class, the anxiety clearly showed that female students faced the bad side of the anxiety (debilitative anxiety) which made them lack confidence in the class, especially in speaking activities.

In the male class (VII.1), the researcher found anxiety was closely similar with female students. The anxiety was figured out when they spoke English in front of the class. Male students looked hesitant when they tried to pronounce some words. They were worried about making an incorrect pronunciation and started stammering. Admittedly, male students showed less anxiety than female students (VII.2) in the class. For instance, male students tended to be more confident when they were giving opinions or answering teacher questions. Differ from female students; some of them were able to raise their hands to answer questions before speaking.

When the researcher observed in VII.3 that consisted of female and male students, the researcher found male students felt more comfortable when giving opinions or answering teacher questions by using their first language rather than the English language. In class activities, the teacher asked one of the male students, what was the reason he often declined to participate. He stated that they felt shy to pronounce some words because it made them tongue-tied and his friends often laughed at him when he spoke English. In comparison, in the same class, female students showed more confidence when speaking English and female students tended to be more able to raise their hand to express their opinions or speak in front of the class.

In this context, the level of speaking anxiety and significant differences to the genders has been approved by many researchers. According to Mohtasham and Farnia revealed that the level of females' anxiety was significantly higher than male in impromptu speaking activities. it means that there was a difference on speaking anxiety level between male and female students. In addition, according to Deborah in Sahid et al. claimed that some variables might affect the students' anxiety toward gender differences, such as behavior and physically. The expert also reported that one of the most obvious differences between the sexes is the distinctive ways in which male and female express themselves in various ways and for different reasons. Thus, male and female students were difference on speaking anxiety level

in speaking anxiety level, where it is because of behavior and physically of the genders(Leila Mohtasham and Maryam Farnia. 2017).

From those various experiences between male and female students, the researcher also observed their speaking score. The researcher compared the mean score of male students and female students. To find the mean score of male and female students, the students' scores were grouped based on the genders classification. After that, the researcher summed up all of the scores and divided it into the total number of male and female students. The result showed that the mean score of female students was 85.9 and male students were 82.7. Based on the mean score, it can be interpreted that the both scores were high enough, because it passed from their standard minimum of completeness (KKM) that was 75. However, it can be admitted that female students had higher scores than male students.

To sum it all up, it can be concluded that speaking anxiety appeared in male and female students especially at the VIIth grade of Islamic boarding school Ashhabul Yamin Lasi. Male and female students' anxiety appeared in different contexts such as speaking in front of class, giving opinions, answering teachers' questions, and speaking by using the English language. Thus, based on the students' problem above, the researcher was interested in conducting further research about the difference on speaking anxiety level between male and female students. The research entitled "A Comparative Study On Speaking Anxiety Level Between Male And Female Students At The Viith Grade Of Islamic School Ashhabul Yamin Lasi".

METHODS

This research was quantitative with a comparative or Ex Post Facto research design. Kerlinger, cited in Ibrahim, stated that ex post facto is a systematic empirical study in which the researcher does not directly control the independent variable because the variable already exists or because the variable is essential cannot manipulate. In addition, in this research design, the variable has existed and the data essential cannot be controlled. After an action or event has occurred, a causal-comparative design seeks to find a relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The researcher expected to discover if the independent variable gave an effect on the outcome of the dependent variable. the total population of this research was 80 students, with 49 male students and 31 female students

of Islamic Boarding School Ashhabul Yamin Lasi, the sampling technique that researcher used was total sampling, where the sample was entire students of VIIth grade that consisted of 80 students as respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the description and analysis of the data discussed previously, the researcher had spread the FLSAS questionnaire (Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale) to the entire students' of VIIth grade of Islamic Boarding School Ashhabul Yamin Lasi. After the students filled the questionnaire based on their experiences, the researcher scored the questionnaire and divided it into genders classification. Thus, the result of this data revealed the two research findings; *was there any significant difference on speaking anxiety between male and female students?,* and *what was the dominant factor of students' speaking anxiety?*. This section provided further explanation and discussion about the level of speaking anxiety in both genders, and the dominant factor of speaking anxiety in male and female students

The first finding, concerning the result, revealed that there was any statiscally significant difference on speaking anxiety level between male and female students. It was found that female students were more anxious than male students when speaking English. The level of speaking anxiety in female students was indicated to face moderate anxiety while male students were indicated to face low anxiety. Moreover, there are various aspects that make male and female differences in anxiety. Christiansen reported that the differences in brain structuring and gonadal hormones can affect the anxiety in males and females. It means that structural and brain function and hormones were considered as the biological factors that make male and female students vary in speaking anxiety.

In this context, brain structure and function of male and female in brain regions relevant to anxiety. It includes the prefrontal cortex, hippocampus, and extended amygdala complex. In addition, blood pressure and pulse were reported to be more reactive to anxiety in females than males. It means that the difference of brain structure and function of males and females can affect anxiety, especially in language learning. Moreover, according to Michael Gurian et al. also add that there are differences between males and females in the memory ability. Females can store a greater quantity of random information, particularly if it is connected to an emotional or interpersonal experience they have had. Male tend to store

information when it is organized into clear, logical form or has specific information. It clearly stated that females tend to be emotional and males tend to be logical in storing the experience that they have had. Thus, this is one of the reasons that make females more anxious than male.

Next, hormone changes and stress also can explain why females develop anxiety. Biological sex can affect anxiety through differences in gonadal hormones. Michael Guarian et al. also reported that although males and females both possess all the human hormones, degree of dominance differs. Female estrogen and progesterone level rise and fall with their hormonal cycle, making their moods swing as well. Due to mood, these hormones affect in class emotive functioning, but they also have an impact on academic performances. Thus, male and female students can differ because of the hormones that make female students' anxiety affect their performance.

The second finding, the dominant factor of speaking anxiety in male students is test anxiety. The data showed that test anxiety has the highest mean score rather than communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation that was 18.12. Many researchers have found sources that made test anxiety arise in the learning process, but fear of failure was considered as the key sources of test anxiety. For instance, Aydin claimed that 35 students agreed that fear of failure while taking the test is one of the most sources of test anxiety. Moreover, students' expectation of their test can also evoke anxiety. Horwitz reported that students who have high demand to their performance, would also feel fail if they cannot do perfect to their test. Hence, students who fear of failure and have high expectation to the test' result was considered as the main sources of test anxiety, and if they cannot achieve their expectation, the anxiety can arise while taking the test. Consequently, students who have high test anxiety levels would receive the negative effect from this issue such as influencing their learning process and decrease students' achievement. It means that in this research, male students have to control their fear and expectation while taking the test in order their performance and achievement cannot be decrease.

Meanwhile, this research revealed that the main source of test anxiety was students' perception about the English language. It can be seen in item 16 stating "I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English". It was considered as the main reason that provoked test anxiety in male students, because it had a highest mean score. This

was linked with Antoro, who concluded that learners with speaking anxiety would have self-perception about language difficulties such as lack of vocabulary, afraid about structure and speaking English correctly. Thus, students with lack of proficiency would be more anxious and have the perception that the English rules were quite challenging for them. Hence, anxiety commonly arises when they have difficulty to deliver their opinion or idea because they have to learn the rules of the English language. According to Horwitz findings, students reported that it gets difficult to remember the correct grammar that they have to use during a test or an oral exercise, they also argued that the anxiety can appear when they know the correct answer but provide the wrong one. Hence, students would be more anxious in the English test, when they have trouble mastering the number of rules to do oral communication.

Next, the dominant factor of speaking anxiety in female students was fear of negative evaluation (FNE). In other words, female students tended to be anxious because of their apprehension about others' assessment. It can be seen from the mean score of FNE was 21.55. As Aida reported that students who are highly concerned about others' judgment tend to avoid or minimize participation or those unfavorable situations. It means that students who feel uncomfortable in the evaluative situation have the tendency to avoid being pointed out, preventing any negative impression or giving minimum contribution in classroom activity. Even if fear of negative evaluation is quite similar to test anxiety, FNE could happen in a larger context not only in the academic assessment. Horwitz et al. reported that fear of negative evaluation has a larger scope where anxiety can arise in any social situation or evaluative situation. Thus, this unexpected feeling has to be taken into account in order the students can manage their thoughts and the anxiety cannot give disadvantage to the students' performance especially for female students.

Nevertheless, the researcher found that unpreparedness of the students was the main source of FNE. This was known from the mean score of the FLSAS questionnaire that was selected by female students. It can be seen in item 5 stating "I start to be panic when I have to speak without preparation in English classes". The data showed that the mean score of item 5 was 4.10, where it was considered as the highest mean score. According to Januariza, about half of students agreed that learning to speak English makes them feel anxiety. The lack of preparation of the students becomes one of the intrinsic causes of language anxiety. Admittedly, students may become anxious when they do not prepare themselves in advance

to speak or deliver their thoughts in language learning. According to Suryana, preparation is the best solution to cope with students' anxiety; Preparation refers to the students' effort to improve their learning skills in order to overcome their nervousness. It has taken the note that preparation is the most commonly employed method. Consequently, students with less time to prepare themselves would create an unfavorable atmosphere when they perform in language learning.

In the final discussion, the researcher concluded that there was significant difference on speaking anxiety level between male and female students, where the level of speaking anxiety in male students was low and female students was moderate. Moreover, the dominant factor of speaking anxiety in male students was test anxiety, where it was because of students' perspective of English language, and in female students was fear of negative evaluation, where it was because of unpreparedness of the students. In addition, in this research males' and females' classes were separated, where it can give the advantage to the teacher to overcome students' speaking anxiety related to their genders and factors.

CONCLUSION

Since this research was conducted in Islamic Boarding School Ashhabul Yamin Lasi especially students of VIIth grade. The purposes of this research were to find out the significant difference on speaking anxiety level between male students and female students and to find out the dominant factor of speaking anxiety in male and female students. FLSAS (foreign language speaking anxiety scale) questionnaire that was adopted from Ozturk and Gurbuz was used to collect the data. Based on finding and discussion of the research previously, the researcher concluded that: There was significant difference on speaking anxiety level between male and female students at the VIIth grade of Islamic Boarding School Ashhabul Yamin Lasi. The data showed the mean score of female students (62.55) was higher than male students (52.96). The levels of speaking anxiety in female students were moderate anxiety and male students were low anxiety. The result after analysis by using T-test also proved that the value of T-obtained (3.484) was higher than T-table (1.990). As a result Ha was accepted and Ho was rejected. The dominant factor of speaking anxiety in male and female students was quite different. The dominant factor that of speaking anxiety in female students was fear of negative evaluation (21.55), where it is because of unpreparedness of

students. Meanwhile, the dominant factor of speaking anxiety in male students was test anxiety (18.12), where it is because of students' perception about English language.

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