

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' LEARNING ANXIETY AND SPEAKING SKILLS IN LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL

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Abstract

Speaking skill, which involves the ability to communicate orally, demands self-confidence and composure when interacting with others. Furthermore, speaking in the English language poses a significant challenge for many students, often inducing nerves and anxiety. The purpose of this research was to examine the correlation between students' learning anxiety and their speaking skills at the lower secondary school level. To investigate this relationship, a quantitative research approach with a correlation design was adopted. The data collection involved the administration of a questionnaire (FLCAS) to assess students' learning anxiety and an English-speaking test to evaluate their speaking skills. The questionnaire used in this study was adapted from the work of Horwitz et al. (1986) to measure students' learning anxiety. The collected data were analyzed using the SPSS Program version 25. The target population for this English-speaking of all second-grade students, totaling 102 individuals. Through simple random sampling, 41 students were selected as respondents. The analysis of the data yielded results indicating the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_1) and the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0) ($0.046 < 0.05$). Thus, the findings suggest a significant correlation between students' learning anxiety and their speaking skills. In summary, the research findings support the existence of a relationship between students' learning anxiety and their proficiency in speaking skills. The study contributes to the understanding of the challenges faced by students in developing their speaking abilities, particularly in the context of English language learning.

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INTRODUCTION

In reality, many students are currently faced with a new language problem, especially in English. Meanwhile, English has been used as an international language in many countries in the world. This is supported by Badrasawi et al. (2020) and Suparlan (2021) who stated that English is a medium to communicate with all people in the world that is widely accepted regardless of their language and cultural differences. So, students need to develop their speaking skills to communicate effectively. Moreover, speaking is the most essential skill in English (Suadiyatno et al., 2020). This is what makes students have good abilities in English as the aim of English instruction in schools is to encourage the students to be capable of mastering various areas of the target language, such as conversation, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar (Wasiq & Helmand, 2021). The students who are not used to using English will feel afraid to speak English. In addition, they feel tense, embarrassed, and anxious. More specifically, anxiety in English learning is commonly felt by students in several lectures and it could affect the students' language skills, mainly in speaking skills.

Speaking skill is a tool of daily oral communication, and students should have adequate confidence in front of people when speaking (Asysyfa et al., 2019; Aulia & Apoko, 2022).

When speaking in English with confidence, people are more likely to start conversations in that language wherever they are (Lee & Hsieh, 2019). Cameron (2001), as cited in (Jannah et al., 2022), stated that speaking is the way to communicate and use the language so that others can understand it. (Rao, 2019) as cited in (Irawati, 2021) said that speaking skill is essential not only for communicating in English but also for developing communication so that communication goals can be achieved. It makes speaking a difficult skill to master compared to other skills. (Pratolo et al., 2019) stated that speaking skill, especially in English, is hard. It was because the students' speaking skill was influenced by a variety of aspects. According to Brown (2004) as cited (Bohari, 2020) stated that grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, and pronunciation were all theists of speaking skills.

Speaking English in an EFL classroom is challenging for students because it is not easy to speak a new language where they are not native speakers. They generally feel nervous when they should speak in English. Thus, their feeling can be an obstacle for them to speak English. The factor that causes students to think that in learning, especially speaking, is anxiety. It is a problem in learning called learning anxiety. Siregar & Perwana, (2020) stated that learning anxiety is a psychological phenomenon that causes problems such as worrying about the students while learning. In this research, learning anxiety which is meant is the anxiety in learning English as a foreign language. Students who have anxiety will have negative emotional reactions such as fear, especially in learning English. Meanwhile, anxiety is a fear that occurs as a reflection of something bad that will happen. It is supported by Reber and Sapir & Aronson as cited in (Ofiaz, 2019) who explained that anxiety is a fear based on the emotion characterized by a feeling that something negative will happen, such as uncertainty, loss of control, distress, restlessness, and worriedness. Another view from previous research stated that anxiety has differences from fear. Anxiety has no clear object, whereas fear has a clear object. According to Abdullah et al. (2022), there were several types of anxiety, such as trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. Meanwhile, Horwitz et al. (1986) (as cited in Miskam & Saidalvi, 2019) stated that types of foreign language classroom anxiety could be communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety.

Horwitz (as cited by Toyama & Yamazaki, 2021) explained that people who were anxious about learning a foreign language had higher learning difficulties and struggle with their grades, which could influence their academic achievement. Therefore, the research above showed that anxiety is the most severe variable that can prevent students' success in foreign language learning. So, the students have to suffer from learning anxiety, which can bring negative effecon in learning English. Moreover, it is supported by Daubney et al. (2017) (as cited in Dryden et al., 2021) stating that foreign language anxiety was a negative emotional reaction that happened when a person learned or used a foreign language in public, such as in front of a class. According to other experts in this study, Horwitz et al. (1986) stated that foreign language anxiety is described as a set of self-confidence related to language learning in the classroom. Based on those definitions, it is deduced that foreign language anxiety is the negative response that arises during language learning, especially in the classroom or public places that are the center of attention.

There are numerous kinds of research investigating anxiety and speaking skills. Chen et al., (2022) found a negative correlation between foreign language anxiety and speaking performance through computer-based tests although the relationship was non-significant. They also provided strategies for students with speaking anxiety in online-texting tests. Another research revealed that the students were anxious about learning English and had different anxiety levels (Noviyenty, 2021). Another relevant research used the mixed method to investigate speaking in-class anxiety, focusing on a non-English major first-year student at CECAC, and it reported factors contributing to the student's speaking anxiety and the student's self-perceived language proficiency (Tran, 2022). In addition, several factors caused the

students to feel anxious, and strategies for the teacher to reduce their learning anxiety in English. Those studies stated that English is a foreign language in Indonesia, and not all students use it in their daily communication (Suciati, 2020). They use English only at certain times. They still use their native language, Indonesian in the English Foreign Language classroom. Thus, there is a high level of anxiety and a significant relationship between speaking anxiety and speaking skill strategies to overcome the problems.

Based on the explained relevant studies, this current research is rarely conducted as it focuses on showing other insights into the students' learning anxiety and speaking skills in a lower secondary school. This research aimed to find a significant correlation between the students' learning anxiety and speaking skills in lower secondary school. Thus, the research question addressed was: Is there a significant correlation between students' learning anxiety and speaking skills in lower secondary school?

RESEARCH METHOD

This research examined the correlation between students' learning anxiety and speaking skills in a lower secondary school. Thus, a suitable design for offers research was a quantitative approach with correctional design. The researcher collected the data by using a questionnaire to measure the students' learning anxiety. Meanwhile, English speaking test was used to measure their speaking skills. The questionnaire was distributed in the first step to collect data and did the English-speaking test to perform the speaking skills. To analyze the data, SPSS Programs version 25 was utilized if the data correlated or not.

Research Design

This research used quantitative research by applying a correlational design to gain the relevant data of two variables (Creswell, 2012), namely students' learning anxiety and their speaking skill in lower secondary school. In addition, quantitative research was used for this research as the data was presented with numerical data and evaluated with statistical analysis. It is supported by (Allen et al., 2013) who stated that quantitative research is one of the research that concerned with gathering and evaluating the structured data that might be shown numerically. The primary goal of quantitative research was to create trustworthy and reliable measures that could be applied for statistical analysis.

Population and Sample

The respondents of this research are the nd-semester students in the 2022/2023 academic year of an Islamic lower secondary school in Depok, West Java. This has three types of classes, such as Fullday class, Tahfidz class, and Regular class. The population of the respondents consists of students from second grade with 102 students. Of 102 students, 41 students with 22 male and 19 female students responded to the questionnaire and performed an English-speaking test. They were selected from a random sampling of the student population size.

Instruments

In this research, the data were collected by using two instruments, namely a questionnaire and an English-speaking test. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was used as a questionnaire form by Horwitz et al., (1986). The questionnaire, which had 23 statements, was administered after the original version was translated into the Indonesian language. It was employed through a paper-based questionnaire that the students filled out. The questionnaire includes several aspects that contribute to foreign language anxiety. There are communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. There are 5 statements for communicative apprehension, 8 statements for fear of negative evaluation, and 10 statements for test anxiety in each aspect. The questionnaire responses include a five-point

Likert Scale. 1 indicates strongly disagree, 2 indicates disagree, 3 indicates enough, 4 indicates agree, and 5 indicates strongly agree.

The second instrument is the English-speaking test. This research used the test to assess student's speaking skills. One topic which is about recounting text with the given theof on holiday or personal experience was provided in the English lesson. The students performed their spoken English within 2-3 minutes and their performances were recorded. In testing English speaking skills, Brown (2004) as cited in (Syahidah & Umasugi, 2021) stated that speaking assessment used several criteria, such as grammar, vocabulary, fluency, pronunciation, and comprehension. The score in the English test contains 5 points for excellent; 4 points for very good; 3 points for good, 2 points for adequate; 1 point for poor. The results of the test showed information about their level of English-speaking skills.

In collecting the data, firstly the students were asked to fill out a questionnaire to find out their anxiety levels when learning English. In the next meeting, two ratters tested their speaking skills using an English-speaking test. Each student had 3-5 minutes to perform their spoken English.

Data Analysis

The researchers employed a data analysis technique to analyze the data that has been obtained. The data were gained from the speaking test as an instrument for English speaking skills and a questionnaire asan learning anxiety instrument. The validity and reliability tests were employed to test the questionnaire of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Seven statements were declared invalid as a result of the validity test such as numbers 2, 5, 7, 16, 20, 26, and 27. Meanwhile, 23 statements were found to be valid. It could be said valid as the r-result from the r-table is bigger than 0.361 with a significance level of 0.05. The data was then subjected to a reliability test. The reliability test score was 0.809, placing it in the category of very high reliability. The data were then tested using the normality test, regression linear test, correlation test, and hypothesis testiHypothesis testing was performed to test the research hypotheses after determining the solution to the problem. The data were analyzed by SPSS program version 25. Then, the normality test by using Kolmogorov Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk provided that the significance value is more than 0.05. Thus, the data were normally distributed. Meanwhile, simple regression linear test was used to show the relationship between students' learning anxiety and speaking skills. Then, the researchers did the correlation test by using Pearson Product Moment which provided the category of correlation. Here is the table of the category of Pearson Product Moment Correlation:

Table 1
Pearson Product Moment Correlation

Range	Category
0 – 0.19	Very weak
0.2 – 0.39	Weak
0.4 - 0.59	Sufficient
0.6 – 0.79	Strong
0.8 – 1.0	Very strong

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

The data findings were gathered using a questionnaire for students' learning anxiety and an English test for speaking skills as the instruments. The findings of the data were evaluated using descriptive analysis. Here is the outcome of the descriptive analysis:

Table 2
Descriptive Statistic

	N	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Sum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Learning Anxiety	41	51	51	102	3211	78.32	12.177	148.272
Speaking Skills	41	15.5	6.5	22.0	564.5	13.768	4.1414	17.151
Valid N (listwise)	41							

The research sample, as shown in Table 2, consists of 41 students. They were filling out the questionnaire as an instrument of the student's learning anxiety and did the English-speaking test as an instrument of speaking skills. From the sample, it is found that the mean score of students' learning anxiety as an independent variable was 78.32, and speaking skills as a dependent variable was 13.768. The minimum score of students' learning anxiety was 51 and maximum was 102. Meanwhile, the speaking skill for the minimum score was 6.5 and maximum was 22. The range of students' learning anxiety was 51 and 15.5 for speaking skill. From this analysis, the frequency distribution is determined for each variable in the following table.

Table 3
Frequency of Learning Anxiety

Interval	Frequency	Percentage
51 - 58	2	5%
59 - 66	4	10%
67 - 74	10	24%
75 - 82	9	22%
83 - 90	10	24%
91 - 98	5	12%
99 - 106	1	2%
	41	100%

As it can be seen from Table 3, there were 2% of students that had the highest score in learning anxiety while the lowest score is 5% of the total of participants. Besides, there were as many as 24% of students who had a score of 67-74 and 83-90. The other results obtained were as much as 10% with a total frequency of students as many as 4 students, 22% as many as 9 students, and 12% as many as 5 students. In conclusion, the students' learning anxiety score ranged between 67 and 74, and also 83 and 90 as the majority scoring of their learning anxiety.

Table 4
Frequency of Speaking Skills

Interval	Frequency	Percentage
6.5 - 7.9	3	7%
8.0 - 10.4	4	10%
10.5 - 12.8	12	29%
12.9 - 15.3	7	17%
15.4 - 17.7	7	17%
17.8 - 20.1	5	12%
20.2 - 22.6	3	7%
22.7 - 25	0	0%
	41	100%

According to Table 4, there was 7% of students that had both the higher and lower scores in English speaking test. Furthermore, there were 29% of students who had a score between 11.4 and 12.8. The other results obtained were as much as 17% of students who had a score between 13.8 - 15.3; 16.3 - 17.7; and 83 - 90. The other results were as much as 10% with a

total frequency of students as many as 4 students and 12% as many as 5 students. In conclusion, the student's speaking ranged from 10.5 to 12.8 as the mostly score got in English speaking test. The normality test is the following stage once the data findings have been obtained. The normality test determined whether the data were distributed normally or not. The SPSS program can be used to view it. The following is the result of the normality test.

Table 5
Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Learning Anxiety	.099	41	.200	.982	41	.739
Speaking Skills	.114	41	.200	.963	41	.194

*This is a lower bound of the true significance
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on Table 5, it can be seen that the results of the significance of the data have different results with two different types of normality tests. In Kolmogorov-Smirnov, the significance values of both the students' learning anxiety and speaking skills were 0.200. Meanwhile, the other type, Shapiro-Wilk, had different results for two variables. The significance of students' learning anxiety was 0.739 and 0.194 for speaking skill.

If the data was normally distributed, it had a significance greater than 0.05, and vice versa. If the significance value is less than 0.05, the data is said to be not normally distributed. Based on the data shown above, it was clear that the results of all significances value, including Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk were normally distributed. It is because the results of significance are $0.200 > 0.05$, $0.739 > 0.05$, and $0.194 > 0.05$. The researchers performed a simple linear regression to establish the relationship between the two variables once the data has been normally distributed. It used ANOVA table that explained the examination with F-test. It also shown the relationship between learning anxiety and speaking skills with significance value less than 0.05. The end result is as follows.

Table 6
ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	67.237	1	67.237	4.238	.046 ^b
	Residual	618.811	39	15.867		
	Total	686.049	40			

a. Dependent Variable: Speaking Skills
b. Predictors: (Constant), Learning Anxiety

According to the table above, the F value is 4.238 with the significance level of 0.046. The data can be said to have a relationship if it has a significance value < 0.05 , and vice versa. If a significance value is more than 0.05, the data does not have relationship. Based on the data presented above, the results of significance were $0.046 < 0.05$. It is clear that there was a relationship between both students' learning anxiety and speaking skills. Another simple linear regression was to explain the relationship or correlation value, namely Model Summary. It contains the magnitude of correlation of learning anxiety as independent variable to speaking skill as dependent variable. Here is the result.

Table 7
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjust R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.313 ^a	.098	0.75	3.9833

a. Predictors: (Constant), Learning Anxiety

From Table 7, it was a simple linear regression analysis that explained about correlation (R), coefficient determination (R square), adjust R square, and std. error of the estimate. It is found that the relationship or correlation (R) value was 0.313, and the coefficient determination (R Square) was 0.098. It indicated that there was a 9.8% the effect of correlation or relationship on the students' learning anxiety to speaking skills. Meanwhile, adjusting R square is used when the research has two or more independent variables. After knowing the value of the relationship or correlation (R) and the coefficient determination (R Square), the hypothesis in the research is accepted or not. In order to discover if it is accepted, the SPSS program was used. Here is the value of the coefficient in this research.

Table 8
Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	Constant	22.107	4.098		5.394	.000
	Learning Anxiety	-.106	0.52	-.313	-2.059	.046

a. Dependent Variable: Speaking Skills

As it can be seen from Table 8, the significance value is 0.046. The data could be said to be correlated if it has a significance value < 0.05 . It means that H_1 is accepted, while H_0 is rejected. The data found is 0.046, and the significance value is $0.046 < 0.05$. Thus, the data that has been found is correlated with students' learning anxiety and speaking skills. Another result, as can be seen from the table above, the significance value is as follows.

Table 9
Correlation analysis

		Learning Anxiety	Speaking Skills
Learning Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	1	-.313*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.046
	N	41	41
Speaking Skills	Pearson Correlation	-.313*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.046	
	N	41	41

a. Correlation is significance at the level 0.05 level (2-tailed)

According to Table 9, it can be seen that the Pearson correlation is -0.313. It means that it has a negative direction on the results of the correlation between the two variables. The negative results showed that if students' learning anxiety has a high score, then the speaking skills will have a low score, and vice versa. If students' learning anxiety has a low score, speaking skills will have a high score. Thus, it could be said that the level of correlation between these two variables has a weak level with a negative direction.

Discussion

The aim of this research was to discover the correlation between students' learning anxiety and speaking skills in lower secondary school. The students considered that English is one of the complicated subjects in the school. They needed to speak English during the learning process. The students were anxious to speak English in front of the class as they feared of being wrong. The anxious arose when the students were required to speak English and found some mistakes, such as incorrect sentences in grammar and mispronunciation (Nadia & Hilalina, 2020). The feeling of pressure in speaking English during learning process could hinder students' learning to speak English confidently. Thus, they tried to avoid it. Meanwhile, the previous studies also found that the fear of negative evaluation was the most dominant types of foreign language anxiety. The students were confident when they spoke English, and their anxiety decreased. Even if they made errors in grammar or pronunciation, they had to be confident in order to avoid being evaluated by others when speaking English (Plantika & Adnan 2021).

Overall, the result showed that there was a correlation between students' learning anxiety and speaking skill in Lower Secondary School. It is evidenced by the hypothesis testing that indicated the result was less than 0.05, namely 0.046 with the negative direction. The other result pointed out that 2% of students' learning anxiety got higher scores than other students and 5% got lower scores. Meanwhile, 7% of students' speaking skills got both higher and lower scores than other students. This current result is supported by a study conducted by Megawati (2019), and it showed that there was a considerable correlation between students' anxiety and their speaking skill. It revealed a negative correlation between speaking anxiety and speaking skills where if the student had a high level of anxiety, their speaking skills were low, then vice versa. Meanwhile, the category of correlation was in strong level. Meanwhile, another study done by Putri & Refnaldi (2020) revealed that the students' speaking skill was in the fair category. The half of the students got score around 60 to 74 that means the half students were in good in speaking English and the other half students were in below average. Related to this current result, the students' anxiety in speaking English was influenced by some factors such as grammar, pronunciation, shyness, and self-confidence (Rajitha & Alamelu, 2020).

Based on the findings in this study, the implication is that it could help the students to better understand the contribution of learning anxiety to speaking skills experienced by them. The students need to prepare well to reduce their anxiety related to speaking in front of the class, communicating, and being afraid of making mistakes (Fang & Tang, 2021). If they are well-prepared, their confidence will increase and thus reduce their anxiety. In addition, teachers can also encourage them to be more confident in speaking English, especially during learning. Teachers can provide a pleasant learning atmosphere so that students can feel comfortable during English learning.

The limitation of this research was that only certain school and grade of the students to fill out the questionnaire and English-Speaking test. There were only 41 students who completed the data. Thus, this research could not generalize that it represented all the students in others regions. In addition, there is time constraints. The researcher had to adjust the time to the research place related to the time used at the time of data collection. Finally, the further research is expected to have more participants and time management better.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it is therefore concluded that there is a correlation between students' anxiety and speaking skill. It is proven that the result of correlation was -0.313 which means that it is in the weak category. In addition, there was only 9.8% of the students' learning anxiety to speaking skills. As learning anxiety contributed to English speaking skill, it is important to recommend that students in lower secondary schools should

consider the grammar use and pronunciation as external factors. The more they practice English by correcting the grammar use and by practicing their pronunciation, their spoken English would be better. By having adequate skills of English, students would be more confident in using English. In addition, they would not be afraid of using English expressions.

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