

Investigating High-School EFL Learners' Foreign Language Anxiety: A Case Study at SMA 4 Banda Aceh

Zulfikar

STAIN Mandailing Natal
Email: zulfikar@stain-madina.ac.id

Abstract. *This study aimed to investigate the level of foreign language anxiety (FLA) experienced by senior-high-school English language learners (ELLs) and to explore plausible factors that contribute to the learners' anxiety. This research employed a qualitative descriptive method with a case study approach, involving thirty-four twelfth-grade ELLs from SMA 4 Banda Aceh, Indonesia, as participants. In gathering the data, Horwitz et al.'s (1986) Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and semi-structured interview were used as instruments. The findings revealed that the majority of the ELLs were at a moderate level of anxiety, with more than half of them being at "Mildly Anxious" level and with no "Very Anxious" learners. The findings also indicated that the ELLs' FLA was caused not only by teacher factors but also student factors. The teacher factors include oral presentation task, incomprehensible input, and teachers' attitude, while student factors comprise learners' fear of being laughed at, their' beliefs about L2, and lack of preparation.*

Key words: *foreign language anxiety, level of anxiety, student factors, teacher factors*

A. INTRODUCTION

The efficacy of a learner's speaking skill in a second or foreign language will be much governed by how often he or she employs the language. Simply put, speaking English fluently will be an arduous task without practice. As asserted by Brown and Abeywickrama (2019), to be considered well-versed in speaking skill, English Language Learners (ELLs) must demonstrate their competence through effective engagement in a conversation. Furthermore, he argued that a display of ELL's competence in achieving practical objectives through a communicative verbal

exchange with other speakers is virtually the barometer of their success in language learning. Similarly, ELL's competency in oral communication depends, according to Richards and Renandya (2002, as cited in Derakhshan et al., 2016), on their aptitude in utilizing the language effectively in interpersonal interactions, which includes not just verbal communication but also such paralinguistic features of the language as rhythm, rate, pitch, stress, and intonation.

Anxiety can stem from a variety of sources. It can sometimes be traced back to classroom activities and approaches that are parts of the teachers' instructions. Speaking tasks, for instance, are frequently cited as an anxiety-inducing element (Bashori et al., 2020). In fact, speaking activities, from being asked to react orally to making oral presentations in front of the class, was found to be the most anxiety-inducing and the most stressful for many ELLs, especially those with limited oral proficiency. They fear of being judged adversely by their instructor and being laughed at by their classmates, exposing their deficiencies. It instills in them a fear of making mistakes and a fear of making a fool of themselves in front of others. As a result, they resorted to being silent. Furthermore, ineffective teaching methods might also lead to ELLs' anxiety. According to Odabaşı and Suleimenova (2013), when teacher speak too quickly, ELLs' failure to grasp what is being said might contribute to their communication anxiety. They also pointed out that intimidating teaching methods such as calling on learners in random order may also incite fear. In addition, instructor-learner interaction difficulties, such as harsh criticism (Huang, 2012), and ridicule (Hamouda, 2013) are also often associated to language anxiety. In addition, anxiety may also be caused by the highly demanding materials (Trang et al., 2013), and the overwhelming number of materials (Khusnia, 2016) which the learners are unable to keep up with. Furthermore, anxiety among ELLs may be worsened by teachers' improper error correction techniques, which may mislead them into feeling that their errors are harmful to their development

(Gumbaridze, 2013; Zhang & Zhong, 2012). In this case, teachers fail to perceive errors as a positive feature of acquisition and to offer an opportunity for effective correction, and instead, use instructional strategies and mistake treatment that exacerbate their ELLs' levels of fear and discourage them from communicating in the target language.

Aside from the aforementioned issues, anxiety can also stem from the learners themselves. Some ELLs have negative attitude toward language learning because a stressful learning experience at a certain point in their life has led them to believe that foreign language class is daunting and harder than other subjects (Pramuktiyono & Wardhono, 2016). Others hold negative beliefs that to master a foreign language is to be able to communicate in it flawlessly (Al-Mukdad, 2021; Kralova & Petrova, 2017). Lee et al. (2017) and Gkonou (2014), in addition, stipulated that learners with poor self-esteem who believe that their language proficiency was inferior to that of their peers are more prone to feeling anxious in their learning. ELLs tend to compare their skills to those of their peers, and an error might lead them to believe that they are less proficient than their peers, thus generating anxiety. All this often leads to ELLs' avoiding all aspects of language learning, including preparation for class or a test, which, according to (Yassin & Razak, 2017), will only contribute to further exacerbate their level of anxiety and prevent them from fully performing.

A number of studies have previously sought to explain foreign language anxiety, its sources, effects, and implications on L2 learning and acquisition. Stomff (2014) investigated how anxiety affected learners and their academic performance using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, a self-developed framework to observe negative views among the learners, as well as a test to verify the correlation between the learners' negative views, their anxiety, and their performance. She confirmed that anxiety has a substantial impact on learners' academic performances. E. J. E. Lee

(2016) used observations, survey, and interviews to investigate the links between oral corrective feedback and improvements in ESL graduate learners' anxiety. He reported that the high proportion of the oral corrective feedback had a beneficial impact on learners' emotional factors, particularly reducing their communication apprehension even though several explanation requests raised their anxiety. Jiang and Dewaele (2020) also studied the foreign language anxiety as experienced by over a thousand Chinese EFL learners at tertiary level and its connections to their sociobiographical and linguistic criteria. Their findings revealed that foreign language anxiety was closely related to learners' regional origin, overseas experience, period of learning commencement, self-rated proficiency, rate of performance, and L2 exposure intensity. The results imply that FLA also occurs beyond the classroom boundaries but with varying causes and experiences among learners depending on their autonomy. In addition, as part of their autobiographical research on the rise of anxiety in EFL learners, Trang et al. (2013) looked at approximately fifty college-level ELLs who were categorized as anxious according to their FLCAS scores. They found that the learners' anxiety grew as the process of acquisition progressed and culminated in their period of adolescence, caused by teaching methodology, evaluation, classroom interactions, and curriculum design they were exposed. Furthermore, Effiong (2016), in his investigation of foreign language anxiety and its instructional, interpersonal causes, observed and interviewed almost thirty EFL learners, as well as two nonnative and two native instructors, from four different colleges in Japan. The results indicated that instructors' age, sociability, manner of speech, and personality are strong predictors of learners' language anxiety. They also reported that, learners experienced increased anxiety when learning with peers they are not familiar with or peers with different genders, when they faced the possibility of being laughed at, and when they learn in a silent class.

While FLA has obviously been experienced by many ELLs in many L2 classrooms around the globe and a number of prior investigations on language anxiety have been conducted, however, few of them have attempted to take into account the ELLs' perspectives on the cause of their anxiety. Also, studies on FLA as experienced by EFL learners in senior high schools in Aceh are still scarce in number, if not inexistent. Therefore, this research aimed to fill this gap. It was conducted to investigate the level of FLA among high-school ELLs in Banda Aceh, and to identify its possible causes from the ELLs' perspectives. Preliminary observations conducted in several English language classrooms in one of senior high schools in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, revealed that the majority of the ELLs displayed signs of anxiety when tasked to communicate in English and were too hesitant to participate in class. Many of them looked disinterested and tended to await their teacher's instructions. A few of them even resisted the teacher's request to perform orally in front of their peers, pretending to be busy taking notes or reading a book to evade their teacher. The results of this study were expected to as well as to substantiate established theories, as well as to produce empirical evidence of practical pedagogical norms and principles of L2 learning and acquisition, especially in the area of foreign language anxiety.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

The data for this study was gathered using a qualitative descriptive method. The purpose of qualitative descriptive studies, like any other qualitative research design, is to provide an exhaustive summary of specific events faced by individuals (Ary et al., 2014). The research involved thirty-two twelfth-grade ELLs in SMA 4 Banda Aceh. Third-graders were selected as participants given that they had the longest tenure of studying English and were deemed capable of better expressing their thoughts on the research inquiries. A preliminary investigation conducted prior to the start of this study in the school on one of the classes (class XII-2) revealed that

when requested to speak in front of the class during English lesson, the students appeared nervous or apprehensive. Only about a quarter of the thirty ELLs managed to relatively confidently communicate their thoughts in the target language, while others displayed apparent signs of anxiety. Asked what caused their hesitation to speak in English, the majority of the ELLs claimed they felt concerned for making mistakes, particularly in the areas of grammar and pronunciation.

The research employed two types of instruments to collect data from the participants: the Horwitz et al.'s FLCAS questionnaire and a semi-structured interview on the ELLs' experience learning English that was tailored to reveal the possible explanations of their anxiety in a language classroom. The learners initially completed the FLCAS questionnaire, which comprises thirty-three items in five-point Likert's scale, each with the responses ranging from "Strongly Agree" (SA), "Agree" (A), "Neither Agree nor Disagree" (NA), "Disagree" (D), and "Strongly Disagree" (SD). Thus, the possible score range of the questionnaire is between 33 and 165, with the theoretical mean of 99. The FLCAS includes three major aspects of language anxiety: fear of negative evaluation (items 3, 7, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25, 31, and 33); communication apprehension (items 1, 9, 14, 18, 24, 27, 29, and 32), and test anxiety (items 2, 8, 10, 19, and 21). Additionally, the questionnaire contains nine positive statements, numbered 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, and 32, and twenty-four negative statements, numbered 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, and 33. To prevent the ELLs from misinterpreting the questionnaire, the positive and the negative items were grouped separately.

Afterwards, their responses were manually examined, and utilizing Oetting's (1983, as cited in Bidari et al., 2021) scale, the students' anxiety levels were classified, based on the total scores of their responses. The results of the analysis were plotted in a percentage diagram highlighting the differences in the respondents' anxiety levels.

Table 1. Anxiety Scale as Adapted from Oetting (1983, as cited in Bidari et al., 2021)

Range	Level
124-165	Very Anxious
108-123	Anxious
87-107	Mildly Anxious
66-86	Relaxed
33-65	Very Relaxed

An interview followed at the next stage to explore the possible sources of the ELLs' anxiety. A total of ten participants who were considered to be anxious based on FLACS administered beforehand were selected to be interviewed. Each interview lasted approximately ten minutes and was taped with the consent of the participants. Price's (1991, as cited in Al-Saraj, 2014) interview guide, which centers on foreign language anxiety, was adopted. Their responses were examined from the perspectives of and compared to the findings of other studies.

Following Miles and Huberman's (1994, as cited in Houghton et al., 2015) paradigm for qualitative analysis, the data analysis process was broken down into three main stages: data reduction, data display, and interpretation. In data reduction stage, the writer determined which aspects of the interview data corresponded with the objective of the study and needed to be highlighted. Each important element was then coded (as can be seen below), and afterwards, themes and descriptions were provided according to the relevant sources of data in data display stage. Finally, the reduced data were then reduced and their meaning and implications were drawn in the interpretation stage.

Table 2. Anxiety-Provoking Factors in Codes

Anxiety-Provoking Factors	Codes
Teacher Factors	TF
Teachers' personality	TF-TP
Speaking in front of peers	TF-SP

Incomprehensible Input	TF-II
Student Factors	SF
Fear of being ridiculed	SF-FR
Belief that English is difficult	SF-DF
Low self-esteem	SF-SE
Lack of Preparation	SF-LK

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Learners' FLA Levels

The following table shows the distribution of learners' responses to the positive and negative statements in FLACS questionnaires.

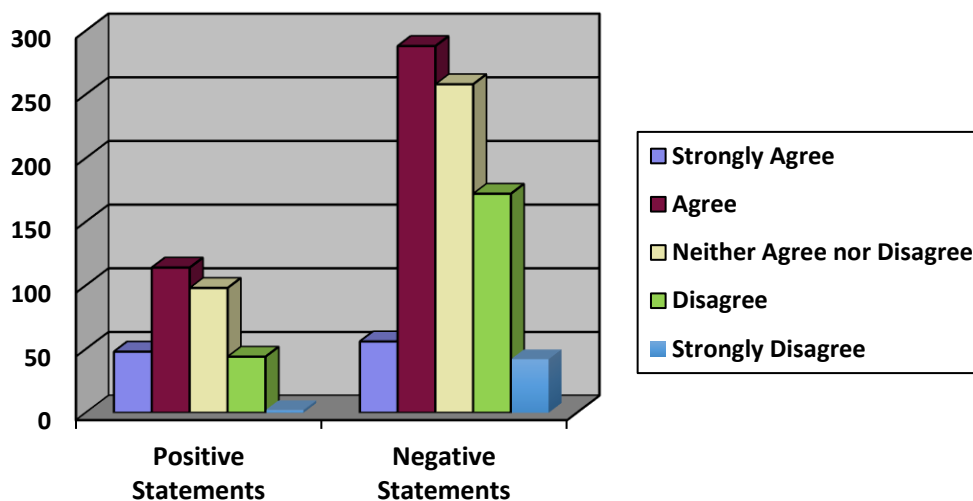


Figure 1. Learners' responses to positive and negative statements in FLCAS

The chart illustrates that the ELLs expressed their agreement to most of the positive and negative statements, with both receiving consecutively 114 and 288 'Agree' responses. While neutral responses were also found to be high in number, very few statements received strong disagreement, with only 2 'Strongly Disagree' responses for positive statements and 42 for negative statements. The percentage of the

learners' responses to each of the statements in FLCAS can be seen in the following table:

Table 3. Learners' Response Percentage

Item No.	Learners' Response Percentage					Total
	SA	A	NA	D	SD	
1	-	64%	23%	11%	-	34
2	17%	64%	5%	11%	-	34
3	5%	23%	47%	17%	5%	34
4	-	29%	41%	23%	5%	34
5	11%	47%	29%	11%	-	34
6	-	29%	41%	29%	-	34
7	11%	47%	23%	11%	5%	34
8	11%	35%	41%	11%	-	34
9	17%	35%	17%	17%	11%	34
10	5%	52%	35%	5%	-	34
11	5%	23%	41%	29%	-	34
12	-	52%	23%	17%	5%	34
13	17%	17%	35%	17%	11%	34
14	17%	17%	58%	5%	-	34
15	11%	52%	29%	-	-	34
16	52%	17%	29%	-	-	34
17	-	17%	29%	47%	5%	34
18	17%	35%	47%	-	-	34
19	-	23%	35%	35%	5%	34
20	5%	35%	35%	17%	5%	34
21	17%	11%	35%	29%	5%	34
22	11%	41%	35%	5%	5%	34
23	11%	41%	35%	11%	-	34
24	5%	58%	23%	11%	-	34
25		29%	47%	11%	11%	34
26	5%	35%	23%	29%	5%	34
27	11%	41%	23%	17%	5%	34
28	23%	29%	23%	23%	-	34
29	-	41%	29%	23%	5%	34
30	5%	11%	52%	23%	5%	34
31	17%	11%	11%	52%	5%	34
32	5%	23%	41%	29%	-	34
33	11%	29%	41%	11%	5%	34

Based on the results of the questionnaire, the levels of anxiety were then assigned to each of the ELLs. The percentage of ELLs in each level is briefly shown in the figure below:

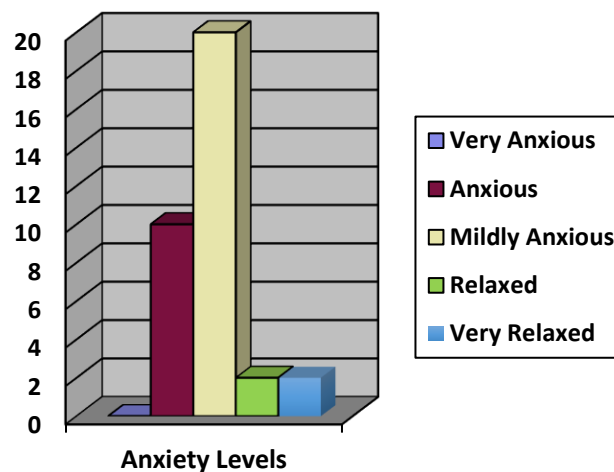


Figure 2. Summary of learners' anxiety levels

As can be seen above, ten learners (29%) are considered to be anxious, twenty (59%) mildly anxious, two (6%) relaxed, and two (6%) very relaxed, with no learners considered highly anxious. In other words, based on the questionnaire, the majority of them indicated that, they experienced a moderate level of anxiety in their L2 classroom. Only a small minority of the learners were considered to be relatively relaxed in their L2 classroom.

Factors Causing Learners' FLA

The table below illustrates the factors that provoke the ELLs' anxiety according to the interview.

Table 4. Anxiety-Provoking Factors According to the Learners

Respondent	Anxiety-Provoking Factors
Participant 1	TF-II, TF-SP, SF-FR, SF-SE, SF-LK, TF-TP
Participant 2	TF-SP, TF-II, TF-TP, SF-LK, SF-FR

Participant 3	TF-SP, TF-II, SF-FR
Participant 4	SF-DF, TF-II, TF-SP, SF-FR
Participant 5	SF-FR, TF-SP, SF-SE, SF-DF
Participant 6	TF-II, TF-SP, SF-FR, SF-LK, SF-DF, SF-SE
Participant 7	SF-DF, TF-SP, SF-FR
Participant 8	TF-SP, SF-FR, TF-II
Participant 9	SF-DF, TF-II, SF-FR
Participant 10	TF-SP, TF-II, SF-FR, SF-SE, SF-DF, TF-TP

The anxiety-arousing factors according to the learners include incomprehensible teachers' presentations, oral tasks, fear of making errors, fear of being embarrassed, failure to grasp what the teacher said, and their own lack of preparation. Interview also revealed that the students' self-perceived lack of grammatical knowledge and vocabulary, their beliefs that English is a hard subject and other students' English skills were superior to theirs further contribute to their language anxiety. Inquired on how their learning experiences were affected by their teacher, the participants suggested that teachers may provoke anxiety through their actions and behaviors. For instance, they may feel anxious when teachers use a rigid and intimidating approach or talk too quickly.

Discussion

The thirty-four ELL respondents exhibited varying levels of speaking anxiety. As can be seen above, ten learners (29%) are considered to be anxious, twenty (59%) mildly anxious, two (6%) relaxed, and two (6%) very relaxed, with no learners considered highly anxious. In other words, based on the questionnaire, the majority of them indicated that, they experienced a moderate level of anxiety in their L2 classroom. Only a small minority of the learners were considered to be relatively relaxed in their L2 classroom. Even though the learners' FLCAS scores were not particularly high on average, nearly a third of them (29%) indicated high levels of anxiety. Furthermore, a combined thirty out of thirty-four ELLs had high and moderate levels of anxiety and were thus affected by anxiety. This suggests that

anxiety is among the factors that characterize the process of foreign language learning in the classroom and require serious attention and appropriate actions especially from the behalf of the instructors. This finding corroborated Alrabai (2014), who reported that while moderate rather than high level of FLA affected most EFL learners, instructor should to a large extent recognize and accept that anxiety in second or language learning is valid and genuine and devise appropriate techniques to assist ELLs in coping with its negative effects.

The data from the interview revealed that a number of factors played a role in causing the language anxiety among the ELLs in their L2 classroom. The data also pointed out that those factors came from both the teacher and the learners. The factors can be grouped into the following categories:

Teacher Factors

Oral Presentation

Half of the participants (50%) expressed their apprehension about having to speak in front of the classroom. They reported that when their teacher invited them to speak in the classroom, they usually became anxious. Others stated that they became agitated when a certain task required them to speak in the target language. Many participants also mentioned that they became panic-stricken when the teacher suddenly asked them to respond to a question. Even being called on in a predictable order could cause anxiety, according to one participant. This factor was evident during the observation and corroborated in the interview by the following statement:

When asked to come forward to speak, I usually sweat all over my body. That makes me even more embarrassed, more panicked. I'm afraid of making mistakes if I come forward, especially since my English is not fluent.
(Participant 3)

Furthermore, five participants admitted to feeling anxious when being watched by the rest of the class. They were afraid of exposing their weaknesses, especially in the area of vocabulary and grammar and being judged negatively by both their teacher and their classmates as a result.

Incomprehensible Input

Unclear explanations, according to five participants (50%), also led to their anxiety. Most of them stated that they grew frustrated and anxious when they were unable to grasp what the teacher was saying. Some of them went on to say that partially comprehending the language input would still make them anxious since it might raise their chances of failing. One of the learners' statement below exemplifies this:

Sometimes it's the teacher's factor, too. If the explanation is not clear, you don't understand. So, you feel restless, and it doesn't feel good. (Participant 5)

The finding also supported Nilsson's (2020) in which he found that ELLs often struggle to follow directions and comprehend what they were supposed to say or reply to due to the incomprehensible English input. ELLs' difficulties comprehending teachers' remarks leads to anxiety, and anxiety will lead to further difficulties in attending to or learning a spoken message. In fact, the majority of the interviewed ELLs expressed their dissatisfaction with the teacher's rapid speech, while others felt that the English session lasted too shortly. English classes frequently progress fast since the teachers wants to ensure that all of the materials are covered in the time allotted. On the other hand, the learners admitted that if they had more time to understand and internalize the lesson explanation, they would be much better off. Indeed, according to some other participants, keeping up with the teachers who seemed to run them through important information in short period of time was a massive challenge, and it was an even more overwhelming effort to do

so in a classroom where teachers impose English-only or strictly-English policies. This finding reiterated Suleimenova's (2013) in which he reported that ELLs' inability to comprehend their instructors' statements and explanation entirely or partially is a chief source of their anxiety and unwillingness to engage in interaction in L2.

Teachers' Attitude

Five participants (50%) admitted to feeling threatened and becoming anxious when a teacher unduly scolded (or criticized) their errors. They also mentioned that they dreaded a test given without any warning because it gave them a sense of apprehension of being unprepared. This is demonstrated in the statement below.

There are teachers who just keep asking questions but rarely provide any help, intentionally asking [questions] to test us. Sometimes, they get angry, so we do not feel good. (Participant 7)

A few other students remarked that the teacher had an uninterested demeanor at times. One student described how he inquired about a lesson one day, but the teacher simply snubbed him, and instead of answering the question, asked him to seek an answer from a classmate. Another one with an identical experience described how the teacher was adamant about not having to re-explain or clarify anything. Students who asked for repetition or clarification would risk being accused of not paying attention.

Student-Related Factors

Fear of Being Laughed at

Unsupportive classroom conduct, such as ridicule by instructors and classmates, is another cause of anxiety among the participants. All of the ten respondents (100%) believed that their mistakes would be ridiculed, and the rest of the class would make

fool of them. Some of them shared their traumatic recollections of being teased and taunted, which will only cause distraction and humiliation. As a result, they were distressed, shaking, wriggling, stuttering, and possibly perspiring over nervousness. Others simply smiled or laughed to hide their anxiety. This anxiety factor was corroborated in the interview by the following learner's statement:

Usually, your friends' reaction [to your mistakes] is to laugh [at them]. It makes you feel insecure. You also get jeered at. It is so embarrassing. The teacher would just smile sometimes. The teacher feels bad for that.
(Participant 4)

The learners expressed their concern about making mistakes in their L2 oral performance due to the perceived threat of being embarrassed or ridiculed. They felt uneasy when their errors were called into attention because they were concerned that errors would make them appear inferior and unknowledgeable. They show an aversive mentality, preferring not saying anything than risking making a mistake and losing face. This finding corroborated Effiong (2016) and Aichhorn and Puck (2017), who reported that many learners are concerned about giving erroneous responses or doing poorly in front of their classmates since they are commonly associated with ridicule, humiliation, and loss of self-esteem. This fear has a negative impact on L2 learning. Since instructional settings are designed to enable learners to learn from both their teacher and their classmates, the potential benefits of a shared educational experience will often be overlooked.

Learners' Beliefs

Certain false assumptions were also revealed to cause anxiety among the students. The interview highlighted that the majority of the students (60%) harbored the belief that English was a difficult and demanding subject, and to communicate

properly or to comprehend the instruction was often an arduous task. One of the learners' statements below exemplifies this.

It [English subject] is hard, very difficult. Understanding people speaking in English is very difficult, let alone having to speak. I can memorize the sentences from the textbook, but it's hard to spontaneously compose sentences to speak casually. (Participant 1)

In addition, nearly half of the learners (40%) also had a low sense of self-worth, feeling that other learners were more proficient than them. One of stated:

Concentrating on expressing ideas in English is exhausting because my level is low. Some students here can speak well enough to communicate the ideas that the teacher wants them to. Their [proficiency] level is already high. I don't want to embarrass myself speaking in front of them. (Participant 9)

Furthermore, some of them stated that they were frustrated by the English language rules and constructions, and they had a difficulty in the area of vocabulary, believing that in order to be fluent in English, they had to have large vocabulary. The following statement represented the learners' concern:

There are a lot of rules in the English language. There are too many of them. Some are too confusing to understand. ... Also, I don't have enough vocabulary to speak fluent English. The amount of vocabulary we must memorize is too large. (Participant 2)

Learners bring a variety of beliefs to a language classroom, some of which are valuable to their L2 development, while others are erroneous misconceptions or assumptions that contribute to their lack of motivation. As reiterated by Wesely

(2012), learners' certain assumptions and beliefs, including about themselves and about L2 learning circumstances, contribute to anxiety and tension in the classroom. Also, according to Gkonou (2014), learners with high anxiety have a tendency to think of themselves as incapable, incompetent, or inadequate. They struggle with their self-esteem and lack confidence, believing that they are less capable than their peers. Since learners' successful achievement, as well as their attitude towards language learning, is much influenced by their beliefs, it is important for teachers to develop a positive support system for learners, to prevent false assumptions, and to foster the belief that every ELL comes to the classroom for the same reason and face the same challenges.

Lack of Preparation

Three respondents (30%) stated that their lack of preparation also caused anxiety. They acknowledged to feeling apprehensive when they did not prepare adequately for a test in their L2 classroom. One student asserted:

If I have to come forward with preparation, I don't feel worried. When there is no preparation, I will be anxious. If I have prepared, I [believe I] can do it. I feel confident.

Marwan (2016) came to the same conclusion, claiming that a lack of preparedness was the primary cause of students' nervousness, and that attending class without adequate preparation often results in anxiety. As indicated by the learner, failure to give oneself adequate time to study leads to poor performance under assessment scenarios, which sequentially results in elevated anxiety when it comes to performing in ensuing tests. This finding is also consistent with other research that has found that poor preparation is at the root of test anxiety, with severely test anxious students having less efficacious study habits than their less anxious peers (Gregersen et al., 2014). This particular finding highlights the importance of

spending some time to review and prepare for a class or an exam to assist ELLs in addressing any disparity in their comprehension, obtain extra input, and improve confidence, minimize anxiety, as well as achieve excellent performance. Promoting efficient learning skills, in this case, can help to reduce test anxiety and improve performance.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

The objective of this research is to identify the level of anxiety experienced by the twelfth-grade ELLs in SMA 4 Banda Aceh and factors that contribute to their anxiety when using L2 in the classroom. The findings revealed that the majority of the participants experienced moderate anxiety with 10 participants being at “Anxious” level and 20 participants at “Mildly Anxious” level. The remaining participants were found to be relatively relaxed, experiencing slight anxiety. The results also revealed several factors bringing about anxiety among the students. Oral performance in front of others, fear of being ridiculed, incomprehensible input, teacher’s classroom practice, students’ beliefs, and lack of preparation are among the causes of anxiety identified in this study. These variables come from both the teacher and the students. Any English instructor, especially those who work with EFL learners, must take these factors into consideration in trying to figure out how to assist their learners to manage their fear of communicating in L2 in the classroom.

Because studies of the levels of anxiety commonly faced by senior-high-school ELLs in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, are still scarce, the research findings are expected to be able to contribute to the improvement of English language instruction by offering to the teachers the data and insights about the differing levels of language anxiety experienced by ELLs and instructional circumstances that might cause them

to feel anxious in the classroom, so that the teachers can make relevant interventions to address the issue.

Suggestion

Although the current study's findings revealed that ELLs' anxiety was in general at a moderate level, further in-depth research is still needed, particularly on instructors' approaches in overcoming their ELLs' anxiety. Also, further research on anxiety at different educational levels might provide more depths on other factors at play in causing anxiety among ELLs. Finally, the examination into strategies or techniques for reducing ELLs' anxiety in a foreign language might be explored as a topic for future investigations.

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