Gender-Based EFL Students' Speaking Anxiety: Poetry Performance

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Abstract

English for Foreign Language (EFL) teachers do not always recognize students' speaking anxiety. Meanwhile, a set of studies revealed that there was no significant difference of male and female's students' speaking anxiety level. In fact, male and female students have difference condition on their learning style as well as psychological performance. This study aims to examine how difference male and female EFL students' speaking anxiety in a different context, in which the exposure was taken under the students' performance on reciting poetry through Youtube for their Creative Writing class. It is a quantitative study with causal-comparative research design. It was carried out to 64 students fifth semester EFL students majoring in English Language Teaching (ELT) in a state Islamic University in Jember, selected by using purposive random sampling. The data were collected by using a modified questionnaire consists of 21 items of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) which was originally developed by Horwit et.al. (1986). The data were analyzed by using SPSS version 24 with Mann Whitney formula computation. The results indicated that there was no significant difference between male and female speaking anxiety through their poetry performance (Sig 2 tailed 0.657 > 0.05). The mean and median scores of both also showed that they were not significantly different one into another with most samples on moderate level. The findings of this study might be used as input to further researchers to examine factors affecting speaking anxiety on male and female students.

INTRODUCTION

Students' speaking anxiety has been a topic discussion for many years in a world of language acquisition. Even for first language acquisition, it is still a famous topic to discuss (Puspitaningtyas, 2019). Various sub-topics could be elaborated, from its causes and effects, strategies to overcome, or even about its relationship with other language key terms. It becomes more complicated when the discussion move to second/foreign language acquisition (Hu, 2014). Many studies have been conducted for examining students' speaking anxiety for second/foreign language acquisition. Dealing with this, especially in Indonesia where English was taught as a foreign language (English as Foreign Language/EFL), students' speaking anxiety has been a big issue to discuss.

Many factors could influence the students' performance on English as their target foreign language, one of which is speaking anxiety (Nan, 2020). However, not every teacher realizes the existence of speaking anxiety. The low achievement of speaking performance is still often considered as the result of the lack of vocabulary for the target language, in this case English vocabulary (Afzal, 2019). Meanwhile, we could not refuse to believe that it is not only linguistics problems faced by the students, but also the psychological ones. This speaking anxiety belongs to one example of psychological problem in foreign language acquisition (Auliyah, 2019).

English speaking anxiety is students' worry in making mistake when they express their idea by using English through speaking performance. Students thought that they would make mistakes while speaking because they did not feel too confident of their own ability and lack of preparation; they also thought that their teacher would be angry if they made some mistakes; in addition they felt embarrassed of their classmates (Almira, 2018). However, this problem could be solved if the teacher prepared treatments for the students by giving many speaking practice and preparing strategies that boosted students' psychological state to overcome their own worry.

Furthermore, since female and male students are considered different on their psychological state, many studies have been conducted to examine their difference on language acquisition, including on speaking anxiety on public speaking performance. Wienanda (2017), Afrianti (2020), and Amelia (2022) stated that there was no significant difference on male and female students' anxiety of public speaking performance. However not many studied about how difference male and female students' anxiety when they have to perform poetry. Meanwhile, performing poetry is considered as one way to practice students' public speaking skill (Hazo, 2008). It belongs to public speaking since they need to express their idea through reciting poems so that the audience could understand what they

would like to express through the poetry. The result of the study will show whether or not training students' speaking skill with poetry performance in public can be appropriately helpful for both male and female students or for one of them only.

Based on the explanation above, the objective of the study is to examine whether there was a significant difference on male and female students' speaking anxiety by performing poetry in public.

METHODS

It is quantitative research applied by using causal-comparative research design. Causal-comparative study measures the cause effect relationship without manipulating the independent variables, which involves both continuous as well as discrete variables (Latief, 2012). It aims to examine the effect of gender's difference, male and female students, on their speaking performance anxiety. It measured the cause and effect relationship without manipulating the existing condition of students' gender on their speaking performance anxiety. Thus, gender is the independent variable in this study and students' speaking performance anxiety as the dependent variable. Poetry recitation was chosen to represent speaking performance in filling the research gap of speaking performance context.

The population was 127 third semester students of English Language Teaching (English Education Program) in a State Islamic University in Indonesia. The samples were taken purposively based on certain criteria; first, they joined Creative Writing class on the third semester; second, they created their own free-form poetry with any themes; third, they recited and recorded their own poetry, and then uploaded it into public Youtube platform. It was not manipulated either since it was their project for final examination of Creative Writing class. Therefore, it is appropriate to measure students' speaking anxiety in the context of poetry performance. It fulfills the research gap in which it is rarely found studies dealing with speaking anxiety on monologue public speaking performance. Some were found, however not many related to reciting poetry. In addition, the poems were created by the students themselves. Based on those criteria, the samples of the study were found as 64 students, consists of 9 male students and 55 female students.

Research data were collected by using a modified questionnaire consists of 21 items of statement with 5-point Likert scale which the original one had been developed before by Horwit et.al. (1986) entitled Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The original one consisted of 33 items which covered several indicators, such as students' feeling before coming to speaking class, students' feeling during speaking class, and students' feeling when performing speaking with classmates, teacher or when having individual performance in front

of the class. It was considered as the most reliable instrument since the Cronbach Alpha number for the reliability was 0,93.

The original questionnaire needed to be adapted to fit the aim of this study. First, it was translated into Indonesian to reduce the ambiguity during the filling process. Second, statements which did not relate to the objective of the study were deleted, such as statements related to students' feeling when having speaking with classmates or teacher. Some statements also needed to be revised to fit the students' situation on poetry performance. Then, it was obtained 23 statements to be tried out. The tryout was implemented online by using Google form to 20 students of the population by choosing them randomly. It was decided for research efficiency of time and paperless. The result of try out shows that 2 statements were considered not valid since the numbers of Sig-2tailed were more than 0.05 as the level of confidence. Therefore, those 2 statements were omitted. It remained 21 statements, both in positive and negative statements, with Cronbach Alpha reliability number was 0.73.

The following statements were then distributed in the form of 5 scale questionnaire to the samples of the study. It was distributed online by using Google form after they had done the process of uploading their video performance on Youtube platform. It took no more than 10-15 minutes to finish filling the questionnaire. The statements were divided into positive and negative statement. The original questionnaire distributed to the students was written in Bahasa Indonesia to avoid misunderstanding.

Table 1. Statements of Students' Speaking Anxiety on Poetry Performance

Probe	Statements
Positive	*I feel at ease when I have to perform with English*
	I do not get embarrassed to volunteer performs in English
	I am not afraid of making mistakes in performing English poems
	I feel confident when I perform English in public
	I feel confident when I perform English poems in public
	I do not feel under pressure when preparing English poems that will be performed in public
	I feel happy when I realize that my viewers could be native speakers
Negative	*I do not feel confident when I have to perform my English poem in public*
	I get nervous when I have to perform my English poem in public
	I always feel that the other students perform English poems better than I do
	I start to panic when I have to perform English without preparation
	I am never quite sure of myself when I am performing English even with preparation

Probe	Statements
	When performing English poem, I get nervous so that I miss much pronunciation
	I get embarrassed when I volunteer perform with English in public
	I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make
	More I study how to speak English well, more I get confused
	I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do
	I always feel nervous when I have to perform with English
	I feel anxious and confused when I have to perform with English in public
	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English
	I am afraid that I the other students will laugh at me when I speak English

The scale ranges differently for positive and negative statements. The table above shows how the range of scale scores for each type of statement.

Table 2. Range of scale score

Scores	Positive Statements	Negative Statements
1	*Sangat Setuju*	*Sangat Tidak Setuju*
2	*Setuju*	*Tidak Setuju*
3	*Biasa Saja*	*Biasa Saja*
4	*Tidak Setuju*	*Setuju*
5	*Sangat Tidak Setuju*	*Sangat Setuju*

Data were analyzed quantitatively by using SPSS version 24 with Non-Parametric Mann Whitney formula computation. It was based on the result of normality and homogeneity test on data obtained from the questionnaire. The computation shows that Sig number for Lavene test was 0.575 (more than 0.05), in other words the data were homogenous. However, the Sig number of Kormogolov-Smirnov test was 0.021 (less than 0.05) which means that the data were not distributed normally. Therefore, non-parametric analysis was implemented.

The statistical hypothesis for this computation was shown as following,

Ho: There is no significantly difference on poetry performance anxiety between male and female students

H1: There is significantly difference on poetry performance anxiety between male and female students

The hypothesis decision was based on the following criteria;

If Asymp Sig. 2 tailed < 0.05, H1 was accepted

If Asymp Sig. 2 tailed > 0.05, Ho was accepted

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of the study is to find out whether or not male students are significantly different from female students in terms on their poetry performance anxiety. It was generalized to speaking performance anxiety since reciting poetry in public could be categorized as one example of public speaking. It does not belong to reading performance since the students in this study created their own poem. In other words, it was another form of expression they hoped people could understand what they mean. They did not mean to comprehend what they recite anymore, since they have already well understood the content.

Before examining the result of how different male and female students' poetry performance anxiety, it was also important to examine the distribution of students' poetry performance anxiety level in general. By measuring this, it could give a description whether the students' poetry performance anxiety was actually really a problem for the students or not.

The result of students' poetry performance anxiety level is described on the following table, in which the result was based on the total scores obtained by each student from the questionnaire. They were divided into 5 level of anxiety (Range=84, SD=14, M=63).

Table 3. The Distribution of Students' Poetry Performance Anxiety

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	**Sangat Rendah**	4	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Rendah	8	12.5	12.5	18.8
	Sedang	27	42.2	42.2	60.9
	Tinggi	18	28.1	28.1	89.1
	Sangat Tinggi	7	10.9	10.9	100.0
	Total	64	100.0	100.0	

The table shows that most of the students were in the state of moderate level of speaking anxiety, especially on public speaking performance anxiety. It supports Harahap (2021) that also shows moderate level of anxiety possessed by students in performing public speaking. It can be summed up that the students did not really get problems at performing public speaking. Having not taken public speaking class yet was not a problem for them. They have already practiced their speaking skill for about two semesters. Moreover, they also got much exposure from other classes as well in practicing speaking through various social media such Youtube, Instagram and Tiktok. It shows that the treatment of public speaking practice could help students in coping their performance anxiety (Nadia, 2012).

However, it could not be said that they could perform easily at public speaking as well. Anxiety level of moderate shows several students still felt anxious of their own capability. According to Li (2020) practice is believed to be one treatment for anxiety, however unfamiliar environment, the position of speakers and audiences, new audiences or even unfamiliarity towards words could be another factor of public speaking anxiety. In this case, the students experienced those factors. They had not got experiences in composing poetry as well as reciting the poetry in public. It is known that figurative language used in poetry is different from academic language that they used to use in performing speaking for other classes. Even when they experienced in speaking through their various social media, they still had no experience in reciting English poetry. They had no idea who would be their audiences since the Youtube account is public. Therefore, they still had to give themselves effort to cope with this public speaking anxiety.

In sum, it could be said that the students in this study still got problems in coping their public speaking anxiety since the context of public speaking, they included was different from the context of public speaking they used to perform before.

Dealing with how different male and female students in their poetry performance anxiety, it will be discussed based on the finding as follows:

Table 4. Mann-Whitney Analysis

	Skor
Mann-Whitney U	224.500
Wilcoxon W	1764.500
Z	-.444
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.657

a. Grouping Variable: Gender

From the table it is shown that U was 224.500, while W was 1764.500. It means that the conversion number of Z was -0.444 with Sig or P value (0.657) was more than the critical limit. It shows that Asymp. Sig (2-tailed) was 0.657 (> 0.05). Therefore Ho was accepted and H1 was rejected. In other words, it was shown that there was no significant difference between male and female students' anxiety on their poetry performance. It supports other previous studies conducted by Wienanda (2017), Afrianti et al., (2020), and Amelia (2022) which showed similar result, even though they had different context of public speaking performance.

This study did not examine the possible factors that can be inferred as the cause of the result. However, the contents of the questionnaire of FLCAS showed that most of the possible causes of students' speaking anxiety referred to psychological factors and linguistics factors in which they obtained during the

class. First, male and female students in this study had the same learning experience known when choosing the sample of the study. They joined the same class and the same teaching learning process. In terms of speaking class, they got same strategies to overcome their speaking anxiety. In other words, they have the same perception of how to face the audiences of their speaking process. In terms of Creative Writing class, they got the same insight about how to compose their own poetry, how to choose figurative language to make the poem interesting and how to recite them accurately and beautifully. Thus, there was no any difference on how male and female students got exposure of material or strategies for speaking as well as poetry at class. In other words, the teachers gave the male and female students the attitude during the class and treated them the same treatment, in which it may trigger the same level of anxiety (Çağatay, 2015).

Second, another possible factor came from male and female students' psychological strategies on public speaking performance shown from the research findings based on the questionnaire. It was shown that public speaking anxiety has a strong relationship with the adaptation of psychological strategies (Hasan et a., 2012). In performing public speaking, male anxiety is affected by their thought while female anxiety is affected by their feeling (Sahid et al., 2018). When reciting their own poetry on Youtube, the most chosen theme by the female students was about love. It seems like they did not really care about the appearance of the video or even their pronunciation. They seemed to feel anxious whether the audiences could understand about the content of the poem or not. However, the male students worked better on their video performance. The cinematography was very good. The result was they did not feel anxious in reciting their poem. They spoke more fluently than the female ones. In other way, the female ones were better on language accuracy. Therefore, they did not significantly different since each, male or female one, had their own strengthens and weaknesses on their performance.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there was no significant difference between male and female students' speaking anxiety in performing English poems. The level of anxiety for poetry performance was mostly in the state of moderate, which shows that the students still got problems on coping themselves with public speaking performance. However, this problem was just slight and they could overcome it better with the treatment of public speaking practice. Next, it is also concluded that there was no significant difference on male and female students' anxiety dealing with their poetry performance. The possible causes for the result were related to similarity of treatments given by their speaking and creative writing

teachers for male and female students in class; as well as the similarity on their psychological performance for poetry.

This study did not examine the factors caused the slight difference of poetry performance done by male and female students deeply. Therefore, it is suggested to further research to conduct phenomenology research dealing with factors causing the slight difference of poetry performance based on gender.

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