

AN EXPLORATION OF LEARNERS' FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY IN THE INDONESIAN UNIVERSITY CONTEXT: LEARNERS' AND TEACHERS' VOICES¹

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Abstract: Despite the importance of teachers' roles in helping learners overcome their foreign language anxiety (FLA), a number of studies found that there were some mismatches between learners' views and those of the teachers in regard with learners' FLA. These mismatches could potentially hinder the teaching and learning process. This study, therefore, investigated the views of Indonesian university students from non-English majors and their teachers on the effects of and factors associated with FLA. It involved six *English 3* (General English class) students from different anxiety levels, low-anxiety, medium-anxiety, and high-anxiety, and six teachers of *English 3*. Through Thematic Analysis, the study found six emerging themes regarding the teachers' and students' views on the effects of FLA and factors associated with FLA. The first theme was on their views on the effects of FLA. The other five themes were on contributing factors of FLA, teachers' attributes, teachers' perceived efforts, students' attributes, and interactions as well as activities in class. Based on the results and the limitations of the study, implications and recommendations for students, teachers, and future researchers were also presented.

Keywords: Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), teachers' views, learners' views

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The notion “socio-affective filter” introduced by Dulay and Burt (1977) might be the first acknowledgement of the role of learners’ affect and emotion in learning. It suggested that some affective factors in language learning filter the amount of input. Krashen (1982) later supported this by proposing affective filter hypothesis hypothesizing that learners with high affective filter tend to obtain less input and vice versa. Anxiety, he further stated, is one of the affective factors influencing learning (Krashen, 1985).

Specific in the field of foreign language learning, many authors agreed that anxiety experienced by language learners are situation specific (Foss & Reitzel, 1988; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Scovel, 1978) different from general classroom anxiety. This type of anxiety, called Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), is considered to play an important role in the foreign language classroom (Horwitz et al., 1986; Scovel, 1978). Horwitz et al. (1986) further defined FLA as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128). In other words, FLA is a complex construct influenced by various factors, which might include teachers, peers, and the level of instruction. Then, in order to provide conceptual building blocks for this definition, they identified three related situation-specific anxieties, namely communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Further in the same paper, Horwitz et al. (1986) constructed Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) , which has widely been used as an instrument measuring FLA in speaking (e.g.: Aida, 1994; Marwan, 2008; Shao, Yu, & Ji, 2013).

As studies on anxiety continued, researchers began to be interested in the relationship between anxiety and learners' performance, attributed to the popular notions of facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety. Horwitz et al. (1986) seemed to be quite convinced that FLA brings negative effects stating that it can "represent serious impediments to the development of second language fluency as well as to performance" (p. 127). This was also supported by some subsequent works (e.g.: Arnold & Brown, 1999; Horwitz & Young, 1991). In line with that, Tobias (1986) asserted that anxiety might impair learners’ ability to take in information, to process it, and to retrieve it when needed. Learners’ blanking on the right answer despite studying hard and knowing it (Ortega, 2009) could be an example. Even Krashen's (1982) affective filter hypothesis mentioned earlier might already suggest the debilitating effect of anxiety as anxiety might serve as a filter blocking input.

However, despite many empirical studies suggesting debilitating anxiety, some studies did reveal positive effects of anxiety. An early study by Kleinmann (1977) revealed that learners with facilitating anxiety tended to have more courage to take a risk and have fewer avoidance behaviours. Interestingly, the finding of this study might be interpreted that learners must be made a little anxious in order for them to study harder, stimulating them to care more about their progress. Some more recent findings of studies focusing on qualitative methods also found some phenomena in which their participants reported that their anxious feeling led them to pay attention more to their learning (e.g. Spielmann & Radnofsky, 2001; Trang & Moni, 2015).

Despite Horwitz' and colleagues' idea on debilitating anxiety, some authors argued that whether anxiety is facilitating or debilitating would depend on its level (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Scovel, 1978). Besides, cognitive view of anxiety seems to support this idea as a certain level of anxiety is needed to stimulate autonomic nervous system enough to produce attention and concentration, needed for learning (Sousa, 2006). Only when their anxiety level is too high, anxiety becomes debilitating (Brown, 2000) because learners might then have negative thoughts and be too hard on themselves to the point of their impairing their cognitive ability (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994).

However, the relationship between anxiety and performance might not be as straightforward as one causing the other. Rather, they influence each other (Arnold & Brown, 1999; Horwitz, 2001; Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 1999b; Skehan, 1989). It is proposed that anxiety influences learners' language performance, and in turn, their language performance will affect their level of anxiety in a circular way. Arnold and Brown (1999) even stated that anxiety makes learners nervous and thus contributes to poor performance and "this, in turn, creates more anxiety and even worse performance" (p. 9), highlighting debilitating anxiety previously mentioned.

Studies using, or focusing on qualitative methods, primarily through interviews, have produced some findings on the possible factors associated with anxiety. Self-comparison with peers is one factor associated with anxiety (see Bailey, 1983; Subasi, 2010; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). Learners tend to become anxious when they feel that their proficiency is greatly lagging when compared to their peers' (Bailey, 1983; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). In comparison, Koga's (2010) study found that co-operative activities, such as group works, as opposed to peer-comparison-provoking activities like individual works, are at-

tributed to the development of cooperativeness among learners, which, in turn, decreases learners' anxiety level. Unfortunately, one-size-fits-all approaches may not always work to address anxiety issues. Some participants in Donley's (1997) study, for example, did not like group work, as they did not always like their group mates or were afraid that they would have to do more work than their group mates. Interestingly, some of the participants in Yan's and Horwitz's (2008) study did report that, in activities instilling peer comparison, knowing they are lagging behind their peers makes them study harder and care more about their learning. This may suggest that other variables, such as the various individual differences among learners, also contribute to the differing effects of competition, or co-operation, on their anxiety level.

Some authors have mentioned that teacher-student interaction is one of the most common factors attributed to anxiety (e.g. Al-Saraj, 2014; Huang, 2012; Tallon, 2006; Young, 1991). Tallon (2006) stated that this includes excessive error corrections by teachers and teachers asking learners to speak in front of the class. Teachers' excessive correction is attributed to learners' embarrassment of looking "dumb" in front of their peers and, as such, it is quite anxiety-provoking (Mak, 2011; Young, 1991). Despite this, Young (1990) insisted that carrying out error corrections is sometimes necessary. She noted that it is not the error correction itself that is anxiety-provoking, but, rather, it is when, how often and how the teachers correct learners' errors that matter more (Young, 1990).

Learners' fear of making mistakes, being afraid of poor pronunciation and lack of vocabulary are other factors attributed to why many learners feel anxious when they speak in front of the class (Tallon, 2006). With regard to this, some authors proposed that learners should be required to speak in small groups, rather than confronting the whole class, as, in smaller groups, learners tend to adopt risk-taking behaviors (e.g. Kitano, 2001; Liu, 2006) and are provided with more preparation time before speaking (e.g. Mak, 2011). In addition, Mak's (2011) study also found that learners' not being allowed to speak in Chinese, their L1, during lessons, is one of the factors contributing to their anxiety. Whilst the use of learners' L1 being associated with a lower anxiety level has not been widely discussed in the anxiety literature, it may be explained from cognitive perspectives. Some authors mentioned that an L1 is a psychological tool used by learners, especially lower achieving learners, when they are facing cognitive difficulty (DiCamilla & Anton, 2012; Swain & Lapkin, 2013).

Certain teachers' attributes are also associated with anxiety. Effiong's (2016) study revealed that his participants feel less anxious when being taught by friendly teachers. In comparison, he further stated that, when learners consider their teachers unfriendly or strict, they tend to feel uncomfortable, which, in turn, limits their interactional opportunities. Trang and Moni (2015) also reported the same finding. This is in line with Steinberg's and Horwitz's (1986) earlier statement, in that it is less likely that learners will communicate genuinely in stressful classroom environments. However, Trang and Moni (2015) also noted that teachers' attributes can be a complex issue, in considering the vast diversities of learners. It is difficult to "measure" how easy-going or how strict teachers should be in helping them to cope with their anxiety (Trang & Moni, 2015). For example, whilst friendly teachers are associated with learners' lower anxiety levels, teachers' being friendly and easy-going will not satisfy the needs of all learners. Nevertheless, generally, learners tend to feel less anxious if they get their teachers' encouragement, positive reinforcement and empathy (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 1999a).

It is clear that, other than learners themselves, teachers play an important role in affecting learners' FLA. In relation to this, Trang and Moni (2015) argued that, instead of considering anxiety as something to reduce, teachers should consider it as something to manage, by focusing on both reducing its debilitating effects and utilising its facilitating effects. Realizing that anxiety is a "part of our existence" (Bigdeli & Bai, 2009, p. 108) and that its effects are long-lasting, as "even when the stressor is deleted, its effects remain" (Bigdeli, 2010, p. 677), teachers may need to work with anxiety for learners' advantage, rather than simply reducing it. This may be considered more feasible and, perhaps, more important.

Despite teachers' important role in affecting students' FLA, some studies found discrepancy between learners' and teachers' views on anxiety (e.g. Trang, Baldauf, & Moni, 2013a; Trang & Moni, 2015). Whilst the students believed that their anxiety negatively affects learning, their teachers believed that the issue was not so serious (Trang et al., 2013a). In addition, students who perceive themselves as low achievers are sometimes considered the best students by the teachers (Foss & Reitzel, 1988), or the other way around, as those appearing to be quite incompetent when speaking the target language might be very good at grammar, vocabulary and syntax (Daly, 1991). As this may affect how the anxiety is addressed in class, both teachers' and learners' shared understanding of learners' anxiety during the learning process is necessary.

The present study, more specifically, focused on FLA experienced by non-English major university students in General English classes called *English 3*. *English 3* was a Speaking class program with its various speaking assessments. This specific context was selected because many studies found that learners are anxious the most in speaking activities (Steinberg & Horwitz, 1986; Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009; Young, 1990). In Liu's (2006) study, even highly proficient learners reported that they experienced anxiety. Considering these findings, it becomes important to address the phenomenon in more depth in order to gain further understanding based on which teachers can help learners perform better in speaking class.

The present study also involved some teachers of *English 3* as the participants and there was some rationale behind this. Previous studies on FLA in Indonesia had predominantly focused on learners (see Anandari, 2015; Ariyanti, 2016; Marwan, 2008; Sutarsyah, 2017). However, in Vietnamese context, a context which might not be so different from the Indonesian context, Trang et al.'s (2013a) study comparing the students' perceptions and their teachers' on FLA interestingly found some mismatches. Whilst the students were aware of the existence of FLA, not all of their teachers were aware of that. Whilst some students perceived anxiety as an obstacle to their learning, one of the teachers even admitted never having thought of it before. Additionally, a more recent study by Trang and Moni (2015) still found a further mismatch. For example, the teachers wanted to see the students take a risk, which they believed could help the students with their weaknesses. However, to take a risk may not be so easy a task for students who did not want to lose face if they made some errors. Because of such mismatch in expectation, students might fail to see teachers' efforts in helping them, which makes them more anxious (Trang & Moni, 2015). Hence, it became important to obtain the teachers' views of their students' FLA and compare them with those of the students to help the teachers understand their students' affect more, which in turn would enable them to help their students learn more effectively.

This study therefore attempted to answer two research questions. First, what are *English 3*'s teachers' and learners' views in regard with the effects of learners' FLA? Second, what are *English 3*'s teachers' and learners' views in regard with factors attributed to learners' FLA?

METHOD

My previous quantitative study, based on which the present study was conducted, involved 132 university student participants. It investigated the relationship between learners' FLA and their achievement (Subekti, 2018) and used Horwitz et al.'s (1986) FLCAS to obtain data on their FLA. Thirteen participants returned incomplete questionnaires and thus their data were excluded from further analysis. From the data of the other 119 learners, their FLA levels were obtained. With the total of 33 items, each of which had a 1-5 range of score in which a higher score indicated a higher FLA level, learners' FLA would range from 33-165. For the present study, this range was then divided into three categories, in which scores in 33-66 range indicated low anxiety (LA), 67-99 indicated medium anxiety (MA), and 100-165 indicated high anxiety (HA).

For each of the three anxiety categories, a male student and a female student were invited for individual semi-structured interviews conducted in the Indonesian language and lasting for twenty to thirty minutes. Students selected from LA and HA categories were those having the lowest and the highest anxiety respectively in each respective gender whilst students from MA category were selected randomly merely based on gender. Inviting students from different anxiety category for interviews was intended to obtain more diverse perspectives on FLA in general and contributing factors of FLA. For example, participants who had low FLA may have different views on FLA compared to those with high FLA.

In addition to the individual interviews with the students, two separate focus groups in English were also conducted to obtain the views of six *English 3*'s teachers on their students' FLA. There were in total twelve teachers of *English 3* and they were all invited to focus groups if they wished to participate in the study. There were actually more than six teachers who expressed their willingness to participate in the study, but did not have a matching schedule with the others and thus could not participate. At the end, the focus groups were conducted two times in which three teachers participated in the first focus group and the other three participated in the second one. Each focus group lasted about an hour. The teachers were all females and their ages ranged from twenties to forties. Two teachers had Bachelor's degrees whilst the other four had Master's degrees.

I conducted teachers' focus groups instead of interviews because of their possible chained/cascade effects in which participants could be triggered to have more ideas as they were listening to other participants' memories or experience (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002), which in turn could enrich the data obtained. The teacher participants had also known each other and had had experiences sharing their ideas with one another. On the other hand, I conducted individual interviews with the students to allow them to express their views about their anxiety more comfortably and freely without anybody else knowing.

There were five basic questions asked during the six semi-structured interviews with the students and the two focus groups with the teachers. These questions are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Main Questions in Interviews and Focus Groups

| Interview questions | | Focus group questions | |
|----------------------------|--|------------------------------|---|
| 1 | What do you feel when you are attending the English class? | 1 | What is your view about the feeling of FLA in English learning? |
| 2 | Do you feel anxious/relaxed when attending English class? | 2 | Is there any possible effect of FLA? |
| 3 | What situations make you feel anxious or relaxed in English class? Is there any possible effect? | 3 | Before you participated in the study, had you ever thought that learning English might make some students feel anxious? |
| 4 | What factors do you think make you feel that way? | 4 | What is your view about the degree of anxiety of your students? |
| 5 | To what extent do you think your teachers understand students' anxiety in class? | 5 | What might be the contributing factors? |

The data were collected during the period of April - May 2016. Considering ethical considerations, the name of the university at which the student participants were studying was not disclosed. The participants were given informed consent forms before participating in the study whilst they listened to the brief explanations about the research (Israel & Hay, 2006). Pseudonyms were used throughout the paper to keep the participants' confidentiality (Israel & Hay, 2006).

To analyse the individual interviews' and focus groups' data, Thematic Analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used. It is a method for

identifying patterns of meaning across a dataset in relation to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The first was familiarizing with the dataset including reading and rereading the transcriptions. The next were searching for themes, in which all data related to each potential theme were gathered, and reviewing the themes, in which a thematic map of the analysis was generated. All these steps were done through annotating each of the transcripts as well as taking notes separately when necessary. After the themes were named, extract examples that could best reflect the themes were selected for further analysis and report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Unlike the previous studies on FLA in Indonesia, e.g. Marwan's (2008) study which focused on the results of FLCAS questionnaire data, and Anandari's (2015) study which was a classroom action research, this study focused on verbatim quotes from the participants to better capture FLA phenomenon from their perspectives. As for the presentation of interviews and focus groups, in order to facilitate the reference-tracing, the following codes were used: LA = Low Anxiety, MA = Medium Anxiety, HA = High Anxiety, FG1 = Focus Group 1, and FG2 = Focus Group 2. Thus, "(Desi, FG1)", for example, indicated that the reference was from Desi in the first focus group.

Figure 1 shows the whole sequence of data collection and analysis.

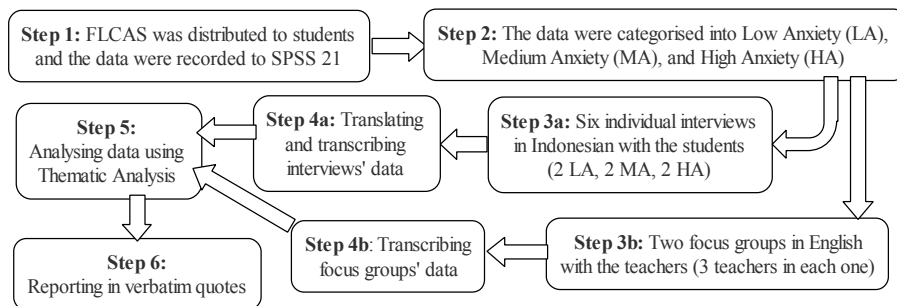


Figure 1: Sequence of Data Collection and Analysis

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 2 shows the emerging themes from the Thematic Analysis. As can be seen in the figure, the first theme was about the teacher and student partici-

pants' views on the effects of FLA, whilst the next five themes were about their views on factors attributed to FLA.

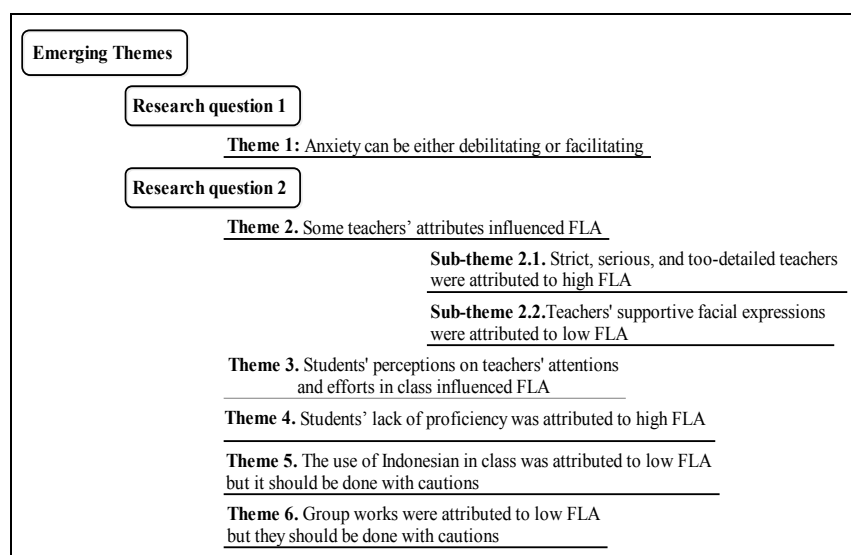


Figure 2: Emerging Themes from the Thematic Analysis

Research Question 1: What are *English 3*'s teachers' and learners' views in regard with the effects of learners' FLA?

Theme 1: Anxiety can be either debilitating or facilitating

The teachers had various views regarding the effects of anxiety. In the first focus groups, the teachers emphasized the debilitating effects of anxiety. Desi and Jeni, for examples, commented:

They [students] already know [what to talk about], but because they are anxious, they forget about it. (Desi, FG1)

Sometimes when they [students] are anxious, starting from the very beginning, they are already resistant. (Jeni, FG1)

On the other hand, the teachers in the second focus group tended to support the idea of facilitating anxiety. Fida, for example, stated:

It [speaking individually] is a good way to force them [students] to think [...] they have to overcome their anxiety [...] [Having] low level of anxiety [students] would underestimate the tasks. (Fida, FG2)

Whilst some teachers admitted that their students' anxiety was attributed to poor performance in line with the idea of numerous authors (e.g.: Horwitz, 2000; MacIntyre, 1995; Ortega, 2009), Fida held the opinion that anxiety may be needed for learners to keep learning. She believed that creating tasks "compelling" learners to perform, despite their anxiety, was attributed to better learning. The teacher participants in Trang's and Moni's (2015) study also stated that anxiety should not be radically eliminated because of the same reason. Additionally, Aceng and Nana, medium-anxiety students, also believed that anxiety made them care more about their learning. They reported:

We are trained to be confident, so whatever the situations, we have to learn first, at least by learning, we can evaluate our mistakes. (Aceng, MA)

The moments that I don't like include times when I cannot answer in [grammatically] correct sentences [...] Like I feel that I am not satisfied [...] I feel that I have to study harder so that I "can". (Nana, MA)

In comparison, neither of the two high-anxiety students reported any benefits of being anxious, emphasizing the debilitating effects only. In other words, whilst the same tasks or situations may not be so anxiety-provoking for some learners, they may be too anxiety-provoking for some others. Thus, in line with many authors' idea proposing that too high anxiety is attributed to poor performance (e.g. Bigdeli, 2010; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994), Young (1992) reminded that teachers should continually be sensitive to the signals learners provide and show more understanding of learners' struggles.

Research Question 2: What are *English 3's* teachers' and learners' views in regard with factors attributed to learners' FLA?

Theme 2: Some teachers' attributes influenced FLA

Sub-theme 2.1: Strict, serious, and too-detailed teachers were attributed to high FLA

Some teachers commented that strict and serious teachers tended to make students feel more anxious. Yuni, for example, reported:

They [teachers] can be the one who can reduce it [anxiety], or can be the one who can increase it [...] Teachers' attitudes in class, the ones who smile a lot compared to the ones who never smile in class, the ones who make jokes in class and the ones who are always serious in class, students can see the difference. (Yuni, FG2)

In comparison, Nana commented that teachers who liked to make jokes tended to make learners feel less anxious. Additionally, she commented that younger teachers tended to make the class' atmosphere more relaxing with jokes and humor. She reported:

[I prefer] interactive teachers, those that can mingle with the class well. But usually those are young teachers; the senior teachers tend to really focus on the materials with little humor and jokes [...] It is less relaxing to be taught by senior teachers. (Nana, MA)

It was consistent with one finding in Effiong's (2016) and Trang's and Moni's (2015) studies in which unfriendly and strict teachers are associated with learners' higher anxiety. Trang, Baldauf, and Moni (2013b) also commented that their student participants tended to keep distance from their teachers and feel more anxious as they saw them as being strict and difficult to approach. Additionally, this study found that teachers who paid attention to details too much were considered more anxiety-provoking. Jeni, for example, commented:

Maybe [...] it is like "more detailed". Like when a teacher gives a very detailed feedback on grammar, even a very simple, detailed grammar [...]. That is what makes students anxious to say something. It is like a threat for them. (Jeni, FG1)

In line with what Jeni stated above, Aceng reported:

[I am] afraid, anxious, like every single gesture, pronunciation, and fluency will be monitored, also eye contact [...] Then, I will make too many pauses when speaking [...] When I have shown my best, but the teachers [still] give massive evaluations, of course, while then I realize I need to study more [...] it does affect me in the next tests, I become less confident. (Aceng, MA)

With regard to this, Mak (2011) argued that teachers' excessive error corrections are attributed to higher anxiety. Specifically, they are attributed to learners' embarrassment in front of their peers (Shao et al., 2013; Young, 1991). However, Young (1990) stated that teachers' giving correction is some-

times necessary and it may be wrong to assume that learners would rather not be corrected at all. She explained that actually when, how often, and how teachers give corrections matter more (Young, 1990).

Sub-theme 2.2: Teachers' supportive facial expressions were attributed to low FLA

The second teachers' attribute was related to their facial expressions. All of the three teachers in the first focus group seemed to agree that teachers should show supportive facial expressions regardless of the students' performance. This could be reflected in the conversation excerpt below:

- Desi : And supporting expressions also, "Wow, Okay. Go ahead" (*All laughing*). Usually [it is] just to help them, to improve, to sustain their confidence.
- Yasmin : Even though sometimes I don't get what they talk about. (*All laughing*)
- Jeni : That is true. Sometimes if we show some disappointment face, they will be like, "Oh my God, I must have made mistake." Then for the rest of the test, they will not be confident.
- Desi : We have to be an actress. (*All laughing*) "Okay, Good job [...]" even though actually "What are you talking about? I have no idea."

(Desi, Jeni, & Yasmin, FG1)

In line with what these teachers said, Aceng and Vania stated that teachers' supportive expressions helped them minimize their anxiety. They reported:

If they [the teachers] give "nice" expression, we will feel confident. But when they show disappointed and upset face, we will become anxious like we have just made mistakes. (Aceng, MA)

It seems, for example, Ms. Desi*, [when] she knows [her students are anxious]; she will give smiling expressions, [...] so it is helping, and we are a little comfortable despite being nervous. (Vania, LA)

**formerly an identifying information, changed into the corresponding pseudonym*

Interestingly, the potentials for teachers' supportive facial expressions to alleviate anxiety has not been discussed much in anxiety literature although it may intuitively be true. Many anxiety studies heavily emphasizing quantitative data and the fairly limited number of qualitative studies on anxiety may be one

of the likely reasons as to why this particular finding has been overlooked thus far. However, Onwuegbuzie et al. (1999a) generally stated that teachers can build learners' confidence in class "via encouragement, reassurance, positive reinforcement, and empathy" (p. 232). In addition, though not specifically discussing FLA, Butt and Iqbal (2011) stated that teachers' facial expressions can affect learners' behaviors and thus can help learners in their learning if utilized properly. Hence, through giving supporting facial expressions when students are speaking or performing in a test, teachers may be giving them ongoing support, sustaining their confidence and minimizing their anxiety.

Theme 3: Students' perceptions on their teachers' attentions and efforts in class influenced FLA

The teachers reported that they had done some efforts to help students with their anxiety. Yasmin, for example, stated that to make the students less anxious in class learners should feel that their teachers cared about them or paid attention to them.

[...] I need to get close to students personally, [...] inside the classroom, I usually go around the class [...] asking questions not really related to the materials, but something related to their personal life [...] So, they kind of feel like, I pay attention to them, so they feel more relaxed. They can talk; they can share [...] their problems. (Yasmin, FG1)

Nana, a medium-anxiety student, seemed to be quite satisfied with her teachers' efforts in class. She reported:

[...] after I finished Level 2 class, I got nice teachers in Level 3, so I realize English is actually really fun, so I don't think "I am forced" [to take the obligatory English class]. (Nana, MA)

Eko and Widya, both high-anxiety students, however, believed that their teachers had not given them enough attention and that they tended to focus only on the students who had better proficiency. They stated:

It makes me uncomfortable and anxious when the teachers - their attention only focuses on those who "can" [...] They only know [I am nervous]. That's all. (Eko, HA)

Perhaps, the teachers should be more active in interacting with all students in class because sometimes they just "know" the students who are active [...], those

the teachers know very well – it is like, they are top students in class if compared with those not so “known”. (Widya, HA)

This finding is similar to those of two studies conducted by Trang and associates in Vietnam (see Trang et al., 2013a; Trang & Moni, 2015) in which those not so happy with the teachers were high-anxiety learners. As seen from the excerpts above, both Eko and Widya felt that they had been given less attention by the teachers and this, based on their perspectives, may be attributed to their being less proficient than others. However, it should be noted that in this study, some learners from low and medium anxiety groups, Nana, for example, seemed to be quite happy with their teachers' efforts in making them feel at ease in class. One of the reasons might be that these learners believed that anxiety could also give positive effects (see Aceng's and Nana's comments in Theme 1).

Theme 4: Students' lack of proficiency was attributed to high FLA

Students' lack of proficiency emerged as a factor associated with anxiety. Fida and Yasmin, for examples, commented:

[...] the lack of proficiency. So, those [students], [who are] lack of proficiency, tend to be more anxious. (Fida, FG2)

I think it [anxiety] has something to do with their [students'] English competence [...] when they have a low level of competence, then the anxiety will be high. (Yasmin, FG1)

Eko and Widya, both high-anxiety students, believed that their English was not good enough and this made them feel anxious. They stated:

From the pronunciation, I am not so good at it [...] vocabulary, if asked [questions], sometimes I know what is asked, but how to structure my answer [is difficult]. (Eko, HA)

Sometimes they [the questions] are [spoken] too fast, sometimes they are not, the problem is [that] my vocabulary [mastery] is not so good (*laughing*). (Widya, HA)

This result was in line with that of Trang's and Moni's (2015) study in which the participants also considered the improvement of English proficiency very important to reduce learners' anxiety. Thus, helping learners improve their

proficiency gradually whilst sustaining their confidence might be one possible way teachers can do.

Theme 5: The use of Indonesian in class was attributed to low FLA but it should be done with cautions

The teachers seemed to agree that the use of Indonesian in class could help reduce their students' anxiety. However, some teachers held the opinion that Indonesian should only be used as a "way out" when students faced difficulty in speaking or understanding explanation in English. Nike and Yasmin, for instance, commented:

[...] They [students] are a bit comfortable with the goals of the class [if we use Indonesian at times] because they can understand a little bit more than if we use English all the time. Sometimes, I try not to use Indonesian directly after giving instruction in English. I give examples, after that, if they show confusion, then I will use Indonesian. (Yasmin, FG1)

They can speak Indonesian, as long as they have tried to speak in English, it can make their anxiety low. (Nike, FG2)

Slightly different in views, Fida preferred her *English 3* students to use English. She stated:

For level 3, I would choose not to use Bahasa [meaning: Indonesian] in class, because I expect them, let's say, if they don't know the word, I would encourage them to describe it. (Fida, FG2)

Perhaps, Surya, a low anxiety student, had summarized the various views held by the teachers on the use of Indonesian in English classes. He commented that whilst the use of Indonesian could make the students less anxious, it should be limited. He stated:

[...] if we suddenly forget what to say, then we mix [English and Indonesian], perhaps, it will make students feel more confident. We will feel more comfortable if allowed to mix [English and Indonesian] moreover when we forget what to say. But it should be limited. (Surya, LA)

With regard to this, even though not specifically in anxiety literature, the benefits of the use of L1 in L2 classroom have been extensively discussed from cognitive perspectives (e.g. Swain & Lapkin, 2013). Swain and Lapkin (2013)

further claimed that L1 use can help learners sustain attention, communicate ideas that are too complex, and solve problems. These descriptions may offer an explanation, from cognitive views, as to why the use of Indonesian was attributed to learners' lower level of anxiety. It was also consistent with Mak's (2011) study that found the use of learners' L1, Chinese, as a factor attributed to low anxiety level.

Additionally, there seemed to be a converging view that the use of Indonesian should be limited despite the benefits of L1 use in L2 classrooms, which may also have its own ground of explanation. Rolin-Ianziti and Varshney (2008), for example, whilst acknowledging the positive affective role of code-switching in class, found that their participants thought L1 use sometimes resulted in a lack of challenge. What they found may also correspond to a phenomenon Yuni found in class in which some learners expected translation too much. She reported:

[...] the barrier is only the lack of vocabulary, which they can solve by mixing it with Indonesian or by asking the teacher. But then, I don't always give the answer right away [...] they expect that I will give them everything that they need [...] I am a walking dictionary, [...] but I don't do that. I let them find the words themselves; they can use their dictionaries [...]. (Yuni, FG2)

Considering this, it may be wiser to let teachers make judgements on when, how, and how often learners are allowed to use their L1 explicitly in class. Here, it was possible that Yuni's students had been accustomed to constantly receiving teachers' translations in class, perhaps from their previous learning experiences. With regard to this, Cook (2010) stated that teachers' constant and ongoing reflection and exploration of pedagogical principles on whether and in what ways learners' L1 use is justified are needed. Nike's suggestion presented earlier on allowing learners to use Indonesian if they still have difficulty expressing ideas in English even after they try their best may be an example.

Theme 6: Group works were attributed to low FLA but they should be done with cautions

Some teachers commented that the use of group works might have different effects for learners. While it could make students less anxious in class, it

could also make some students put less effort than the others. Fida, for instance, reported:

Usually in groups, the students tend to be more relaxed. [...] but when we have group works, of course there will be students, who are active in participating in the classroom, while others would be stealing the time, checking on their cell phones, or doing something else. (Fida, FG2)

Fida's concern above was in line with Surya's comments about the group works he did in class. He reported:

When we need to do some discussions, they [students] – it seems that they understand, but they are reluctant to express their ideas. I think it is more likely they are lazy than afraid. (Surya, LA)

Nike, additionally, reported that in group works, some of her students tended to ask the more able students to speak, presenting their works. She commented:

[...] if I ask them to prepare something in groups, actually, the ones who speak are only the students who can speak fluently, so, I make the rule that everybody should speak, so all of them can speak. (Nike, FG2)

Interestingly, the same as Nike's testimony above, Widya, a high-anxiety student, reported that in group works she felt more relaxed as one of her group mates would speak for the whole group. She reported:

I love group works as the teachers will normally just ask the representative of the group to speak and we already decide who that person is. So, I am not so nervous during group works. (Widya, HA)

Apart from that, Nana believed she had benefited from working in groups. She reported:

I have two group mates. "A" is very confident but her English is so "messy". The other one really-really prioritizes, "My English should be good," but she is lack of confidence [...] So, I kind of support them, supporting my less confident friend to be more confident and helping the other [...] structure her English better. (Nana, MA)

With regard to these findings, some points could be commented. Both the teachers and the students seemed to agree that group works tended to make

learners feel less anxious in class. This finding was consistent with the findings of some previous studies (e.g. Effiong, 2016; Koga, 2010). Koga (2010), for example, found that cooperative works in class was attributed to learners' sense of cooperativeness, which in turn contributed to declining anxiety. Additionally, as also seen from Nana's comment above, in group works learners could help each other and give their contribution, which in turn, may boost their self-confidence and risk-taking behavior (Shao et al., 2013).

However, whilst group works may be considered beneficial for learners, they were not always perceived in fully positive views by the teachers. Interestingly, as to why group works tended to make Widya feel less anxious, she commented that in group works, she could "escape" from talking by asking the more able friend in her group to talk representing her group. Additionally, Surya also commented that in groups some students tended to work less hard than the others, sometimes, despite their sufficient proficiency.

In short, whilst the finding on the positive effects of group works on anxiety is consistent with those of many previous studies, the use of group works should not be taken for granted as giving merely positive effects on learners. Hence, Nike's strategy to ask all students to speak may be considered insightful. However, doing so in a whole-class interaction can be quite time-consuming. With regard to this, Jacobs and Hall (2002) suggested that teachers ask students to do small group presentation, in which each member of the groups is responsible for representing his or her groups in their new groups consisting different students. They further asserted that it can also increase each learner's talking time or speaking opportunity, which as Savasci (2014) stated, is attributed to lower anxiety level as learners' positive self-perceptions towards their proficiency grow.

CONCLUSIONS

Considering the results of this study, the following pedagogical implications can be suggested. Whilst the teachers had had a lot of similar views with those of some students, some other students reported that their teachers' efforts to help them with their anxiety had not been sufficient. Whilst it should be acknowledged that teachers may not be able to help every learner in the way they want because of the number of the students, as suggested by Jennybelle Rardin, a language specialist, teachers should listen to "the inner process of each learner, letting him or her know through words or actions that he or she

has been heard and respected” (Young, 1992, p. 166). The mismatch in perceptions especially among teachers and high-anxiety learners may be one of the barriers in their reaching mutual understanding on how best to manage learners’ anxiety for better learning. Whilst learners with low and medium anxiety may be aware of their teachers’ good intention in giving activities requiring them to go beyond their comfort level to encourage them to show their best effort and overcome their anxiety, those with high anxiety may feel more neglected and left behind. Hence, teachers may try to specifically approach learners whom they consider highly anxious, such as by giving extra guidance, so they can feel their teachers’ attention more. To inform learners from the onset of the semester that intelligibility is more important than “perfect” grammar and pronunciation and to focus more on learners’ efforts in learning than on the outcome of their speech per se may also help ease learners’ anxiety. This, in turn, may encourage them to speak more despite their limited ability.

Considering both the facilitating and debilitating effects of anxiety reported by learners, as also suggested by Suleimenova (2013) and Trang and Moni (2015), learners are also responsible to manage their anxiety, optimizing the facilitating effects and minimizing the debilitating effects. Learners could improve their self-reliance, being in charge of their own learning, for example, by spending more time studying English and using English independently outside the class and having a clear study plan. They can also ask others for help, such as, by consulting their learning difficulties with their teachers personally and by having a study group with classmates they are close to (Trang & Moni, 2015).

The results of this study, though may not be generalized to wider population, offer replications of some findings of previous studies, as well as unique perspectives of the participants on FLA as it tried to capture the FLA phenomenon through the participants’ viewpoints. In relation with the overall results, there are some important points that need to be considered for future studies. Firstly, it is important to investigate FLA among students from education backgrounds other than universities considering studies on FLA in Indonesia so far still focus on university students (see, e.g., Anandari, 2015; Ariyanti, 2016; Marwan, 2008). Some mismatches in views between teachers and students on FLA also need to be investigated further. Hence, to conduct an FLA study by examining teachers’ and students’ journals on anxiety during a longer period of time, slightly similar to Trang et al.’s (2013b) study on FLA which used auto-

biographies in the Vietnamese context, might be important to find out how FLA grows and the roots of these mismatches in the Indonesian context.

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