EXPLORING STUDENTS' ANXIETY IN ONLINE AND OFFLINE ENGLISH CLASSROOMS

Stefanus Angga B. Prima[1], Budi Riyanto[2], Dang Arif Hartono[3]
Universitas Agung Podomoro, Jakarta, Indonesia[1,2,3]

stefanus.angga@podomorouniversity.ac.id

Abstract
This study investigates the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Score (FLCAS) of students in English classes before the pandemic (offline class) and during the COVID-19 pandemic (online class) in a private university in Jakarta, Indonesia. There were 145 participants in total, 67 of which attended the offline class of English 1, while 78 others attended the online class of English 2. The 33 items of the questionnaire were adapted from FLCAS and were analyzed by three aspects: Communication Apprehension, Fear of Negative Evaluation, and Test Anxiety. The questionnaire items were translated into Indonesian and distributed online using Survey Monkey. The study used Independent Samples t-test to test the hypothesis, and the writer analyzed items to categorize the FLCA scores into high and low anxiety levels of each anxiety category. The writer found the FLCAS difference between offline and online classes insignificant ($p > 0.05$). Furthermore, The writer revealed that Fear of Negative Evaluation, especially judgment from classmates, was the dominant aspect that caused anxiety among students of both classes. On the other hand, it was also found that learners from both classes had no problem having their teacher correct their errors when using English.

Keywords— Anxiety; offline and online English class; FLCAS

Introduction

Learning a foreign Language is both a matter of cognitive aspects but also effective ones. The presence of these affective filters, which include motivation, attitude, and anxiety, in learning a foreign language is ubiquitous when learners study a foreign Language due to instrumental causes (Krashen, 1981). These effective filters can influence learners during the teaching and learning process. A high level of anxiety that occurs when learning a foreign Language may hinder language input during the foreign language learning process (Ni, 2012). On the other hand, a low level of anxiety may boost Language input. It is not just the feeling of being relaxed or happy during learning, but intense anxiety can promote 'resilience and hardiness during difficult times' (Dewaele, Witney, Saito, & Dewaele, 2018).

Studies about Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) started in the 1970s. One major study conducted by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) developed an instrument called Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). This instrument has been utilized by numerous researchers around the globe with different types of learners. Furthermore, Horwitz (2014) also indicated that this instrument has high reliability and validity as more results show that foreign language anxiety has a significant role in foreign language learning.

Some researchers have also conducted key studies that investigate the relationship between FLCA and test performance dating back from the early 1990s (Aida, 1994; Phillips, 1992) until the 2000s, with various contexts and English skills being investigated (Ayuningtyas, Mauludin, & Prasetyo, 2022; Cakici, 2016; Cao, 2011; Liu, 2022; Subekti, 2018). These studies show a negative correlation between high anxiety levels and test performance. Hewitt and Stephenson (2012), who replicated a study of FLA conducted by Phillips (1992), also found a

moderate negative and statistically significant correlation between language anxiety and test grades. Furthermore, they also found that anxiety has some facilitative functions as these can trigger grammatical accuracy in learners' spoken performance, especially for learners with moderate anxiety. This shows that anxiety does not only affect negatively but also affects some rather positively for some learners.

The COVID-19 pandemic has engulfed the world since 2020, and teachers and students have been forced to shift from in-person to online classes. This situation has created a new context where learners learn at home studying via online platforms such as Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, or Zoom. Since the pandemic's beginning in 2020, some studies focusing on online foreign language classrooms are worth discussing. Russell (2020) found that learners are generally more anxious at the beginning of the course than at the end of the period. She also suggested that teachers need to put more effort into alleviating learning anxiety, such as creating a positive support system and giving enough opportunities for students to interact with each other virtually. Research in China conducted by Jiang and Feng (2020) shows that online classes reduce anxiety, but students are still nervous when prompted by questions. While for Indonesia's context, Yaniafari and Rihardini (2021) found that learners are less likely to feel anxious in their online speaking classes. Regarding anxiety factors, a study conducted in vocational higher education showed Communication Apprehension as the leading cause of anxiety (Ayuningtyas et al., 2022).

The present study was in a private university in Jakarta, Indonesia, and aimed at capturing the phenomenon of FLA during English online classes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the university shifted from in-person classes into online courses, this research attempted to compare the FLA scores questionnaire completed by learners of offline English classes and the online ones. The investigation tried to reach the level of FLA between offline English classes and online ones by testing the following hypothesis:

H0: There will be no significant difference between FLA scores of online and offline classes.

H1: There will be a significant difference between FLA scores of online and offline classes.

The present study also investigated items based on the three factors affecting foreign Language learning: Communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety, as depicted in the questionnaire items.

Research Method

This research is a quantitative study as it incorporates the use of FLCAS developed by Horwitz et al., (1986), which has been used numerous times by researchers worldwide in different settings and participants. The 33 items in the FLCAS questionnaire were divided into three categories based on the three constructs of FLA: communication apprehension (items 1, 4, 9, 14, 15, 18, 24, 27, 29, 30, and 32), fear of negative evaluation (items 2, 7, 13, 19, 23, 31 and 33), and test anxiety (items 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26 and 28). In addition, nine items had reverse values as they indicated positive statements (items 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, and 32). Unlike the original version, which used a five-point Likert scale, the FLCAS questionnaire in this study used a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ('strongly agree') to 4 ('strongly disagree'), to avoid neutral responses. This study's four-point Likert scale in FLCAS is similar to Ayuningtyas et al. (2022), which aimed to maintain internal reliability.

All questionnaire items were translated into the Indonesian Language to reduce the possibility of misunderstanding. Some modifications were also made to the wording of the questionnaire items. In the original study by Horwitz et al. (1986), several things use the term

'foreign language .'In this study, it was decided that the term was changed to 'English Class' so the participants understood the items better. The term 'foreign language teacher' was also changed to 'English lecturer.'

The FLA score ranges from 33 to 132, in which a lower score indicates low anxiety and a higher score shows more profound concern. This score interpretation is similar to the study conducted by Amengual-Pizarro (2018), although, in that study, the five-point Likert scale was used. In this study, the anxiety level was divided into three: high anxiety (33-65 total points), moderate anxiety (66-98), and low pressure (99-132).

The results from the questionnaire were analyzed using Microsoft Excel 365 and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 20. The internal reliability measure's results were similar to that of Horwitz et al. (1986), which resulted in Cronbach Alpha's coefficient of .930. The hypothesis was tested using Mann.

In the last section of the questionnaire, participants were asked to fill in the demographic data (age, gender, department). They were asked to rate their listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills. They were also asked to fill in what hotel department they wished to take during the internship. This information will be helpful for the possibility of expanding the study scope or reference in future research.

The current study participants were private university students of hospitality majors enrolled in English 1, conducted fully offline in 2019, and English 2, completed in 2020, during the onset COVID-19 pandemic. English 2 class was initially offline but moved online due to government regulations restricting in-person courses. Therefore, students interacted with the lecturer using Microsoft Teams and Zoom platforms. The samples were taken using the convenient sampling method as the students enrolled in the English class in which this study was situated. In English 1, there were 67 participants comprised of 49 female and 18 male students, while in English 2, there were 78 students consisting of 65 female and 13 male students. Thus, in total, there were 145 participants.

The questionnaire was built on the Survey Monkey website, and participants were requested to respond online. The link to the survey was distributed through online chat platforms, WhatsApp, and Line Group. The first data collection was conducted after the English 1 Class had finished in 2019, and the second was at the end of the English 2 Class in June 2020.

Results and Discussion

The comparison of FLA between online and offline English class
The mean FLA in online English classes was 83.51, while the average score of FLA in offline English classes was 80.76, as depicted in Table 1 below.

Table 1: FLCAS Scores of Offline Class and Online Class

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
FLCAS	Offline Class	67	80.76	13.08
	Online Class	78	83.51	13.93

Looking at the results of the FLCAS score in Table 1 above, both groups fell into moderate anxiety. Only 12 students (12%) had great concern for offline classes, while six others (9%) had low pressure. The results in online courses were also quite similar. 9 students (12%) had low anxiety, while 8 others (10%) had high anxiety. Therefore, the average FLA score in an offline class was lower than in an online course.

Table 2: Independent Samples *t*-test

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means

F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
.006	.938	-1.219	143	.225	-2.75163	2.25732	-7.21365	1.71039

However, the Independent Samples t-test (Table 2) indicated that the difference between online and offline classes was not statistically significant (p > 0.05). With this result, it is concluded that between the online and offline classes, although the descriptive statistics showed a slight difference in the mean, the difference is not statistically significant.

Items with Highest and Lowest FLA Score Mean

In this study, a low score indicates high anxiety, while a high score indicates common concern. Interestingly, in both classes, item number 7 ('I feel that other students have better English than me') had the lowest mean (x=1.74 in offline class; x=1.93 in the online class). This indicated that Fear of Negative evaluation dominated the learners' anxiety in online and offline courses. Furthermore, in the offline class, the highest mean (x=3.00) was found in item number 17 ('I often feel like not going to English class), while for the online class, the highest mean (x=2.81) was found in item 19 ('I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make').

Regarding the aspect of Communication Apprehension, learners in the online class had the lowest mean (x=2.23) in item 24 ('I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students'), while the highest mean (x=2.77) was in item 30 ('I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English'). Regarding Fear of Negative Evaluation, the online class learners had the highest mean (x=2.87) in item 19 ('I am afraid that my English lecturer is ready to correct every mistake I make'). Lastly, regarding Test Anxiety, learners in the online class had the lowest mean (x=2.08) in item 11 ('I don't understand why some people get so upset over English language classes'), and the highest mean x=2.08) in item 17 ('I often feel like not going to my English classes').

The highest mean (x=2.73) in the Communication Apprehension in the offline class was item 30 ('I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English') and the lowest (x=2.22) was item 24 ('I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students'). Regarding Fear of Negative Evaluation, the highest mean (x= 2.81) is found in item 19 ('I am afraid that my English lecturer is ready to correct every mistake I make'), while the lowest mean (x=1.93) was found in two items: item 23 ('I always feel that the other students speak the English better than I do') and item 7 ('I feel that other students have better English than me'). Finally, in the aspect of Test Anxiety, the lowest mean (x=2.01) was found in item 11 ('I don't understand why some people get so upset over English language classes'), and the highest (x=2.81) was in item 21 ('The more I study the English class, the more confused I get').

Conclusion

From the investigation of both online and offline English classes in this study, it can be concluded that although the students in the offline class have lower FLCAS, the difference has not yet been found to affect their anxiety significantly. However, it is worth noting that the possibility of more downward pressure in online classes needs further exploration in future research. This research is still limited in terms of several participants and the English language performance test. Future research may need to incorporate the English class test results to see if the anxiety the learners experience during learning is more facilitating or hindering learning progress.

In terms of English teaching, language teachers must put extra effort into alleviating learners' anxiety, especially those related to fear of being evaluated by their peers. Most learners fear that their peers with higher English proficiency will judge those with lower ability. Some learners

may not be as anxious in an online setting as those attending offline classes, but moderate anxiety is still there. Therefore, teachers should build a positive environment where peer evaluations are not judgment tools to punish students with lower proficiency but facilitate progress for those who need it the most. Teachers should also provide effective feedback that struggling learners welcome, so stronger students with more advanced English proficiency can take it as examples. Positive encouragement that fosters confidence and accuracy among struggling learners can benefit the English class in the long run, in either online or offline courses. In the context of online learning, teachers need to find methods that reduce the fear of being evaluated through increasing interactivity among learners and teachers.

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