

## AN ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE READING ANXIETY TO EFL LEARNERS

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### Abstract

This study is aimed to know the scale on the level of anxiety on Foreign Language in general and in reading on EFL learners especially to English department learner of 2015 in IKIP Siliwangi Bandung. The method that is used in this research is descriptive qualitative. The data were gathered using an online form by using a Likert scale questions of FLRAS (Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale) and FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scales). The data that have been collected were then analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 22 that consisted of descriptive statistics (e.g. means, standard deviations, percentages, etc.). The data used to measure the level of FL anxiety in general and in reading. From the results, more than 66% of the EFL learners have a medium-level in FLRAS, and 76% of the participant has a level of mildly anxious in FLCAS toward English as a foreign language.

**Keywords:** *Foreign Language Reading Anxiety, FLRAS, FLCAS*

### INTRODUCTION

Language as a tool for communication that uses around the world is something that must be learned as a piece of general knowledge in this fast era. It also has central role on intellectual development, social, and emotional students to supported success student and learn all of lessons, Parmawati (2018). One of the languages used by many people all over the world is the English language. English as a foreign language is the essential intelligence for learners in Indonesia. Although it is not something new, Indonesian EFL (English as Foreign Language) learners still found the language as a difficult language to learn and master.

In Learning English, there are four skills that need to be mastered by the students, namely reading, writing, speaking and listening. According to Dreyer (1998, cited in Apsari, 2017), reading is the most important skill for second language learners in academic contexts. However, English as an FL (foreign language) certainly creates a significant fear of the use of the language itself which is well-known as foreign language anxiety (FLA). FLA as a unique type of anxiety specific to foreign language learning, defining it as “a definite complex self-viewpoint, assumption, feelings, and demeanor related to classroom language learning process” (Horwitz and Cope in Trang, Moni, & Baldauf, 2012). This anxiety is the learning obstacles for the development of the use and the application of the language that has been learned, which is a drawback for EFL learners.

Zhao (2009, p. 1) stated that “early studies in language anxiety had to focus on the language skill of speaking as it is considered as the most anxiety-provoking skill among all of the language skill, but in fact, every learner has different anxiety levels related to other language skills”. In the previous study about foreign language anxiety, there are many researchers that

making research about English speaking student in learning various languages, such as Korean, Japanese, Russian, Chinese, Arabic, and many other languages. Of course, every EFL students have a different level of anxiety according to the foreign language they studied.

Even though there are a few skills in a language, but in this research, the researchers only focused on the learners reading ability against anxiety which is then recognized as Reading Anxiety (RA) and used FLRAS (Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scales) to measure the anxiety levels. It also focused on how foreign language anxiety, in general, have a role in reading anxiety to the EFL learner by measuring it using the FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scales).

### **FLRA**

The most well-known research about Foreign Language Reading Anxiety (FLRA) was first conducted by Saito, Horwitz, and Garza in 1999. Saito et al. stated that an unusual script and writing system, and also unusual cultural material as a potential source of anxiety (in Ghonsooly & Loghmani, 2012). There are various sources of foreign language anxiety, which are personal factors (self-esteem, competitiveness, and beliefs), procedural factors (classroom procedures, instructor-learner interactions, and test anxiety), and cultural background (Huang, 2012). Huang (2012) also stated that “reading anxiety is a definite condition of anxiety that the learners do not experience the anxiety until he or she is faced with reading and then the anxiety begins to form and block the learners’ ability to decode or interact with the text”

### **FLRAS**

Saito et al. developed and used FLRAS (Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale) to apprise American University students’ reading anxiety toward Japanese, Russian, and French. They found that anxiety plays a big role in learners FL reading and that FLRA was different from other FL anxiety. Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scales (FLRAS) is an instrument which used to measure reading anxiety from a foreign language text which consists of 20 item-questionnaire based on a five-point Likert-type Scale question. The potential score on the FLRAS range from 20 to 100, which, the greater the number, the lower the level of FLRA experienced by the learners.

“The response of this questionnaire categorized from strongly disagree to strongly agree and inquire about ‘learners’ self-reports of anxiety over varied situation of reading, their viewpoint of the relative difficulty of reading as correlated to the difficulty of other language skills” (Saito et al., in Liu & Samimy, 2012). Since the FLRAS was developed to measure non-Asian learners’ FL reading anxiety in the U.S context, the original FLRAS was adapted to meet the needs of the present study. The only difference between the accustomed FLRAS and the original FLRAS is the wording. Beside of that, the accustomed FLRAS retains the same number, content, and ordering of the items on the original FLRAS.

### **FLCAS**

FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) is a self-reported measure of students’ anxiety in the foreign language classroom designed by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope in 1986 (Mojerloo, 2018). It has 33 items on a five-point Likert-type scale differing from strongly agree to strongly disagree. It measures three dimensions of classroom anxiety including; communication apprehension (number 1, 9, 14, 18, 24, 27, 29, 32), test anxiety (number 2, 8, 10, 19, 21), and fear of negative evaluation (number 3, 7, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25, 31, 33).

**Table 1.** Likert Scoring Table adopted from Horwitz et al. (1986)

Statement	Scoring				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Positive	1	2	3	4	5
Negative	5	4	3	2	1

FLCAS consist of a positive and negative statement, which the scoring also different too. The positive statement in the questionnaire is in number 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, and 23. Meanwhile, the negative statement in the questionnaire is in number 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. The potential score on the FLCAS varies from the minimum score of 33 to the maximum score of 165, which, the higher the score, the higher the level of FLA experienced by the learners. In this study, FLCAS used to measure Indonesian-speaking students’ anxiety in the English language classroom.

**METHOD**

This study used qualitative research. The respondents of this study were the English Department learners of class B1 2015 in the eight-semester that consist of 30 people at IKIP Siliwangi. The data was obtained from questionnaires. The data gained were analyzed in a descriptive way to explore their attitude, behavior and experience which emerged along teaching program as proposed by Dawson (2009 cited in Apsari & Yana, 2015). This used SPSS version 22 to found the descriptive statistics which contains means, standard deviations, percentage, etc. The descriptive statistic numbers are used to determine the categorization of the anxiety levels of FLRAS, which is divided into three levels, those are low, medium and high anxiety (Aydin in Subasi, 2014).

**Table 2.** The formula to categorize the score of the anxiety level of FLRAS

Level	Formula	Explanation
Low	Mean + Standard Deviation	The score is higher than this
High	Mean – Standard Deviation	The score is lower than this
Medium	Low > Medium > High	Between Low and High score

Different with FLRAS, the categorization of anxiety level in FLCAS used the adapted Oetting’s scale, which contains five levels started from “Very Anxious”, “Anxious”, “Mildly Anxious”, “Relaxed, and “Very Relaxed” (Mayangta, 2013).

**Table 3.** FLCAS anxiety scale adapted from Oetting’s scale

Range	Level
124 – 165	Very Anxious
108 – 123	Anxious
87 – 107	Mildly Anxious
66 – 86	Relaxed

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The purpose of this research was to find out the correlation of foreign language anxiety in general to foreign language reading anxiety on EFL learners of IKIP Siliwangi English department student of class B1 2015. The FLRAS and FLCAS questionnaire were distributed to the participants. The research findings obtained from the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety (FLRA) and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA).

**Table 4.** Descriptive Statistics for FLRAS and FLCAS

Type of Scale	N	Mean	SD
FLRAS	30	2.9048	0.39378
FLCAS	30	2.9227	0.28961

The outcome of the research indicated that FL reading anxiety and general FL anxiety is indistinguishable. The mean and standard deviation of the FLRAS (M = 2.9048; SD = 0.39378) is almost equal with the FLCAS (M = 2.9227; SD = 0.28961) (Table 4). According to this finding, it might indicate that the participants agreed more with the statements of reading and general anxiety.

By using a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient ( $r = -0.346$ ,  $n = 30$ ,  $p = 0.061 > 0.05$ ) to found out the relationship between FLRAS and FLCAS. The negative score of  $r$  means that it was statistically not significant, and the  $r$  score is bigger than 0.05 means that the higher anxiety level of reading does not prone to a higher level of anxiety in general.

As mentioned before, the mean and standard deviation were calculated as M = 2.9048 and SD = 0.39378 for the FLRAS. According to the given formula (Table 2), the participants having mean scores lower than 2.51 were labeled as high anxious since they agreed with many of the statements assessing FL reading anxiety and higher than 3,29 were categorized as low anxious learners since they disapprove with the questions measuring FLRA. 5 participant categorized as high, 20 participants categorized as medium and the rest of 5 participants categorized as low anxiety.

**Table 5.** Distribution of the Anxiety Level on the FLRAS

Group	N	%	Mean	SD
High (M > 3.29)	5	16.7	2.41	0.042
Middle (2.51 < M < 3.29)	20	66.6	2.86	0.216
Low (M < 2.51)	5	16.7	3.58	0.120
Total	30	100	8.85	0.378

Anxiety in general that scored from the FLCAS is not only distributed by the level of anxiety itself, but it also distributed by the subscales. These subscales are used to describe which part that got the biggest part of the anxiety of FL in general.

**Table 6.** Distribution of the Anxiety Level on the FLRAS

Group	N	%	Mean	SD
Very Anxious	0	-	-	-
Anxious	4	13.3	3.43	0.180
Mildly Anxious	23	76.7	2.90	0.129
Relaxed	3	10	2.38	0.166
Very Relaxed	0	-	-	-
Total	30	100	8.71	0.475

According to the distribution of anxiety levels of 30 participants in FLCAS, mostly they are in the mildly anxious level that contains more than half of the participants which is 76.7%. The anxious level is bigger in quantity than the relaxed level, which is 13.3%, and the relaxed level only have 10% of the participants. The anxious level has the biggest mean score of 3.43 (SD = 0.180) on the FLCAS among the groups, it also abides of the largest number of participants (n = 23, 76.7%). Despite the relaxed level of general anxiety in FL, the majority of participants (90%) reported that they had experienced anxiety in an English language classroom.

**Table 7.** Descriptive Statistics of the FLCAS and Its Subscale

Subscale	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Communication apprehension	2.13	3.63	2.93	0.365
Test anxiety	1.80	4.00	2.82	0.588
Fear of negative evaluation	2.25	3.75	2.95	0.307
Total Anxiety	6.18	11.38	8.70	1.260

The descriptive statistics analyzed the subscales of the FLCAS, which all of the three items have a balanced score of Mean that below the score of three, it means that participants have the same thought about the answer to the question. They all agree to the positive statement and disagree with the negative statement. While the minimum and the maximum score of the subscale goes to the fear of test anxiety by the participants.

## Discussion

The objective of the research is to investigate whether EFL learners especially learner of English department in IKIP Siliwangi have anxiety towards English as an FL, whether it's anxiety in general or specifically in reading. Through the outcome of the research, it was found that the participants have the same answer in FLRAS and FLCAS. Most of them are agreed that there are things that triggered the anxiety in learning or using English as an FL.

The anxiety level of FLRA participant showed that the majority of 83.3% believed that they had experienced anxiety while reading English. Meanwhile, 16.7% of the low anxiety group in FLRA proclaimed that they did not really have anxiety toward reading English as an FL. Same with the result of the anxiety levels in FLRAS, FLCAS also showed that only 10% of the participants that have low anxiety (relaxed) toward learning or using English in a classroom.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation in the result and discussion, we can sum up that even though the subject is learners who majoring in English language education, anxiety toward the language itself still appear. The anxiety of FL appeared in general which is in a classroom, and also in a specific skill which is reading in this research. Through a FLRAS and FLCAS, teacher or lecturer could find the anxiety level of the learners and find a specific way to lessen their anxiety while learning or using English as an FL.

Following the conclusion, hopefully, this research can be a basis for the next researchers. This research recommended to the teacher/lecturers, the learners, and future researchers. For the lecturers, the result of this research can be followed to know the anxiety levels of the learners, which can be used as a reference in determining methods, technique or media for teaching and learning activity of English as a foreign language to the EFL learners. For the learners, it is hoped that by knowing the result of this research, they can find out how anxiety arises in learning or using English as an FL especially in reading skill. For future researchers, it is hoped that they can find a way to lessen the anxiety that arises in learning or using English as an FL, especially for the FL learners in Indonesia.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This article is the result of hard work, guidance, and support from several people. Thus, we would like to proclaim our honor to our supervisor, parents, beloved one, and people who have given their support, prayers, and guidance in writing this article. We also would like to give an appreciation of gratitude to IKIP Siliwangi, the head of English Education Study Program, and the lecturers in English Education Study Program who have given us knowledge, supervision, and time for the last three and a half year. Finally, the writer hope this article will have some contributions and be helpful to the audiences of PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education) no matter how small and deficient it is. The suggestions and critics are welcomed.

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