REDUCING EFL LEARNERS' SPEAKING ANXIETY THROUGH SELECTIVE ERROR CORRECTION AND GROUP WORK

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This quantitative study aimed to examine the level of speaking anxiety experienced by second-year high-school Acehnese EFL learners in their oral performance in L2 classroom and to investigate the attempt to lower their anxiety through the implementation of selective error correction and group work. The findings showed that a high level of speaking anxiety was found in the majority of the learners, and that the use of selective error correction and group work for the treatment of speaking anxiety overall resulted in the learners' improved performance in their oral task. The findings highlighted the needs to create a positive and supportive educational environment that stimulates learners to freely experiment with L2 and to establish close-knit learning communities that promote authentic interactions in L2 and provide opportunities to be more engaged in oral language use.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian EFL learners lack opportunities to practice speaking in class and in real-life situations, resulting in their poor listening and speaking skills. Since English is not an official language, exposure to English only takes place in a language class (Yosintha, 2020). In comparison to ESL learners, who study English in a country where English is the main language, EFL learners tend to have lower level of fluency due to their lack of exposure to authentic language normally found

in interaction and communication with native speakers. EFL learners' engagement to the authentic language use might be confined to their weekly classroom sessions, and accordingly, the majority of them still fail to demonstrate a satisfying proficiency in their productive skills.

In addition to their lack of exposure to L2 authentic use beyond classrooms, some other factors have been suggested as possible causes of EFL learners' struggle. The washback impact of exit and entrance exams has particularly been accused to contribute to the condition (Furaidah et al., 2015). National examinations, measuring only learners' reading and listening skills result in a backlash, causing teachers to divert the teaching away from productive skills. Classroom instruction are now devoid of such necessities as long-term assignments, critical thinking, and computer-based learning since teachers concentrate on taking practice tests by handing out worksheets with items designed identically to those found on standardized examinations. In an attempt to elevate their learners' exam results, some schools even altered course objectives and overhauled course content. Others suggested that passivity, compliance, and reflectiveness are all inherent characteristics of Asian EFL learners (Loh & Teo, 2017), who tend to favor a teacher-centered approach, with teachers expected to be well-equipped for classes, display strong command of course materials, deliver content logically and methodically, and be proficient at responding to learners' inquiries. Others pointed out the shortfall in communicative and interactive tasks in textbooks (Diaab, 2016), as well as the complexities of regulating oral communication tasks in overcrowded classrooms (Ayu, 2019), claiming that teachers are forced to cover a large number of pages in a limited class time, leaving no time for additional communicative activities.

Nevertheless, of the varying causes of EFL learners' lack of proficiency, the feeling of unease and apprehension they experience when learning or communicating in a language other than their own has commonly been identified as the major factor impeding their learning and acquisition. This so-called foreign language anxiety may be skill-specific in nature, arising when learners are faced

with speaking, listening, reading or writing activities that may expose their lack of competence or make them uncomfortable. Speaking and listening in particular have been identified as the two most common causes of foreign language anxiety (Afshar & Hamzavi, 2014), and the former is widely regarded as the most anxiety-inducing aspect of foreign language learning (Sutarsyah, 2017). Foreign language anxiety may also be caused by classroom-related variables such as activities that require learners to produce the language orally or in front of their peers, peers' frequent laughter at a mistake, or instructors' strict approach to error correction. In fact, foreign language anxiety that arises from having to produce language orally, especially in front of peers, is the most frequently reported barriers faced by not only beginner but also advanced EFL learners (Gkonou, 2014). Furthermore, language anxiety may be learners-induced, brought about by learners' unfounded assumptions, implausible expectations, self-perceived ineptitude, and fear of unfavorable judgment.

Horwitz et al. (1986, as cited in Kralova & Petrova, 2017) contended that communication apprehension, fear of negative judgment, and test anxiety are the three primary causes of FLA. They argued that having to express one's ideas in a language in which one is not confident while being evaluated by more proficient users of the language can result in discomfort and fear of being criticized and humiliated, which can arouse communication anxiety. Also, the proclivity to be extremely worried and stressed out by the potential implications of poor performance during a test or an exam may impair learners' capacity to perform as expected in an evaluative situation and heavily affects their performance in a foreign language assessment. Furthermore, learners frequently believe that they are under constant scrutiny from their teachers' and peers; as a result, they develop the feelings of apprehension about these people's judgments and presumption that their peers would rate them unfavorably.

Foreign language anxiety has been found to cause debilitating effects on L2 learning. The apprehension and stress that EFL learners are under has the potential to take precedence over the cognitive processes involved in learning. Anxiety are

among the emotional reactions that are closely associated with the heightened filter (Krashen, 1982, as cited in Patrick, 2019), and anxious learners' language acquisition will likely be stifled, almost as if a barrier has been created around them to block the flow of information to their brain. In more severe cases, anxiety will result in learners' suffering from anxiety disorders (Mayworm et al., 2014), displaying a non-responsive, passive behavior toward their learning, as evidenced by a lack of enthusiasm and mediocre achievement in tests and assignment. An overwhelming feeling of anxiety may drive EFL learners to escape altogether from the work at hand, causing them to indulge in avoidance behavior. In fact, anxiety may result in such psychological disorders as nervous breakdown, panicking, and short-term memory loss or poor memory recall, where, for instance, as reported by Horwitz et al. (1986 as cited in Tran, 2012), learners reported that they understood a particular grammatical form but failed to recall it or made reckless mistakes in an exam or an oral test in which they are required to retain and coordinate a large number of grammar rules at the same time. While the degree of apprehension differs among individuals and circumstances (McCroskey, 1977, as cited in Byrne et al., 2012), at any rate, all anxious ELL learners display similar tendency, they tend to underrate and fail to perform at their full capacity to communicate in L2 and become fixated at their failures rather than their achievements in L2 learning. They begin to question their competence in a subject, and anxiety ultimately becomes a stumbling block to their learning and demonstrating what they are actually capable of.

EFL teachers who are well-versed in the symptoms of anxiety in their learners can begin to identify and detect them early within learners, understand the mental mechanisms associated with their nervous sensations, and assist them by implementing their method to deal with and control their apprehension (Alrabai, 2014; Atasheneh & Izadi, 2012). Among the most commonly proposed pedagogical approaches to assist EFL learners suffering from anxiousness are selective error correction and group work, both of which could be employed concurrently so as to produce a gradual change on the students. Selective error correction constitutes a two-step procedure that begins with the detection of learners' errors and ends with

the highlight of the errors so as to allow the learners to collect the information necessary to fix the error (Uysal & Aydin, 2017). In selective error correction, feedback can be confined to a single category or several pre-determined categories of errors. Teachers can also take into account such factors as errors' interference with the intended meaning of the statement, their complexity, and their relevance with the current topic of the class. EFL learners would gain greater benefit from a teacher's criticism if they concentrate on specific and limited features of their oral performance since it allows them to attend to and eliminate one fault at a time from their language. More importantly, this practice would pose no detrimental impact on learners' attitudes toward speaking since their performance would not be marred by a lot of potentially demotivating remarks by their teachers. In addition to selective error correction, teachers may casually set up group work for any teaching and learning activities or assessment tasks in which learners of varying levels assemble into pairs, small groups, or large groups and collaborate as a team to achieve shared objectives (O'Donnell & Hmelo-Silver, 2013). During group work, interaction with peers, especially with more experienced ones, facilitates meaningful exchanges among learners and contributes considerably to learners' skill and knowledge developments. Group work allows learners to discuss subject matters or complete collaborative tasks with their peers in a less intimidating setting (Zulfikar & Aulia, 2020), thus eliminating the fear that prevents anxious learners from engaging in the target language with the entire class.

Foreign language anxiety has attracted the attention of many researchers, and a number of studies have attempted to explain its nature, causes and impacts in L2 learning and acquisition. In their autobiographical research on the growth of anxiety in EFL learners, Trang et al., (2013) looked at 49 university students who were considered apprehensive according to the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale. They reported that, in their L2 learning quest, learners started off feeling highly enthusiastic, but their enthusiasm dwindled with time, replaced by a rising amount of anxiety that peaked out during their high school or tertiary periods. They also found that teaching methodology, evaluation methods, classroom interactions,

and curriculum design were among the major factors that spawned and exacerbated the learners' anxiety. In a case study on the usage of English as an international language of communication at two Austrian multinational corporations, Aichhorn and Puck (2017) found that foreign language anxiety, to a varying extent, affected all non-native participants. As a coping mechanism, the affected respondents either avoided and withdrawn themselves altogether from any circumstances that necessitated the use of English, or resorted to code-switching. Hamouda (2013) conducted a survey in his study on learners' unwillingness to participate in classroom activities involving well over a hundred EFL learners from a major tertiary educational institution. According to her findings, a significant number of learners were unwilling to use L2 and remained quiet for a variety of reasons, including limited L2 proficiency, fear of being judged, face-saving, low confidence, lack of preparation, and fear of making errors. Furthermore, Jiang and Dewaele (2020) explored the anxiety in Chinese EFL learners at tertiary level as well as its correlations to their sociobiographical and linguistic factors. The findings revealed that FLA was substantially correlated to learners' origins, international travel or stay, L2 learning starting age, self-rated fluency, grades in achievement tests, and intensity of L2 exposure. Along the same line, using a scale adapted from (Horwitz et al., 1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), Latif (2015), in her analysis of the degree and causes of language anxiety among Chinese ESL learners, reported that to a large extent the learners felt anxious in L2 classroom, and that the anxiety levels among the learners were much determined by their years of L2 exposure. Additionally, E. J. E. Lee (2016) surveyed and interviewed sixty master's-degree ESL learners to study the effects of instructors' oral corrective feedback on the learners' language anxiety. Instructors' corrective feedback, in contrast to clarification requests, was in general revealed to contribute positively to the participants' affective parameters, particularly reducing their fear of speaking in L2 in front of their peers.

Nevertheless, in spite of a number of prior investigations on language anxiety in general, studies focusing on classroom strategies to deal with learners' L2 anxiety

are still few in number. Indeed, studies focusing specifically on L2 speaking anxiety in Indonesian educational context and ways for teachers to cope with the issue still need further study impetus. This research aimed to fill this gap. It was conducted to examine the level of speaking anxiety in secondary-level EFL learners in a public high school in Aceh Besar, Indonesia, and to examine the effect of concurrently applying selective error correction and group work in reducing their speaking anxiety. Preliminary observation revealed that the reality faced by the majority of Indonesian EFL learners is well-represented by the ELLs in Aceh Besar, the majority of whom, are unable to demonstrate an adequate competence in their speaking skill and displayed anxiety to some extent when asked to produce L2 orally in front of the entire class.

Theoretically, this study's findings were intended to corroborate established theories and further provide empirical evidence of practical rules and principles of English language pedagogy, notably in terms of EFL learners' oral performance through the application of selective error correction and group work. This study demonstrated how selective error correction and group work might help EFL learners overcome their speaking anxiety in L2 classroom, showcasing their experience in a speaking class with selective error correction and group work and giving an insight on ways to cope with and manage the anxiety that comes along with learning a foreign language.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative framework in seeking to obtain and explore relevant data on the level of EFL learners' speaking anxiety. A quasi-experimental design was used for this study since field settings made random assignment of participants infeasible (Maciejewski, 2020). The research was conducted at a state vocational high school in Aceh Besar, Indonesia, involving thirty second-year EFL learners as participants. These participants were selected purposively as the sample of this research on the ground that these EFL learners still displayed anxiety and poor oral proficiency even though this class of ELLs had longer weekly English session than the other classes.

Questionnaires and tests, which consisted of an oral pretest and an oral post-test, were the data collection methods used in this study. Closed-ended questionnaire in the form of modified 12-item Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz et al., 1986) was used to measure the learners' anxiety levels in this study. The questionnaire, administered on the first meeting, consisted of selected items on the five-point Likert scale indicative of L2 speaking anxiety that were distributed equally into three sections, comprising communication apprehension, test-anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. With the responses ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree', the questionnaire was later statistically analyzed by calculating the percentage and the mean of the learners' responses to each item of the questionnaire. The learners' anxiety scores were calculated by summing up the ratings of all items, with possible score ranging from a minimum of 12 to a maximum of 60 and with higher total scores indicating higher level of anxiety. The learners' levels of anxiety were determined by adopting Jee's (2014) anxiety categorization, in which those with scores in the range of 12 to 32 were considered to have low level of anxiety, those whose score ranged from 33 to 44 were classified as moderately anxious, and those with a score range of 45 to 60 were perceived as highly anxious. In addition, items with combinational percentages (of those who agreed and strongly agreed with the statements) higher than 40% were regarded as anxiety-arousing factors.

A pre-test, in which the learners were required to make a two- to three-minute-long oral presentation on a topic assigned the day before, was administered to examine and measure at first hand the learners' anxiety level before experimental teaching. The speaking assessment rubric as adopted from Ismailia (2021) was then used to evaluate their performance. This 100-point analytic scoring rubric assesses five different components of speaking ability, which comprise pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, and task. After a four-meeting experimental teaching, in which selective error correction and group work were implemented, an oral post-test was administered to evaluate their speaking performance after the treatment.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings

The following table sums up the learners' responses to the communication apprehension items in the questionnaire.

Table 1. Responses to Communication Apprehension Items

No.	Statements	Percentage					Mean
		SA	A	NA	D	SD	
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.	10%	53.33%	26.67%	10%	0%	3.633
2	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.	10%	50%	36.67%	0%	3.33%	3.633
3	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.	3.33%	20%	46.67%	23.33%	6.67%	2.9
4	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	6.67%	56.67%	36.67%	0%	0%	3.7
Overall Mean Score							3.47

*SA: Strongly Agree; A: Agree; NA: Neither Agree nor Disagree; D: Disagree; SD: Strongly Disagree.

The result shows that a combined 63.33% or more than half of the learners believed that they did not feel confident using L2 in front of others. Only three learners (10%) affirmed that classroom communication in L2 did not make them feel uneasy. The other eight learners (26.67%) indicated that they had neither a positive nor a negative view on speaking in L2 in the classroom. In addition, almost

half of the learners also (40%) felt reluctant to offer their answers to their teacher's questions in class. Only one learner (3.33%) admitted that his/her inability to comprehend the teacher's statement was not a source of apprehension. Also, a total of seven learners (23.33%) indicated that they felt more stressed out and unconfident in learning L2 more than in learning any other school subjects. These learners still found L2 class the most stressful learning experience at school. On the other hand, more than half of the learners (30%) reported otherwise, with seven learners (23.33%) stating their disagreement and two (6.67%) other their strong disagreement on the idea that L2 lesson put them in a daunting situation. Additionally, a total of 19 learners (63.34%) admitted that their apprehension occurred when they failed to comprehend parts of what their teacher said.

In terms of the items reflexive of their test anxiety, the learners' responses in brief is shown in the following table:

Table 2. Responses to Test Anxiety Items

No.	Statements	Percentage					Mean
		SA	A	NA	D	SD	
1	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in class.	20%	46.67%	33.33%	0%	0%	3.87
2	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I made.	0%	46.67%	43.33%	0%	10%	3.27
3	I feel very self-conscious about speaking in foreign language in front of other students.	3.33%	43.33%	43.33%	10%	0%	3.4
4	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	3.33%	33.33%	40%	23.33%	0%	3.167
Overall Mean Score							3.43

As can be seen in the table, a total of 20 learners (80%) admitted to becoming panic-stricken when they had to speak in L2 without prior preparation, while a total of 14 learners (46.67%) felt uncomfortable and agitated over the thought that their mistakes and errors were to be pointed out by their teachers in front of their peers. Only three learners (10%) indicated that they did not feel afraid or anxious with the prospect of being corrected by their teacher.

A total of 14 learners (46.66%) also indicated that, to a certain degree, they feel inhibited when they have to speak in front of their classmates. On the other hand, only a small minority of the three learners (10%) felt that speaking in front of others is not a cause of inhibition for them. Furthermore, eleven learners (36.66%) indicated that speaking in L2 classroom is a cause of confusion and nervousness, while seven other learners (23.33%) reported that they do not experience nervousness or perplexity when speaking in L2 classroom.

As for the fear of negative evaluation items, the learners' responses are summarized in the table below.

Table 3. Responses to Fear of Negative Evaluation Items

No.	Statements	Percentage					Mean
		SA	A	NA	D	SD	
1	I keep thinking that the other students are better at language than I am.	33.33%	43.33%	23.33%	0%	0%	3.87
2	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	0%	40%	60%	0%	0%	3.27
3	I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	1.33%	50%	23.33%	1.33%	0%	3.4
4	I am afraid that the other students will	20%	50%	30%	0%	0%	3.167

laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.		
Overall Mean Score		3.76

Twenty-three learners (76.66%) believed that their language proficiency was inferior to other learners' and that other students performed better in their L2 classroom, and 12 learners (40%) reported to feel reluctant to offer their answers to their teacher's questions in class. The majority of the learners also perceived their lack of speaking ability, as shown by the fact that 19 (63.33%) of them agreed to the suggestion that their classmates possessed higher-level oral proficiency. Only four learners (13.33%) indicated their relative confidence by denying their peers' better L2 oral proficiency. In addition, 21 learners admitted to feeling anxious to speak in L2 due to the thought of being laughed at by their peers.

The learners' scores in all items in all three factors causing speaking anxiety were then summed up to arrive at the total score. The levels of anxiety were then assigned to each of the learners based on the total score they attained, as can be seen in the following table:

Table 4. Learners' Anxiety Levels

Learner No.	Fear of Negative Evaluation	Communication Apprehension	Test Anxiety	Total Score	Anxiety Level
1	15	15	18	48	High
2	13	12	13	38	Moderate
3	15	15	12	42	Moderate
4	18	15	11	44	Moderate
5	11	14	13	38	Moderate
6	18	16	20	54	High
7	20	20	20	60	High
8	8	10	8	26	Low
9	10	8	8	26	Low
10	13	12	13	38	Moderate
11	15	13	18	48	High

Learner No.	Fear of Negative Evaluation	Communication Apprehension	Test Anxiety	Total Score	Anxiety Level
12	15	12	15	42	Moderate
13	12	15	15	42	Moderate
14	18	15	15	48	High
15	20	16	18	54	High
16	20	20	20	60	High
17	18	20	16	54	Moderate
18	16	18	20	54	High
19	18	20	14	52	High
20	20	20	20	60	High
21	20	16	18	54	High
22	14	18	20	52	High
23	14	20	18	52	High
24	8	8	10	26	Low
25	14	18	20	52	High
26	18	18	18	54	High
27	20	20	20	60	High
28	18	15	15	48	High
29	18	18	18	54	High
30	20	18	14	52	High

As illustrated in the table, the majority of the learners experienced L2 speaking anxiety, with two-third of them (63.33%) considered to be highly anxious and eight of them (40%) considered to be moderately anxious. Only three learners (10%) indicated that they experienced a low-level anxiety.

Furthermore, the results of the learners' oral presentation in both pretest and post-test in brief can be seen in the tables below. Their scores in the respective tests, along with the mean scores, have been arranged in ascending order of magnitude with their corresponding frequencies.

Table 5. Pre-Test' Table of Frequency and Mean Score

No	Interval Class	Frequency (fi)	Midpoint (xi)	fi.xi
1	31 – 36	2	33	66

2	37 – 42	3	39	117
3	43 – 48	8	45	360
4	49 – 54	3	51	153
5	55 – 60	2	57	114
6	61 – 66	11	63	693
7	67 – 72	1	69	69
Total		30	357	1572
Mean		52.4		

Table 6. Post-Test' Table of Frequency and Mean Score

No	Interval Class	Frequency (fi)	Midpoint (xi)	fi.xi
1	63 – 66	3	64	192
2	67 – 70	4	68	272
3	71 – 74	0	72	0
4	75 – 78	11	76	836
5	79 – 82	3	80	240
6	83 – 86	0	84	0
7	87 - 90	9	88	792
Total		30	532	2332
Mean		93.28		

The learners' average score in the post-test was 93.28, significantly higher than that of the pre-test. This disparity suggests that the implementation of selective error correction and group work effectively lowered the learners' anxiety in L2 speaking.

Discussion

The result of the questionnaire revealed that fear of negative evaluation is the major cause of the learners' speaking anxiety. More than half of the learners admitted to harboring the feeling that their L2 proficiency was inadequate, deficient or inferior when compared to their peers'. As a matter of fact, all, but four of them, perceived that their peers' oral skill exceeded theirs. The learners apparently exhibited severe uneasiness when expressing themselves in L2 in front of others, which, as reiterated by Russell (2020), was caused by a constraining feeling of

excessive concern about others' perception of what is said. Their persistent fear of negatively evaluated by their teachers and their peers appeared to limit their engagement in L2 learning activities, especially in ones that entailed making an oral production of L2. The perpetual feeling of being scrutinized is prevalent, however, not only among the learners in this investigation, but also among many other ELLs, many of whom experience a sense of inadequacy and poor self-evaluation (Cheng & Erben, 2012), further exacerbated by their low self-confidence, throughout their L2 learning. Indeed, a persistent feeling of inadequacy may lead to an inferiority complex and can negatively interfere with learners' academic life (M. Lee et al., 2017). Learners may feel that they intellectually of less worth or importance than others, and as a result, they appear detached and withdrawn in the presence of the people who make them feel inadequate.

A large number of the learners reported that they avoided volunteering answers to their instructors' questions for fear of being incorrect and being judged as less proficient. Similarly, the majority of the learners also reported they are fearful of their L2 oral performance due to the perceived threat of being embarrassed or ridiculed. The results were comparable to those of Aichhorn and Puck (2017), who discovered that EFL learners tend to experience apprehensiveness when they have to speak in front of others in an L2 learning environment, causing them to restrict their engagement in learning activities. This attitude has detrimental consequences for L2 learning. Because instructional environments are meant to allow learners to learn from both their instructor and their peers, the possible advantages of a shared educational experience are missed. Since learners are frequently misinformed yet too timid to offer their ideas, they lose a chance for learning the correct answer. In addition, since learners may also typically be correct but are too anxious to speak up, they risk missing out on a genuinely gratifying moment.

Furthermore, communication anxiety and test anxiety accounted for relatively the same level of anxiety in the majority of the learners in this study. More than half of the learners suggested that they struggled with the feelings of low confidence, refraining them from speaking in their L2 classroom. Also, classroom oral activities,

ranging from simply being called up to respond to the instructor's on-the-spot occasional inquiries to making an oral presentation in front of the classroom, caused intense apprehension to a number of them. In fact, a major portion of the learners indicated that their performance was especially marred with panic-attack as a result of having to speak without preparation. Moreover, almost half of the ELLs in this study identified instructors' negative feedback as particularly anxiety-provoking, indicating their worries about making mistakes, being criticized in front of their peers, and making them seem less than perfect. As a result, they exhibit aversive attitude because they would rather not say anything than say something but risk an error. These findings strongly support the assumption in the Hamouda's (2013) study that learners' fear of making mistake, fear of losing face, fear of being judged, low confidence and lack of preparation are among the sources of their anxiety and unwillingness to use the target language in the classroom. At this rate, not only does anxiety detrimentally impair their performance in a given task, but their overall academic performance was also put at risk since EFL learners are frequently assessed based on how well they perform orally.

In addition, a large number of learners in this study also identified their fear, nervousness, and subsequent reluctance to engage and interact in L2 as critically caused by not only their failure to comprehend their instructors but also their inability to comprehend the entire words in their teachers' utterances. This particular finding is in agreement with that of Suleimenova (2013) and Nilsson (2020) who reported that failure to understand what the instructor says is among the most anxiety-inducing scenarios for many ELLs. Apprehensive communicators attempt to attend to every word an interlocutor says in an interaction, not knowing that the more they focus on each word uttered, the more perplexed they become in keeping up with information flow, and that even the most skilled learners may struggle to communicate effectively with others. As a consequence, they have trouble in both comprehending others and getting their ideas across to them.

These negative emotional reactions to learning circumstances create a barrier that might obstruct learning or language acquisition. A learner's cognitive process

is heavily regulated by his or her emotional state, with L2 learning and acquisition being deterred if their affective filter is heightened, that is, if the circumstances surrounding the language learning make a learner feel under stress and unwilling to learn, creating a mental block that prevents input and hamper his or her cognition. EFL learners' feeling of anxiety gets in their way of achieving the primary objectives of foreign language learning, that is to communicate and exchange information and knowledge with others. Only through the creation of a student-friendly, low-stress educational setting can learners be stimulated to experiment, take risks, and produce exceptional performance, and selective error correction and group work serve this purpose well. The learners' L2 speaking anxiety was significantly reduced after the implementation of the two strategies as was evident in the mean score of their post-test, which was considerably higher than that of their pre-test.

Working under the selective error correction classroom, the learners became more confident in their ability to communicate in L2 (Ha et al., 2021) since the approach meets their need for non-threatening correction. Selective error correction is less overwhelming for EFL learners and enables them to concentrate on recurring errors. Moreover, in selective error correction, less is more; that is, correcting only a limited number of errors at a time will increase the possibility of the corrections being retained in the learners' long-term memory (Mak, 2019). However, to yield the expected results, teachers play a pivotal role in this. It is teachers' responsibility to motivate individuals who are reluctant to speak up by showcasing a positive attitude toward learners' efforts to communicate. Teachers must not just tolerate and welcome learners' errors, but also provide them with an appraisal of their good performance in order to keep their morals high, nurture confidence and alleviate the stress as a result of correction (Daskalovska et al., 2012). Selective error correction requires teachers to not only attend to learners' mistakes, but also consistently demonstrate their own forbearance for them in order to develop an atmosphere of sincere acceptance to errors and keep their affective filter in check.

Group work, on the other hand, empowers learners to take charge of their communicative tasks, and therefore relieves fear, promotes responsibility, and

improves fluency. Teachers can step away from the traditional teacher-centered classroom design and serve as a facilitator with the learners as the lead speakers instead (Nunan, 2014). This learning circumstance generates a more intimate atmosphere that facilitates learners to take risk in using L2 by instilling a feeling of safety. When working collaboratively in a small group, they will come to understand that other learners share their feelings and no learner in a group will have to bear the responsibility or feel ashamed if the answer is incorrect. As a result, they will be less intimidated and more encouraged to experiment more creatively with L2. Group work also encourages more active participation of the learners and creates more opportunity to be engaged in communicative tasks (Dobao, 2014). It gives learners wider possibilities to establish and regulate communication, generate a wider range of grammatical constructions, and partake in negotiation of meaning. Even if they may not be able to express their thoughts grammatically, creative language use still facilitates their interaction to achieve a shared objective.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Even though the advances to improve learners' oral proficiency and to balance their acquisitions of the four skills has been the focus of English pedagogy across the globe, including Indonesia, many ELLs continue to struggle in oral activities. While such factors as limited exposure to authentic L2 use, the teaching to the tests, learners' passive characteristics, and the absence of communicative and interactive exercises in textbooks have been proposed as the serious challenges in the teaching of speaking skill, learner's anxiety remains the single most concerning stumbling block, threatening the development of the communicative competence of ELLs across levels. This research focused on identifying Indonesian EFL learners' levels of anxiety and remedying the undesirable effects of speaking anxiety through the concurrent implementation of the selective error correction and group work. The findings indicated that the majority of the learners experienced high level of L2 speaking anxiety, with fear of negative evaluation as the major contributing factor, followed consecutively by communication anxiety and test anxiety. The findings also suggested that selective error correction and group work was able to

significantly mitigate learners' anxiety in their oral tasks. Selective error correction provided a secure environment for learners to experiment with the language and received corrective feedback that did not hamper their fluency and flow of speech while group work allowed the learners to be more engaged in meaningful communication and interaction, assume control of their own oral activities, and eventually freely use the target language without fear.

In EFL lessons, teachers should take into accounts learners' anxiety and provide a low-stress, warm, and encouraging educational classroom climate. They should not overlook it nor dismiss it as an issue that learners must solve by themselves, and thus, rather than being stuck to traditional approaches that aim only to instill textbook content, teachers must seek such anxiety-relieving teaching approaches as selective error correction for the sake of empowering learners in accomplishing their objectives. Because each learner comes with distinct characteristics and responds differently to correction and feedback, error correction in oral performance requires meticulous handling and attention. Besides, the dramatic improvement in the learners' oral performance was also attributed to the fact that allowing learners to complete a task collectively in a group promotes an anxiety-relieving atmosphere. When teachers allow learners to work cohesively in a group achieve a common objective, assisting one another and recognizing each other's strength, they will stop perceiving themselves as individuals and those very timid learners will gradually get the courage to open up to their peers. They will no longer assume that they are being evaluated adversely by them or that they are in a competition with the class' top brass, and as a result, they feel less anxious about L2 learning scenarios.

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