

FACE-TO-FACE OR ONLINE SPEAKING PRACTICE: A COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM ANXIETY LEVEL

Rahmati Putri Yaniafari; Ajeng Ayu Rihardini

Universitas Negeri Malang; Universitas Negeri Malang
yaniafari.fs@um.ac.id; ajeng.ayu.1602216@students.um.ac.id

Abstract: Speaking using foreign language in front of other people can be one of the most anxiety-provoking situations (Minghe & Yuan, 2013). Learners who does not enjoy interacting with other people or being the center of attention may exhibit extreme anxiety when they are asked to take parts in oral presentation, discussion, or any other kind of language activities. A study found that online discussion may decrease the effect. It provides a non-threatening situation for learners who are shy and withdrawn (Bakar et al., 2013). This survey study aims to see whether it is also applied in Indonesian tertiary education by investigating and comparing the learners' level of anxiety in face to face speaking class before Covid-19 pandemic and online speaking class during the pandemic. 120 students who experienced both speaking courses before and during the pandemic participated in the survey. Consistent with the result of other studies (Bakar et al.,2013; Rodrigues & Vethamani, 2015), this study found that in average, learners feel less anxious during during online speaking class (48,41%) compare to face-to-face class (60,96%).

Keywords: Foreign Language Anxiety, Online Language Learning, Teaching Speaking

INTRODUCTION

Learning a second or foreign language is often influenced by affective factors. Motivation, attitude, and anxiety are some that contribute to the performance of second or foreign language learning. Of the three listed affective factors, anxiety has become the most investigated in relation to learners speaking performance as it is an affective factors that could highly obstruct language learning process (Abrar, 2018; Amiri &

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Ghonsooly, 2015; Minghe & Yuan, 2013). It is a feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worried related to autonomic nervous system stimulation (Horwitz et al., 1986). Numerous studies have found that most second or foreign language learners have anxiety when it comes to speaking or communicating (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre, 2007; Nande, 2017; Riasati, 2012; Rihardini, 2020). Some observable distinctive features of learners who have high level of anxiety include: (1) having the tendency to avoid communicating, (2) having difficulty in concentrating, (3) becoming forgetful, and (4) even feeling panic when they are spontaneously asked to communicate in second or foreign language without enough preparation or time to think (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre, 2007). When these happen, learners start to avoid speaking or communicating, they'll have less exposure to the target language (Riasati, 2012).

Learner's anxiety usually occurs when learners assume that their speaking or oral performance is not good or incomprehensible. In other words, learners' low perceived speaking proficiency can be a major cause of anxiety (Brown, 2001). Many assumes that learners who have high level of anxiety are the one who have low speaking proficiency, however considering that perceived proficiency might be different compared to real competence, no one can guarantee that learners with high level of speaking proficiency never feel anxious when it comes to speaking in a second or foreign language.

Speaking in front of other people can also be one of the most anxiety-provoking situations (Minghe & Yuan, 2013). Introvert learners who does not enjoy interacting with other people or being the center of attention may exhibit extreme anxiety when they are asked to take parts in oral presentation, discussion, or any other kind of language activities as they tend to be more anxious when speaking in front of many people. Fear of negative evaluation is also another causes of the learners' anxiety (Çagatay, 2015; Horwitz et al., 1986). When learners start to speak or communicate using second or foreign language, especially during a speaking class, learners have to be ready to receive some comments or corrective feedback either from their teacher or peers. As learners have no

control over the type of feedback given, the anticipation of negative comments might trigger anxiety (Brown, 2007).

Since March 2020, Indonesia and even other parts of the world have been facing an unexpected situation which is a novel coronavirus pandemic. Due to the pandemic, all school and any other educational institutions are forced to make a transition to prevent the widespread of the virus. All face to face classes are replaced to online classes and every face-to-face language course activities are turned into online activities. Before the pandemic, almost all language activities are carried out in a face to face class, while online activities are only used as a supplementary activity to support the language learning and facilitate the development of learner autonomy in blended learning format. However, most teachers favor face to face learning as they are not familiar with online learning (Cong-Lem, 2018; Rodrigues & Vethamani, 2015). Originally, the objective of online language learning is to ease language learners to have more exposure to the target language in an individualized learning environment at their own pace and time (Rodrigues & Vethamani, 2015). However, during the pandemic, all language activities are conducted in online mode, regardless of the type; synchronous, asynchronous, structured, unstructured, and with or without the presence of the teacher.

There is limited number of research investigating learners' anxiety level in an online class. However, a study found that online discussion may provide a non-threatening situation for learners who are shy and withdrawn; It is expected to decrease their anxiety and concerns about being embarrassed as if they are speaking face to face (Bakar et al., 2013). In an online class, when learners are allowed to turn off their camera during the learning process, the introvert learners might be more confident in speaking as other participants cannot see their faces. Through online class, learner' self-confidence is increasing as each learner apart from each other and the feeling of being in the center of attention is decreasing (Rodrigues & Vethamani, 2015). Thus, we can assume that online class is less burdensome for a most of the learners. This study aims to see whether the assumption is also applied in Indonesian tertiary education by investigating and comparing the learners' level of anxiety in face to face and online learning mode.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language anxiety and technology

In the pandemic situation, the government suspends all face to face school activities to avoid the widespread of Corona virus. Therefore, distance or remote learning is needed to substitute the face-to-face learning. In the last decade, distance learning has shown a rapid development across subjects and settings, including language learning (Stella, 2000). Furthermore, the current developments of technology have allowed and ease language teacher and learners to establish an online language class. By using technology, language teachers are able to help learners to be more independent and also optimize their learning outcome through online learning (Rodrigues & Vethamani, 2015). Utilizing and involving technology in language activities may foster the development of learners' language skills, especially speaking (Ataiefar & Sadighi, 2017). Numbers of research have shown that language activities that require learners to speak in front of many people most of the time arouse learners' anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986; Minghe & Yuan, 2013; Riasati, 2012; Young, 1990). Therefore, online learning is expected to reduce learners' anxiety level as they do not see each other face's directly. Moreover, through online learning, a less threatening and less stressful environment for communication and interaction has been created (Grant et al., 2014; Rezai & Zafari, 2010).

Kaisar & Chowdury (2020) discovered that language learners feel anxious in a virtual classroom when they are afraid of being left behind and cannot follow their communication models in their best. However, Al-Qahtani (2019), who conducted a research in English department of King Khalid University, found that virtual classroom has a significant role in enhancing learners' communication skill as it enables powerful environment for interaction and participation. Moreover, virtual classroom provides a less anxious and more comfortable environment to facilitate learners' communication skills, especially for shy learners who have trouble speaking in face to face class. A survey by Grant et al. (2013) shows that learners' anxiety about making mistakes is lower in virtual language class rather than in face to face class and virtual environment is less stressful in terms of language use.

Even though distance or online learning makes learners' less anxious upon speaking, Kötter et al. (1999) found that due to the lack of eye contact, learners tend to prepare their answer before speaking to the extent they read it out, so the conversation does not feel natural. The lack of spontaneity from the learners to avoid anxiety cannot be considered as successful language learning.

Language anxiety in Indonesian context

As a *Lingua Franca*, English is used in every part of the world, including in Indonesia. It has become a compulsory subject in junior and senior high school in the developing country. However, due to the multicultural and multilingual society, we cannot deny that it affects Indonesian learners' speaking performance (Haidara, 2016). In Indonesian context, foreign language or English is in the third place after Bahasa Indonesia and the regional vernacular. Therefore, Indonesian learners are not really used to communicate using foreign language; as a result, Indonesian learners tend to have a higher level of anxiety in language classes than in any other classes (Subekti, 2018a).

Woodrow (2006) stated that anxiety in English communication may be affecting students' adaptability to the target setting and, ultimately, their ability to attain their educational goals. Subekti, (2018b) interviewed some English teachers and found that learners actually know what they are going to say, however they tend to forget everything when they are anxious, so it affects their language performance. Rachmawati & Jurianto (2020) investigated college students' anxiety factors and found that negative feedback or evaluation is the most anxiety-provoking situation in which it increases their insecurities and fear. As a result, learners hesitate to speak and unable to perform well in a language class. Having so little prior knowledge also stressful for language learners as they are afraid of being left behind during language class (Listyani & Angellia, 2019). Most of the time, learners think that other students are smarter and better at foreign language than themselves.

Haidara (2016) in her research stated that among Indonesian learners, the main reason of their anxiety is that they do not have confidence speaking in foreign language. Most learners think it is

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unnatural for them to speak in foreign language. Moreover, learners tend to over think about how to pronounce each word correctly and how to construct sentences perfectly and even hesitate to speak because they are afraid of being judged and laughed by other people when they make mistakes. Horwitz et al. (1986) even mentioned that most learners think that it is better to stay quite rather than speaking about something they do not know well. In other words, language learners will start to speak in foreign language when they are already sure that they will not make any mistakes while speaking.

METHOD

This research used survey design to find out the foreign language anxiety in speaking classes, both in online and face-to-face mode. The English version of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), which has been commonly used to evaluate overall foreign language anxiety in the classroom, was adopted in this study. Two sets of FLCAS items were distributed via google form. The first set is to know the foreign language anxiety level during face-to-face speaking class, while the latter is for investigating the foreign language anxiety level during online speaking class. Out of 33 items in each set, 11 items are directed toward Commutation Apprehension, 15 items toward Test Anxiety, and 7 items toward Fear of Negative Evaluation. Open question asking the reason why they felt more comfortable speaking in front of the class during face-to-face or online speaking class is also attached in the end of the survey. To ease the students in expressing their thoughts, the students were informed that they could use Bahasa Indonesia in answering the open question.

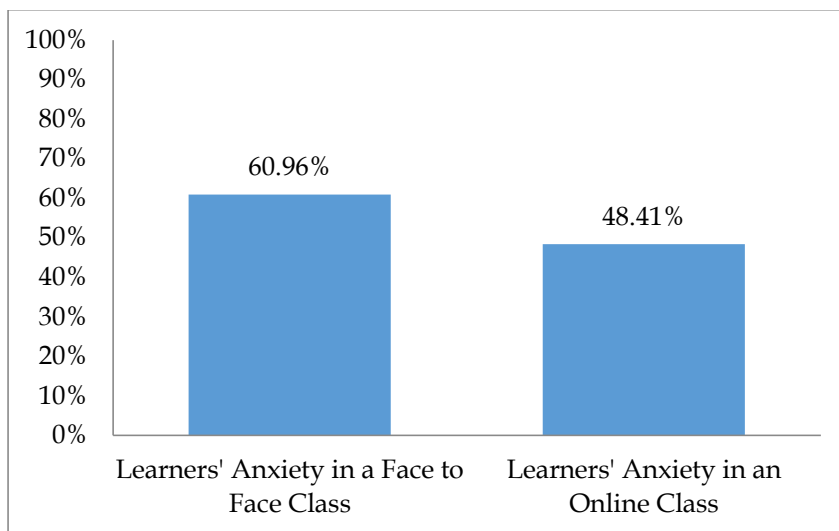
The data were collected from English Department Students in the end of 3rd semester of the academic year 2019/2020. The specific cohort was selected because the students were taking 2 required Speaking courses during the transition; face-to-face mode for the 1st required speaking course (Speaking for General Purposes), and online-mode during the pandemic for another required speaking course (Speaking for Academic Purposes). From around 183 students of English Department, 120 students filled in the survey. The data collected from each set of the FLCAS were

then analyzed on the basis of frequency. After the analysis, the foreign language anxiety level from each set of data were compared.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Overall comparison of learners' FLA level in face to face and online class

In average, learners feel less anxious during online speaking class (48,41%) compare to face-to-face class (60,96%) (See Picture 1). Consistent with the result of other studies (Bakar et al., 2013; Rodrigues & Vethamani, 2015), the current study finds that online mode may provide a non-threatening situation for learners; thus, it decrease their anxiety. Learners' self-confidence grows in online class as they are not directly facing the interlocutor or audience and the feeling of being in the center of attention diminishes.



Picture 1. Overall comparison of learners' anxiety in face-to-face and online class

The open question in the end of FLCA items asking the Learners' reasons behind their anxiety in both learning mode did elicit various answers. Table 1 classified those factors into three categories.

Table 1. The classification of students' language anxiety factors by Horwitz et al.'s category (1986): (1) communication apprehension, (2) test anxiety, and (3) fear of negative evaluation.

	Face to Face Class	Online Class
Communication Apprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners feel overwhelmed by the numbers of rules in order to speak well ▪ It causes the learners to panic when they have to speak without enough preparation ▪ Learners feel nervous speaking with native speakers ▪ Generally, learners do not feel confident speaking in a foreign language ▪ Learners get nervous when they do not understand what the lecturer says ▪ It is burdensome for introvert learners and also those with low English proficiency to speak in front of many people directly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners never feel quite sure of themselves when it comes to speaking in foreign language ▪ Learners feel uncomfortable around native speakers ▪ Learners are more self-conscious speaking in front of other learners ▪ Learners get nervous and confused when speaking in a language class ▪ It frightens the learners when they do not understand what the lecturer says
Test Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners feel more tense and nervous in language class than any other classes ▪ More learners feel burdensome during language test ▪ Learners easily get nervous and even forget things they know ▪ Learners feel anxious even if they are well prepared for the test ▪ It is burdensome for learners to prepare well for language class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners feel like they do not want to go to their language class ▪ Learners get so upset over foreign language class ▪ Learners neither feel sure nor relaxed on their way to language class ▪ Learners tend to think about things unrelated with the course ▪ The more the learners study for a test, the more confused they get

	Face to Face Class	Online Class
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners are worry about failing in the foreign language class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More learners are worry about making mistakes ▪ Learners are afraid that the lecturer might ready to correct every mistake they make ▪ Learners are afraid of taking more online foreign language classes
Fear of Negative Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners' heart are pounding when they are going to be called on ▪ Learners experience trembling when they know that they are going to be called on ▪ Learners get nervous when the lecturer asks question that they do not prepare beforehand ▪ Learners are embarrassed to volunteer answer ▪ Learners keep thinking that other learners are better at language and have better speaking skill ▪ Learners are afraid that other learners will laugh at them when they try to speak English ▪ It is embarrassing for learners to get negative feedback either from the lecturer or other learners ▪ It is uncomfortable for learners with low English proficiency to speak directly in front of many people as they might make lots of mistakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learners are worry that they might be left behind as they feel that the class moves so fast ▪ Learners get upset when they do not understand what the lecturer says

Comparison of learners' FLA level in face to face and online class by categories

Communication apprehension

In relation to learners' communication apprehension, 34.1% of learners never feel quite sure of themselves when they are speaking in face to face language class, while in online class, 38.3% of learners have the same feeling. Moreover, 37.5% of learners feel overwhelmed by the number of rules they have to learn in order to speak well in foreign language, meanwhile in online class, only 29.9% of learners feel it. In another case, 73.3% of learners start to panic when they have to speak without enough preparation in face to face language class, however in online class, 65% of learners have the same feeling. Riasati (2012) found that having prior knowledge and being well prepared before discussing or speaking about a certain topic will make learners more confident speaking in a language class. Moreover, it will be so much easier and less anxious for learners to talk about something they have known well. Learners may feel anxious when they do not have enough preparation before speaking, especially for those who have low English proficiency, they might be confused about what should they say.

Another result shows that 40.9% of learners feel confident speaking in foreign language with native speakers in face to face language class, while in online class, 41.7% of learners feel the same. Also, 47.4% of learners said that they would probably feel comfortable around native speakers face to face, while 38.4% of learners stated that they feel comfortable around native speakers in online mode. Moreover, generally only 34.2% of learners feel confident speaking in foreign language during face to face class, while in online class, 38.4% of learners feel confident speaking in foreign language. The result is similar to studies conducted by Al-Qahtani (2019) and Russell (2020) that online language class enables learners to increase their quality and quantity of engagement in a conversation. Generally, learners tend to be more confident and less anxious to engage in a conversation with anyone in an online class rather than face to face class.

Related to self-conscious and nervousness, 41.7% of learners feel very self-conscious about speaking face to face in foreign language in front

of many people and the result is similar to how the learners' feel in online class in which 42.5% of learners feel the same. Moreover, 41.7% of learners get nervous and confused when they are speaking in face to face language class, while 42.5% of learners feel it during online language class. McBrien et al. (2009) has a similar research finding in which learners have more control over on how they express their ideas since a large group of people do not stare at them directly and it makes them more confident expressing themselves.

Other than that, 60% of learners get nervous when they do not understand what the lecturer is saying during face to face class, while only 48.3% of learners feel the same during online class. Moreover, it frightens 41.7% of learners when they do not understand what the lecturer is saying in face to face class, while in online class, 44.2% of learners feel it. Grant et al. (2013) found a similar result in which learners feel more anxious and frighten when they do not understand what the teacher is saying in face to face class. During a teaching and learning process, teacher or lecturer may ask the learners some question related to the material, if the learners do not understand what the lecturer says, it means that there will be a possibility of learners cannot answer the question from the lecturer. Therefore, learners may feel anxious and frighten when they do not understand what the lecturer says.

According to the result, we may conclude that the learners' is less anxious speaking in foreign language in online class rather than in face to face class. In line with a research by Russell (2020) that learners become more comfortable and less anxious in an online class rather than a traditional face to face classroom. However, there is only a slight difference in learners' anxiety in relation to their communication apprehension during face to face and online language class. The result is related to the learners' responses in the open-ended question that they prefer speaking in online class as they feel more confident speaking from their comfortable place with no one paying attention to them directly, especially for introvert or socially awkward learners who do not really like to be the center of attention.

Test anxiety

Related to test anxiety, the result shows that 7.4% of learners often feel like they do not want to go to their language class, while in online class, the number students who have the same feeling is higher that is 18.3%. Similar to a research by Seidikenova et al. (2020) that in an online class, many learners may have lack of motivation, self-discipline and anxiety in relation to the technology or something related to their home situation, such as lack of personal space, noisiness, and other distraction that may occur during the class. Moreover, 39.2% of learners have a positive attitude towards face to face language class and they do not understand why some people get so upset over face to face foreign language class, meanwhile 30.8% of learners have a positive attitude towards online language class and they do not understand why some people get so upset over online language class. When the learners are on their way to face to face language class, 44.1% of learners feel sure and relaxed, while in online class, 40% of learners feel it. In contrast, McCroskey (1977) and Russell (2020) found that usually learners with high communication apprehension have a negative attitude towards speaking in front of many people directly, even some of them fainted during the speech. Moreover, online class provides learners with a less anxious environment to enhance their speaking skills. Furthermore, 38.3% of learners feel more tense and nervous in language class than any other classes, while in online class, 31.7% of learners have the same feeling. Furthermore, 35.8% of learners find themselves think unrelated things with the material in face to face class, while in online class, more 46.6% of learners experience the same thing.

During the test in face to face language class, only 28.4% of learners are at ease, while in online class, 34.1% of learners feel at ease during test. However, still 20.9% of learners said that in face to face class, the more they study for a test, the more confused they get. Meanwhile, in online class 22.5% of learners also feel that the more they study, the more confused they get. Moreover, 65.8% of learners get so nervous and forget things they know in face to face class, while in online class, 54.2% of learners feel it. Even if the learners are well prepared for language class, 61.6% of them still feel anxious about it, on the other hand, 55% of learners have the same

feeling in online class. Heng et al. (2012) also found that learners tend to forget content knowledge during a test and experience fear of failure when they are too nervous over a language test, especially when it comes to a speaking test.

In terms of making mistakes, 35% of learners do not worry about making mistakes in a face to face class, while in online class 44.2% of learners feel the same. Moreover, 31.7% of learners in face to face class are afraid that their lecturer is ready to correct their mistakes, while in online class the result is higher in which 38.3% of learners think the same. Similarly, Grant et al. (2013) has found that learners' anxiety about making mistakes in online class lower since online class provides a less stressful environment in terms of language use. Therefore, in an online class, learners can speak more freely and confidently with almost no worries of making mistakes.

In terms of preparation, 35% of learners do not feel pressure to be well prepared for face to face language class, while for online class, 38.3% of learners feel the same. Furthermore, 77.5% of learners are worry about failing their foreign language class. On the other hand, in online class, less learners are worry about it as the result shows lower number that is 70.9%. However, 54.2% of learners do not mind to take more face to face foreign language class, while in terms of online class, 46.7% of learners have the same opinion. In line with a research by MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) shows that learners with high level of anxiety tend to relies heavily on memories, yet are disorganized and inefficient in recalling of learned materials. It means that there will be a possibility for learners who experience high level of anxiety become forgetful during the test as they have difficulties recalling the materials they have learnt even though they feel that they are already well prepared for the test. If learners have difficulty recalling their memories during test, the chance of being failed in a test will also be higher.

Thus, we can infer from the result that learners' test anxiety level in online class is lower than face to face class. In the open-ended question, some students also stated that they prefer online class as they cannot see other people's reaction when they make mistake while speaking foreign language, so that it makes them less anxious. Moreover, some learners

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stated that they have better preparation in online class rather than in face to face class.

Fear of negative evaluation

Speaking of learners' level of anxiety in relation to learners' fear of negative evaluation, 64.2% of learners feel that they heart pounding when they are going to be called out in face to face class, while in online class, 53.3% of learners feel it. Moreover, 53.4% of learners tremble when they know that they are going to be called out in face to face class, while in online class, 50.4% of learners feel it. Furthermore, 65% of learners feel nervous when the lecturer asks them question that they have not prepared before, while in online class, 60.9% of learners feel the same. Similarly, Xiangming et al. (2020) found that learners' anxiety is increasing when they know that they are going to be asked to speak about a topic they have not prepared before, because they think that they will not be able to find the best word to express themselves and also afraid that they will utter grammatically incorrect sentences.

In terms of volunteering themselves to answer, only 26.7% of learners feel embarrassed to volunteer answer in face to face class, similar to the feeling in online class, 25.8% of learners are embarrassed to volunteer answer. According to Wijaya and Rizkina (2015) lack of vocabulary can be one of the reason learners do not want to volunteer answer. Since they have limited vocabulary, they might not be able to state their ideas clearly. In contrast to the previous result, in face to face class, 81.7% of learners keep thinking that other learners are better at language, while in online class, 75% of learners have the same opinion. Moreover, in face to face class, 76.6% of learners feel that other learners are better at speaking foreign language, while in online class, only 68.8% of learners feel it. Heng et al. (2012) mentions in his research that having known that other learners are better at language, especially speaking can be a motivating force to encourage themselves to perform better.

Additionally, in face to face class, 55% of learners think that language class moves so quickly and they are worry about getting left behind, while in online class, the number of learners who are worry getting left behind are higher, that is 58.3%. Similarly, Meihua (2014) stated

that many learners think that other learners are better and quicker learners than them. It makes them worry and anxious that they will not be able to follow the class and being left behind. Moreover, in the open ended question, some learners mention that sometimes they encountered a problem with the internet connection and make them miss some of the materials.

In relation to feedback, 54.2% learners are afraid that other learners will laugh at them when they try to speak the foreign language, while in online class, only 44.5% think the same. Furthermore, in face to face class, 48.4% of learners get upset when they do not understand what the lecturer is correcting, however in online class, the result is higher in which 52.5% of learners have the same opinion. The result is in contrast with Stella (2000) that learners who are willing to take risks and make mistakes in a language class will have better improvement in terms of language use. It means that learners have to be able to control their anxiety so that they have more courage to speak even though they might make some mistakes. From the result, we can infer that learners' speaking skill will improve more in an online class as they are less anxious about making mistakes.

Based on the result of the open-ended question, the majority of learners are afraid of negative evaluation due to the lack of vocabularies and pronunciation. Also, they feel embarrassed when they make mistakes in front of many people and they are afraid if other learners laugh at them when they are making mistakes. It confirms Huang and Hwang (2013) statement saying that college students are mostly afraid of losing face in front of their teacher and peers, and are afraid of making mistakes. Therefore, they tend to avoid speaking in a language class. However, in an online class, the situation makes them more relax, more confident and less anxious about speaking in foreign language as they cannot see their lecturer and friends' faces directly.

From the result above, it can be inferred that the pressure of speaking in online language class is lower than in face to face class. The situation in which they are staying apart encourage learners to speak more than they do in face to face learning without really concerning what other learners' think about their speaking.

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CONCLUSION

In conclusion, learners' level of anxiety in online speaking class is lower than their anxiety in face to face speaking class. The most contributing factor is fear of negative evaluation. The majority of learners are afraid of getting negative evaluation, such as being judged or laughed either from their peers or teacher when they make some mistakes. Most of them also agree that speaking in an online class feels more comfortable than in a face to face class. This provides insight for those teaching students with moderate to high level of anxiety during post-pandemic era. Online speaking practice, with its varieties of speaking activities, can be used as an alternative way to improve students' speaking competence in a more comfortable speaking environment.

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