

Anxiety in Speaking Japanese Experienced by the Department of Japanese Language Education Students of Unnes

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Abstract

Language learners, particularly foreign language learners, endure language anxiety. Language anxiety can affect learners at all levels, including early, intermediate, and advanced. Anxiety in speaking Japanese is quite noticeable in speaking abilities. It happens for Japanese language students enrolled in the Japanese language education study program as well. The causes of anxiety in speaking Japanese can be seen in a variety of ways, including vocabulary knowledge, sentence patterns, confidence level, and so on. The objective of this research is to discover how worried Japanese people are and what causes their worry. This study's subjects were Japanese language students at the beginning and intermediate levels, each of levels had 50 students. This study took a qualitative approach and collected the data through observation and questionnaires. According to the study's findings, 60% of students at the beginning level did not sense anxiety when speaking Japanese, despite the fact that their worried behavior indicated linguistic anxiety. Scratching the head and moving the hands, for example. Meanwhile, 60% of middle-level students were afraid to speak Japanese because they lacked command of vocabulary and sentence patterns.

Keywords: Japanese; language anxiety; speaking anxiety

INTRODUCTION

Language skills are components of the learning process that language learners must consider or master. Language skills in general, are hearing, reading, writing, and speaking abilities (Munezane, 2021). The four language skills are inextricably linked (Fitriani et al., 2022). As a result, various attempts are undertaken by language teachers to develop language skills.

Language acquisition, particularly foreign languages, is in high demand for formal study in schools such as elementary, secondary, and higher education. Previous research has shown the significance of foreign language abilities in obtaining individual-level achievements. Volk et al. (2014), for example, showed how foreign language abilities (particularly the ability to understand foreign languages) might promote self-regulation, allowing individuals to adjust well to a circumstance. As a result, foreign languages, particularly Japanese, which is in high demand, require special consideration in the learning process.

Japanese is one of the most widely spoken foreign languages. Japanese language learners at all levels, from beginner to advanced, must master four language abilities (Khan & Yunus, 2019). Learners experience difficulties in acquiring these four skills. One of them is that students experience difficulties with reading skill anxiety, which teachers find difficult to detect since it does not involve spontaneous interactions such as speaking abilities (Safira et al., 2023). However, the difficulties that Japanese language learners frequently confront while implementing speaking skills. Speaking is a productive skill in language learning and the skill that is most widely utilized to one's language activities (Niswah & Masykur, 2022). Japanese speaking skills are linked to mastery of vocabulary, sentence patterns, culture, and other language skills.

The four basic language skills are strongly predicted by vocabulary knowledge (Bashori et al., 2021). In practice, Japanese language learners experience anxiety due to a variety of circumstances (Khairunisa, 2019).

Speaking anxiety in foreign language learning, on the other hand, can be addressed by a favorable response from the teacher (Gusnovita et al., 2018). The learner must grasp grammar, vocabulary, and culture in order to gain speaking abilities and communicate successfully. Grammar mastery is one of the causes of speaking skill concern. However, worry in the learning process can affect the level of grammar acquisition (Muliadi et al., 2021).

According to Horwitz (1986), foreign language anxiety encompasses a range of interconnected self-perceptions, attitudes, emotions, and actions that are specifically associated with the process of learning a language in a classroom setting. In contrast to the general manifestation of anxiety, particular circumstance anxiety refers to the phenomenon wherein an individual consistently experiences anxiety in a specific context, thereby establishing an association between anxiety and this context (Dewaele, 2017). In contrast to Dewael's perspective, it might be argued that foreign language fear is an acquired emotional reaction, as shown by MacIntyre (1989). However, according to Natsir (2017), there is variation in the experience of speaking anxiety based on the individual's level of language acquisition. According to Piniel and Zólyomi (2022), an examination of language anxiety can also be approached through the gender.

The phenomenon of Japanese language anxiety, particularly in relation to speaking activities in the classroom, has been examined in prior research conducted by Damayanti (2016). This research focuses on foreign language speaking anxiety, which has the potential to hinder one's ability to effectively communicate in the target language. The phenomenon of experiencing negative emotions during foreign language speaking has garnered significant interest from both language learners and psychologists. This is due to the recognition that of the four language abilities, speaking a foreign language is commonly regarded as the most anxiety-inducing and has a notable impact on performance (Damayanti, 2016). Furthermore, a study conducted by Sukrianti et al. (2022) examined the extent of anxiety among

students in the Japanese Language Education Study Program at FKIP Riau when speaking Japanese. This study highlights the factors contributing to the occurrence of speaking anxiety among learners of the Japanese language.

Anxiety in public speaking is a common experience among individuals, albeit with varying prevalence rates. The aforementioned phenomenon was also observed among participants of the Japanese Language Education Study Program at Semarang State University. These individuals exhibited nervousness when speaking the Japanese language, as evidenced by preliminary research conducted through in-class observations. Anxiety can manifest when an individual, in response to a question posed by another individual, engages in the act of repeating the inquiry.

The objective of this study is to investigate the factors contributing to speaking anxiety among Japanese language learners enrolled in the Japanese Language Education Study Program at Semarang State University. Additionally, the study aims to determine if there are variations in Japanese speaking anxiety among students at different levels of Japanese proficiency.

METHOD

The research approach used is a qualitative descriptive approach. Data collection methods used are questionnaire and observation methods. The research subjects were students who attended speech skills lectures (chokai kaiwa shokyu zenhan - semester I and chokai kaiwa chukyu zenhan - semester III) in the Japanese Language Education Study Program, Semarang State University. Respondents totaled 100 students consisting of 50 students participating in the chokai kaiwa shokyu zenhan lecture and 50 students participating in the chokai kaiwa chukyu zenhan lecture.

Chokai Kaiwa courses are listening and speaking skills courses, including unconditional tiered courses. Data obtained in October - December 2022.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results were obtained from a questionnaire distributed to 100 students as respondents.

1. Frequency in experiencing the anxiety in speaking Japanese in the classroom

Table 1. Frequency of the Respondent who Experience the Anxiety in Speaking

Category of Respondent	Always	Often	Sometimes %	Never	Total
Respondents of <i>chokai kaiwa shokyu zenhan</i>	10	16	14	60	100
Respondents of <i>chokai kaiwa chukyu zenhan</i>	20	40	28	12	100

Respondents of *chokai kaiwa shokyu zenhan* never experienced speaking anxiety 60% of the time because the respondents were basic level Japanese learners. This is shown in table 1. Basic level language learners have a high emotional level in learning language so they ignore the anxiety they experience. Meanwhile, 60% of the respondents of *chokai kaiwa chukyu zenhan* always and often experience anxiety about speaking Japanese. Respondents at the basic intermediate level obtained more and more material and were at a greater level of difficulty than the basic level.

2. Situation that makes the respondents felt anxious in speaking Japanese in the classroom

Table 2. Situation that makes the respondents felt anxious

Category of Respondent	Talk in group	Talk in pairs with a friend	Talk with a lecturer	Total
	%			
Respondents of <i>chokai kaiwa shokyu zenhan</i>	30	28	42	100
Respondents of <i>chokai kaiwa chukyu zenhan</i>	34	42	34	100

The anxiety experienced by *Chokai Kaiwa Shokyu Zenhan* respondents occurred when talking with lecturers by 42%, can be seen in table 2. Meanwhile, *Chokai Kaiwa Chukyu Zenhan* respondents experienced high category anxiety when talking in pairs with friends. *Chokai Kaiwa Chukyu Zehan* experienced anxiety in speaking in pairs with friends due to the closeness of students so they were afraid of being judged negatively by their speaking partners in class.

3. Practice activity in the classroom that makes the respondents felt anxious in speaking Japanese

Table 3. Practice in classroom that makes the respondents felt anxious

Category of Respondent	Role Play	Interview	Presentation	Total
	%			
Respondents of <i>chokai kaiwa shokyu zenhan</i>	52	40	8	100
Respondents of <i>chokai kaiwa chukyu zenhan</i>	54	36	10	100

Based on table 3. role play speaking exercises in class which made *chokai kaiwa shokyu zenhan* respondents experience anxiety by 52%. Respondents of *chokai kaiwa chukyu zenhan* also experienced the same thing, namely 54% of

respondents were made anxious during role play exercises. Role play activities are in a high category causing anxiety because during practice students must be able to master the role and master Japanese expressions that will be conveyed in accordance with the role displayed. While the low category interviews made the respondents anxious because the activity was in the form of question and answer which could be done by memorizing the answers and questions. The lowest data acquisition presentation activity was for both *chokai kaiwa shokyu zenhan* respondents (8%) and *chokai kaiwa chukyu zenhan* respondents (10%). Students tend to memorize the presentation activities.

4. Causes of anxiety in speaking Japanese

a. Unconfidence

Table 4. Unconfidence

Category of Respondents	Unconfidence				Total
	Mastery of Sentence Pattern	Mastery of Vocabulary	Mastery of Listening Skills	Mastery of Reading and Writing Skills	
	%				
Respondents of <i>chokai kaiwa shokyu zenhan</i>	20	42	28	10	100
Respondents of <i>chokai kaiwa chukyu zenhan</i>	58	24	12	6	100

Based on table 4, it is shown that the cause of anxiety for respondents in *chokai kaiwa shokyu zenhan* is their lack of self-confidence in their ability to master vocabulary by 42%, because the basic level of Japanese is still limited by

acquiring vocabulary. While the cause of speaking anxiety for respondents *chokai kaiwa chukyu zenhan* is due to the mastery of sentence patterns by 58%.

b. Anxiety towards the peers' negative perception

Table 5. Anxiety towards the peers' negative perception

Category of Respondents	Anxiety towards the peers' negative perception		Total
	Being Lauged	Truth checked	
	%		
Respondents of <i>chokai kaiwa shokyu zenhan</i>	72	28	100
Respondents of <i>chokai kaiwa chukyu zenhan</i>	56	44	100

Table 5 shows respondents *chokai kaiwa shokyu zenhan* causing anxiety about negative perceptions from friends on the "laughed at" indicator of 72%. and the respondent *chokai kaiwa chukyu zenhan* on the same indicator is 56% greater than the truth checked.

c. Anxiety towards the lecturer evaluation

Table 6. Anxiety towards the lecturer evaluation

Category of Respondents	Anxiety towards the lecturer evaluation		Total
	Being compared	Gaining the failed score not as expected	
	%		
Respondents of <i>chokai kaiwa shokyu zenhan</i>	64	36	100
Respondents of <i>chokai kaiwa chukyu zenhan</i>	28	72	100

Based on table 6. the causes of anxiety about the evaluation of lecturers on the "compared" indicator of respondents chokai kaiwa shokyu zenhan answered 64% while respondents of chokai kaiwa chukyu zenhan answered 72% of anxiety about lecturer evaluations on the indicator "gaining the failed score not as expected".

The results showed that the cause of anxiety in speaking Japanese, namely anxiety over negative perceptions, was chosen by most respondents by 70% in the anxious category of being laughed at. This is in line with previous research by Damayanti (2016) which stated that one of the anxiety of speaking Japanese is influenced by negative perceptions. In addition, the cause of speaking anxiety among Japanese language education study program students is due to their distrust of their own abilities in terms of vocabulary mastery as much as 78%, which is in line with what was revealed by Bashori et al., (2021). The results of the study also showed that there were differences in the levels of students' Japanese speaking anxiety between the Japanese language levels obtained in line with Natsir's statement (2017).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, this study concluded that the causes of speaking anxiety experienced by Japanese language learners in the Japanese Language Education Study Program, Semarang State University, namely 1) lack of self-confidence in the ability to master vocabulary and mastery of sentence patterns, 2) anxiety about negative perceptions of friends in indicators "laughed at", and 3) anxiety about the evaluation of lecturers on indicators "compared" and "values that are not as expected". Between the chokai kaiwa shokyu zenhan respondents (beginning elementary level) and the chokai kaiwa chukyu zenhan respondents (basic

intermediate level) there are differences in anxiety in speaking Japanese. 60% of respondents to chokai kaiwa shokyu zenhan have never experienced anxiety in speaking Japanese, while 60% of respondents to kaiwa chukyu zenhan have always and often experience anxiety in speaking Japanese.

Suggestions for future researchers, it is necessary to carry out further research related to what solutions are taken to overcome anxiety in speaking Japanese.

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