HSK TEST ANXIETY OF CHINESE LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract: Anxiety can affect the foreign language learning process negatively. Chinese language as one of the developed foreign languages in Indonesia faces this problem too. In the Chinese language, there is language testing called HSK or Hanyu Shuping Kaoshi. Test Anxiety is one of the students' problems. Test anxiety in the Chinese language influence in student's learning process and achievement. This research aims to find and analyze students' Chinese language test anxiety of HSK. The research method is descriptive quantitative and the procedure will be using a questionnaire that gives to the students—the anxiety measurement using Sarason TAS (Test Anxiety Scale). The result is anxiety level belongs to TAS moderate level with data mean 20, 43 points.
Keywords: *Test Anxiety; HSK; Chinese Language; CFL learners*

Abstrak: Kecemasan atau anxiety dapat berdampak negatif pada proses pembelajaran. Bahasa mandarin sebagai bahasa asing yang berkembang di Indonesia juga mengalaminya. Dalam bahasa Mandarin terdapat tes kemampuan berbahasa yang disebut HSK yaitu Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi. Kecemasan terhadap tes adalah salah satu masalah bagi pembelajar. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan dan menganalisis kecemasan mahasiswa terhadap tes HSK. Metode penelitian yaitu deksriptif kuantitaif dan akan menggunakan angket kuisioner yang diberikan kepada mahasiswa. Pengukuran anxiety menggunakan TAS (Test Anxiety Scale) oleh Sarason. Hasil dari level anxiety yaitu berada pada level menengah dengan skor rata-rata TAS 20,43 poin.
Kata Kunci: *Kecemasan; HSK; Bahasa Mandarin; Pembelajar Bahasa Mandarin*

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1. BACKGROUND

The Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK) is a test for foreigners learning Chinese. There are six testing levels, and the most recent rule specifies that there are 7-9 advanced levels of HSK. There are various levels of difficulty for HSK examination. HSK certificate is used to apply for a scholarship, study, or work in China. In addition, several businesses in Indonesia require an HSK certificate when hiring new employees. Today's HSK requirements make it crucial.

Chinese language students have to take or pass the HSK exam to complete their degrees, apply for scholarships, get employment, or otherwise demonstrate their proficiency in the language. University students may get test anxiety or depression as a result of this.

Anxiety from learning a foreign language or taking a language test is unavoidable. Anxiety is one of the emotions that language learners experience while they learn the language. According to Spielberger (S. et al., 2017), anxiety is a negative emotional situation characterized by the subjective feelings of tension, apprehension, and worry as well as by the activation or arousal of the automatic nervous system.

There are previous studies about anxiety. Alfani (2022) conducted " A Survey of Foreign Language Test Anxiety of EFL Vocational High School Students". This research used Sarason's Test Anxiety Scale (TAS), and the result found that the highest mean of test anxiety was at three views. First, there are the students stated their anxiety level elevated if they felt unprepared. Second, The students claimed they got a lousy score on the test because they did not study enough. Third, they had trouble remembering what they had learned before the test.

Zhang and Yang (2022) revealed that anxiety hurts the performance of HSK students in their research entitled "The Impact of Fear of COVID-19 on Student Performance, Moderating the Role of Attention: Perception-Based Views of HSK Students". Their research was to find out the relationship between fear of COVID-19 and student performance, and they found a relationship between anxiety and student performance. Fear of COVID-19 has a negative impact on students' academic performance. This increases anxiety in students, which ultimately leads to stress and low academic performance.

Luo (2013) in research "Chinese Language Learning Anxiety and its Associated Factors", concerns the anxiety of U.S. college CFL learners and the impact of background characteristics on Chinese Language Learning Anxiety. In comparison to earlier FL anxiety studies, CFL anxiety among U.S. university students was not high on average. Learners of advanced CFL were substantially less anxious than intermediate and primary students. Heritage learners with a Chinese language background experienced significantly less anxiety than non-heritage learners and heritage learners without a Chinese language background.

According to previous studies above, anxiety is a crucial thing in foreign languages. Finding anxiety levels among the students can assist the learning improvement. Students and teachers can be more 'well-prepared' about HSK.

In Indonesia, HSK has also become a requirement to complete a university degree, get employment, or other needs. HSK test anxiety gives contribution to describing anxiety among university students. It can increase learning and preparation strategy abilities. From these points of view, this research aims to find, describe, and analyze university students' Chinese Language test anxiety of HSK in Indonesia.

2. LITERARY REVIEWS

Foreign or Second Language Anxiety

Horwitz (1986) in Macintyre and Gardner, divides three components of foreign language anxiety. There are (1) communication apprehension; (2) Fear or negative social evaluation; (3) Test anxiety.

Firstly, Concerns about communication apprehension suggest that the language student has sophisticated thoughts and ideas but a limited second language vocabulary with which to express them. The inability to communicate with oneself or comprehend another person causes depression and anxiety. The second, Fear of negative social evaluation. The students think of social judgment because they are unsure of themselves and what they are saying, they may believe they are unable to produce the appropriate social impression. Third, Test anxiety is fear of academic evaluation. The pedagogical standards of the school and teacher require that the student be regularly tested on areas of proficiency while that proficiency is being gained (Macintyre & Gardner, n.d.)

Language anxiety is distinct from other sorts of anxiety symptoms. It can classify language anxiety as learner-induced, classroom-related, skill-specific, and some culture-imposed, depending on the circumstances. The available sources provide us with an informative perspective on the challenges students may have encountered during their language learning journey (Renxia & Jian, 2012).

MacIntyre and Gardner in their study "Anxiety and Second-Language Learning: Toward a Theoretical Clarification" conclude that their study has shown that a clear relationship exists between foreign language anxiety and foreign language proficiency.

Test Anxiety

According to this analysis, not only positive emotions such as hope, relief, and joy may be important, but also negative ones such as anger, shame, and despair. Although the results of this exploratory analysis confirm that fear is the central emotional experience in testing and examination situations, we hypothesize that fear is not the only relevant human emotion in such situations. Therefore, this result suggests that test-related emotions in students are richer than common views about the importance of test anxiety suggest. (Pekrun, et.al, 2012, Beyond test anxiety: Development and validation of the test emotions questionnaire (TEQ).

The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), In Chinese Anxiety scale in language learning, reflects fears associated with four skills. Exploratory factor analysis revealed a solution to his three factors for this scale: fear of speaking, fear of listening, and

fear of reading and writing. Write a fear that confirms the plausibility of the components of the scale. (Han Luo, 2013)

Zou's research title is Test Anxiety and telomere length: Academic Stress in adolescents may not cause rapid telomere erosion. In this research, the authors use TAS for dividing students' Academic Stress (AS) in anxiety levels (mild, moderate, and severe) and use students' saliva for telomere erosion (TL) measurement via quantitative polymerase chain reaction (qPCR). Previous reports have found that AS is very common in Asian adolescents. The research found no immediate telomere shortening in adolescents with AS. Longitudinal observations are required to determine if TL is affected by AS. (Zou et al., 2017.)

The assessment of test anxiety would also benefit from the application of the dynamic process models of contemporary stress theory. Rather than see test anxiety solely as a fixed property of the individual, it is important to explore how stable dispositions bias self-appraisal and coping in the context of the person's active attempts to manage the evaluative situation, and process cues towards performance adequacy. (Zeidner & Matthews, 2017)

There are also test anxiety called State Test Anxiety Scale (STAS). In Sahin (2021) research of "Validation of a new State Test Anxiety Scale (STAS)", this study aimed to validate the English version of Sahin's (2019) State Test Anxiety Scale (STAS) which was originally developed in Turkish based on latest bio-psychosocial model of test anxiety. Psychosocial effects, Cognitive effects subscales, and the total scale respectively. Stratified Alpha was also calculated and was found to be .93. All in all, evidence collected in this study indicated that the English version of STAS was a valid and reliable scale as its Turkish version. (ŞAHİN, 2021)

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used descriptive quantitative. The research uses Test Anxiety Scale (TAS) questionnaire by Sarason as an instrument for collecting data. (Sarason & Mandler, n.d.). TAS was modified according to the needs of HSK test situations. The instrument is used to collect data about university students' anxiety levels about taking the HSK test. The data respondents are 56 Indonesian university students who already have experience taking the HSK test.

The instrument uses the Guttman scale True-False, for the correct answer get 1 point score, and for incorrect get 0 points. There are 37 questions. The data showed in the frequency distribution table and histogram.

The data result is used for analyzing the HSK anxiety in university students in Indonesia. The result of the scores indicates the level of anxiety, as shown in the table below.

**Table 3.1 Indicator of Anxiety Levels by Sarason (Zou,et. al, 2017)**

Scores	Level of Anxiety
0-12	Mild anxiety
13-20	Moderate anxiety

21-37	Severe anxiety

A score of 12 or below ranks in the low-test anxiety range as called mild anxiety. A score of 13 to 20 ranks in the medium range as called moderate anxiety. Any score above 20 signifies high test anxiety or severe anxiety. To conclude the level of anxiety, the mean (average score) is used to determine the student's anxiety level based on its indicator.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data collected is from 56 Indonesian students who study Chinese language major in Indonesia's Universities.

All students as respondents already take the HSK examination. The students take variation levels of HSK 1-6. 12 students take more than one HSK level with different levels. The data is as follows:
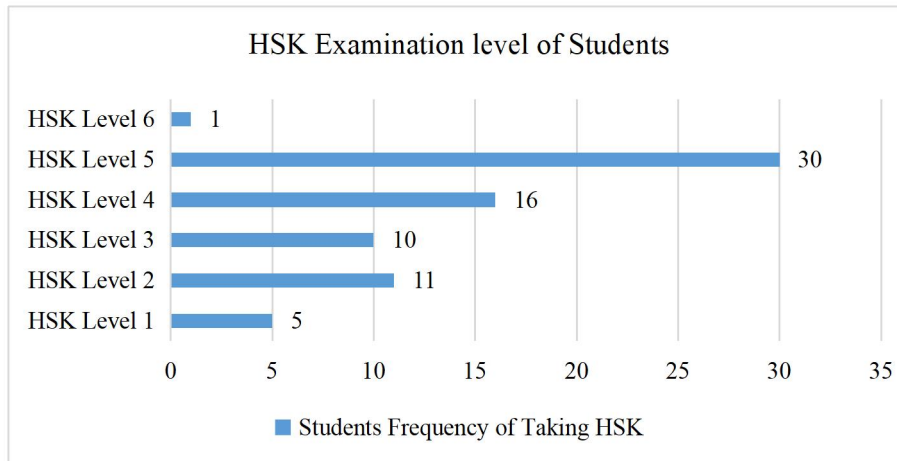
According to the data above, the highest frequency of HSK level that students take is HSK level 5 by 30 students, percentage of 53,6%. The second highest, HSK level 4 by 16 students, percentage 28,6%. Then, 11 students (19,6 %) take HSK level 2, 10 students (17,9%) take HSK level 3. HSK level 1 there are 5 students (8,9%), and the lowest frequency is 1 student (1,8%) taking HSK level 6.

Most students take a high level of HSK. It is HSK 4 and HSK 5. It means most Indonesian university students on taking HSK high level. The higher level of HSK the more difficult the test. Difficulties with the test make students should be more prepared. It can lead sort of symptom anxiety on classification as "skill-specific" **(Renxia & Jian, 2012).**

The result of test anxiety scores is classified into anxiety level indicators. As follows:

Table 4.1 The Result of the TAS Score

TAS Score	Anxiety Level	Frequency	Percentage
0-12	Mild	11	20%

13-20	Moderate	17	30%
21-37	Severe	28	50%
	Total	56	100%

According to Table 4.1, there are 11 (20%) students with TAS score between 0-12 belong to Mild level of anxiety, 17 students (30%) with a score between 13-20 belongs to Moderate level of anxiety, and 28 students (50%) between 21-37 belongs to Severe level of anxiety.

As the data shown above, the anxiety level of students taking HSK examination tends to medium to high. The highest frequency of anxiety level is "Severe" level of high anxiety, with 28 students and percentage 50%. The second highest belongs to "moderate" level of anxiety. The lowest frequency is "Mild" level anxiety with 11 students, which means just a few Indonesian students have low anxiety when taking HSK examination. Clearly shown in this histogram below.
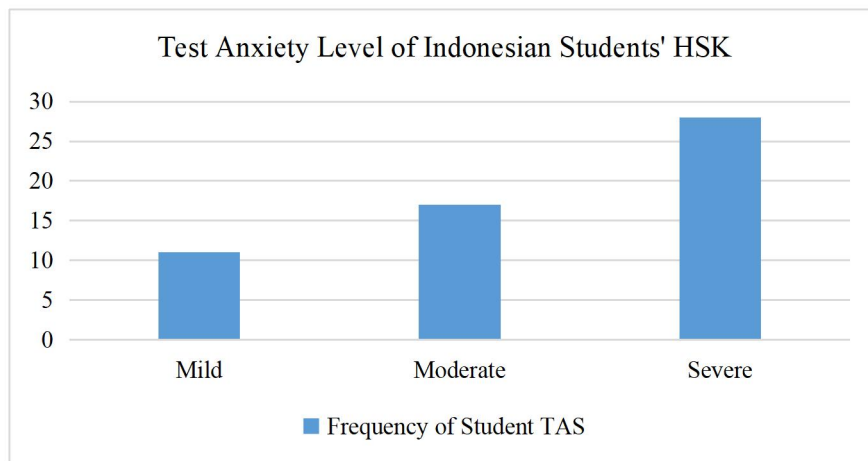
Picture 4.1 Test Anxiety Level of Indonesian Students' HSK Chart

To decide the anxiety level of all results, the result shows the mean of the data score and concludes the level of anxiety. The total score is 1144, The mean of the 56 students' TAS score is **20,43** points. It has belonged to **Moderate** level of anxiety.

Among 37 questions of the TAS questionnaire, there are some items that have high correct answer (more correct answer means higher anxiety). It is item number 34 and 35, as follows:

"The university should recognize that some students are more nervous than others about tests and that this affects their performance" (questionnaire number 34)

"It seems to me that examination periods should not be made such intense Situations" (questionnaire number 35)

Item 34 and 35 each get the highest score by 49 (87,5 %) students answer it correctly. The

statement of the questionnaire is anxiety caused by the environment. It seems students' anxiety come from worries, uncomfortable feeling, and avoidance of the situation. For example, the university's role in taking HSK test and the intense situation that appears in the examination period (sarason, 1977).

The other items of the questionnaire that get high scores are items number 30, 2, and 22, as follows:

"Even when I'm well prepared for a test, I feel very anxious about it." (Questionnaire number 30)

"If I were to take an HSK test, I would worry a great deal before taking it." (Questionnaire number 2)

"I wish examinations did not bother me so much." (Questionnaire number 22)

Item number 30 get corrected answers by 47 students (83,9%), number 2 and 22 by 46 (82,1%) students. Most of the highest items lead to anxious feelings from students itself anxiety. It can conclude that most students have anxiety before take HSK examination. It categorized into *negative activating emotions* classification. (Pekrun et al., 2004)

The lowest number of questionnaire questions chosen by students is item number 4 and 9, as follows:

"I freeze up on things like HSK Examinations." (Questionnaire number 4)
"While taking an HSK test, I perspire a great deal." (Questionnaire number 9)

The items number 4 and 9 get the lowest frequency, it is 9 (16,1%) students. The statement of items is about the student's behavioral situation on facing HSK examination. Besides, there are also other items that stated about behavioral situations mostly during and after taking HSK. The questions with less than 50% correct response rate, are item number 5, 8, 10, 13, 15, 18, 19, 21, 24, 25, 26, 31, 32. It shows that students have no big problem or distraction feeling during taking HSK examination.

According to data analysis, Indonesian university students have high anxiety about external situations and test preparation or anxiety before the test. And they have less anxiety while taking the test and after it.

5. CONCLUSION

1. The mean of the 56 students' TAS scores is **20,43** points. It belongs to **Moderate** level of anxiety.
2. The anxiety level of students taking the HSK examination tends to medium to high.
3. The highest frequency of anxiety level is "Severe" level of high anxiety, with 28

students and percentage 50%. The second highest belongs to "moderate" level of anxiety.

4. The most anxious feeling according to the statement questionnaire of TAS, is received from external situations: the university's role in taking HSK test and the intense situation that appear in the examination period.

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Appendix

Test Anxiety Scale (modified from Sarason's TAS)

True	False	
T		1. While taking an HSK exam, I find myself thinking of how muchbrighter the other students are than I am.
T		2. If I were to take an HSK test, I would worry a great deal before taking it.
	F	3. If I knew I was going to take an HSK test, I would feel confident andrelaxed.
T		4. While taking an HSK test, I perspire a great deal.
T		5. During HSK examinations, I find myself thinking of things unrelated to theactual course material.
T		6. I get to feeling very panicky when I have to take a surprise exam.
T		7. During a test, I find myself thinking of the consequences of failing.
T		8. After HSK test, I am frequently so tense my stomach gets upset.
T		9. I freeze up on things like HSK Examinations.
T		10. Getting good grades on one HSK test doesn't seem to increase my confidence onthe second.
T		11. I sometimes feel my heart beating very fast during HSK exams.
T		12. After taking a test, I always feel I could have done better than I actually did.
T		13. I usually get depressed after taking a HSK test.
T		14. I have an uneasy, upset feeling before taking a HSK test.
	F	15. When taking a HSK test, my emotional feelings do not interfere with my performance.
T		16. During a HSK test, I frequently get so nervous that I forget facts I really know. I seem to defeat myself while working on HSK tests.
		17. I seem to defeat myself while working
T		18. The harder I work at taking a test or studying for one, the more confused I get.
T		19. As soon as an HSK exam is over, I try to stop worrying about it, but I just can't.
T		20. During HSK tests, I sometimes wonder if I'll ever get through school/university
T		21. I would rather write a paper than take an examination for my grade in a Course or Chinese level.
T		22. I wish examinations did not bother me so much.
T		23. I think I could do much better on tests if I could take them alone and not feel pressured by time limits.
T		24. Thinking about the grade I may get in a HSK test interferes with my studying and performance on HSK tests.
T		25. If HSK examinations could be done away with, I think I would actually learn more.
	F	26. On HSK exams I take the attitude, "If I don't know it now, there's no point in worrying about it."
	F	27. I really don't see why some people get so upset about HSK tests.

T		28. Thoughts of doing poorly interfere with my performance on tests.
	F	29. I don't study any harder for HSK exams than for the rest of my coursework.
T		30. Even when I'm well prepared for a test, I feel very anxious about it.
T		31. I don't enjoy eating before a HSK test.
T		32. Before a HSK examination, I find my hands or arms trembling.
	F	33. I seldom feel the need for "cramming" before a HSK exam.
T		34. The university should recognize that some students are more nervous than others about tests and that this affects their performance.
T		35. It seems to me that examination periods should not be made such intense situations.
T		36. I started feeling very uneasy just before getting a test result.
T		37. I dread courses where the instructor/teacher has the habit of giving "pop" HSK quizzes.