

## ANIMATED EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS AND EFL LEARNERS' FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY

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### Abstract

Anxiety is known as foreign language anxiety when correlated to the learning of foreign languages. Animated educational videos can serve as excellent instruments for visually facilitating the courses. Although recent studies discussed the benefits of using video in educational activities and other similar subjects, only a few findings focused on the impact on EFL learners' Foreign Language Anxiety. To provide a thorough description of the occurring phenomenon from the perspective of the research participants, the researchers used a qualitative approach. On the grounds of this, the researchers used convenience sampling as the preferred technique in collecting the sample, particularly comprehensive sampling. The research participants were 12 students of at the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) of Sanata Dharma University. The data were collected through an online survey using an open-ended questionnaire and an online interview. The findings revealed that there were two results based on this research. First, the use of animated educational videos both increases anxiety and reduces anxiety. Nonetheless, it was also found that the animated educational videos did not boost nor decrease EFL learners' anxiety about foreign languages. Second, the researcher found that topic and video editing were the aspects that influenced the EFL learners.

**Keywords:** animated educational video, EFL learner, foreign language anxiety

### Introduction

Tanveer (2007) observes that in the efforts to support them to achieve the intended learning objectives in the target language, language teachers consider the needs of the language learners as something essential. Despite the importance of videos in the process of learning a foreign language, few researchers have studied how animated educational videos could affect EFL Learners' Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) in acquiring a foreign language. This evoked curiosity to investigate deeper about this phenomenon. Therefore, the study of educational videos as a medium in influencing the FLA of EFL learners has become an important aspect of learning the language. Timothy (2015) denotes that videos assist in enhancing the learning experience holistically by enticing the learners to think and analyze. This



indicates that students can conveniently store knowledge through videos. Also, educational video is an alternative platform to enhance orally-taught knowledge.

Further, global disruptive learning modes due technology revolution have increased numerously in many sectors. One sector that is affected by this educational invention is remote learning. Remote learning happens during situations where teachers and learners are not used to the transmission of teaching using online media or devices. Nevertheless, remote learning is currently permitting teachers and students to stay connected and engaged. In addition, Russell (2020) mentions that without enough time or preparation, teachers and their students have to move quickly into the online environment, which is also a cause of stress for students and educators. In this study, the researchers focused on the process of EFL learners on how they managed anxiety by watching educational videos.

Education video has been an integral aspect of higher education and is an essential strategy in many flipped, blended, and online courses for the distribution of content. Many studies have explored various ways that can influence language anxiety in individuals (Lee, 2015; Mayer, 2009). Researchers study how videos, as one of the E-learning materials, can affect students' learning achievement, students' learning strategy, online learning activity, and teaching-learning activity of the four core components, namely reading, writing, listening, and speaking, in teaching a foreign language.

However, there had not been sufficient attention given to this specific type of video affecting FLA, specifically from EFL learners. Nevertheless, although some studies focus on the techniques that were used to decrease anxiety (Aliyu et al., 2019; Aydin, 2018; Charoensukmongkol, 2016; Motallebzadeh et al., 2020), those studies had not been closely associated with the EFL Learners' learning media, such as the use of videos for learning. The use of videos for learning is crucial as this can offer valuable additional advantages for student learning activities, expand the language perceptions of individuals, enhance cross-cultural understanding, develop imagination, and inspire students to learn (Hadijah, 2016).

Moreover, videos can be one of many effective ways to engage learners and catch their attention. Teachers can use videos to include course details that can help to introduce the lesson. Before the class begins, information and other instructional material can be accessed, which enables more skill-related activities and practice individually. Penfold (2017) states that engagement opportunities can be added to the clips to boost their interactions. Some web addresses can be embedded into the video and provide the learners with additional information thoroughly. Altogether, this study aimed to investigate the perceptions of some ELESPP students that utilizing digital learning material in the form of educational videos can influence the FLA of EFL Learners. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate the influence of educational videos in decreasing FLA and the aspects of the videos that influenced ELESPP students. Considering the pedagogical and practical objectives of English teaching, this thesis examined the following two questions of the research:

- a. What are the influences of watching animated educational videos on the scope of EFL learners' foreign language anxiety?
- b. What kinds of aspects of animated educational videos can help EFL learners overcome their foreign language anxiety?

Muliawati et al. (2020, p. 201) convey that learners who are in an evaluative situation are those who are particularly likely to experience a strong feeling of test anxiety. Hence, the findings of this study were directed to the benefit of college students majoring in English language education, considering that FLA still has become one of many big obstacles. In addition, data produced from this study could be used to show the effects of educational videos on EFL learners' learning activities and provide insight into the influence of FLA on higher learning activities. Thus, the ELESF students could apply a suitable approach to construct a positive atmosphere in a class that had a high intensity of stress and anxiety.

The outcome of this research would also benefit other researchers who are eager to conduct a study about the usage of educational videos in influencing FLA. Nonetheless, future researchers were encouraged to use this study as their reference or apply the results of this study as additional information.

### ***Animated educational video***

Essentially, video is the technology for digitally capturing visual pictures. Video has been one of the major components of higher education. It is embedded in conventional lessons and has become the core of many mixed courses as well as the key source of knowledge supply in online classes (Brame, 2016). Meanwhile, animated educational videos are animations created for educational purposes. They function as tools to help the courses visually. Furthermore, they visualize conceptual material and allow students to comprehend complex or abstract concepts better. It signifies that an animated educational video is an animation used for cultivating educational purposes. This notion visualizes conceptual materials, which allows students to grasp complex or abstract ideas better. Moreover, animated video is an efficient educational platform to assist language learners' anxiety and it can boost their efforts in improving verbal skills (Ju, 2020).

Bobkina (2020) proves that the pedagogical potential of videos is deeply connected with the design of educational videos. Audiovisual equipment strengthened with Information and Communications Technologies could create an excellent educational video. Wiley (2000) argues that a Reusable Learning Object is a form of online practice that offers a digital educational tool that can be used repetitively, expanded, and shared in support of learning from a central online repository.

Compared to a semester where videos are not used in combination with assignments, videos strengthen students' comprehension of complicated topics (Zubair & Laibinis, 2015). What is essential to remember is that viewing a video can be like reading, it is a passive experience. To make educational videos more effective, students need to be constructive in the processing and self-evaluation that contributes to the course's learning outcomes (Brame, 2016).

### ***Foreign language anxiety***

Anxiety, when correlated with foreign language learning, is referred to as foreign language anxiety. Hashemi (2011) mentions that FLA is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon and can be characterized as a subjective feeling of tension, fear, uneasiness, and worry related to the autonomic nervous system. Additionally, the complexity of self-perspective, principles, emotions, and acts relating to language learning in the classroom can be characterized as a specific

process resulting from the nature of language learning. The researchers mentioned earlier that there is a pandemic, which is still ongoing. It asserts that students learn from their home, typically called online learning.

Russell (2020) in her research about language anxiety among online students, shows that significant levels of language anxiety could also influence these students. In the present situation, many students have been compelled into online language learning, and their lack of equipment to choose their teaching platforms can also be a cause of anxiety. Furthermore, EFL learners may experience anxiety that is caused by the English language and by the educational technology that is utilized to converse in the target language (Pichette, 2009; Ushida, 2005). A theory from Krashen (1988), an expert in the field of linguistics, shows that in the mind of language learners, a barrier is created that blocks the input of linguistic information if they become anxious. This is referred to as the affective filter hypothesis. The affective filter can be intensified by low morale, low self-esteem, fear, introversion, and inhibition and develop a 'mental block.'

A 'mental block' inhibits the acquisition of comprehensible input (Schutz, 2019). Any kind of information that is absorbed by a language learner that can be understood is called comprehensible input. Additionally, Cakici (2016) denotes that anxiety is related to the feeling of being uncomfortable, frustrated, self-doubt, frightened, or worried. Similarly, it defines feelings of apprehension and tension as subjective, consciously perceived, and associated with activation or reactivity of the nervous system.

According to Schutz (2019), many variables such as anxiety, confidence, motivation, and stress can lead to the affective filter hypothesis. The affective filter hypothesis does not directly influence language acquisition but hinders the information from reaching the minds of the language learners. Therefore, in foreign language learning studies, the FLA phenomenon has become a profound and outstanding topic of research (Cakici, 2016; Hashemi, 2011; Krashen, 1985; Pichette, 2009; Russell, 2020; Schutz 2019; Ushida, 2005).

Stress and anxiety are common phenomena of mental strain disorders that play a key role in the personal quality of life of the individual. Stress is a psychological, physiological, and behavioral condition that is difficult to analyze and caused upon perceiving a significant difference between the individual's demands and the perceived capacity to accomplish those demands (Giannakakis et al., 2016). Nonetheless, chronic stress could be associated with psychological and/or somatic illness. Anxiety is an unpleasant feeling of apprehension, even without actual risks.

If anxiety is regularly encountered and at degrees of severity that seem excessive, it may become a wide spectrum of disorders. Giannakakis et al. (2016) proclaim that stress and anxiety phrases are used interchangeably. Their biggest difference is that anxiety is a fear not apparently or directly related to external factors or threats. Anxiety and stress usually entailed similar physical symptoms, for example, increased heart rate, sweating hands, and churning stomachs, exacerbated by neuronal pathways largely merging, as the brain could not differentiate between the potential threat and the actual threat.

The particular issue of a foreign language was due to the peculiarity of foreign language learning in the classroom. Horwitz (1986) describe three elements of FLA: fear of negative evaluation, fear of communication, and fear of examination.

The fear of negative evaluation consists of the fear of being judged by other people, which refrains from circumstances that need evaluation, and from the misconception that they will often be negatively judged.

McCroskey (1984) denotes that the fear of communication is a kind of fear that is marked by anxiety or discomfort about interacting with people. An apprehension of communicating happens when learners are inexperienced in communicating even though they have mature ideas and opinions. Zeidner (1998) states that test anxiety is a fear of academic assessment that occurs before or during the assessments. It is a fear that students will fail the examination and have an uncomfortable experience. This reflected a kind of apprehension over the fear of disappointment in academic assessment.

In this research, the first research question was about the influence of watching educational videos on the scope of EFL learners' FLA. To indicate the influence of watching educational videos, the researchers were required to analyze whether the participants were aware of their FLA or not by using Krashen's theory of affective filter hypothesis (1988). By applying the theory, the researchers would know about the effects of watching educational videos based on the cause of anxieties that each participant has experienced. After the influence of watching the educational video had been analyzed, the researchers would employ the three elements of FLA, according to Horwitz (1986), to understand what kinds of aspects from the educational videos could help learners overcome their FLA.

By using the three elements of FLA, the researchers could classify the participants based on each element which can help the researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. The researchers would analyze the aspects of the videos that influenced ELESF students further by using Brame's theory of selecting and providing educational videos (2016). Additionally, the researchers also inserted several findings from some journals such as the following: the theory from Ju (2020), the theory from Pichette (2009), and the theory from Ushida (2005).

In brief, the researchers would utilize some relevant theories as follows: the theory of affective filter hypothesis according to Krashen (1985), the four effective practices in association with selecting and providing educational videos stated by Brame (2016), the three elements of FLA according to Horwitz (1986) to identify the source of the anxiety and several relevant findings. On the other hand, Krashen's theory was applied to indicate the barriers located in the language learner's mind. Thus, the utilization of the educational videos that the participants have watched can be analyzed further in the next chapter of this research.

### ***EFL learners***

EFL is an abbreviation for English as a Foreign Language, students who become EFL learners were taught in non-English speaking countries. According to Hyte (2008), English in a non-English-speaking country is taught as a foreign language. EFL students are, for example, Indonesian students who study English in Indonesia considered as EFL learners because English is not the country's official language. However, when the Indonesian students were studying English in the United States, they would be called students of ESL (English as a Second Language) learners.

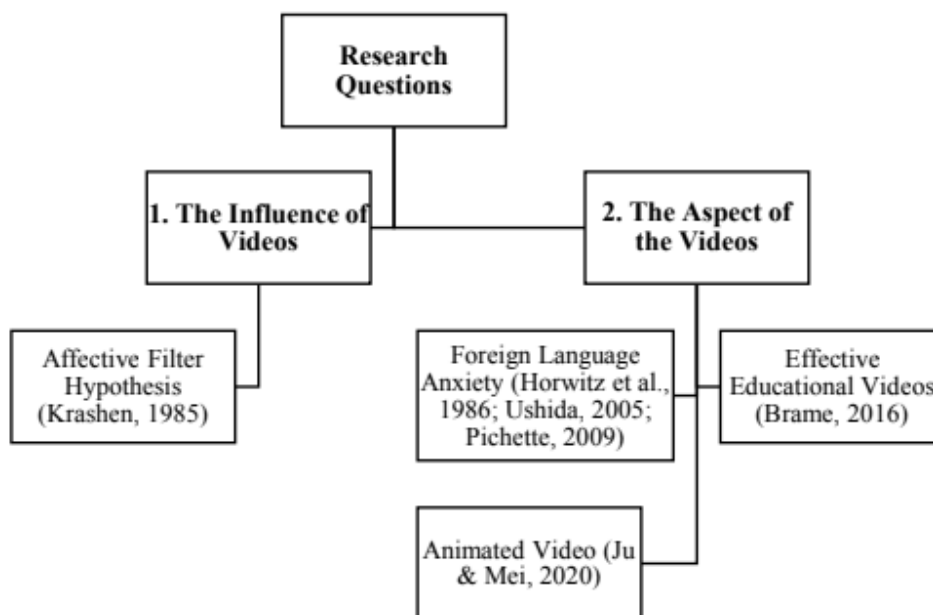


Figure 1. Theoretical framework

## Method

The researchers chose a qualitative approach to carry out an in-depth explanation of the phenomena that occurred from the perspective of the research participants. Ary et al. (2010, p. 424) argue that qualitative inquiry prioritizes attention to context and meaning. It implied that human action is contextual — and thus inseparable from their experience of social, historical, political, and cultural factors.

The researchers collected the data through observation and interviews with the participants to investigate the phenomena. The data would then be analyzed from the description by the participants of the research. Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 2) signify that qualitative research focuses on multimethod concerning an interpretive and naturalistic approach to the subject or participants. Furthermore, the researchers selected to conduct a case study method. Ary et al. (2010, p. 454) proclaim that a case study concentrates on one unit to produce a detailed and holistic overview. Therefore, case studies define a single unit through an in-depth description. This was extracted from interviews and other sources, for instance, observations. The case study approach also entailed either observing what happens to a single person or group of people or reconstructing the case history of the subject participants.

This study was conducted at Sanata Dharma University, particularly at the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP). The researchers began collecting the data once the respondents finished their final examination from February 25, 2021 – March 9, 2021. This decision correlated with the consideration that the participants could concentrate since they already completed the final semester examination. All respondents were 12 ELESP students of batch 2017 and 2018 who volunteered to participate and remained anonymous. Furthermore, the researchers created an open-ended questionnaire through Google Form and distributed it online via WhatsApp. The rationale behind the selection of the 12

participants was that the researchers decided that 12 participants were enough to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Minichiello, 1990).

Next, the researchers collected videos from YouTube. The participants of the research were required to watch all of the videos. Furthermore, the researchers distributed some questionnaires with some open-ended questions. Also, the researchers interviewed some college students majoring in English Language Education from batch 2017 and 2018. The interview was conducted online. In this study, the researchers would employ Convenience Sampling as the selected technique to pick the sample. According to Ary et al. (2010, p. 431), the sample selected for convenience sampling is according to availability, time, location, or ease of access. The first procedure in collecting the data was creating an online questionnaire.

The researchers employed two different types of online questionnaires, which were the Pre-Watching Questionnaire, and the Post-Watching Questionnaire. The Pre-Watching Questionnaire was created to identify if the participants recognized FLA or not and to discern the source of their FLA. The online questionnaire was distributed to any EFL learner from Sanata Dharma University. Meanwhile, in the Post-Watching Questionnaire, there were six videos attached in the beginning section of the online questionnaire. The second procedure was conducting an online unstructured interview. Interviews were designed to collect information in their language from people about thoughts, perceptions, and opinions about certain situations.

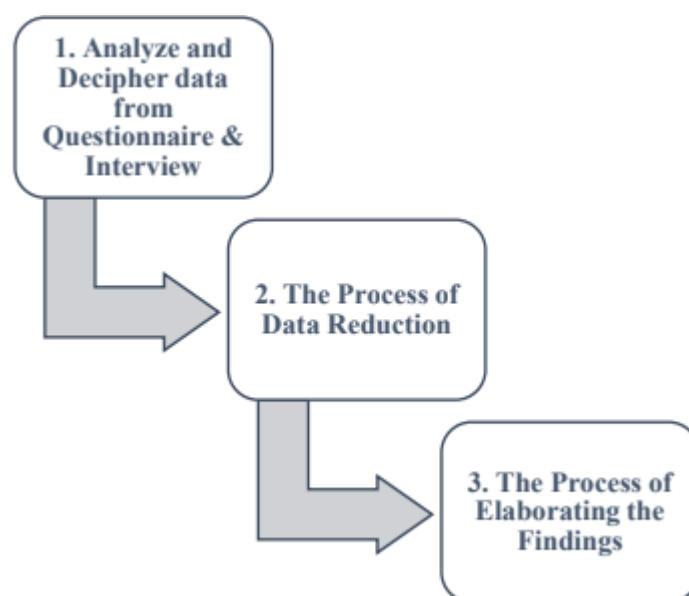


Figure 2. Data analysis technique

Ary et al. (2010, p. 481) show that the first step of qualitative data processing involves familiarization and organization to allow fast retrieval of records. The researchers analyzed the result of the interview by deciphering the answers from the open-ended questionnaire and the interview transcripts.

Subsequently, the researchers would begin the coding and reducing process. The researchers read and reconstructed all the material and filtered it by searching for units of meaning - sentences, expressions, phrases, the viewpoint of the subjects,

patterns of behavior, and events that tend to occur frequently and which seem important (McLeod, 2019). Once all the data are sorted, the researchers would review all the entries with the same code and then combine them into patterns by identifying similarities and associations between various categories.

### Findings and Discussion

#### *The influences of watching animated educational videos on the scope of EFL learners' foreign language anxiety*

To answer the research questions, the researchers elaborates on the results from the post-watching online open-ended questionnaires. Meanwhile, the result of the pre-watching questionnaire was utilized to classify the cause of the Foreign Language Anxiety from each participant.

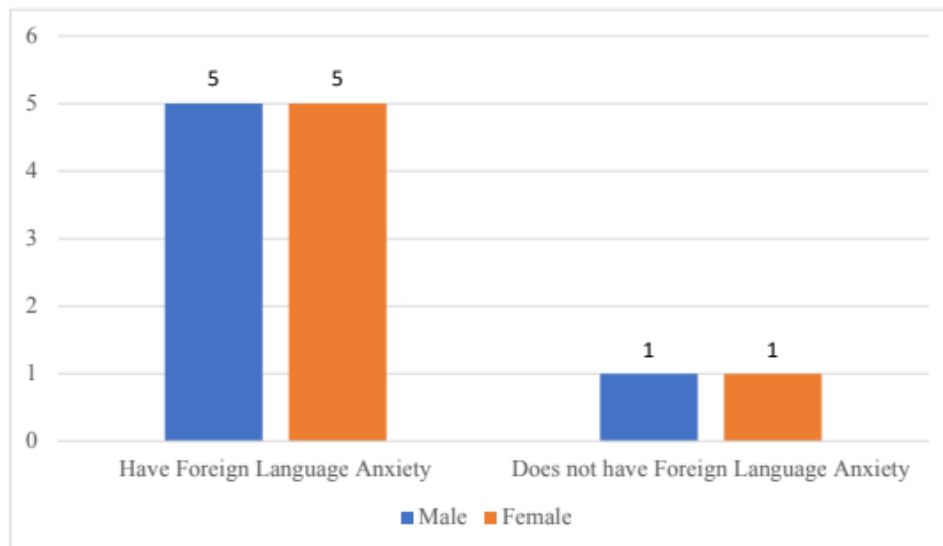


Figure 3. Column graph of EFL learners' anxiety

Figure 3 indicates the comparison between participants who have FLA and participants who do not have FLA. There were 12 participants in this research. Based on the bar graph, five males had an FLA, as well as the other five female participants. On the contrary, there was one male and one female participant who did not have an FLA.

Table 1. First summarized result of the post-watching open-ended questionnaire

No.	Themes	Answers
1.	The videos decreased the FLA	The videos have positive impacts that are useful for coping with my Foreign Language Anxiety problem.
2.	The videos increased the FLA	It triggers my Foreign Language Anxiety.
3.	The videos did not influence the FLA	It does not affect my Foreign Language Anxiety problem. The videos are very good for English Language learners.

The following table below summarizes the responses from 12 respondents to this research. Moreover, the analysis would also have supported some interview



answers transcribed by the researchers. According to the summary, the researchers divided the answers that were closely associated with the first research question into three themes: the videos decreased the FLA, the videos increased the FLA, and the videos did not influence the FLA. These three themes will be discussed further in the following sub-topics below.

#### *The videos decreased the FLA*

One out of two teachers believes that video content promotes student creativity, and 66% of the respondents, who are teachers, agree that animated educational videos boost student's motivation. This statement verified the answer from some respondents that animated educational videos could help them cope with the problems of their FLA. The videos encouraged the respondent's motivation and enhanced their creativity in the effort to solve the problem. This was the respondent's answer:

*I feel that anxiety is a normal thing because it happens naturally. Instead, I feel calmer.* (Respondent 9, open-ended questionnaire)

In the statement above, the respondent expressed that the videos could give him a sense of tranquility. A study conducted by Ju (2020) proclaims that the utilization of animations is an effective way to help language learners' anxiety, improve their oral skills, and motivate students to learn English. Thus, it was confirmed that animated educational videos assisted EFL learners' anxiety, and in this context, they could calm the FLA of the respondent. This was another respondent's answer:

*It helps because I can listen to it comfortably, and above all, it is created interestingly.* (Respondent 7, open-ended questionnaire)

The above respondent also expressed that she had prior knowledge about these videos. Some videos were used as a learning medium in her high school. However, the style of teaching in her high school year did not correspond with her learning style. To be clear, most of the videos that she watched during her time in high school were very tedious and uninviting. She liked to watch animated educational videos that had the same aspects, such as those videos. Not to mention, she also stated that her FLA was reduced due to the animated educational videos.

The pedagogical potential of an animated educational video was closely associated with how the video was created in terms of the editing process, sound effects, background animations, etc. This finding emphasizes the theory that pedagogical elements of a video are deeply linked with the design of the video, which is a part of the Reusable Learning Object (RLO), mentioned by Bobkina (2020). In this notion, the collaboration with the theory of the four effective practices in providing educational videos connoted by Brame (2016) is a significant factor in making the videos comprehensible, convenient, and creative for ELESF students. Below is another respondent's answer to the open-ended questionnaire:

*After watching the videos, I think the videos can become a positive thing to reduce my anxiety because they can be enjoyed and also give satisfaction in understanding the meaning.* (Respondent 6, open-ended questionnaire)

The above respondent also mentioned that he felt motivated because he received new information from the animated educational videos and those videos created a positive atmosphere within him. Ju (2020) connotes that a combination of multimedia can help inspire and motivate language students to learn the English language.

*The videos increased the FLA*

Meanwhile, animated educational videos could also have negative impacts on EFL learners. Language learners could feel anxious both in speaking and in using educational or instructional technologies to communicate in the target language (Pichette, 2009; Ushida, 2005). Additionally, this was the respondent's Answer:

*The video makes me think that I should improve my listening and communication skills, then I will not be afraid anymore. (Respondent 10, open-ended questionnaire)*

The above statement confirmed a respondent's answer that the videos evoked the fear of communication within herself. Additionally, it was evident that the respondent had a fear of communication and it was one of the fears expressed by Horwitz (1986) namely, fear of communication, academic test, and negative evaluation. In the same vein, another respondent of the questionnaire conveyed her answer:

*It evokes my insecurity because I cannot understand some of the parts in the videos. (Respondent 12, open-ended questionnaire)*

The above respondent also conveyed that the animated educational videos made her contemplate her learning progress in the study program. In particular, the respondent thought about how to explain a subject such as science smoothly and straightforwardly.

*The videos did not influence the FLA*

A respondent stated that to overcome his FLA, he needed to expand his knowledge and information about anything and without help from others. This was the respondent's answer.

*They are good videos for learning because there are some uncommon scientific words. However, it does not affect my anxiety problem or help me to boost my confidence. (Respondent 5, open-ended questionnaire)*

The above respondent also connoted that he could overcome his anxiety if he could absorb a lot of new information from any media platform to become more educated. Krashen (1985) argues that language learners are well-equipped for success in learning foreign languages with high motivation, confidence, a strong self-image, and a low degree of anxiety.

***Aspects from animated educational videos that can help learners overcome their foreign language anxiety***

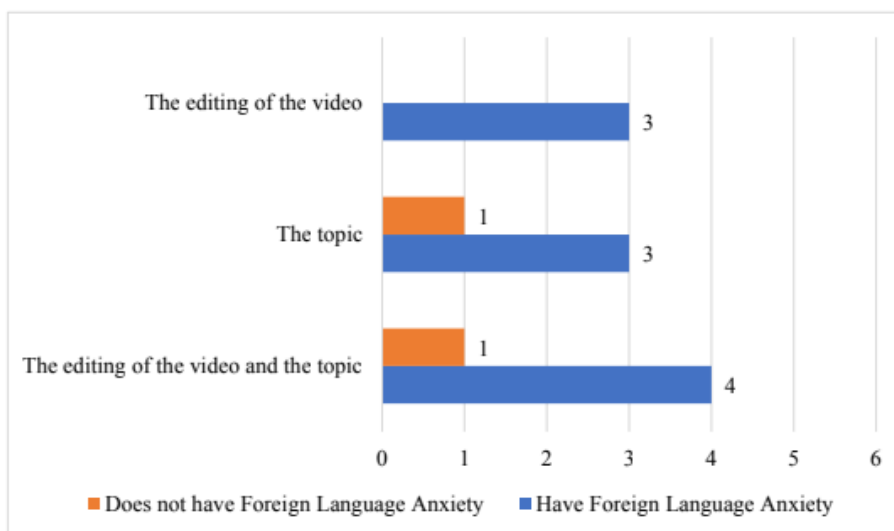


Figure 4. Bar graph of the influence of video editing and the topic

Figure 4 shows the influences of video editing and the topic of the animated educational videos on ELESF students who had anxiety or not. Furthermore, the table below was also summarized from 12 respondents of this research. According to the summary, the researchers divided the answers that were closely associated with the second research question into three themes: the topic, the editing of the video, and also the editing of the video and the topic. These three themes will be discussed further in the following sub-topics below.

Table 2. Second summarized result of the post-watching open-ended questionnaire

No.	Themes	Answers
1.	The topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The topics of the videos are very informative.</li> <li>- I can relate the topics to my life.</li> </ul>
2.	The editing of the video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The editing of the video is very amazing and entertaining.</li> <li>- The editing of the video helps me to understand the meaning.</li> </ul>
3.	The editing of the video and the topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Both aspects can help in reducing my Foreign Language Anxiety.</li> <li>- Both aspects can increase my Foreign Language Anxiety.</li> </ul>

#### *The topic*

This was a respondent's answer from the questionnaire that did not have Foreign Language Anxiety:

*I think the most important aspect is the topic because it relates to our real-life situations. (Respondent 3, open-ended questionnaire)*

Despite that the above respondent did not have Foreign Language Anxiety, she still conveyed that the videos could help in reducing language learners' anxiety. In other words, the respondent could understand the meaning of the videos without hindrance. Krashen (1985) denotes that in the minds of language learners, a barrier is created that blocks the input of linguistic information if they become anxious. This is referred to as the affective filter hypothesis.

#### *The editing of the video*

Some respondents conveyed that the editing aspect of the videos could give them some impact. A respondent proclaimed that the videos can help in decreasing her fear of communication. The rationale for her statement was that watching animated educational videos matched her style of learning and, she felt motivated by anything related to visual animation. Hence, other findings proved that animated educational videos had an impact on motivating language learners to learn more.

#### *The editing of the video and the topic*

An interviewee mentioned that the visuals and the content of the videos helped him to cope with his fear of negative evaluation. He affirmed that the visual animation and how the speaker explained the topic played a significant role in decreasing his FLA (Interviewee 9). On that account, this finding asserts that using animated videos is an efficient tool to help EFL learners' FLA. Ju (2020) proves that animated videos are an efficient tool for learners to help with their anxieties. Similarly, another interviewee who did not have FLA, conveyed that the videos could help EFL learners to cope with their FLA problem. He stated that the topic of the video could be an alternative method of learning for EFL learners if they felt tedious about their learning style, while visual animation could be a way to stimulate their curiosity (Interviewee 4). Hence, this finding asserted that interesting and varied teaching content served a vital role in helping learners improve their ability to learn a foreign language, which can be obtained via animated videos (Ju, 2020).

### **Conclusion**

The effects of watching animated educational videos can both increase anxiety and at the same time decrease anxiety. It occurred for participants who felt that the videos increased their anxieties. They had various reasons such as the videos evoked their self-insecurity about skills to communicate in the English language. On the other hand, some participants argued that the videos could help EFL learners in decreasing FLA. They mentioned that EFL learners needed to have a willingness to gain new insights and have a high curiosity. Not to mention, some participants conveyed that the topic of the videos was very informative and educative, and even some participants could apply what they have learned from the videos to their real-life contexts. Also, other participants stated that the visual animation of the videos was very creative and amazing. They argued that the visual animation helped them to understand the subject of discussion in the videos. Also, several participants stated that both aspects could influence their FLA. Given these points, the visual animation aspect could evoke EFL learner's curiosity and the other aspect could motivate their learning spirit.

Future researchers were suggested to analyze and select videos from YouTube thoroughly and conscientiously by considering more relevant topics, such as videos about learning grammar. Apart from this, some participants argued that the duration of the videos was too long, which caused the participants to feel fatigued and easily lose concentration. Nonetheless, the researchers suggested future researchers make the focal point of this study within a classroom setting, which means a specific subject is being learned. For instance, future researchers could conduct a study about the perceptions of watching animated educational videos towards Grammar I students' FLA.

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