



STUDENTS' ANXIETY IN THE ENGLISH LEARNING AT SDIT AL IHSAN JAKARTA

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the English language learning anxiety of primary students empirically. This research is descriptive qualitative research. The population of this research is the sixth-grade students' from SDIT Al-Ihsan in South Jakarta. The sample was taken through simple random sampling of which 50 students as samples of this research. The instruments used in this research were questionnaires and interviews. This research explained that students' English language learning anxiety is considered a high category in learning English.

Keywords: *Language, Learning, Anxiety, Primary Students*

INTRODUCTION

As a developing country, Indonesia needs English because the government is trying to improve all aspects which are usually faced by all countries. Due to the significance of the English role of today's communication, being competent in English is greatly needed. Having English skills and using English communicatively, could encourage Indonesian people to study English since the globalization era challenges their competence comprehensively.

We know that nation of Indonesia has thousands of islands which means that it also has hundreds of ethnic groups which makes languages in Indonesia vary. Then Indonesian nationalists thought that they needed to have a single national language to unite the people, therefore the Indonesian language became an official national language. While Indonesia has been successful with its national language which then affects the use of the Indonesian language for daily communication, it makes the use of English for international communication less. Then the majority of Indonesian people remain handicapped by their English.

The fact has shown that Indonesians get some troubles in studying English mainly in performing their speaking competence although they have been studying English for years to years they are still incapable to use English orally. People who have learned English for a long time in



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Indonesia, sometimes rather hesitate when they should speak with native speakers. They are not sure about their English. They are often embarrassed or shy to say anything when they do not understand what others speak or when they realize that others do not understand them. Sometimes, they just listen in silence while others do talk. This situation is quite related to a feeling of anxiety. Sometimes some people do not have enough bravery to speak in front of people even in their language. They always feel nervous when they speak in public. They are afraid of making mistakes because they are worried that other people will laugh at them.

From all descriptions above, the writers would like to find out students' language learning anxiety on primary students. In the writers' opinion, most people experience language anxiety. There has been a great deal of research in language learning anxiety. In the education field, anxiety becomes a major obstacle faced by students, especially young learners. Thus, because of the importance of English in the world today, this research analyzes the English language learning anxiety of primary students at SDIT Al Ihsan, Jakarta.

Anxiety is a complex phenomenon that has been studied by several well-known theorists over many years. There are several kinds of anxiety that have been described. Anxiety is part of the human condition that is closely related to the issues of psycholinguistic and socio-cultural that one has. Anxiety is also considered as a fear occurring whenever an individual feels in a threat or a danger in such situations in the environment. It is caused by mental or emotional conflicts, not objective circumstances.

In learning, anxiety appears to be a common thing that students face particularly in second language learning (Amiri and Ghonsooly, 2015). Students often experience anxiety in learning if they do overthink the punishment given by teachers when they make mistakes in the learning. It surely affects their achievement in the learning process (Shibli, et. al., 2015; Sing and Thukral, 2009). Some students may feel guilty about their failure in learning. The sense of guilt is the most important problem in the evolution of learning culture. It could be said that the sense of guilt brought in students' mindset could hurt this attitude and it can arouse anxiety.

Anxiety has such an impact on individuals in social situations, especially in public speaking, which is known as "social anxiety" as stated by Dugas and Robichaud (2007), anxiety in the social context is assumed as a fear that intensively occurred in the social performance

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situations. People with social anxiety will automatically avoid and anticipate the unexpected social activities that might emerge among them. Social anxiety is identified as extreme fear and stress related to being watched by others. This could be from speaking activities in crowds to eating meals among other people.

In real life, social anxiety does happen to many individuals. Social anxiety cuts across all gender, ethnic, economic, and cultural barriers. They experience some type of social anxiety, for example, avoiding public speaking conferences, job interviews, gatherings, or parties. In the opinion of Dugas and Robichaud, social anxiety can appear quite similar to generalized anxiety disorder (GAD). A distinction between social anxiety and GAD is the underlying fear. For example, social anxiety is having by an individual who worries when he might be observed or evaluated by others, while GAD is having by individual who worries not only in social situations but also worries about several daily events.

Scovel in Pavlenko (2005:33) said that "Anxiety is commonly seen as a state of apprehension and vague fear that is only indirectly associated with its object". Anxiety is a form of individual emotions related to feeling threatened by the existence of something, usually with the object of threats that are not so clear. It is defined as a state of uneasiness and apprehension about future uncertainties. Though anxiety is related to fear, it is not the same thing. Fear is a direct response to a specific event or object of which an individual is conscious. While anxiety is often unfocused, vague, and hard to pin down to a specific cause. Anxiety could be a result of anticipation of a realistic or fantasized threat or situation. Everyone experiences a small level of anxiety during his life. This happens is natural.

In the process of language learning, the use of cognitive thoughts is quite high. Besides, language ability is a skill, therefore oral practice is in high demand. Quite many steps they have to learn, to remember, and to practice. When there are too many inputs coming into the brain at once, the brain tends to stop them. At this level, the students feel of having brain overload. This condition can keep their stress level high and it makes the material of the lesson is not interesting. Lately, the students feel frightened or have a sense of failure. They feel unconfident with their English which situation will bring them to the level of feeling anxious, panic, afraid, embarrassed, and so on, which all of these feelings can be categorized

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as feeling of anxiety. Thus, in this case, the anxiety arises because of the feeling of uncomfortable with the learning process.

Anxiety is associated with problems in second language learning. It is often found that students who have grade-level increased in which the material of English lesson becomes wider, thus the learning process becomes harder, therefore it causes their feeling of fear, panics, or anxiety becomes increased as well. Thus in many respects, anxiety must be controlled appropriately since it can arouse such negative impacts in their learning circumstance (Millan, 2003).

Schein in Coutu (2002:100) identified that “Learning anxiety as stemming from the fear of failure, of looking stupid, of having to change”. It is usually begun with a perception that language learning is difficult, then students will judge that it is not easy to have English competence. They think that language learning is emotionally painful, as they often have to practice the language in front of the class in which they are afraid of looking stupid. The fear or anxiety of exposure during the process of language learning will lead to their failure in the target language.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is qualitative research that uses a descriptive method for this research focuses on the vivid description of what happens. Therefore, the descriptive method is suitable for this purpose. The population of this research is all sixth-grade students of SDIT Al-Ihsan. Then, 50 students are selected as participants. The data is obtained from sixth-grade students of SDIT Al-Ihsan. The technique for analyzing the data is to analyze the percentage of indicators of students’ anxiety from all questionnaires. Such procedures are conducted to collect the data as the followings:

1. Observation

Observation is a method of collecting information by investigating directly the current process of learning English speaking.

2. Interview

Collecting the data and information by interviewing teachers and students to the research importance.

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3. Literature Review

The data and information are collected by reviewing sources or references. In this phase, the literature review starts with the analysis of the previous research from both offline and online sources. The list of books and journals as references is in the references section.

4. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given for students to identify their anxiety in learning speaking. The questionnaire consists of 10 questions related to the primary students' anxiety indicators in English language learning. The questionnaire used for this research is a questionnaire of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) described by Huang (2010). The researchers use only 10 items.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings have shown that students' anxiety of SDIT Al-Ihsan Jakarta is still at a high level. Based on the data taken from the students, there is a significant percentage that indicates a high level of students' anxiety. From 10 questions given to 50 students, there are 355 responses of Yes and 145 responses of No. In percentage, it can be said that the students who have high anxiety reach 71%, while the students who have low anxiety reach 29%. It means that the students with high anxiety are more than students with low anxiety.

Table1: Students' Responses on English Learning Anxiety at SDIT Al-Ihsan Jakarta

Questionnaire	Students' responses	
	Yes	No
1. I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in language class.	32	18
2. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.	38	12
3. I get upset when I don't understand what the English teacher is correcting.	31	19
4. I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	40	10
5. I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in English class.	37	13
6. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says.	29	21
7. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	32	18
8. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class.	35	15

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9. I am afraid that other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	42	8
10. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English class.	39	11

Table 2: Percentage of Students' Responses on English Learning Anxiety

Total of Students' Responses			
Yes	Percentage	No	Percentage
355	71%	145	29%

Based on all of the data collected, there can be found some feelings related to language learning anxiety such as afraid, nervous, upset, inferior, worried, unconvincing, and embarrassed. All of them have a significant score by showing 71% of students' responses to indicate students' language learning anxiety. It confirms that language learning anxiety at SDIT Al Ihsan occurs. Language learning anxiety is anxiety that occurs in the process of language learning because of the feeling of fear, shyness, panic, and so on, when a student has to practice the language in the classroom or because of any other factors which could threaten him/her.

In the classroom, most students feel uncomfortable when receiving bad feedback in front of the group. It creates a panic situation or a feeling of shyness. They do not want to look foolish, while it is natural that anybody wants to protect his self-image. All of these feelings are called anxiety. Unconsciously, it results in an emotional reaction and creates a negative feeling to the teacher.

Anxious students are desperately trying to avoid humiliation, embarrassment, and criticism, and to preserve their self-esteem. In this case, the degree of exposure to language practice is great. Many students have a negative feeling about their language ability. This can make language learners who have a certain personality avoid language learning. They do not have strong confidence or bravery to achieve. Their feeling of guilty increases. They do not want to be humiliated, embarrassed, and criticized but they do not try to come up.

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CONCLUSION

The results of the research show that the students' anxiety in learning the English language is still high that is caused by some factors and indicators remarked in their responses to the questionnaire related to language learning anxiety. Findings also show that all students are not yet maximal to develop their potential and competence in the teaching-learning process. In this case, teachers should be much more creative in exploring any kind of teaching strategy. Moreover, teachers should also have enough knowledge of psychology to be able to reduce students' anxiety.

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