

AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' ENGLISH LANGUAGE ANXIETY AT SMAN 7 PADANG

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat komponen-komponen yang paling berpengaruh terhadap kecemasan siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris dan juga sumber-sumber kecemasan siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris di SMAN 7 Padang. Data dari penelitian ini adalah angket dan wawancara. Sumber data penelitian ini ialah 2 kelas X; X9 dan X10, 2 kelas XI; XI IPS 1 dan XI IPA 4, dan 2 kelas XII; XII IPA 1 dan XII IPS 1. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komponen yang paling berpengaruh terhadap kecemasan siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris adalah ketakutan terhadap penilaian negative orang lain, diikuti dengan kecemasan dalam berkomunikasi, kecemasan terhadap ujian, dan yang terakhir adalah kecemasan berada di dalam kelas bahasa Inggris. Melalui interview didapatkan bahwa siswa merasa sumber kecemasan mereka adalah karena faktor mereka sendiri, keyakinan diri mereka yang merasa bahwa bahasa Inggris sulit, koreksi langsung dari guru, kegiatan kelas yaitu berbicara, dan ujian bahasa Inggris.

Key words: English, language, anxiety

A. Introduction

English is one of the main subjects taught in junior high school and senior high school level. It is taught from the first year of junior high school and senior high school level. It is also involved in National Examination. According to those situations, English can be said as an important subject learnt in junior high school and senior high school level. Especially for high school students, English learning is more complex than in junior high school since the purpose of English language learning in high school is to enable students to reach informational level since they are expected to continue their study to higher education level (KTSP,2006).

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However, it seems hard for high school students to reach informational level of English. Based on the interview done with an English teacher and a training teacher at SMAN 7 Padang, it was found that students' achievement in English learning is generally quite low.

Actually, Students' low achievement in English may come from themselves. It implies that high school students' problem in learning English comes from themselves which is called internal factors. Brown (2007) states that some factors affected students in language learning that come from themselves is personality factors. He classifies some personality factors including self esteem, willingness to communicate, motivation, anxiety, etc. Similarly, based on the interview done with English teacher and a training teacher, there are some internal factors that influence students' English learning at SMAN 7 including lack of motivation, students' attitudes toward learning English and language anxiety.

The first internal factor is students' lack of motivation. Basically, motivation is important factor of learning since it needs to make the students get involved in learning activities. In fact, many students are not motivated to sincerely follow English class at school. Students' perception of learning English may be the factor. It is really general issue that most of students think that English is a very difficult subject. They feel like they want to pass the times fast whenever they are in English class.

The second internal factor is students' attitudes toward the English learning. According to the interview done with an English teacher and a training teacher of SMAN 7 Padang, it was discovered that most of students were not really eager to learn English. It was proved by the way they acted during English class. Some of students enjoyed gossiping, some others were more interested at looking outside and even there was a time when one or two students fell asleep in English class. Those attitudes definitely affect students' achievement in English learning. Once they ignore the lesson of the day, they get nothing at that day.

Another internal problem faced by high school students is language anxiety. Spielberger (In Brown, 2007) argued that psychologically "Anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system". Another definition is explained by Scovel (In Brown, 2007) states that "anxiety is associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension, or worry". Based on some studies; McIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Young, 1991; Oxford, 1999; Horwitz & Horwitz, 2001 (In Young, 1999) anxiety often interferes students' learning process.

There are 3 types of anxiety identified by some experts; Cattell & Schier 1963, McIntyre & Gardner 1989, Spielberger 1966 (In Young, 1999)

1. Trait Anxiety

Spielberger (In Toth, 2010) defines that “Trait anxiety refers to a stable predisposition to become nervous in a wide range of situations”. It means trait anxiety may appear in any situation. People with high trait anxiety are generally nervous people and lack of emotional stability.

2. State Anxiety

Spielberger (In Toth, 2010) argues that “state anxiety is subjective feelings of tension, nervousness, and worry, and by activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system.” Moreover, MacIntyre (In Young, 1999) defines anxiety as “moment to moment experience of anxiety; it is the transient emotional state of feeling nervous that can fluctuate over time and vary in intensity.” Shortly, state anxiety happens in some moment because of the feeling of nervousness, tension, and worry.

3. Situation-Specific Anxiety

“The situation-specific view of anxiety is based on the assumption that certain types of situations are more likely to produce anxiety than others” (Toth, 2010). Anxiety in language learning is categorized into situation-specific anxiety (Macintyre, In Young 1991 and Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986). They argue that situation-specific anxiety only occurs in particular situation such as giving speech, taking a test, or using other language. Thus, situation-specific anxiety represents anxiety in language learning.

Students’ language anxiety may come from some components. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) identify three main components of foreign language anxiety

1. . Communication apprehension

Communication apprehension arises from someone’s fear and shyness when it comes to communicate with others. Communication apprehension in foreign language learning comes from someone’s personal knowledge. In communication apprehension, people are usually afraid of oral communication that is about speaking and listening (Wu and Chan, 2004). They might get difficulty to make someone understands and to understand someone.

2. Test anxiety

Test anxiety is related to someone’s fear of test-taking situation. Students tend to deal with test anxiety every time they get to face frequent test. As Wu and Chan (2004) argue that students, in their

mind, build up such negative thought toward test and have unreasonable opinion on evaluative situations.

3. Fear of Negative Evaluation

“Fear of negative evaluation comes from students’ apprehension about other’s evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate negatively” (Watson *et al* in Toth, 2008). Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) state that fear of negative evaluation is not limited to test-taking situations. They argued that it is broader than that that it may appear in any social. In a foreign language context, negative evaluation may come from teachers and peers because in FL learning, continuously evaluation is needed.

The components of foreign language anxiety have been developed by many researchers such as Na (2007) and Lucas (2011). They add one more component of language anxiety based on their research that is about students’ English language anxiety. The component is English classroom anxiety. Since this research is also on students’ English language anxiety, the researcher uses model developed by Na (2007) and Lucas (2011).

4. English Classroom Anxiety

Na (2007) and Lucas *et al* (2011) in their research about students’ English language anxiety add one more component of students’ language anxiety that is English classroom anxiety. English classroom anxiety includes how students’ though their English class generally.

There are some sources of language anxiety. Young (1991) states 6 sources of language anxiety.

1. Personal and Interpersonal

Language anxiety can arouse when someone has low self-esteem. People with low self esteem often worry about what others think about them. At that moment anxiety will appear.

2. Personal belief about language learning

Belief is very important in language learning. Once belief becomes unrealistic, it will lead language learners to feel anxious.

3. Instructor beliefs about language teaching

Young (1991) quotes Brandl about instructor’s belief of their role in class. Most instructors play their role as the centre of the class. Instructors who think their role in class is teaching and talking, who believe their role is like a commander instead of facilitator, who feels wrong in pair is bothering the class, may be contributing to learner language anxiety.

4. Instructor-learner interaction

Some experts believe that harsh manner of correcting learners' errors is often cited as provoking anxiety. Learners who are corrected in front of their friends will feel pressured for not performing well and look so terrible. Their tense feeling results on anxiety.

5. Classroom procedure

Having to speak in front of class is the primary centre of classroom procedure which arouses learners' anxiety. Oral quizzes and having to respond orally in the target language are other strong sources of anxiety.

6. Language test

Language testing is another source of learners' language anxiety. Some particular language test items may lead learners to anxiety. Spending hours of time is studying only to find tests or utilize question type which they have no experience will also cause anxiety.

Students' anxiety in learning English is really bothering that it affects students' learning achievement. If students' language anxiety gets higher, they cannot perform well in classroom. According to informal interview to an English training teacher and an English teacher at SMAN 7 Padang, most of students were nervous when it came to speaking English or English test. Whenever they are in front of the class, they tend to forget what they already have in mind. Their fear and nervousness in speaking, English test, and performing in class show that they already deal with anxiety since fearness in speaking; that is classified into communication apprehension, and English test are two of components in language anxiety.

Based on the interview, there are some factors that influence students in learning English; students' lack of motivation, students' attitudes toward learning English, and students' language anxiety. Some of the factors above have been studied by many researchers such as motivation. However, there is lack of research on anxiety especially in English department State University of Padang, Therefore, the writer is interested in studying students' English language anxiety at SMAN 7 Padang.

B. Research Methodology

This research was a descriptive research which was done to find out the components of students' English language anxiety that mostly influence them in English learning and the sources of students' English language anxiety. This research used FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) develop by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) and also interview. FLCAS is a 33-items questionnaire. The FLCAS was adopted and translated into Indonesian language to make the students respond easily.

The source of data of this research was two classes of each grade. The classes were X9 and X10 of X 9 and X 10 , XI IPA 4 & XI IPS 1 of XI IPA 4 and XI IPS 1 , and XII IPA 1 and XII IPS 1.

C. Discussion

1. The Components of Students' English Language Anxiety

The finding of this research showed that fear of negative evaluation was the most influential component of students' English language anxiety. It could be seen from the average percentage of each grade; 62% of X 9 and X 10 students, 63% of XI IPA 4 and XI IPS 1 students, and 58% of XII IPA 1 and XII IPS 1 students felt that they dealt with anxiety mostly because of they feared of others' negative evaluation. They were afraid and anxious whenever they were in evaluative situation. They were afraid of performing in the class because they thought people will value them negatively whenever they perform in English class. Wu and Chan (2004) stated that students that feared of negative evaluation may be uncertain about their ability to make a good impression.

Communication apprehension followed behind as the second influential component of students' English language anxiety with 58% of X 9 and X 10 students, 58% of XI IPA 4 and XI IPS 1 students, and 53% of XII IPA 1 and XII IPS 1 students thought that they were afraid and shy in communicating with others. They were afraid that they would not understand others and others would not understand them. Wu and Chan (2004) described those students who dealt with anxiety in communication apprehension were majorly afraid of speaking to others and listening to others. Following communication apprehension, test anxiety was the third influential component of students' English language anxiety. Majorly, the students were afraid of English tests. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) argued that most of students were anxious whenever they were in test-taking situation.

The last influential component of students' English language anxiety was English classroom anxiety. English classroom anxiety described about how the students felt about their fearness in English class generally (Na, 2007 and Lucas *et al*, 2011). The finding showed that 41% of X 9 and X 10 students, 44% of XI IPA 4 and XI IPS 1 students, and 43% of XII IPA 1 and XII IPS 1 students felt anxiety in English class.

In summary, the first component of language anxiety that mostly influence students in English learning was fear of negative evaluation with 61% of average percentage of all participants. The second influential component was communication apprehension with 57% of average percentage. The third component of language anxiety was test anxiety with 45% of average percentage. The last component of language anxiety that mostly influence students in English

learning was English classroom anxiety with 43% of average percentage. The result of average percentage can be seen in the table below.

Table 1. Average Percentage of Students' English Language Anxiety Components

Components of Students' English Language Anxiety	10th Grade: X 9 and X 10	11th Grade: XI IPA 4 and XI IPS 1	12th Grade: XII IPA 1 and XII IPS 1	Average Percentage
Communication Apprehension	58%	58%	53%	57%
Fear of Negative Evaluation	62%	63%	58%	61%
Test Anxiety	46%	48%	40%	45%
English Classroom Anxiety	41%	44%	43%	43%

2. The Sources of Students' English Language Anxiety

In term of the sources of students' English language anxiety; based on the result of interview, it was found that the sources of students' English language anxiety were personal and interpersonal, personal belief about language learning, instructor-learner interaction, classroom procedure, and language test. The first source was personal and interpersonal. The students dealt with anxiety mostly because of their low self esteem. The result showed that they were not confident in English class that they thought other students were better than them in English class. Young (1991) argued that language anxiety can arouse when someone has low self esteem.

The second source was personal belief about language learning. The students' belief about English learning was they thought English learning was difficult and they thought that speaking English had to be done well and correctly. It was one of the sources of students' English language anxiety. Young (1991) noted that if students' belief about language learning was impractical, anxiety would appear. The third source was instructor-learner interaction. Based on the interview, the students' anxiety could come when they were corrected directly in front of others. It made them embarrassed that anxiety aroused at that moment. Young (1991) stated that students who were corrected directly in front of their friends would feel that they looked so terrible.

The fourth source of students' English language anxiety was classroom procedure. According to the interview result, most of students were anxious because of classroom procedure especially speaking. They said that speaking or performing in English class made them afraid and anxious. Young (1991) stated that the primary classroom procedure that produced anxiety in speaking in classroom. The last source was language test. Young (1991) argued that some particular language test items may lead learners to anxiety. Based on the interview, the students said that English test made them anxious especially listening test. They thought they got difficulties in understanding what the speakers said. They also noted that if the tests were unfamiliar, they would be anxious.

It can be concluded that the components of students' English language anxiety that mostly influence students in English learning were first fear of negative evaluation. The second component was communication apprehension. The third influential component was test anxiety and the last was English classroom anxiety. Meanwhile the sources of students' English language anxiety were personal and interpersonal, personal belief about language learning, instructor-learner interaction, classroom procedure, and language test.

D. Conclusion and suggestions

Based on the research findings, it was found that the components of English language anxiety that mostly affected students in English language learning was fear of negative evaluation. According to the data found, most of students of X 9 and X 10 , XI IPA 4 and XI IPS 1 , and XII IPA 1 and XII IPS 1 felt that fear of negative evaluation was the component of English language anxiety that mostly influenced them in English language learning. The second influential component was communication apprehension. The third influential component was test anxiety. The last component that mostly influenced students in English learning was English classroom anxiety. Derived from the interview, it was found that the sources of students' English language anxiety were personal and interpersonal, personal belief about language learning, instructor-learner interaction, classroom procedure, and language test.

Based on the conclusion, it is suggested that the students should build more self confidence in English class. Moreover, the students should gain more self esteem in order to reduce language anxiety whenever they are in English class. Not only should the students, the teachers also pay attention to students' English language anxiety in English class. The teacher should create less anxiety classroom activities so that the students will enjoy being in English class. Less anxiety classroom activities will also reduce students' English language anxiety.

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