

# AN ANXIETY ANALYSIS OF STUDENT IN LEARNING ENGLISH AT THE 10<sup>TH</sup> GRADE OF SMA 7 KOTA TANGERANG

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## Abstract

This research was carried out to investigate foreign language anxiety of EFL senior high school students at the 10th grade of SMAN 7 Kota Tangerang. Specifically, it aimed to identify what factors that may contribute to anxiety in English learning environment based on the students' perspectives.

The method was used in this study was descriptive qualitative method. Fifteen anxious students were selected as the participants. The data were gathered through structured interviews and classroom observations.

The result of the study showed that speaking in front of the class is the dominant factor of students' anxiety, then being laughed at by others, incomprehensible input, students' beliefs about language learning, teacher personality and attitude, and lack of preparation were the six factors that may contribute to the students' anxiety in learning English.

**Keywords:** Students' Anxiety, English

## 1. Introduction

It is undeniable that English is the most important and prevalent throughout the world. This is also very important in shaping the lives of professional and academic students from various disciplines (Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009; Teng & Sinwongsuwat, 2015; cited in Al-khasawneh, 2016).

In classroom learning, many factors influence students' success. One of them is emotion. Emotion is important because they have an impact on classroom learning. It affects the ability of students to process information and to accurately understand what they are facing. (Brown 1991:73; cited in Hashemi, 2011) states that emotion affect learning in the most fundamental way because it is the basis of learning strategies and techniques.

In other words, emotion can encourage or inhibit learning. For example, when students learn and feel safe, happy, and excited about the subject matter, it will make more successful. Emotion has the potential to energize students' thinking and also potentially disrupt learning. Negative emotion such as anger, anxiety, and sadness can potentially interfere with students' learning efforts.

Unfortunately, in the case of foreign language learning, students' emotions tend to be more discouraging than encouraging. One emotional state that causes such a process to be difficult is anxiety. In the process of language learning, students can distract by emotional states such as anxiety. Because of feelings of tension, worry, and nervousness students' abilities will be hampered in foreign language classes.

According to Oxford on Fonseca-mora (2016) most language research shows a negative relationship between anxiety and performance. By worrying, hesitating, and reducing participation, anxiety can destroy student performance. "Anxiety is a psychological construct, usually described by psychologists as a state of fear, faint fear that is only indirectly linked to an object" (Scovel, 1991:18; cited in Hashemi, 2011). Anxiety, negatively influences language learning as felt intuitively by many language learners, and has been found to be one of the most studied variables in all psychology and education (Horwitz, 2001:113; cited in Hashemi, 2011).

Meanwhile, during the writer's teaching practice in a senior high school, SMAN 7 Kota Tangerang, the writer found signs of anxiety among themstudents. Some of them became anxious, making avoidance and participating in class reduced. They worried about making mistakes with the target language and feeling afraid and ashamed to do. In this case the target language is English. There are those who think, the teacher will be angry when he made a mistake and friends will mock him. So he prefers to be quiet and passive. While some of them also believe that English is a difficult lesson. Such beliefs can affect their self-esteem and make them feel worried in class. Then some of them have beliefs that can affect and make them worry in class. Some English opinions were a difficult lesson for them.

In other words, anxiety can hinder the students from attaining the objectives of their English learning. Students can learn from the purpose of their English learning.

Anxiety in students occurs because there is a cause. Many factors can cause anxiety. In this study the writer intend to identify what factors cause students' anxiety in learning English. The writer's expectations after knowing various factors in this study, teachers and students can minimize the occurrence of anxiety in learning English.

## 2. Method

This research conducted at SMAN 7 Kota Tangerang in academic year 2019/2020. The research subject was students in tenth grade of SMAN 7 Tangerang. In this study the population is tenth grade of SMAN 7 Kota Tangerang. The total of students are 315 students. The participants of the study were a number of SMAN 7 Kota Tangerang in class X Mipa 2 with the total number of students are 35.

In this research, the writer used qualitative approach. Then, the writer used design of descriptive method which is a method of research that attempt to describe and interpret the objects in accordance with reality. The descriptive method is implemented because the data analysis is presented descriptively.

## 3. Research Finding

The data were gathered through structured interview with the participants who considered to be anxious in English class and classroom observation. The table below is a data display compiled from the interview. It shows what factors that might contribute to the students' anxiety.

**Table 1**

Interview	Participants Answers/Factors Contribute to Anxiety
1st student	Limited vocabulary, studying less, do not understand what teacher said, suddenly asked by the teacher, ridiculed by peers
2nd student	Limited vocabulary, studying less, English is difficult , unclear explanation
3rd student	Limited vocabulary, English is difficult, asked by the teacher to speak, suddenly asked by the teacher, threatening attitude
4th student	Being called by the teacher, asked speak in front of the class, ridiculed by peers, English is difficult, the way

	teacher acts and behav
5th student	Being called by the teacher, speak in front of the class, unclear explanation, studying less, the way teacher acts and behave , threatening attitude
6th student	Studying less, ridiculed by peers, English is difficult, limited vocabulary, threatening attitude
7th student	asked speak in front of the class, suddenly asked by the teacher, studying less, the way teacher acts and behave
8th student	Asked by the teacher, speak in front of the class, ridiculed by peers, limited vocabulary, studying less
9th student	Asked to practice, limited vocabulary, studying less
10th student	Suddenly asked by the teacher, ridiculed by peers, limited vocabulary
11th student	Asked to practice, ridiculed by peers, the way teacher acts and behave
12th student	Being called by the , speak in front of the class, ridiculed by peers, English is difficult, threatening attitude
13th student	Limited vocabulary, studying less, unclear explanation

Based on the table 1, it shows that speaking activities limited vocabulary and grammar knowledge were the aspects that bothered the participants most about English class. They also spoke of their fear of making mistake and being ridiculed by peers. Further/then, when asked why feel so anxious, the participants responded that they feel anxious when do not understand what teacher said and do not prepare enough.

While asked how people react if someone make a mistake, not all of them responded that their peers will laugh. The writer also examined the participants' beliefs about English language. Most of the participants also admitted that English was difficult. They thought that they need to know every word to understand what being said in English.

Further, the participants also asked how teacher influenced their feelings. They responded that the teacher can generate anxiety by the way they act and behave such as harsh and threatening method, spoke too much fast, and forced them to practice. Last, the participants suggested that the teacher should teach more slowly and comprehensible by using English moderately. They also wanted the teacher to encourage them and not forced them to practice.

And the table below is a data display compiled from classroom observation.

**Table 1 Factors Contribute to Anxiety**

Factors contribute to Anxiety	Signs
Speaking activities: speaking in front of the class, being called on by teacher or waiting turn, did not know how to answer teacher's question, worried about grammatical mistake worried about pronunciation	Avoidance; lack of eye contact, pretend to be busy by reading a book or writing a note, refuse teachers instruction to practice. Physical; fidgeting, stuttering, lowering the voice.
Ridiculed by others	Physical; Lose focus, fidgeting, lowering the voice, squirming, stammering, stuttering, jittering, smiling, laughing to cover anxiousness.
When teacher deliver a lesson: incomprehensible input	Avoidance; showing carelessness, lack of eye contact, chatting with peers, Physical; fidgeting, confusing, worried.

Based on the table 4.2, it shows that students might feel anxious at some situations. Students were mostly anxious in speaking activities such as speaking in front of the class, being called on by the teacher or waiting turn to speak. They also worried about grammatical and pronunciation mistake.

Some students appeared to be anxious when their peers ridiculed them. Further, it also appeared that students might feel anxious when the teacher delivered a lesson. They began to feel uneasy when not understand the lesson.

#### 4. Discussion

The findings suggested several factors that possibly contribute to the students' anxiety in their English class. It also indicated that those factors were not only come from the teacher but also the students. Based on the findings, the factors that contribute to anxiety could be classified as follows:

1. Factors Contribute to Anxiety comes from Teacher
  - a. Speaking in front of the class

Most of the participants responded that they were very concerned about having to speak in front of the class. They frequently answered that they

started to worry when their teacher asked them to practice their speaking in front of the class. While the other said that they started to panic when have to speak English. Many also commented that they get anxious when suddenly teacher asked them a question. One student reported that just simply being called on can produce anxiety.

Moreover, some of the participants confessed that they felt uneasy because all the students pay attention to them. They fear of being negatively evaluated by both teacher and peers which can expose their inadequacies. Furthermore, they thought it might happen because of their limited vocabulary and grammatical knowledge.

During observation it also found that students appeared to be anxious when speaking in front of others. Some of them lowered their voices or read faster to avoid the teacher correction. While several other were likely to avoid their teacher by pretended to be busy writing a note or read a book. Few even refuse the teacher's instruction to practice their speaking skill in front of the class in an effort to avoid humiliation or embarrassment of being called to speak.

Similar result was found by lizuka (2010) that students experienced anxiety in some contexts. One of the contexts is speaking in front of the class. These finding is also consistent with Koch and Terrel, as cited in Oxford (1999) that oral presentation is the most anxiety producing activities. They added that being called on to respond orally was also anxiety producing. Horwitz et al. (1986) also noted that students are very self-conscious about speaking foreign language in front of other students, those feeling often lead to fear or even panic. Moreover, according to them, difficulty in speaking in dyads or groups or in public are all manifestations of communication apprehension.

b. Incomprehensible Input

According to the participants, unclear explanation may also contribute to their anxiety in learning English. The interview indicated that most of the participants get so bothered when they do not understand a lesson. They told that they started to feel uneasy when they do not understand what the teacher said. Some of them added that they fear they would not understand all the language input which simply increased the probability of their failure.

Many complained that the teacher spoke too much fast. In addition, other also felt that the English class moved so quickly. Several other participants reported that they often feel intimidated when the teacher only using English when giving a lesson. One replied that he got so annoyed when he did not understand a lesson. The other one also admitted that an extra time would be very helpful for him to digest the lesson.

Moreover, the result of the observation revealed that some students looked confused when the teacher gave a lesson. A few even showed carelessness by chatting with their friend next to them or drawing something maybe to reduce their anxiousness.

According to Horwitz et al. (1986) difficulty in listening to or learning a spoken message are manifestations of communication apprehension. Worde (2003) also noted that incomprehension provoked considerable amount of anxiety. Moreover, similar result was found by lizuka (2010) that difficulty in following teachers' talk lead to anxiety.

c. Teachers' personality and attitude

The two previous factors discussed, speaking in front of the class and incomprehensible input, both indicated that it was clear teacher had played significant role in the amount of anxiety. However, other factors mentioned by the participants were also appeared to be generated by the teacher.

Some participants reported that they got anxious when teacher overly criticized students' mistake. It made them feel very intimidated. They also commented that they started to feel uncomfortable or worried when suddenly the teacher gave them a quiz or a test. Furthermore, they suggested that teacher should show his/her empathy and encouragement to his/her students.

Few other students complained that the teacher sometimes showing apathetic attitude. One told his experience that one day he asked about a lesson but the teacher just ignored him. The teacher ordered him to ask his friend instead of answer the question. The other one told similar story. The teacher did not want to repeat the explanation. He added the teacher accused him did not hear the explanation so the teacher refused to repeat.

Price (1991) noted that some teachers had increased students' anxiety. These findings were also consistent with Oxford (1999) who classified the most important teacher-learner interaction related to language anxiety into three issues such as harsh correction, ridicule, and the uncomfortable handling of mistake in front of a class. Similar results were found by Worde (2003) that some pedagogical and instructional practices brought by the teacher can lead to anxiety.

2. Factors Contribute to Anxiety comes from Students a.

Being laughed at by others

Another factor that play great role in contributing the participants into anxious feeling is unsupportive manner such as ridicule by peers or teacher. They all thought that people in their classroom will laugh at them if they make a mistake. In other words they all were very concerned about being laughed at by others or making fool of themselves in public.

Moreover, some of them had painful memories of being ridiculed by other students. They admitted that their peers often ridiculed or even sometimes shouted at them if they make a mistake. It just simply makes them lose their focus and feel so embarrassed. This finding also indicated that is why they get so nervous when had to speak in front of the class.

In addition, this finding is supported by the result of observation that indeed most students were likely to be laughed at their peers when he or she made a mistake. The worst thing was the students who made mistake just started to lose their focus. Their mind went blank and remained silent for a moment. They fidgeting, squirming, stammering or stuttering. They looked so disturbed and worried. While some of them just smiled or also laughed to cover their anxious feeling.

Similar result was found by Price (1991) that fear of being laughed at by other as one of the greatest sources of anxiety. Moreover, this finding is also consistent with Oxford (1999), he noted that ridicule is one of the most important issue related to language anxiety.

#### b. Students' beliefs about the language learning

Certain beliefs were also found as factor that may contribute to students' anxiety. The interview revealed that English has gained reputation as notorious lesson. Many of the participants felt that English was a difficult subject. They often think that they just cannot speak correctly or understand the lesson. They also felt less competent than other students. They kept thinking that other students were way better than them. In other words they had a low self-esteem.

Furthermore, some of them replied that they felt overwhelmed by the language rules. While several others admitted they had a problem with their vocabulary. They believed that in order to understand what being said in English they must understand every word.

Moreover, during observation it also revealed that students were too afraid to become active in their classroom. Most students were passive. They preferred to wait for the teachers, just followed, and did whatever the teacher told them to do.

These findings were consistent with Horwitz et al. (1986) that certain beliefs about language learning also contribute to the students' tension and frustration in the classroom. In addition, Price (1991) found that anxious students believed their language skill were weaker than any other students. He added that unsuccessful language learner often have lower self-esteem than successful language learner. Similar result was found by Marwan (2007) that lack of confidence is one of the primary causes of students' anxiety.

#### c. Lack of preparation

The findings indicated that lack of preparation was also factors that contribute to the students' anxiety. Few admitted that they usually get very anxious when they did not prepare enough for test or speaking practice. One blamed himself for getting so much worried because he was studying less. Similar result was found by Marwan (2007) that lack of preparation was the major contributor of students' anxiety. In addition, Iizuka (2010) also found that participating in class without enough preparation often lead to anxiety.

From the results of interviews and observations that have been done it was found that the most dominant factor influencing students in anxiety when learning English is the factor of the teacher especially speak in front of the class. This was confirmed by the results of the interview by the eighth participant who said "Takut ketika ga bisa jawab" it means he afraid if he makes mistake when asked what made him worry. Also the answer from the seventh participant stated that she had better come to the front of the class herself than was appointed suddenly. Then the fifth participant stated that to learn comfortably she suggested the teacher not appoint students suddenly to come forward to speak to the class.

### 5. Conclusion

According to the students, there are various factors that may contribute to their anxiety. There are at least six factors which are found in this study, they are: speaking in front of the class, being laughed at by others, incomprehensible input, teacher's personality and attitude, students' beliefs, lack of preparation. The dominant factor in influence the anxiety is speaking in front of the calss.

The experiences of the students provide a great deal of information about students' anxiety in learning English. They offer insights on what may contribute to their anxiety as well as what teacher can do to reduce that anxiety. In other words students can provide valuable information about their anxiety in learning English. Therefore, it is important to use their insights to create a more relaxing environment.

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