



EVALUATING THE INFLUENCE OF ANXIETY ON THE STUDENTS LEARNING ENGLISH AT SMP BREBES

THESIS

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by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, reasons for choosing the topic, research problems, objectives of the study, significance of the study, the scope of the study, definitions of terminologies, and outline of the thesis report.

1.1 Background of the Study

Education has become a fundamental aspect to build a nation. Through education, humans can develop the capabilities and potentials they have. It is related to the constitution on the National Education System No. 20 of 2003 article three which emphasizes the development of human potential into several aspects such as being a person who has faith and devotion to God Almighty, a good character, is a healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible citizen. This constitution should improve the quality of human resources as the main goal of the government development program. It requires a systemic reference which is the standard of national education states that it is necessary to standardize the application of appropriate educational components for students at every level. Starting from the basic education, secondary education, and higher education based on levels, types, and field of education which integrates with the education curriculum.

The curriculum is an important component that cannot be separated as an effort to enhance education. According to Faisal and Martin (2019), the curriculum is centered on the teachers' professional development to provide the appropriate materials and to encourage the quality of the education system.

Whereas, Ahmad (2014) adds that the teacher should be innovative to deliver material which is impactful for learning activities in the modern pedagogical dimension. It has provided the students with learning structure and organization as a way to implement the educational goals.

Based on the regulations and policies the implementation of the curriculum encountered some crucial problems in education for applying the rules in the learning process. According to Sukasni and Efendy (2017), one of the problems is the lack of attention in the learning objectives. Implementing the objectives gives less meaning to students where the objectives caused several troubles, for instance, students became worried about the learning result, had less interest in learning and awareness of learning. The students would be anxious when they met learning difficulties or several challenging tasks. That is a kind of the students' characteristics as one of psychological factors. According to Astrid et al. (2017) in a psychological study, anxiety is one type of affective factor in learning a language. In line manner Budianto's (2011) stated that psychological factors are mental factors related to aspects of language acquisition. There are four factors related to psychological states, namely anxiety, attitude, aptitude, and motivation.

The main concern of this research is anxiety as one of the psychological factors that influence foreign language learning. Ehmke (2019) states that students' anxiety is related to difficulties in focusing on the subject matter in class. It happens because anxiety is something that is dependent and occurring dynamically depending on certain situations and circumstances (Purba, 2018). For

example, students who have difficulty in answering questions for fear of making mistakes tend inability performance to do their work. While personal behavior that arises can be identified through students' attitudes, like doubts about their ability, unwillingness to make eye contact with the teacher, fear of examinations, assignments, subjects, and other activities related to school. This happens because anxiety overwhelms their brains. It can lead to negative aspects of the decrease or low motivation and confidence of students in the learning process.

The transparency of globalization emphasizes the students to learn another language like English to be more competitive toward the new information that can build their knowledge. This becomes an important thing to teach the student a foreign language by mastering four language skills. Related to the international surveys about literacy in acquiring the information trough a language, like PISA and WERN. Indonesia was in the bottom rank of accessing the information when being compared to other countries that have participated in the programs. The data can be listed as follows; PISA (Program for International Students Assessment) in 2015, Indonesia was ranked 64 of 72 countries which participated in reading literacy sustainability programs for students. In 2019, WENR (World Educational News Review) has analyzed survey literacy by the World Bank in Southeast Asia which found that Indonesia has the lowest literacy rates with a percentage of 55%. It compared to the other countries in Southeast Asia such as Vietnam with 14% and the other member countries showed a percentage of 20%. That becomes our challenge to increase awareness in improving the quality of education of all ages.

Concerning teaching English as a foreign language in the classroom, based on the researcher observation and the English teacher statement, there are some problems in learning English. One of them is an anxiety problem. The student perceptions about worry in learning English make them confused, frustrated, and emotional. Horwitz et al. (1986) claim that anxiety can affect the process of language input that makes the students have difficulties in understanding foreign language materials. While MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) assert that foreign language anxiety (FLA) can trigger tension and fear in every discipline including speaking and listening when the learners learn or use a foreign language. This condition makes the FLA become the unique emotional feeling of the language since it is a kind of the psychological factor in learning a language. FLA cannot be compared to academic anxiety in general because it is influenced by a special experience (Horwitz et al., 1986). For example, a student who is intelligent in other subjects might get emotional fear in learning a foreign language, because of their previous experiences. Furthermore, student who has mastered speaking might get emotional feelings of anxiety in writing ability and so on.

The students who feels anxious to learn English becomes a serious issue during the process of foreign language teaching and learning. Hidayati (2018) and Subekti (2018a) had explored Indonesian students' anxiety in learning English. They found that the biggest cause of students' anxiety of learning was the experience of negative evaluations. It makes student performance worse in terms of learning a foreign language. Those made learners feel tense, fearful, uneasiness, or worried because of the unusual use of the language. The teachers need to

understand depth to understand language anxiety effect on this particular student achievement, to anticipate the anxiety, and to understand how their social background is.

English is an essential language to connect people in the world for communication with each other. English has four skills to master, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The problem of listening appeared when the learners considered it a difficult skill to develop since it is a foreign language (Alfuatin, 2019). It exposures that the learner do not understand what they have heard. In like manner in speaking, they are not accustomed to speaking English, since most students will feel afraid unconfident to speak English (Lutfi, Sutopo, & Rukmini, 2018). Arifin (2017) asserts that it influences the students' performance to speaking English because of anxiety. Otherwise, the specific reading issues are to comprehend content such as vocabulary or background knowledge. Nation (2019) states that reading would fail when the readers cannot access and comprehend information. The readers need to decipher the meaning of the text from the writer. Frequently, the reader could not receive the information completely. Thus, learning writing is generally the problems that deal with lack of practice, low motivation, and also insufficient time allocation (Maysuroh & Maryadi, 2017). In other words, the learners need extra rehearsal for increasing their quality in writing. However, the teachers do not have enough time to find out various strategies for teaching English, but they must know the strategies and approaches that are effective for students. The affective domain can influence the students' becoming less performance. Foreign language anxiety (FLA) becomes a

factor that influences the students in the learning process. FLA has special subcategories that cover four language skills that have been reviewed by several experts, there are; foreign language listening anxiety (FLLA), foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA), foreign language reading anxiety (FLRA), and foreign language writing anxiety (FLWA).

According to Yilmaz and Yavuz (2015), anxiety is a psychological problem that is directly related to students. They argued that in the learning listening, problems arise, like quickly forgetting what has been heard, not recognizing the words, and misunderstanding the message being heard. Purba (2018) also adds that the speed of speech and unknown words also became a source of students' anxiety in learning to listen. While in the form of learning speaking, Jannah and Fitriati (2016) claimed that fear of making mistakes because students do not have good pronunciation and afraid if they cannot express ideas in English are forms of psychological problems faced by students in learning speaking. Anxiety also arises in reading and writing skills. Saito, Garza, and Horwitz (1999) stated that the specific anxiety in reading causes the system of sound-symbol. That has an impact on the reading process. They state that anxiety will arise when the reader realizes that processing meaning through decoding symbols into sounds that are connected with words cannot produce a comprehensive and logical message. Thus, learning writing anxiety arises because of three components such as low confidence in writing, dislike of writing, and writing evaluation (Liu & Ni, 2015).

The evaluation of the psychological factor gives the description problems appearing in learning English. That becomes a reference for the teachers as guidance on how to solve the problems. This research focuses on analyzing the relationship between the psychological factor that causes students' anxiety and learning English. The result will show the data of the students' symptoms, so that it can use as a guide for teachers to overcome stressful learning. The research analyzes the students' anxiety issues, namely foreign language anxiety in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The result discusses ways to reducing the specific psychological factor that causes students' anxiety in learning English. Thus, it can help the English teacher and students getting mutual benefits in learning English. The student should be literate in foreign languages to be able to compete globally. They should also be familiar with the English, it is one's awareness of the importance of learning a foreign language.

1.2 Reasons for Choosing the Topic

The international survey such as PISA and WENR have released their survey results to range literacy level in the country. Indonesia was among those in the bottom rank. This become the main reason for choosing the topic. The reasons which relate to this topic about how psychological factor of the students' anxiety influencing learning English will be explained as follow;

The first, one of the phenomena occurred in a junior high school in Brebes Regency based on the teacher statement and the researcher observation. Some of the students have less concentration, so the teacher could not deliver the material quickly. In presenting some of the concepts, the students need extra time and

exercise to understand the material as well. The teacher states that the students have low motivation and anxiety to accomplish the English task. The students assume that English is difficult in terms of understanding the word meaning, pronouncing the word, and comprehending the information. Those make the students be afraid of learning English especially for speaking. They feel anxious about speaking English because of common grammar mistakes, lack of confidence, shyness, and nervousness. It can also influence English listening skills that can relate to speaking as an aspect of communication. The students cannot respond to the teacher's question by using English. That is because they do not understand the words or the entire sentences properly.

The second, the researcher found that the students have low abilities in reading and writing. The students have low ability in reading because they do not like reading that this reduce their performance in classroom. It indicates the students poor reading skills and low comprehension of the text. The condition is common in writing. The students are weak to arrange the reasoning and arguments. It happened due to lack of grammar ability, of vocabulary and organization. Therefore, it can cause difficulty for students to continue their inhibited learning. It will have an impact on their difficulty in conveying ideas through language. This makes a low-level English proficiency due to the differences in the English and Indonesian language systems. However, the issues make obstacles for students in learning English which have difficulty to follow the teacher directions in learning activities.

The third, nowadays, the students must know the news around them as daily information to increase a knowledge. Frequently, the student is directed to be familiar with information that uses English. It can develop their ability to access information through English when they learn at school with various information in English as a communication tool. They must improve their learning style and reduce their stress levels in English learning. This research hopefully can give the solutions to reduce the students' anxiety about the low-ability assumption in learning a foreign language. Later, it will be able to help the students to enjoy learning English with fun and helping to develop students' critical thinking, to select, and to sort out appropriate information.

The fourth, anxiety is one of the psychological factors appearing during the learning process. The difficulty of learning English contributes to foreign language anxiety as a psychological problem. FLA can make the students unable to get the point of what the teacher taught in the classroom. The condition can reduce student's motivation and self-confidence. It can give an impact on the development of the students' concept of learning a foreign language. It has been proven by the teacher by asking the students to read aloud, to do conversation, and to answer the question related to the learning English activities. Most of the students have rejected the teacher's instruction because of anxiety factors, like feeling shy, nervous, and fear of making mistakes. It becomes an obstacle to the students' performance. Therefore, this research discusses ways to reduce the specific psychological factor that causes students' anxiety in learning English.

1.3 Research Problems

Based on the explanation above, the researcher propounds some statements of the problems as follows:

1. How does anxiety influence learning listening?
2. How does anxiety influence learning speaking?
3. How does anxiety influence learning reading?
4. How does anxiety influence learning writing?
5. How is the relationship between the students' anxiety and learning English?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

Based on the statement of the problems above, the objectives of the study are stated as follows:

1. To explain the anxiety influence learning listening.
2. To explain the anxiety influence learning speaking.
3. To explain the anxiety influence learning reading.
4. To explain the anxiety influence learning writing.
5. To explain the relationship between the students' anxiety and learning English.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Hopefully, the results of this research will contribute to several benefits in three aspects, namely theoretically, practically, and pedagogically. In the case of the first research question, this research is expected to provide a theoretical benefit to the reader of the importance of comprehensive information about students' anxiety in learning listening and to provide additional information that can be

used as a reference if the reader encounters similar problems. The practical importance of this research is to improve the quality of less-stressful learning listening so that this research can be used as a problem-solving idea related to listening. Thus, the pedagogical contribution is to help students overcome listening anxiety, so the teacher can easily choose what methods are appropriate for dealing with students' anxiety in learning listening as a psychological problem.

In the form of research question number two, the theoretical contribution is to provide mastery of information about the disadvantages of students' anxiety in learning speaking which can make a low-level of speaking performance. Later, it can be used as a reference for future researchers as a contribution of knowledge. A practical contribution is to improve students' speaking and learning abilities in the classroom that can help students to reduce the students' anxiety experience during speaking activities in the classroom. While the pedagogical implication of the evaluation of students' anxiety in learning speaking is that the teacher can easily know what ~~are~~ the students' fears in learning to speak in class are, so the teacher can choose the appropriate materials to reduce students' psychological problems, especially the fear of learning to speak.

The research question number three as theoretical implications are used to encourage future researchers who are interested in continuing the same field on reading anxiety. They can analyze the problem more thoroughly through this research as a reference. Inpractical implication, it can be used directly by English teachers to find out the source of difficulties contained in reading learning

activities. Thus, pedagogic implication, for teachers, it can be used as a reference for teachers in providing the appropriate types of English texts for students according to the students' characteristics. Besides, the teacher can support the student to access and to comprehend information that can decipher the meaning of the text.

Theoretically, a significant study of research question number four for future researchers is; used as a reference for scientific information to describe the students' problems in learning writing. Thus, the results of this research also provide insight to increase awareness and to improve the quality of students' writing. In practical contributions, this study provides benefits for teachers, students, and future researchers to find out the evaluation of psychological factors that affect students' writing anxiety. This can also become key for the teachers to understand personal characteristics so that the teachers can provide alternative strategies for teaching writing in English. The pedagogical benefit of this research is that it gives the teacher an understanding to pay more attention to students' problems in writing activities.

Finally, the analysis of the relationship between a psychological factor influences students' anxiety in learning English. The researcher will explore and provide a deep understanding of the problems that have correlated with each skill. In theoretical benefit, this study will give some information to future researchers and English teachers to better comprehend the English problem. Then, the practical benefit is to suggest English teachers as an initial evaluation for students' psychological problems. It gives opportunities to the teachers to select the

strategies, methods, or approaches that are effective for the students. Otherwise, the pedagogical benefit will give English teachers understanding, awareness, and advice about psychological problems experienced by students, so the teacher can study the psychological phenomenon systematically, especially that of students' anxiety.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This research covers the phenomenon of students' anxiety which is under the psychological aspect. It aims to describe the psychological factor of the students' anxiety influencing learning English which will be conducted in Junior high school in Brebes Regency. According to Brown (2007), student psychological factors can be identified through students' affective factors, which consist of self-esteem, self-efficacy, willingness to communicate, inhibition, risk-taking, anxiety, empathy, and extroversion.

In this research, the researcher will do the limitation of the study on students' anxiety as one of the problems contained in the psychological phenomenon in learning English. The researcher will take the data from four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing as the scope of English research at ninth-grade in junior high school. The selection of this problem limitation is used to minimize the larger interpretation object concerned and to make the research focus on certain goals.

1.7 Definition of Terminologies

To avoid ambiguity and misunderstanding, it is important to give definitions of the terms used in this study. The terminologies which need to be defined, as follows;

1. SMP at Brebes

In this study, SMP at Brebes refers to junior high school at Brebes regency, Central Java Province. Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP) at the level of formal education in Indonesia, which is taken after graduating from elementary school. SMP is taken in 3 years, starting from grade 7 to grade 9. The target class in this study is grade 9 which is considered to have the most experience in learning English at SMP level. This school is located in a rural area using a full-day school system which provides additional subject programs such as; English, Arabic, BTA, and Computer. The focus of this study is to evaluate the influence of the students' anxiety on learning English at SMP level.

2. Students' Anxiety

There are some definitions of the student's anxiety which the researcher will summarize into a specific meaning used in this study. Horwitz et al.(1986) state that student's anxiety is an individual's subjective feeling, like feeling tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry in learning caused by communication fear, anxiety in exams, and fear of negative social evaluation. It plays most dominant role of affective factors in second language acquisition (SLA) (Brown, 2003). Student's anxiety can hinder the learning process that is responsible for the success or failure of language learning (Dewi, Rukmini, & Mujianto, 2020). While according to the Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008), student's anxiety is a person who has nervous feelings or worries about something when learning at school. Based on those meaning, the researcher concludes that the term of the student's anxiety in this research refers to a person's subjective

feelings about apprehension, nervousness, worry, and fear in learning English in school.

3. English Learning

English learning in this study refers to learning a foreign language. According to Mahmud et al. (2016), learning English is an academic language subject that has the purpose of communicating. Learning English consists of two types of skills that include receptive skills and productive skills. Receptive skills consist of listening and reading as a form of the direction of communication and productive skills consist of speaking and writing which are used as a method of communication (Brown, 2003). In its stages, learning English as SL/FL has three steps, namely input, processing, and output (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Whereas according to Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008), learning English is an activity to gain knowledge from the languages used in the UK, the US, and many other countries. To sum up, the researcher uses the term learning English refer to academic learning activities to obtain FL knowledge about receptive and productive skills which have three steps, namely input, processing, and output.

1.8 Outline of the Thesis Report

This research is systematically arranged as follows;

Chapter I describes some elements of the introduction. The first, background of the study presents several data, like; two international surveys about literacy in acquiring the information through a language, some previous studies about anxiety in learning English, and the researcher's data observation.

The second, the reasons for choosing the topic present four problems that happened in junior high school at Brebes Regency. The third, there are five research problems in this part as the highlighted issues to discuss. The fourth, there are five research objectives related to the research problems which are used to describe and to analyze the problems. The fifth, the researcher clarifies the significance of the study, including theoretical, practical, and pedagogical regarding research objectives. The sixth, the scope of the study informs the limitation of the psychological factor of the students' anxiety influencing learning English. The seventh, the definitions of key terms by some experts and offline dictionary are displayed to avoid ambiguity about some concepts. The last is an outline of the report which covers all of the brief information of this research.

Chapter II describes several theories that underlie this research. In this chapter, there are three parts. Firstly, the researcher conducts the previous studies which cover the result of national and international research journals related to or relevant to this research. It discusses the two concepts of psychological factor and students' anxiety. Secondly, the theoretical studies contain the underlying basic theory about the psychological factor and students' anxiety in four language skills. It becomes the basic theory that the researcher uses to do this research. Third, the theoretical framework presents a schematic thought flow to illustrate the systematic rules of this study. This is used to confirm the FLA theory used and to describe the psychological factor of the students' anxiety influencing learning English as the focus of this research.

Chapter III provides a research methodology. A few systematic procedures of this research are displayed. It clarifies the research design used in the form of a qualitative approach to describe the issue in the education field. Some steps in conducting a case study will be clearly explained, including identification of the phenomenon to be studied, identification of participants, data collection, data analysis, interpretations, and conclusions. Information about the short profile of the research object is selected in Junior high school in Brebes Regency. Then, the researcher also explains the position of the researcher as a participant-as-observer who takes the data directly in the field by using observations, questionnaires, interviews, and documents to be analyzed by using Miles' et al. (1994) theory.

Chapter IV describes the findings and discussion of this research which is supported by evidence and interpretation. The findings obtained by the researcher have been reduced to classify and discard or eliminate unnecessary data. In which, the researcher displays the data from the instruments systematically to facilitate the reader's understanding of this research easily. Moreover, the findings are presented by focusing on the evaluation of psychological factors that have influenced the students' anxiety in learning English and their relationship by considering the data in the field.

Chapter V provides the conclusions and suggestions relating to the findings of this research. Drawing conclusions is carried out as a form of confirmation and verification of the data which is obtained by answering the research questions concisely. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that three categories that have influenced the students' anxiety as a psychological factor in

learning English are communication apprehension, test-anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. These are influenced by situational-specific of anxiety which represents an uncomfortable experience emotionally and physically for some students in every activity of learning skills in the classroom. Moreover, it involves suggestions for the English teachers and further researchers who are interested in this case.

