

**STUDENT'S ANXIETY IN LEARNING ENGLISH (A Case Study in the Tenth Grade
of SMA Budi Mulia)**

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Abstract

Keywords: learning anxiety, English, case study, senior high school.

Kata Kunci: kecemasan belajar, Bahasa Inggris, studi kasus, SMA.

This study aims to analyze students' anxiety in learning English in the tenth grade of SMA Budi Mulia. The research employed a qualitative case study approach. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings indicate that students experience anxiety primarily in speaking activities and classroom participation, influenced by internal factors such as low self-confidence, and external factors such as peer pressure and teaching methods. Strategies applied by the teacher to reduce anxiety include providing motivation, using interactive learning media, and creating a supportive classroom environment. This study emphasizes the importance of teachers' understanding of students' anxiety to make English learning more effective and enjoyable.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tingkat kecemasan siswa dalam belajar Bahasa Inggris di kelas X SMA Budi Mulia. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa mengalami kecemasan terutama dalam berbicara dan mengikuti kegiatan kelas, dipengaruhi oleh faktor internal seperti rasa kurang percaya diri, dan faktor eksternal seperti tekanan dari teman sebaya dan metode pengajaran. Strategi yang digunakan guru untuk mengurangi kecemasan meliputi pemberian motivasi, penggunaan media pembelajaran yang interaktif, serta menciptakan suasana kelas yang mendukung. Penelitian ini menekankan pentingnya pemahaman guru terhadap

kecemasan siswa agar pembelajaran bahasa Inggris lebih efektif dan menyenangkan.

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INTRODUCTION

Learning English as a foreign language often presents various challenges for students, one of which is anxiety. Anxiety in language learning can significantly affect students' performance, particularly in productive skills such as speaking and writing. According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), language anxiety is a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning, arising from fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, or test anxiety.

In the context of SMA Budi Mulia, the tenth-grade students face difficulties in expressing themselves confidently in English classes. Observations indicate that many students hesitate to participate in class discussions or answer questions, not because of lack of knowledge, but due to emotional barriers caused by anxiety. This emotional factor can hinder their language acquisition and reduce their overall academic performance.

Several studies have highlighted the impact of anxiety on language learning. For instance, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) emphasized that anxiety can lower students' motivation, decrease participation, and affect their willingness to communicate in the target language. Moreover, internal factors such as self-esteem, fear of mistakes, and lack of confidence, combined with external factors such as peer pressure, classroom environment, and teaching methods, contribute to students' anxiety in learning English.

Understanding the sources and manifestations of anxiety is essential for teachers to design effective strategies to support students' emotional well-being while enhancing language proficiency. This study aims to explore the nature of students' anxiety in learning English in the tenth grade at SMA Budi Mulia and to identify strategies employed by teachers to help students overcome these challenges. By focusing on both student experiences and teacher interventions, this study contributes to a better understanding of anxiety in EFL classrooms and provides insights for improving teaching practices.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Language learning anxiety has been widely studied as a critical factor affecting students' performance in foreign language classrooms. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) define foreign language anxiety as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs,

feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning. This type of anxiety can manifest as communication apprehension, test anxiety, or fear of negative evaluation. Students experiencing high levels of anxiety often struggle to participate actively, hesitate in speaking, or avoid opportunities to communicate, even when they possess adequate linguistic knowledge.

Several studies highlight the multidimensional nature of anxiety in language learning. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) emphasize that anxiety is not only an emotional response but also a cognitive and behavioral phenomenon that can negatively impact language acquisition. Emotional factors such as low self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, and previous negative experiences contribute to internal anxiety, while external factors including peer pressure, teaching methods, and classroom environment can exacerbate the problem.

In addition, Krashen's (1985) affective filter hypothesis explains that learners' emotional state significantly influences their ability to acquire a second language. High levels of anxiety act as a filter, reducing input comprehension and hindering language acquisition. Conversely, creating a supportive and low-anxiety learning environment can enhance motivation, increase participation, and improve overall language proficiency.

Teachers play a crucial role in managing and mitigating students' anxiety. According to Young (1991), strategies to reduce anxiety include creating a supportive classroom atmosphere, incorporating interactive activities, encouraging participation without fear of mistakes, and providing constructive feedback. The KWL strategy, peer discussions, and collaborative tasks are examples of methods that help students feel safe and confident while practicing language skills.

This study draws on these theoretical insights to examine the sources, manifestations, and impacts of students' anxiety in learning English at SMA Budi Mulia. It also explores teacher interventions aimed at reducing anxiety and promoting effective learning. Understanding both internal and external factors of anxiety is essential for developing strategies that foster a positive learning environment and enhance students' English proficiency.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to explore students' anxiety in learning English in the tenth grade at SMA Budi Mulia. The qualitative method was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of students' experiences, perceptions, and emotional responses related to language learning. Through this approach, the study aimed to identify both the internal and external factors contributing to anxiety, as well as strategies employed by teachers to mitigate it.

Participants

The participants in this study were ten students from the tenth-grade English class at SMA Budi Mulia, selected using purposive sampling. The selection criteria

focused on students who frequently exhibited signs of anxiety during English lessons, such as hesitation to speak, avoidance of participation, or visible nervousness. Additionally, the English teacher of the class participated in the study to provide insights into classroom strategies for reducing anxiety.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through three main techniques:

1. Observation: Classroom observations were conducted over a period of four weeks to monitor students' behavior, participation, and emotional responses during English lessons. Notes and field journals were maintained to document interactions, reactions, and classroom dynamics.
2. Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected students to gain deeper insights into their feelings, experiences, and sources of anxiety. Questions explored internal factors such as self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, and prior experiences, as well as external factors including peer influence and teaching methods.
3. Documentation: Relevant documents such as lesson plans, student assignments, and classroom activities were reviewed to understand the teaching strategies implemented by the teacher and their effectiveness in reducing anxiety.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This involved several steps:

1. Familiarization with the data through repeated reading of field notes and interview transcripts.
2. Coding significant statements and categorizing them into themes related to anxiety triggers, manifestations, and teacher interventions.
3. Interpreting the data in relation to the theoretical framework to identify patterns, insights, and implications for teaching practice.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the credibility and reliability of the findings, the study applied triangulation by combining observation, interviews, and documentation. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with participants to confirm the accuracy of interpretations. Additionally, detailed descriptions of the context, participants, and procedures were provided to enhance transferability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Results

The findings of this study reveal various aspects of students' anxiety in learning English at the tenth grade of SMA Budi Mulia. Anxiety was observed to affect multiple areas of classroom participation, particularly in speaking activities, answering questions, and group discussions.

1. Internal Factors of Anxiety

The study identified several internal factors contributing to students' anxiety:

- a) Low Self-Confidence: Many students expressed fear of making mistakes and being judged by peers, which led to hesitation and reluctance to participate. One student mentioned, "I am afraid I will say something wrong, so I stay quiet even if I know the answer."
- b) Previous Negative Experiences: Some students reported past experiences in which incorrect responses led to embarrassment, reinforcing a fear of participating in class.
- c) Perfectionism: A few students demonstrated high self-expectations, creating internal pressure and stress during language activities.

2. External Factors of Anxiety

Several external factors were identified as triggers for anxiety:

- a) Peer Pressure: Students felt nervous when classmates were attentive or critical, which sometimes intensified their fear of speaking.
- b) Classroom Environment: Large class size and limited opportunities for individualized attention increased stress levels.
- c) Teaching Methods: Traditional teaching approaches that focused heavily on drills and accuracy sometimes heightened students' apprehension.

3. Manifestations of Anxiety

Anxiety manifested in various observable behaviors:

- a) Avoidance of answering questions or participating in discussions.
- b) Nervous gestures such as fidgeting, avoiding eye contact, and whispering answers.
- c) Decline in performance in oral tasks, despite adequate knowledge and preparation.

4. Teacher Interventions

The English teacher implemented several strategies to help reduce student anxiety:

- a) Encouragement and Motivation: Providing positive feedback and praising small successes.
- b) Interactive Learning Activities: Incorporating pair work, group discussions, and role-plays to create a supportive environment.

- c) Creating a Safe Environment: Emphasizing that mistakes are part of learning and fostering peer support.

Overall, the findings indicate that students' anxiety is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors, and effective teacher strategies play a crucial role in mitigating anxiety and supporting language learning.

b. Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that students' anxiety in learning English is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by both internal and external factors. Internally, students' low self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, and previous negative experiences create emotional barriers that hinder active participation in the classroom. These results are consistent with Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) theory, which explains that language anxiety arises from students' perceptions of themselves and their fear of negative evaluation.

External factors such as peer pressure, classroom environment, and teaching methods further exacerbate students' anxiety. For instance, a crowded classroom with limited opportunities for individual attention may heighten nervousness, as observed in several students. This aligns with MacIntyre and Gardner (1991), who emphasized that both situational and environmental aspects can significantly impact language learners' anxiety.

The teacher's interventions were found to be crucial in reducing anxiety. Strategies such as motivational feedback, interactive activities, and creating a supportive classroom climate were effective in helping students feel safe and confident. This supports Young's (1991) assertion that teachers' awareness of students' emotional needs and the application of supportive techniques can mitigate anxiety and enhance learning outcomes.

Furthermore, this study highlights the importance of balancing cognitive and affective dimensions in language learning. While linguistic knowledge is essential, students' emotional well-being plays a pivotal role in their ability to communicate effectively. Teachers who integrate empathy, encouragement, and interactive pedagogical strategies contribute not only to academic success but also to the development of students' self-esteem and motivation.

In conclusion, addressing language learning anxiety requires a comprehensive approach that considers both internal emotions and external environmental factors. Teachers' proactive involvement and supportive strategies are key to fostering a positive learning experience, enabling students to participate more confidently, improve their skills, and achieve better learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that students' anxiety in learning English at the tenth grade of SMA Budi Mulia is influenced by a

combination of internal and external factors. Internal factors include low self-confidence, fear of making mistakes, and previous negative experiences, while external factors encompass peer pressure, classroom environment, and teaching methods.

Teacher interventions play a crucial role in mitigating these anxieties. Strategies such as providing positive feedback, encouraging participation, implementing interactive activities, and creating a safe classroom environment have proven effective in reducing anxiety and enhancing students' English learning experiences.

This study highlights the importance of addressing both the emotional and cognitive aspects of language learning. By considering students' feelings and providing supportive strategies, teachers can foster a positive classroom atmosphere, increase students' confidence, and improve overall language proficiency.

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