

## **Students' Anxiety in Learning English (A Case Study at 1<sup>st</sup> Graders of SMK MA'ARIF NU DORO)**

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### **Abstract**

There are many languages which are used as a means of communication by people all over the world. One of them is English as an international language, many students in Indonesia do not like English. They have difficulty, boredom and confusion in learning it. This study was conducted to determine foreign language anxiety in 1<sup>st</sup> grade students of SMK Ma'arif NU DORO. Specifically, this paper tried to identify what factors can contribute to anxiety in an English learning environment based on students' perspectives, as well as what types of anxiety students experience while learning English. The method used in this research was a qualitative method with a case study approach, twenty students were selected as participants. Data was collected through structured and written interviews through whats app media and classroom observations. The data analysis process is divided into three main stages as follows: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. The results showed that 13 out of 20 respondents answered that English is a difficult subject to understand, due to difficulties in pronunciation and writing, anxiety factors include in self-perception. 4 out of 20 respondents answered when they had difficulty speaking from their first language to the target language. 15 out of 20 students felt anxious when the being called by the teacher to speak or demonstrate in front of the class. 18 out of 20 respondents answered anxiety because of wrong class procedures. As for the type of anxiety, 17 out of 20 students experience stait anxiety and 1 out of 20 students experience trait anxiety. At least some conclusions can be drawn from this research, such as: English is a difficult subject to understand, being called by the teacher to speak in front of the class, students' beliefs, difficulties in pronunciation and writing, difficulties in translating, inappropriate class procedures. The source of these factors is not only from the teacher but also from the students. In addition, there are several types of anxiety experienced by students when learning English, namely trait anxiety and stait anxiety. The researcher hopes that these findings provide some useful information that can be used by teachers and stakeholders to improve the quality of teaching and learning English.

**Keywords** : Students's anxiety, English, Anxiety Factors, Anxiety Types.

### **Abstrak**

Ada banyak bahasa yang digunakan sebagai alat komunikasi oleh orang-orang di seluruh dunia, salah satunya adalah bahasa Inggris yang merupakan bahasa internasional. Banyak siswa di Indonesia yang tidak menyukai bahasa Inggris. Mereka mengalami kesulitan, kebosanan dan kebingungan dalam mempelajarinya. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui kecemasan berbahasa asing pada siswa kelas 1 SMK Ma'arif NU DORO. Secara khusus, makalah ini mencoba mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor apa yang dapat berkontribusi terhadap kecemasan dalam lingkungan belajar bahasa Inggris berdasarkan perspektif siswa, serta jenis kecemasan apa yang dialami siswa saat belajar bahasa Inggris. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus, dipilih dua puluh siswa sebagai partisipan. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara terstruktur dan tertulis melalui media whats app dan observasi kelas. Proses analisis data dibagi menjadi tiga tahap utama sebagai berikut: reduksi data, penyajian data, serta penarikan kesimpulan dan verifikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa 13 dari 20 responden menjawab bahwa bahasa Inggris adalah mata pelajaran yang sulit untuk dipahami, karena kesulitan dalam pengucapan dan penulisan, faktor kecemasan dari persepsi diri. 4 dari 20 responden menjawab ketika mereka mengalami kesulitan berbicara dari bahasa pertama mereka ke bahasa target. 15 dari 20 siswa merasa cemas ketika guru dipanggil oleh guru untuk berbicara atau mendemonstrasikan di depan kelas. 18 dari 20 responden menjawab kecemasan karena salah prosedur kelas. Sedangkan untuk jenis kecemasannya, 17 dari 20 siswa mengalami stait anxiety dan 1 dari 20 siswa mengalami trait anxiety. Setidaknya dapat ditarik beberapa kesimpulan dari penelitian ini, yaitu: anggapan bahwa bahasa Inggris adalah mata pelajaran yang sulit dipahami, dipanggil oleh guru untuk berbicara di depan kelas, keyakinan siswa, kesulitan dalam pengucapan dan penulisan, kesulitan dalam menerjemahkan, prosedur kelas yang tidak sesuai. Sumber faktor tersebut tidak hanya dari guru tetapi juga dari siswa. Selain itu, ada beberapa jenis kecemasan yang dialami siswa saat belajar bahasa Inggris, yaitu trait anxiety dan stait anxiety. Peneliti berharap temuan ini memberikan beberapa informasi yang berguna yang dapat digunakan oleh guru dan pemangku kepentingan untuk meningkatkan kualitas belajar mengajar bahasa Inggris.

**Kata Kunci** : Kecemasan Siswa, Bahasa Inggris, Faktor Kecemasan, Jenis Kecemasan.

## **INTRODUCTION**

There are many languages that are used as a means of communication by people all over the world. One of them is English, which acts as an international language. This language is known as the

second language taught in Indonesia. Learning English is started from Elementary School to College, because it is important to develop knowledge.

Many students in Indonesia do not like English. They have difficulty, boredom and confusion in learning it. English teachers must be able to motivate students in learning this foreign language. Harmer (1993: 3) states that motivation means a kind of encouragement that encourages someone to pursue an action. This must be done by every English teacher so that students are interested in learning this language. English teachers must be able to manage teaching using certain methods in the teaching and learning process, so that students can be motivated in learning English and can manage their emotions.

Emotions are important in learning , because emotions are effect from the process of learning of receiving information and level of understanding of students. Brown (1991 :73) states that emotions affect learning in most fundamental way because there are the foundation of learning strategies and techniques. For example students will be able to speak and perform successfully if they are feel enjoy, happy and excited. Meanwhile, negative emotions can make students feel anxious, nervous and sad, so that it creates students' potential distract in learning.

Unfortunately, in the process of learning a foreign language, students increasingly lose their confidence and felt unable to push their abilities further. An unstabled emotional sense affected the process of learning a foreign language that triggered anxiety. When learning a foreign language, students tend unable to manage their emotions, this made them felt less optimistic and do not believed in their abilities when learning, especially when speaking in a foreign language. In addition, according to Krashen (2013), weak anxiety can increase the affective filter and form a 'mental block' that prevents the entry of a sense of self inadequacy which in turn gives students anxiety. Anxious students will have difficulty following the lesson. They may not even remember and demonstrate what they have previously learned. Worse, they may experience more failures, and that can lead to increased anxiety when speaking a foreign language.

Meanwhile, based on the result which researcher got through teaching practice at SMK MA'ARIF NU DORO, the researcher found the factors that made students were anxious to speak English. the researchers found factors that dominated such as, students were afraid to perform speaking English because felt shy, lack of confident, afraid, feel incapable. Because of that reason many students chose to be silent and not to be active in English class.

Environmental factors are also one of the reason students felt inferior if they are laughed at or ridiculed when performing a foreign language by classmates.

In addition, students are also afraid that if they are wrong in learning a foreign language, the teacher will scold them, especially when the teacher appoints students to perform in front of the class.

Since anxiety has a very large impact during learning, the researcher tries to examine what factors might trigger students to experience anxiety, especially when performing and speaking English in front of the class.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The researcher used case study approach. The qualitative method was chosen because this study aimed to provide an overviewed of cases of language anxiety in 1st Grade students of SMK Ma'arif NU DORO, especially anxiety in learning English. According to (Mack et.al, 2005: 3) descriptive qualitative research was used with observation and interviewed with participants to obtain information about phenomena. To obtain data, researcher used two data collection techniques. Because this study used a qualitative descriptive method, in-depth interviews were the main technique and continued with

classroom observation to check its validity. Descriptive qualitative research was used with observation and interviews with participants to obtain information about phenomena (Mack et.al, 2005: 3). This means that in this research method information obtained by classroom observation and in-depth interviews with students. The data analysis process is divided into three main phases following the qualitative analysis framework developed by Miles and Huberman (1994: 10) data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Data Description

Data were collected through structured interviews with participants who were considered as anxious students in English class and classroom observation. The table below is a display of data collected from the results of the interviews. It shows what factors might be contributing to student anxiety.

**Table 1.1**  
Table of Factor's Description Contributing to Anxiety and Codes

Factors Contribute to Anxiety	Codes	Characteristics
Self Perception	FA-SP	1. Feel Incapable 2. Feel that English is a difficult subject to understand. 3. Hard to pronounce and write.
Learner's Beliefs about Language Learning	FA-LB	1. Difficulty speaking from first language to target language 2. Afraid to make mistakes in translation 3. Think that English is difficult
Teachers' Beliefs about Language Teaching	FA-TB	1. Fear of being appointed by the teacher to speak English in front of the class 2. Afraid if the teacher corrects mistakes.
Class Procedure	FA-CP	1. Selection of class procedures such as individually, in groups, or discussing with friends

**Table 1.2**  
The table contains of Anxiety Types and Codes

Types of Anxiety	Codes	Characteristics
State Anxiety	TA-SA	1. Feeling anxious when studying or certain situations 2. anxiety is only temporary
Trait Anxiety	TA-TA	1. Feel anxiety outside of learning or in situations without feeling threatened 2. Extreme and long-lasting or permanent anxiety.

### 2. The Result of Interview

**Table 2.1**  
Table contains interview results

Interview	Respondent's answer/Factors that Contribute to Anxiety [FA]
1 <sup>st</sup> interview Initial of respondent (IA)	English is a difficult subject, difficulty in pronunciation, included in the factor (FA-SP), Feel afraid if the teacher points to speak in front of the class, included in category(FA-TB), Respondents answered that they preferred to discuss with friends for procedure classes. included in the factor (FA-CP), only feel anxious in learning or in certain situations, including type (TA-SA).

2 <sup>nd</sup> interview Initial of respondent (EAP)	English is a difficult subject, difficulty in pronunciation. included in the factor (FA-SP), Feel afraid if the teacher points to speak in front of the class, included in category(FA-TB) Respondents answered that going forward or presenting in front of the class with friends. included in (FA-CP), only feel anxious in learning or in certain situations. including type (TA-SA).
3 <sup>rd</sup> interview Initial of respondent (RW)	Difficulty translating from the first language to the target language, included in (FA-LB), only feel anxious when in certain situations, included in the type (TA-SA), chose group discussion. included in (FA-CP).
4 <sup>th</sup> interview Initial of respondent (A)	English is a difficult subject, difficulty in pronunciation. included in the factor (FA-SP), Difficulty translating from the first language to the target language. included in (FA-LB), chose group discussion. included in (FA-CP), only feel anxious when in certain situations. included in the type (TA-SA),
5 <sup>th</sup> interview Initial of respondent (FAN)	Feel afraid if the teacher points to speak in front of the class, included in category(FA-TB) ,only feel anxious when in certain situations. included in the type (TA-SA), chose group discussion, included in (FA-CP).
6 <sup>th</sup> interview Initial of respondent (HM)	Feel that English is a difficult subject to understand, include in (FA-SP), only feel anxious when in certain situations. included in the type (TA-SA), chose group discussion, included in (FA-CP).
7 <sup>th</sup> interview Initial of respondent (MA)	Feel afraid if the teacher points to speak in front of the class, included in category(FA-TB), ), chose group discussion, included in (FA-CP). only feel anxious when in certain situations. included in the type (TA-SA).
8 <sup>th</sup> interview Initial of respondent(I J)	English is a difficult subject, difficulty in pronunciation, included in the factor (FA-SP), Feel afraid if the teacher points to speak in front of the class, included in category(FA-TB), chose group discussion, included in (FA-CP). only feel anxious when in certain situations. included in the type (TA-SA).
9 <sup>th</sup> interview Initial of respondent (B)	English is a difficult subject, difficulty in pronunciation, included in the factor (FA-SP), Feel afraid if the teacher points to speak in front of the class, included in category(FA-TB) chose group discussion, included in (FA-CP). only feel anxious when in certain situations. included in the type (TA-SA).
10 <sup>th</sup> interview Intial of respondent (MBS)	English is a difficult subject, difficulty in pronunciation, included in the factor (FA-SP), Feel afraid if the teacher points to speak in front of the class, included in category(FA-TB), ) chose group discussion, included in (FA-CP), feel anxiety without being in a threatening situation or in learning, anxiety that is felt to be extreme and lasts a long time, including(T-TA)
11 <sup>th</sup> interview Intial of respondent (HU)	English is a difficult subject, difficulty in pronunciation, included in the factor (FA-SP), Feel afraid if the teacher points to speak in front of the class, included in category(FA-TB), chose group discussion, included in (FA-CP). only feel anxious when in certain situations. included in the type (TA-SA).
12 <sup>th</sup> interview Intial of respondent (MR)	This student does not feel anxious while learning English.
13 <sup>th</sup> interview	Difficulty in pronunciation, included in the factor (FA-SP), Afraid to make mistakes in translation include in factor (FA-LB), Feel afraid if the teacher points to speak in front of the

Intial of respondent (M)	class, included in category(FA-TB), chose group discussion, included in (FA-CP), only feel anxious when in certain situations. included in the type (TA-SA).
14 <sup>th</sup> interview Intial of respondent (DAD)	This student does not feel anxious while learning English.
15 <sup>th</sup> interview Intial of respondent (YAS)	Difficulty in pronunciation, included in the factor (FA-SP), Afraid if the teacher corrects mistakes(FA-TB), Respondents answered that they preferred to discuss with friends for procedure classes. included in the factor (FA-CP), only feel anxious in learning or in certain situations, including type (TA-SA).
16 <sup>th</sup> interview Intial of respondent (GP)	Afraid if the teacher points to speak in front of the class, included in category(FA-TB), chose group discussion, included in (FA-CP), only feel anxious when in certain situations. included in the type (TA-SA).
17 <sup>th</sup> interview Intial of respondent (MAA)	English is a difficult subject, difficulty in pronunciation, included in the factor (FA-SP), Feel afraid if the teacher points to speak in front of the class, included in category(FA-TB), chose group discussion, included in (FA-CP), only feel anxious when in certain situations. included in the type (TA-SA).
18 <sup>th</sup> interview Intial of respondent (MAP)	English is a difficult subject, included in the factor (FA-SP), Feel afraid if the teacher points to speak in front of the class, included in category(FA-TB), chose group discussion, included in (FA-CP), only feel anxious when in certain situations. Included in the type (TA-SA).
19 <sup>th</sup> interview Intial of respondent (FPA)	Afraid if the teacher points to speak in front of the class, included in category(FA-TB), choose to go ahead or practice with friends in (FA-CP), only feel anxious when in certain situations. Included in the type (TA-SA).
20 <sup>th</sup> interview Intial of respondent (MIF)	Difficulty translating from the first language to the target language. included in (FA-LB), chose group discussion. included in (FA-CP), only feel anxious when in certain situations. included in the type (TA-SA).

Based on table 2.1, showed that some of the anxiety factors experienced by students and what types of anxiety are experienced by students while learnt English, 13 out of 20 respondents answered that English is a difficult subject to understand, due to difficulties in pronunciation and writing, self-perception anxiety factor.

Beside to the self-perception factor, 4 out of 20 respondents answered that they experienced anxiety when they had difficulty speaking from the first language to the target language, they also experienced anxiety when they had difficulty translating. These factors are categorized in learners' beliefs.

The next factor that made students felt anxious when learning is when being called by the teacher to speak or demonstrated in front of the class, students also felt afraid if the teacher corrected their mistakes both from pronunciation and writing, at least 15 out of 20 students felt anxiety, as explained this is included in the factor of teacher beliefs.

For the procedure class 18 out of 20 respondents answered that forwarded with friends or group discussions would reduced anxiety while English lessons.

From the results of the interviewed, it is also knew what types of anxiety are experienced by students while learnt English. 17 out of 20 respondents answered that they only felt anxiety while in a learned or threatened situation, this type is called stait anxiety. Meanwhile, 1 out of 20 respondents experienced anxiety while of learned and in non-threatened situations. These type is called trait anxiety where a person felt extreme anxiety in the absenced of a threatened situation and lasts long or permanently, and 2 out of 20 respondents do not felt. anxious while studying.

The findings indicated several factors that might contributed to students' anxiety in their English class. This also showed that these factors do not only came from the teacher but also from the students. Based on the findings, the factors that contributed to anxiety can be classified as follows:

**a) Self Perception**

Self-perception or self-esteem has a great influence in learning English, especially in speaking skills. It was no small matter that a teacher could overlook. Students' Beliefs about Language Learning Horwitz (1988,2005: 138) showed that a number of beliefs stemming from students' conceptions of language learning are irrational and unrealistic. This means that the teacher has the details to teach English as a foreign language because in speaking, students must make sure before saying the words. in English. "Some students attach great importance to speaking with a very good native-like accent." Although the accent is interesting when we speak, students must assume that in speaking English we must be accurate and must have good pronunciation even though the student is not a native speaker. " others believe that it is okay to guess unknown second/foreign language words". Before speaking English, students must know all the verbs in English, this reduces anxiety in learning English. "some people think that "Learning a language is basically an act of translating from English or any second/foreign language".

The low self-perception made them felt that they are not able to speak English well they also have the perception that English is a subject which is difficult to understand because of difficulties in pronunciation and writing.

**b) Learner's Beliefs about Language Learning**

Certain beliefs were also found to be factors that could contributed to student anxiety. Interviews reveal that English has earned a reputation as a well-known subject. Many of the participants felt that English is a difficult subject. They often think that they cannot speak properly or understand the lesson. They also feel less competent in speaking from the first language to the target language. They continue to think that their pronunciation or accent is not the same as that of native speakers, it is a mistake, in other words they have low self-esteem.

Furthermore, some of them answered that they felt overwhelmed in the translation. they admit to having problems with their vocabulary. They believe that in order to understand what is said in English, they must understand every word.

In addition, during the observation it was also revealed that the students were too afraid to be active in their class. Most of the students are passive. They prefer to wait for the teacher, just follow, and do whatever the teacher tells them to do.

This finding is consistent with Horwitz (1986) that certain beliefs about language learning also contribute to student tension and frustration in the classroom. In addition, Price (1991) found that anxious students believed that their language skills were weaker than other students.

He adds that failed language learners often have lower self-esteem than successful language learners.

**c) Teachers' Beliefs about Language Teaching**

Just like students' thinking, some teachers also have their own beliefs about language teaching. According to R Herwanto (2013) confirms that the instructor's belief that their role is to correct rather than facilitate students when they make mistakes exacerbate second/foreign language anxiety in students, if the teacher corrects students' mistakes incorrectly, it can cause them to feel afraid negative evaluation as previously described. It means anxiety in speaking English is not only from students' beliefs about language learning, but teachers have a great influence on the beliefs of teachers in the classroom when teaching and learning process.

When the teacher calls the names of students to come to the front of the class Most of the participants answered that they were very worried about having to speak in front of the class. They often answered that they started to worry when their teacher asked them to practice speaking in front of the class. While others say that they start to panic when it comes to speaking English. Many also commented that they became anxious when the teacher suddenly asked them a question. One student reported that simply being called out could cause anxiety.

Some participants reported that they became anxious when teachers were too critical of students' mistakes. It made them feel very intimidated. Further, they suggest that teachers should show empathy and encouragement to their students. Several other students complained that the teacher sometimes showed apathy. Price (1991) notes that some teachers have increased student anxiety.

**d) Class Procedure**

The main activity in English speaking class is asking students to speak in front of the class. This activity can provoke their anxiety. some of them answered that being paired with friends or having group discussions would reduced their anxiety when learning English, especially when speaking.

3. The Result of Observation

**Table 3.1**

Factors Contribute to Anxiety	Signs
Speaking activities in English: afraid of making mistakes in pronunciation, afraid of being called by the teacher to come to the front of the class	avoidance; lack of eye contact, pretending to be busy reading a book or writing notes, refusing teacher instructions to practice. Psychical; nervous, stuttering, lowering voice, speaking too fast and sweating
Consider English subjects difficult to understand, have difficulty in translation	avoidance; show carelessness, nervous, confused, worried.
The class procedure chosen by the teacher, and afraid of being corrected by the teacher's mistakes	avoidance; lack of eye contact, refusing teacher instructions to practice.

Based on the table above, it concluded that speaking in English is one of the factors that caused anxiety, besides being called by the teacher to speak in front of the class, it is also a factor that made students anxious. students with these factors are usually signed with avoidanced lack of

eye contact, pretending to be busy reading a book or writing notes, refusing teacher instructions to practice. nervous, stuttering, stuttering, lowering voice, speaking too fast and sweating.

Besides that there are some students who felt anxiety because they thought that English is a difficult subject, they also have difficulty in translation, signs of anxiety included avoidanced showed carelessness, nervous, confused, worried.

Class procedures also caused anxiety factors for students, usually students has easily anxious if the teacher called the names of their students individually rather than in groups, students will also feel anxious if a teacher tries to correct their English pronunciation, these factors are usually signed by avoidanced eye contact, refusing teacher instructions to practice.

## **CONCLUSION**

While other research on foreign language anxiety focused on the college or junior high school level, this study focused on the vocational high school level and showed clear and convincing evidence about the causes of students' anxiety in learning English. According to students, there are various factors that can cause their anxiety. There are at least some that were found in this study, namely: thinking that English is a difficult subject to understand, being called by the teacher to speak in front of the class, students' beliefs, difficulties in pronunciation and writing, difficulties in translating, inappropriate class procedures. The source of these factors is not only from the teacher but also from the students. There were several types of anxiety experienced by students when learning English, namely trait anxiety and stait anxiety.

## **SUGGESTION**

Although this study was conducted with a small number of participants in a short period of time, these findings provide some useful information that can be used by teachers and stakeholders to improve the quality of teaching and learning English. Based on the results of this study, there are several suggestions that can be made to reduce anxiety in the English class. The teacher must understand that there are some students who experience anxiety when learning a foreign language. This study shows that the teacher's awareness of student anxiety is not sufficient. Therefore, it is necessary to increase teacher awareness because anxiety is an important factor affecting student learning.

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