

English as a Foreign Language Learning from the Students' Mental Health Point of View

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to see how individual factors (self-efficacy, belief, and motivation) play a role in the anxiety experienced by students in learning English. The survey used quantitative in approach and the instrument of data collection is a questionnaire. The respondents were the first semester students who are learning English at Public Health in a private university in Jakarta by adopting purposive cluster sampling technique. The preliminary research showed that the variables self-efficacy, belief, and motivation related to the anxiety in learning English that was part of mental health. The students will be individuals who try to find learning English strategies that are suitable for themselves.

Keywords: EFL learners, Anxiety, University student, Mental health, Language Learning Strategies

INTRODUCTION

Learning English as a foreign language has become the imperial requirement of today's learners. On the other hand, the English language has become a widespread medium of instruction in higher education, offering a unique opportunity to promote students' mental health. However, the absence of a focus on students' mental health in language education may lead to difficulties and challenges, hampering students' English learning process and academic success. Students' attitudes form an integral factor influencing English language learning.

In education, the students face considerable challenges in adjusting to the increasing demand of the ill-structured learning environment. These emerging difficulties affect the students' mental health. The process of learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia is still a problem for

most students in Indonesia. Unfortunately, in the case of foreign language learning, students' emotions tend to be more discouraging rather than encouraging.

In this regard, the institutions have acknowledged students' emotional and psychological mental to be essential in improving individuals' learning process. One of the emotional states that make such process becomes difficult is anxiety. Emotional state such as anxiety can distract students in the language learning process. Feeling of tension, worry, and nervousness will impede students ability to perform successfully in a foreign language classroom. Horwitz, et al. (1986) emphasized that anxiety in foreign languages is related to things such as anxiety, nervousness and worry that learners experience when learning or using the foreign language being studied.

A great amount of attention has been given to this concept and its possible indicators because of its role at the core of learners' educational achievement. Alternatively, it is commonly maintained that self-efficacy has turned into a significant mental concept enhancing the educational cycle and educational presentation that influences learners' decisions regarding their educational assignment and manners and their way of thinking and feeling when it comes to education. They may learn less and also may not be able to demonstrate what they have learned. Even worse, they may experience more failure, which in turn escalate their anxiety. The aims of this research is to see the relationship between individual factors in influencing anxiety in learning English, especially for students at the private university in Jakarta.

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to see how individual factors (self-efficacy, belief, and motivation) play a role in the anxiety experienced by students in learning English. This research methodology used quantitative in approach and the instrument of data collection is a questionnaire. The respondents were the first semester students who are learning English at Public Health in a private university in Jakarta by adopting purposive cluster sampling technique. There were 45 students participated in this study The preliminary research showed that the variables self-efficacy, belief, and motivation related to the anxiety in learning English that was part of mental health.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The questionnaire included the respondent's personal information, and the questions related to the factors that influence learning English mental health in student's point of view.

Table 1.

Items	English as a Foreign Language Learning from the Students' Mental Health Point of View	Yes	No
1	Did you have any bad experiences when you were learning English? When did the bad experience happen?	40%	55,6%
2	Have there been any setbacks or challenges in learning English in the past? How has this affected your confidence and motivation to continue learning English?	75,6%	20%
3	Have you experience performance pressure related to English language assessments? If so, how does it affect you emotionally?	48,9%	44,4%
4	Is there anything memorable in your past English learning journey? And how it has affected your mental health?	57,8%	40%
5	Did you have a support system in the past (e.g., teachers, friends, family) that positively impacted your mental health during challenging phases of English language learning?	71,1%	11,1%
6	Do you feel that English is very influential in your major?	68,9%	26,7%
7	Learning English in college is important because I will need it for my career.	84,4%	11,1%

Table 2.

Item	Question	1	2	3	4	5
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8	My confidence level in overcoming these challenges.	11,1%	8,9%	51,1%	24,4%	4,4%
9	I am confident in achieving my English learning goals.	0,0%	8,9%	44,4%	28,9%	17,8%

Table 3.

Items	Instruments	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
10	I feel confident when I speak in English in the class.	4,4%	6,7%	64,4%	20%	4,4%
11	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English class.	4,4%	20%	53,3%	22,2%	0%
12	When I make a mistake while speaking English, I can find a solution to concentrate on the parts that follow.	4,4%	4,4%	37,8%	4,4%	4,4%
13	I get nervous when I don't understand every word my English teacher says	4,4%	2,2%	53,3%	37,8%	2,2%
14	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for English class.	2,2%	13,3%	55,6%	26,7%	2,2%
15	Sometimes I feel like not going to my English class.	17,8%	28,9%	48,9%	2,2%	2,2%
16	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English class.	4,4%	15,6%	53,3%	20%	6,7%

17	I worry about the consequences of failing in my English class.	2,2%	6,7%	33,3%	51,1%	6,7%
18	I learn English in order to improve my English skills. The learning media provided at OLU and Google class support me to achieve the goal.	2,2%	0%	28,9%	46,7%	22,2%
19	My parents encourage me to practice my English as much as possible.	0%	4,4%	48,9%	31,1%	15,6%
20	My surroundings and the support of those closest to me influence my motivation to learn English	0%	4,4%	44,4%	35,6%	15,6%

The first category is bad experiences when learning English. Forty percent respondents have a bad experience when learning English, something bad is the tenses and online class. Seventy six percent of them agreed that they had setbacks or challenges in learning English in the past, they said that English is half difficult and half easy, such as learning a new vocabulary and memorizing it, and then their motivation to keep learning English is because they want to be a good English speaker.

Fifty percent of the students in this study agreed that they experienced pressure related to English assessment, such as nervousness, lack of confidence, and lack of word mastery in speaking English. Nevertheless, with these challenges students feel excited and challenged in continuing to learn English. Habit of reading English text in their major encouraged the students to write better and lower their anxiety (Wijirahayu & Kamilah, 2021). Sixty percent of them agreed that they had memorable things in their past English learning journey, which greatly affected their mental health because they became confident in speaking and learning English.

Seventy percent of students in this study admitted to have support system in the past that give positively on their mental health during challenging in learning English. Sixty percent of them admitted that English was very influential in their majors, namely public health. Ideas generating from the material in public health suitable provided in the course supported the students to mind map new terms related to their major (Wijirahayu, Alfian & Khadafi, 2023).

Confident when speaking English in the class, students choose neutral (64,4%). Students' level of confidence in overcoming these challenges, students mostly choose level 3.

Encouragement from parents to practice students' English as much as possible, they chose neutral (48,9%), but (31,1%) there were some who agreed that their parents supported them in improving their English. Surrounding environment and support from close people affect motivation to learn English, students chose neutral (44,4%).

CONCLUSION

Learning English as a foreign language has become the imperial requirement of today's learners. On the other hand, the English language has become a widespread medium of instruction in higher education, offering a unique opportunity to promote students' mental health. The findings indicate that a significant portion of students report having bad experiences when learning English, particularly in the areas of tenses and online classes. Many students find English learning tough, especially with tenses and online classes. Some feel pressure during assessments, but many have good memories from learning English. Having support helps students during challenges. English is important for their majors, making them more confident in class. While many feel neutral about speaking English in class, some get encouragement from parents. Overall, the findings highlight a nuanced relationship between challenges, positive experiences, support systems, and the perceived influence of English on students' majors.

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