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INVESTIGATING LANGUAGE ANXIETY AMONG MALAYSIAN
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS : CURRENT SITUATION,
SOURCES AND STRATEGIES

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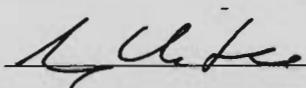
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ABSTRACT

The construct of anxiety is believed to have a significant influence on L2 learning. The present study investigated anxiety from 5 perspectives: the relationship between anxiety and achievement, anxiety and gender, sources of anxiety, manifestation of anxiety and strategies coping with anxiety. A total of 120 students (60 males and 60 females) from Sekolah Menengah Teknik Alor Setar answered Foreign Language Anxiety Classroom Scale developed by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) and 8 students (4 males and 4 females) were interviewed. The school-based results were used to represent students' achievement. SPSS 13.0 was employed to analyze the quantitative data and the interviewed data was transcribed and analyzed. The results showed a significant negative correlation between anxiety and achievement but no difference in gender. Participants agreed with the sources of anxiety suggested by Horwitz (1986) namely communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety and expressed other sources of anxiety such as writing activities and inability to comprehend what is being said. In terms of the manifestation of anxiety, participants showed both physical and psychological signs of anxiety. Some of the symptoms were stutter, palpitation, shaky, tremble, short of breath and restless. Some of the psychological symptoms were to avoid volunteering and demotivated to complete the given tasks. There were five main strategies to cope with anxiety, namely preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking and resignation. Based on the findings the author made some pedagogical suggestions in reducing anxiety in language classrooms.

ABSTRAK

Perasaan bimbang atau 'anxiety' merupakan salah satu faktor mempengaruhi pembelajaran bahasa kedua. Kajian ini bertujuan mengkaji isu kebimbangan pelajar dari 5 perspektif iaitu : perhubungan di antara kebimbangan pelajar dan pencapaian pelajar, kebimbangan dan jantina, faktor-faktor yang menyumbang kepada perasaan tersebut, cara pelajar meluahkan rasa bimbang serta strategi-strategi yang diambil oleh pelajar untuk mengatasi masalah kebimbangan semasa belajar Bahasa Inggeris. Seramai 120 pelajar (60 pelajar perempuan dan 60 pelajar lelaki) dari Sekolah Menengah Teknik Alor Setar dipilih untuk menjawab soal selidik 'Foreign Language Anxiety Classroom Scale' yang dihasilkan oleh Horwitz, Horwitz dan Cope (1986) dan 8 orang pelajar (4 lelaki dan 4 perempuan) ditemubual. Keputusan peperiksaan sekolah digunakan sebagai pencapaian pelajar. Data yang diperoleh daripada FLACS dianalisis menggunakan SPSS 13.0 manakala data yang diperoleh daripada temubual ditranskrip dan dianalisis. Keputusan kajian mendapati terdapat korelasi negatif di antara kebimbangan dan pencapaian pelajar tetapi tiada perbezaan di antara jantina. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan para pelajar mengalami kebimbangan semasa berkomunikasi dalam Bahasa Inggeris, menduduki peperiksaan serta kebimbangan terhadap penilaian negatif. Para pelajar yang mengalami perasaan tersebut menunjukkan simptom fizikal serta psikologi yang ketara. Terdapat lima strategi yang digunakan oleh pelajar untuk mengatasi masalah tersebut. Berdasarkan hasil kajian penulis mengutarakan beberapa cadangan berbentuk pedagogi bagi mengurangkan kebimbangan dalam kalangan pelajar semasa mengikuti kelas Bahasa Inggeris.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

With increased globalization, the growth of bilingualism and even multilingualism is seen prominent. The change in the world economy and the advancement in technology make people realize the need to learn a second language in order to be more competitive. Graddol (2006) estimated that by the year 2010, around two billion people will be learning English worldwide. Despite the fact that many people are bilinguals, some people are totally failure at second language learning (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982). A plethora of researches on second language acquisition (SLA) have been conducted in understanding the complex nature of L2 learning. The goals of SLA researchers, then, are not only describing how L2 is acquired but also explaining this process and providing answers to why some learners are better at it than others.

Ellis (1985) in discussing the key issues in SLA proposed a five-factor framework for investigating SLA. The framework posits a number of interrelated factors, which are: situational factors, input, linguistic output, learner process and learner differences. Under the last factor that is learner differences, scholars further identify a whole range of learner factors that has potential influence on SLA including age, aptitude, cognitive style, personality and motivation (Ellis, 1985). In line with this, the humanistic psychologists such as Erik Erikson, Abraham Maslow and Carl

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