



Selected Factors Students' Stress in Learning English: A Case Study of English Study Program

Rahmadani Putri¹, Mayang Sastra Sumardi², Muhammad Ikrar Nugraha^{3*}

^{1,2,3} Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher, UIN STS Jambi, Indonesia

Email: ¹Rahmadaniputri@uinjambi.ac.id; ²Mayangsastra@uinjambi.ac.id; ³ikrarnugraha@gmail.com

Receive: 13/04/2022

Accepted: 23/08/2020

Published: 01/10/2022

Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui jenis stres yang dialami siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris dan untuk mengetahui faktor-faktor yang berhubungan dengan stres siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini difokuskan untuk mendapatkan data tentang faktor-faktor stres siswa yang dipilih dalam belajar bahasa Inggris. Peneliti memilih 8 mahasiswa yang berasal dari 4 mahasiswa S1 dan 4 mahasiswa S2 sebagai partisipan dalam penelitian ini. Untuk 4 mahasiswa S1 tersebut merupakan mahasiswa semester 1 dan memperoleh IPK minimal B+ (75-76) pada program studi bahasa Inggris. Kemudian untuk 4 mahasiswa S2 tersebut juga merupakan mahasiswa semester 1 dengan IPK minimal B+ (75-76) dan program studi Bahasa Inggris. Semua data penelitian ini dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner terbuka dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa perasaan stres yang dialami siswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris adalah stres negatif karena tidak ada respon positif, dan dikategorikan sebagai stres di masyarakat, dan diikuti oleh stres dalam diri seseorang. Kemudian, peneliti menemukan sebagian besar mereka merasa stres dalam belajar bahasa Inggris karena takut membuat kesalahan dalam belajar bahasa Inggris, jika mereka membuat kesalahan saat belajar bahasa Inggris di kelas, akan terjadi sesuatu seperti teman akan mengejek mereka atau meremehkan mereka, begitu juga dengan dosennya.

Kata Kunci: Stres Mahasiswa, Pembelajaran Bahasa, Program Studi Bahasa Inggris

Abstract

The purposes of this research are to find out kinds of stresses suffered by the students in learning English and to investigate the factors related to students' stresses in learning English. This research focused on getting the data about selected factors students' stress in learning English. The researcher chose 8 students who come from 4 bachelor's degree students, and 4 master's degree students as the participants of this research. For the 4 bachelor's degree students, the students were those who were in the 1st semester and got GPA at least B+ (75-76) on the English study program. Then, for the 4 master's degree students, the students were also those from the 1st semester and got GPA at least B+ (75-76) and the English study program. All the data of this research were collected through open-ended questionnaires and interviews. The results of this research show that the stressed feeling suffered by the students in learning English is such a negative stress since there is not any positive response, and it categorized as stress in the society, and followed by stressed within the person. Then, the researcher found mostly they feel stressed in learning English because of afraid of making mistake in learning English, if they make mistake while learning English in the class, there will be something happened such as the friends will mock at them or underrate them, and so do the lecturer.

Keywords: Students Stress, Language Learning, English Study Program

Introduction

English is one famous language that mostly used by people in this whole world for communicating with each other. It also becomes one of the international languages used by some countries, such as Indonesia. As it is known, Indonesian's first language used is not English, so that English becomes a foreign language in this country. This makes the students have more limited time and opportunity to practice and use English than the students who live or stay in a country where English is its first language. Besides, globalization also forces the outside culture to enter into the Indonesian society (Asrial, A., Syahrial, S., Kurniawan, D. A., Perdana, R., & Nugroho, 2019: 54).

The situation before is usually faced by the students in formal places such as school or university students. School is the beginner level to study English while the university is the last level to study English. However, in this research, the researcher is going to discuss university students since the researcher is also a university student.

For university students especially those who live in Indonesia and take English Education as the major in the university, it will be harder than the students who study English but not in English Education majors. These students will study everything about English in the class until they finish their studies for around 4 years, moreover, if the students are in a master's degree where they have to add about two more years for studying English on the campus. All the activities will be like using English handouts, doing a presentation in English, having an examination in English, doing a discussion in English, speaking English in the class, and completing a thesis in English. These things will be challenges for Indonesian students because this means that they have to have English ability before so that they can follow all the class activities. If these students cannot handle their difficulties in following the learning process, they will get a problem and stress feeling to face the situations. As stated by Barlow, stress factors mostly happen when the students are learning a language as a demanding process (Barlow, 2007). Stress is a feeling where almost all people will experience it. Then, as it is known that priority

of mastering language learning is the mastery of the language structure (Asrial, A., Syahrial, S., Kurniawan, D. A., Subandiyo, M., & Amalina, 2019: 254), this can be one of the stress factors for the students in learning a language.

According to Lazarus, stress is also an unsatisfactory situation of life that people want to change because there is a wish for a better one. Then Lazarus added that stress can be various such as conflict, anxiety, frustration, emotional disturbance, confusion, panic, and trauma (Lazarus, 2006).

A study concluded that the factors that cause learning difficulties in students come from internal and external factors, namely generally low levels of intelligence, low talent for English courses, lack of interest in learning and low learning motivation as well. They attend and complete assignments only as an obligation and to get good grades not to master English as an international language which is very important today (Indah Sari, 2019: 81). As a result, students who always experience distractions make it difficult for them to concentrate and result in low learning performance. Finally, psychological disorders arise, lack of self-confidence, depression, stress, lazy and not even motivated to learn (Aunurrahman et al., 2014: 58). Therefore, solving problems in learning Listening Comprehension is expected to minimize the problems faced by students in the learning process in obtaining satisfactory learning outcomes (S. Sumihatul Ummah MS, 2012: 97). So the reluctance or laziness, lack of interest in English, but because they are not confident in their abilities, fear of getting negative evaluations, and being compared by their peers can be overcome (Fitriani et al., 2022: 2312).

The descriptions above show that stress can attack people especially students on every occasion. This means that university students must aware of stressed feelings since it can happen every time and everywhere. For the university students, this might occur when they do not have a lot of English vocabularies so that this can influence the activities that happen during the learning process, for example, their understanding of reading English handouts in the class, feeling awkward

to speak English during a presentation of discussion in front of the class, or getting difficulties when they are in the final examination and explaining what they have conducted in their research. Based on the descriptions and explanations above, the researcher intends to research with a title: Selected Factors Students' Stress in Learning English: A Case Study of English Study Program.

Methodology

This research was qualitative research with a case study approach. Qualitative research is a process of understanding which explores a social problem that builds a complex, analyzes words, and reports detailed views of an informant in natural form. Besides a case study as developing an in-depth analysis of a case or some cases and one approach which mostly used by people in qualitative research. The in-depth analysis here was done through the interview data which transcribed, classified into themes, and correlated to the theories used in this research.

The data of this research were analyzed through some steps. First, the researcher transcribed the data from the interviews and described the data from the questionnaire. Second, the researcher read the data several times and reduced the unrelated ones. Third, the researcher classified the data into some themes which were decided, this activity (classifying the data into themes) is a process of coding and marking the data with symbols, descriptive words, or categories. Fourth, the data from the questionnaire and interview were combined and correlating each other with the theories used in this research. Last, the researcher discussed it with her two supervisors.

Findings and Discussions

Through the findings below, researchers can describe that almost all of the participants in this research both the bachelor's degree students and master's degree students almost have the same criteria in learning English in the class, for instance, the participants will feel nervous, panic, confused and stressed when they have to use English for some class

activities such as group discussion, examination or test. In addition, they are also afraid of making mistakes during the learning process in the class since usually there will be an effect for them such as making them down and not motivated to study as the result of their ability is not quite good. Furthermore, almost all the answers given by each participant in this questionnaire showed how they do not have positive thinking and response in learning English in the class.

Fear, anxiety to stress students are not difficult to find. This is clear evidence that the stress experienced by students actually creates significant pressure in the development of their studies. As illustrated in the following interview excerpt:

"Hmm. well, learn English like speaking English in the class, umm... I afraid to make a mistake for example like my pronunciation because. I'm not um..like as a... fluent as my friends and if I.. speaking English in the classroom, I am *afraid* that I make a mistake in that and also for my vocabularies and um. my grammar I'm still like of that. I'm so *stressed* of this situation."

"Hmm I..my major is English, so. if I make mistake hmm. my score will be low and..and my friend will be talk about me, so I don't want to make mistake in learning English because I have to speak well, but sometimes my lecturer also make me *stress* because of that especially when in the class."

This factor raises the attitude of students' self-distrust. Not infrequently among students resulted in the lowest state in them to study the material given by a lecturer. This was stated directly by an informant that the stress experienced by students can cause them to be down and have an impact on the spirit of learning in them.

Courage is one of the stress factors for students in the learning process. This has an impact on various errors that will be experienced by each individual. As a result, students are nervous, panicked and stressed in carrying out learning activities in the classroom. As stated by an informant in the following quote:

Okay to use English, such as writing and reading, not speaking...I don't have any braveness when I aware I make a lot of mistake in using English in the class...That will make me *nervous* because of waiting what the lecturer is going to do to me...Of course getting *panic* and *stress*...I could become rather down to face that fact...Mostly the test make me getting like a *pressure* in the class.

The same thing happened to students with regard to their self-confidence. In presenting individual material or assignments, shyness, nervousness and worry continue to haunt a student when he is not confident. Various stigmas will emerge, such as ridicule from friends, failing grades, and being treated unfairly by friends and lecturers.

Some students will experience stress, nervousness and fear when in certain material, such as writing and listening in English. According to an informant he will be afraid, panicked and stressed because of these two materials. So he has no motivation to come to class and attend related materials.

In addition, the results of this study also revealed that the condition of the lecturers, friends in the class, learning facilities, the room does not have air conditioning, and the class will certainly feel hot. As a result, all students will sweat in carrying out learning, this also destroys student focus and has an impact on stress for some students.

Lecturers could be one thing that can make her stressed while the learning process in the class. This means that lecturer could be her stress cause. She also explained about the situation where she did not want to produce any mistakes during the learning in class. Perhaps, her lecturer would do something that could make her feel stress.

Not only that, the findings above add that one of the things that can make students stressed is the subject itself (English). The assumption that English is difficult at the end of the answer. This is experienced because the lecturer conveys or explains something in English and he does not understand it, so it becomes a burden for him.

As one student pointed out to the researcher that she was a little bit panic,

nervous and stressed when she did some mistakes during the learning process in the class especially front of the other friends. This was because there were many students loved to laugh or mock at her when she made mistake, and the other students were looked better than her, although it should not happen because it was just a learning process where everyone could make it, too.

Overall, the responses given by all participants in this study can be expressed all the participants in this research are stress, panic, and nervous when they make mistake during the English learning process in the class. all the participants in this research are stress, panic, and nervous when they make mistake during the English learning process in the class. The causes vary from lack of vocabulary and grammar problems, class situations, friends who make you down, difficult subject matter, self-confidence, and the courage of a student.

This research discussed stressed in language learning. Stress in language learning might be happened and felt by the students who stay in a country or place where it does not use English for its daily speaking. This could happen since a limit chance to learn and use English for them, such as in Indonesia. As it is known Indonesia is one example of country which English does not belong to its first or official language. In this country, English is a language used as a foreign language where the students only get it in a certain situation and place such as at schools or universities. This means the duration they have to study and use the language does not much as the student who live or stay in an English-speaking country. This becomes a short description of a stressed feeling felt by the students in a country.

The mistake in learning English could be one thing that can cause a student to feel stressed. Stress is part of life that generally reach a group of population with no regard to their criteria such as age, gender, educational status or socioeconomic status (Yikealo, D., Tareke, W., Karvinen, 2018). It was known from the data that showed all the participants in this research felt afraid, stressed, panic and nervous when they made mistakes during the learning process in the class. This was because

various reasons for example like having lack of vocabulary and grammatical problem, the situation in the class with friends which can make them felt down and knowing other friends are better. This seemed the same like what is on the research about some factors can cause the university to feel stress for example like having limit proficiency in vocabulary, and lacking of motivation for learning or having a negative attitude toward the target language (Normazidah, C. M., Koo & Hazita, 2012: 35). In addition, this might also happen since someone's motivation will create an attitude toward something. The result of research also showed that the stressed feeling of the students can stop their language learning and abilities in performances.

This theme seemed to come from stress causes such as panic and nervous, when they have presentation, exam, and discussion. In addition, test-taking situation can cause students to feel stress and lose their self-confidence (Amal Shehadeh AlNatour, 2018: 130). This theme was also found where stress is a feeling when there is combination of two pressures, internal and external pressure. As the data found through the interview that the participants of this research felt this because of various reasons start from lack of vocabulary and grammatical problem and the situation in the class with friends and lecturer which can make down. Here, the internal pressure is the awareness of lack of vocabulary and grammatical problem, while the external pressure is the situation in the class with friends and lecturer.

Furthermore, in this research the researcher also found some students stated that the lecturer was one stress cause. This usually happened when the lecturers criticized what the participants had done such as mispronouncing a word or use the wrong English word, while the other students only feel such a nervous or afraid. This can be categorized as stress within the person as one of kind of stresses (Alqahtani & Alajmi, 2013: 168).

However, English as the subject discussed in this research also could be a stress cause for some participants of this

research. This might happen since English is a foreign language for the participants, and there were lot of components and things needed to be understood well with a limit time. Whereas the other 4 students stated what can cause stress is the situation or the atmosphere of the class, and the boring and killer. These results can be said that the participants in this study feel stress in learning (Alqahtani & Alajmi, 2013: 171).

In addition, Harwood added that language is one of the lessons among the school or college subjects that can cause stress on students, whereas it is known that the subject itself is English as a language learnt by the participants in this research as the students (Harwood, 2010). This might happen since English is a new language for them to use and to communicate each other, moreover if there is something they have to reach such as score or GPA at the end of the learning process. This could make the students are inability to concentrate, that one of the common symptoms of stress is inability to concentrate. In addition, this case could also make the participants have limit that can make people's ability to keep information become limit. In addition, Normazidah, Koo, and Hazita explained on their research about some factors can cause university students to feel stressed and one of them is English is regarded and assumed as a difficult subject to learn especially for the students who live in a non-English speaking country like Indonesia (Musa et al., 2012: 35).

As it is known that stressed is a feeling where everyone can feel and experience it. There are some factors that can make someone especially student to feel and get stressed. According to Barlow, stress factors mostly happen when the students are learning a language as a demanding process (Barlow, 2007). In addition, added that stress can be various such as conflict, anxiety, frustration, emotional disturbance, confusion, panic and trauma (Lazarus, 2006).

Stress is a feeling that can arise when there is a combination of internal and external pressure over people's resources to solve their situation. So, the internal pressure is the participants' own ability and the external

pressure is the atmosphere around whether it is from the other friends or the lecturer in the class. In addition, a lecturer or a teacher has an important role to play in preparing young generation for facing the future (Asrial et al., 2019: 54). Whereas Sabbah stated that classroom environment can also be one thing that can make the students to feel more anxious and stressed (Sabbah, 2017: 259).

In addition, stated that there are 3 kinds of stresses (Alqahtani & Alajmi, 2013). They are (a) Stress within the person, (b) Stress in the family, and (c). Stress in society. Above situation can be categorized as stress within the person and stress in the society. Lazarus stated 3 kinds of stress. They are (a) harm, (b) threat, and (c) challenge. Harm is a stress feeling that refers to psychological damage (Lazarus, 2006).

Furthermore, the researcher found that almost all the participants in this research have a negative stress and categorized that the participants in this research got a stress in a society (Alqahtani & Alajmi, 2013). In addition, it is known that negative stress can cause anxiety which can be for short or long term of an individual, and in most cases, this can happen since the individual is unable to cope with the stressor (Kapur, 2018). This can be seen from how they behave when getting stressed and kinds of factors that make them get and feel stressed. Then, this can also be said that it is in form of challenge stress, where challenge is kind of stress that refers to something a person has to face as a stunt, so it can be said that what the students feel are actually a challenge for them.

Conclusion

The stress factor for English students is unavoidable. Even though they are involved in and choose to study in the English Language Education program, it does not mean that they are free from various mistakes and worries that cause stress for students. As this study concludes that the feeling of stress experienced by students in learning English is negative stress because there is no positive response, and is categorized as stress in society and followed by stress within the student. Students feel stressed in learning English because they are afraid of making mistakes in learning English, if students make

mistakes while studying in class, then they will be laughed at and belittled by other friends and lecturers.

References

- Alqahtani, A. A., & Alajmi, S. S. (2013). Psychological Stress in Language Learning: A Contemporary View beyond Teaching Methods. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 4(5), 168–171.
- Amal Shehadeh AlNatour. (2018). Students' Level of Anxiety Towards Learning English as Foreign Language: Students' Perspectives. *US-China Foreign Language*, 16(3), 131–140.
- Asrial, A., Syahrial, S., Kurniawan, D. A., Perdana, R., & Nugroho, P. (2019). Supporting technology 4.0: Ethoconstructivist multimedia for elementary schools. *International Journal of Online and Biomedical Engineering*, 15(2), 54–66.
- Asrial, A., Syahrial, S., Kurniawan, D. A., Subandiyo, M., & Amalina, N. (2019). Exploring Obstacles in Language Learning among Prospective Primary School Teacher. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 8(2), 249–254.
- Asrial, Syahrial, Maryono, D. A. K., Nugroho, P., & Perdana, R. (2019). Etno-Social Knowledge: How Does Knowledge of Basic School Teachers in Indonesia? *Journal of Education and Learning*, 13(4), 54–66.
- Aunurrahman, Kusumaningsih, C., Astriyanti, D., & Kasim, M. I. (2014). Faktor Pengganggu Mahasiswa Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Di Kelas. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa*, 3(1), 58–72.
- Barlow, D. H. (2007). *Principles and practice of stress management*. Guilford Press.
- Fitriani, E., Julia, J., & Diah Gusrayan. (2022). Studi Kasus: Kecemasan Berbicara Bahasa Inggris sebagai Bahasa Asing. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 6(2), 2312–2322.
- Harwood, J. (2010). The contact space: A novel framework for intergroup contact research. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 29(2), 1811–1816.
- Indah Sari. (2019). Kesulitan Mahasiswa Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris. *Jurnal Manajemen Tools*, 11(1), 81–98.

- Kapur. (2018). *Factors Influencing the Students Academic Performance in Secondary Schools in India*. University Of Delhi.
- Lazarus, R. S. (2006). *Stress and emotion: A new synthesis*. Springer Publishing Company.
- Musa, N. C., Lie, K. Y., & Hazita Azman. (2012). Exploring English language learning and teaching in Malaysia. *GEMA Online: Journal of Language Studies*, 12(1), 35–51.
- Normazidah, C. M., Koo, Y. L., & Hazita, A. (2012). Exploring English language learning and teaching in Malaysia. *GEMA Online. Journal of Language Studies*, 12(1), 35–55.
- S. Sumihatul Ummah MS. (2012). Problematika dalam Belajar Listening Comprehension yang Dihadapi Oleh Mahasiswa Semester Iii Tadris Bahasa Inggris Stain Pamekasan. *Nuansa*, 9(1), 97–116.
- Sabbah, S. S. (2017). The Factors that Affect Qatari College Students' Motivation and Attitudes to Learn English. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(1), 259–269.
- Yikealo, D., Tareke, W., Karvinen, I. (2018). The Level of Stress among College Students: A Case in the College of Education,

Eritrea Institute of Technology. *Open Science Journal*, 3(2).

Profil Penulis

Rahmadani Putri merupakan alumni Magister Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Jambi pada 2020. Di Tahun 2021 lulus menjadi dosen tetap pada program sarjana Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi. Aktivitas saat ini merupakan tenaga pengajar di Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi.

Mayang Sastra Sumardi merupakan alumni Magister Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Jambi pada 2020. Di Tahun 2021 lulus menjadi dosen tetap pada program sarjana Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi. Saat ini ia adalah tenaga pengajar aktif di Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi.

Muhammad Ikrar Nugraha adalah dosen tetap pada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Ilmu Keguruan Universitas Islam Negeri Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi.