

## Anxiety Level of Indonesian Students and Its Relationship To Academic Achievement In English

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### Abstract

This research sought the relationship between anxiety in English, the achievement in English and the factors that cause anxiety of the university student of Universitas Advent Indonesia. The respondents were 128 they were classified according to gender and the type of school they graduated from. The instrument used in this study was the final grade in English 3 subject, a 50 items questionnaire, which was taken from the anxiety inventory and was modified by the researcher to suit the need of the study. It was translated into Indonesian for a better understanding of the questions. Correlational Analysis used to determine the relationship of the anxiety level and the achievement and Factor analysis served as tool to identify the factors that cause the anxiety in English. It was found that the level of anxiety of both males, females and types of school were oftentimes anxious. There were 14 factors identified that cause anxiety in English. There was no significant difference on the level of anxiety of these university students in English according to gender and type of high school they graduated from since they fall on the same range as interpreted oftentimes/highly anxious

**Keywords:** anxiety , academic achievement

### Background of the Study,

Bahasa Indonesia, the national language, is used as the language of wider communication in all domains — family, neighborhood, religion, education and occupation-throughout Indonesia. However, although Bahasa Indonesia is the medium of instruction in all school levels (from Elementary to University), knowledge of English is necessary in higher education. University students need to learn English in order to be able to communicate with people from other countries.

Therefore in Indonesia, English is viewed not only as an indispensable vehicle of access to scholarly disciplines but also as a medium for international communication.

In the case of Indonesians, there is a high level of acceptability and tolerance of the use of English. The teaching of English in the school curriculum is given a higher priority over all other foreign languages in the school systems. Thus, the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is in fact compulsory. Indonesian who go abroad for scholarship, conferences and short-term training courses have to be competent in it. Moreover, as part of the international political community, they need to use English during discussion in meetings and conferences with foreign participants-even if these events are held in Indonesia.

In Indonesian schools, however, the teaching of English consists mainly of learning correct grammatical structures or forms, increasing vocabularies, working on exercises on the sentence level, and asking students to repeat over and over similar structures. Exercises on the discourse level are not given much thought. As a consequence, students may gain linguistic competence in English but not its functional use. In other words, skills acquired are applicable only within the four walls of the classroom but insufficient when applied to natural settings.

In general, English is introduced at the lower secondary school (grade 7). But in some private primary school they introduce English at grade 5, but this is only in Urban schools , and not the Rural. So we find English speaking environment in English classes only, but sometimes even if it is an English class the teacher speaks Bahasa Indonesia to teach grammar. Bali is an exemption to this, wherever you go people in Bali speak English because there are a lot of tourists around. You will even be surprised to find out Balinese speak English just like the natives, but they can't read and write. It is for this reason that the researcher is interested to find the anxiety in English of UNAI's students because they come from various parts of Indonesia and different upper secondary schools.

The researcher based her study on the fifth hypothesis of Krashen, —The affective filter Hypothesis.

The affective Filter hypothesis states how affective factors relate to the second language acquisition process. The concept of an Affective filter was proposed by Dulay and Burt (1977) and then reviewed by Krashen , 1981. Most of the studied can be placed into one of these three categories:

**Motivation.** Performers with high motivation generally do better in second language acquisition ( usually, but not always, —integrative‘)

**Self-confidence.** Performers with self-confidence and a good self-image tend to do better in second language acquisition.

**Anxiety.** Low anxiety appears to be conducive to second language acquisition, whether measured as personal or classroom anxiety.

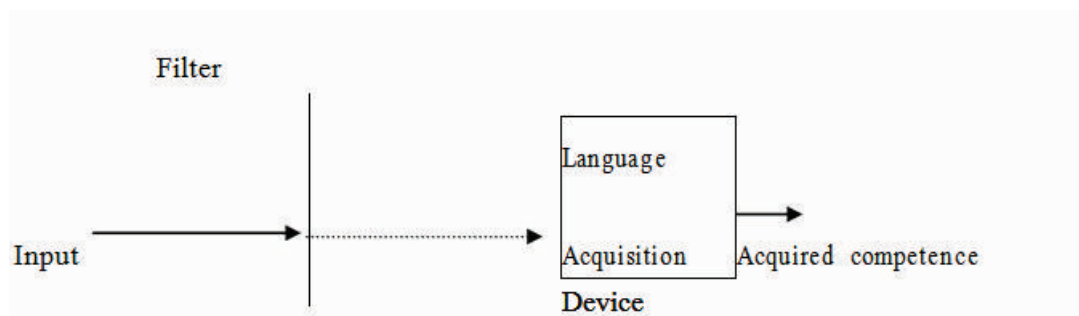


Fig.1.

The effective language teacher is someone who can provide input and help make it comprehensible in a low anxiety situation.

When does language teaching help? Language teaching helps when it is the main source of low filter comprehensible input.

According to King (1989), children demonstrate specific fears and anxieties that may impede social and academic development. Anxiety has been defined as a state of intense apprehension, uneasiness, or fear resulting from the anticipation of a threatening event or situation, often to a degree that the normal physical and psychological functioning of the affected individual is disrupted.

Piotrowski (1998), described that the psychological side of anxiety includes a specific conscious inner attitude and a peculiar feeling state characterized by a physically as well a mentally painful awareness of being powerless to do anything a personal matter or, by an apprehensive self-absorption which interferes with an effective and advantageous solution to reality’s problems.

Mahmood, et al 2010 stated that male students who fall in average level of foreign anxiety showed better results than high level of anxiety regarding academic achievement. Female students who also fall in average level of foreign Language anxiety showed better results than high level of foreign Language anxiety regarding academic achievement.

### Statement of the Problem

This study aims to determine the factors that affect the achievement of English at University students of Universitas Advent Indonesia Bandung. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

*What is the level of anxiety in English of university students according to gender, type of school they graduated from?*

*Is there significant difference in the level of anxiety of these university students in English according to gender and type of high school they graduated from?*

*What is the level of achievement of university students in English according to gender and the type of the school they graduated?*

*Which among the factors cause the level of anxiety?*

### Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study focused on the factors that affect the achievement of university students in English of Universitas Advent Indonesia, first semester, SY 2011 - 2012.

It involved three departments (Accounting, Business management, and secretary) during the first semester of school year 2011 - 2012.

### Definition of Terms

The following terms are operationally and conceptually defined for clarity.

**Anxiety in English.** It refers to a complex and sometimes chronic emotional state generally characterized by fear, apprehension or tension in English. It is also associated with the feelings of inferiority and inadequacy. Anxiety factors like teachers, subject matter, environment, test, textbook and other instructional materials, and schedule are considered. The level of anxiety in this study is categorized into five levels depending on the mean of students' responses to the items:

| Scaling  | Interpretation                           |
|----------|--|
| 0        | Never – N ( <b>Not Anxious</b> )         |
| 0.01 - 1 | Rarely - R ( <b>Less Anxious</b> )       |
| 1.01 - 2 | Sometimes - S ( <b>Anxious</b> )         |
| 2.01 - 3 | Oftentimes - O ( <b>Highly Anxious</b> ) |
| 3.01 - 4 | Always - A ( <b>Very Much Anxious</b> )  |

**Academic Achievement.** In this study, achievement refers to the final grade obtained in English III subject. The table below summarizes the possible grade each student

will receive in their subject.

|      |    |    |   |     |
|------|----|----|---|-----|
| 4.00 | A  | 96 | - | 100 |
| 3.67 | A- | 90 | - | 95  |
| 3.33 | B+ | 85 | - | 89  |
| 3.00 | B  | 80 | - | 84  |
| 2.67 | B- | 76 | - | 79  |
| 2.33 | C+ | 70 | - | 75  |
| 2.00 | C  | 65 | - | 69  |
| 1.67 | C- | 60 | - | 64  |
| 1.00 | D  | 55 | - | 59  |
| 0.00 | F  | 49 | - |     |

**Type of High School Graduated From.** This refers to the type of school where students finished their high school. This can be either from the Urban or Rural. For this study, Urban schools are coded as 3 and 4 for rural schools.

**Schedule.** This refers to the time allotted for English. In this study, English classes were scheduled any time of the day from 8:00 - 12:00 am to 13:00 - 17:00 PM.

UNAI.- UNIVERSITAS ADVENT INDONESIA a tertiary level school located in the northern part of Bandung, West Java.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Method and Design

The **descriptive analysis** was used to determine the level of anxiety and level of academic achievement of college students in English III and the significant differences between the level of anxiety and level of academic achievement of students in English according to gender and the type of school where the student graduated. **Correlational analysis** was used to determine the relationship of the level of anxiety and the level of academic achievement of UNAI's students in English III.

**Factor analysis** was used to identify which among those factors relate with English anxiety.

### Data Gathering and Procedure

An anxiety inventory that involved fifty items questions was distributed to the students at Universitas Advent Indonesia. It was administered to the three selected courses (Secretarial, Accountancy and Business Management). The fifty items questions were translated to Bahasa Indonesia in order for the respondents to understand better what the researcher intended to ask. After which the raw data is analyzed.

### Population

The population of this study is the number of the students of Universitas Advent Indonesia. The students who participated in this study are the sophomore students from Business Management, Accounting, and the Secretary.

### Subjects of the Study

The study made use of the three existing, classes of sophomores of Accountancy, Business Management and Secretarial students in a private university (UNAI-Universitas Advent Indonesia) as subjects. These students graduated from various secondary School and come from different parts (island) in Indonesia. The subjects were 128 sophomore students, 85 of whom were female and 43 male.

Having gone through the regular school curriculum in Indonesia, the subjects are proficient in Bahasa Indonesia, the language of classroom instruction from the Elementary grades through highschool and up to the second year college which was their grade level at the time of the study.

### Instruments Used

The research procedure was to determine the anxiety level and the relationship to Academic achievement. The instrument used in this study was a 50 items questionnaire (see appendix) , which was taken from the anxiety inventory and was modified by the researcher to suit the need of the study. It was then translated into Bahasa Indonesia in order for the students to be able to understand well the questions. A questionnaire was necessary to attain the above objective. The final grade of the subject was taken from the office of the registrar of the Universitas Advent Indonesia.

### Research Local

This study was conducted in Universitas Advent Indonesia , which is located northern part Bandung, West Java. It has a cool climate (23°C) and it is a very nice place to study.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The presentation of data is divided into four main parts.

*Part I* discusses the *level of anxiety* of the university students in English according to variables (gender and type of school graduated). *Part II* discusses *the achievement* of the students according to variables (gender and type of school graduated) *Part III. Correlational analysis* to find the relationship among the variables and *Part IV Factor analysis* to presents the factors that cause the anxiety in English.

**Part I. Anxiety in English of the University Students in the three courses (Secretary, Management and Accounting).**

**Table 1. Represent the overall students' level of anxiety in English.**

**Descriptive Statistics**

|                    | N   | Minimum | Maximum | Mean   | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|-----|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| level of anxiety   | 128 | 1.34    | 3.52    | 2.2625 | .3275          |
| Valid N (listwise) | 128 |         |         |        |                |

The table shows that overall the students' anxiety level is showed in the mean of 2.3 which means that they are **oftentimes /highly anxious** . As it range from 2.01-3.00 = Oftentimes/ highly anxious.

**Table 2. Level of Anxiety in English of University students according to gender.**

| Gender     | N  | Mean   | Standard Deviation |
|------------|----|--------|--------------------|
| Female (0) | 58 | 2.2414 | .3312              |
| Male (1)   | 70 | 2.2800 | .3257              |

The table shows that male has a higher level of anxiety than female students of Univeristas Advent Indonesia in English. The 70males have a mean of 2.2800 compared to 2.2414 mean of 58 female students. The levels of anxiety in English of both male and female fall under 2.01 - 3.00 that is interpreted **as oftentimes or highly anxious**. It only means that both groups have high level of anxiety in terms of

English. This finding can be explained by Spielberger's (1966) theory, which states that anxiety is a relatively stable personality attribute. This further implied that whether a student is male or female, their level of anxiety did not vary. Anxiety as claimed by Lopez (1990) interferes most in students' performance in educational settings, such as examinations and other evaluative or intellectual sources.

**Table 3. Level of Anxiety in English on the three courses**

| Courses     | N  | Mean   | Standard Deviation |
|-------------|----|--------|--------------------|
| Secretarial | 28 | 2.1364 | .3394              |
| Management  | 12 | 2.3250 | .5604              |
| Accounting  | 88 | 2.2941 | .2728              |

Table 3 shows the anxiety level in English of the three courses; secretary, management and the accounting. The secretarial students has a mean of 2.1364, Management students have a mean of 2.3250 while the Accounting students have a mean of 2.2941. Of the three courses the secretarial students have the lowest mean sfollowed by the accounting students. But the three courses fall on the range of 2.01-3.00 as interpreted **Oftentimes (highly anxious)**.

**Table 4. Level of Anxiety in English according to the Type of School**

| Type of School | N  | Mean   | Standard Deviation |
|----------------|----|--------|--------------------|
| Urban (3)      | 85 | 2.3321 | .3129              |
| Rural (4)      | 44 | 2.3327 | .3449              |

Table 3 presents the comparison of level of anxiety of students in English according to the type of school they attended. It shows that the 85 urbane school graduates have a mean of 2.3321 compared to 2.3327 of 44 rural

school graduates. It further shows that urban school graduates have slightly lower level of anxiety as contrast to rural school graduates. Though both means fall under 2.01 - 3.00 interpreted as **oftentimes or high anxious**. The data above further revealed that students either from urban or rural schools were oftentimes anxious in English.

## Part II. English Achievement of the university students of Universitas Advent Indonesia

Table 5 and 6 present the level of English achievement of students according to variables.

**Table 5. Level of English Achievement of Students according to Gender**

| Gender     | N  | Mean   | Standard Deviation |
|------------|----|--------|--------------------|
| Female (0) | 58 | 2.8922 | .8598              |
| Male (1)   | 70 | 2.8107 | .8769              |

Table 5 revealed the level of English achievement of students according to gender. The highest grade obtained in English is 96 (A) among female while 96 (A) among male students. The lowest passing grade for both is 65. It can be noted that the level of academic achievement of both males and female has a slightly difference as revealed by the computed standard deviation of .8769 and .8598 respectively. As observed difference of 0.0815 in the mean value of the computed average grades of students in English with females having slightly higher (2.8922) against male (2.8107), revealed that the result was not significant. It could further be deduced from the result that gender is not a predictor of students' performance in English and that gender does not affect students' English achievement. This contradicts Taladtad's (1990) study which indicates a and academic achievement.

**Table 6. Level of English Achievement of Students according to Type of School**

| Type of School | N  | Mean   | Standard Deviation |
|----------------|----|--------|--------------------|
| Urban (3)      | 85 | 2.8941 | .7881              |
| Rural (4)      | 44 | 2.7614 | .9970              |

Table 6 disclosed the level of English achievement of students according to type of school. It can be noted that the average mean rating of urban school graduates in English is 2.8941 that is slightly higher of 0.1327 compared from the rural school graduates' academic achievement in English with 2.7614. The difference is not so significant.

Under the grading system of Univeristas Advent Indonesia, the mean grade score level of achievement of students of both schools was interpreted to be fair (Faculty Manual, 1992). This finding shows that regardless of the type of school the respondents graduated from, students' academic achievement in English would not vary.

## Part III. Relationship between the Anxiety Level and the Academic Achievement.

**Table 7. Relationship between the Anxiety Level and the Academic Achievement.**

### Correlations

|                  |                     | level of anxiety | GRADE |
|------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------|
| level of anxiety | Pearson Correlation | 1.000            | -.133 |
|                  | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                  | .135  |
|                  | N                   | 128              | 128   |
| GRADE            | Pearson Correlation | -.133            | 1.000 |
|                  | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .135             |       |
|                  | N                   | 128              | 128   |

Table 6 revealed the computed values of the relationship between the anxiety level and the academic achievement. The table shows that there was no significant relationship between the anxiety level and the level of achievement. As this is supported by the finding of Chastain(1975). Chastain found that anxiety level was a

significant predictor only for those studying Spanish, the correlations were high across languages; however, the *direction of correlation was not always consistent*. In some cases the correlation was negative, indicating the deleterious effect of anxiety; in other cases *anxiety seemed to enhance performance*. These findings can be explained by Alpert and Haber's (1960) distinction between *facilitating* and *debilitating* anxiety. Scovel (1978), p. 139) comments:

*Facilitating anxiety* motivates the learner to *'fight'* the new learning task; it Gears the learner emotionally for approval behavior.

*Debilitating anxiety*, in contrast, motivates the learner to *'flee'* the new

Learning task; it stimulates the individual emotionally to adopt avoidance Behavior.

This research is supported by the finding of El-Banna, Adel Ibrahim (1989) on Language Anxiety and Language Proficiency among ESL Learners at University Level, found that: ESL learners with high language anxiety levels seemed

to perform successfully on the language tests used.

#### **Part IV. Factors that Cause the Anxiety in English of the University Students**

Aside from the 50 factors presented in the questionnaire, genders and type of schools were also subjected for factor analysis on the level of anxiety in English. After a thorough process of the factor analysis 18 factors were finally emerged as cause of English anxiety. These were also the identified factors in the initial eigenvalues. These eighteen factors had eigenvalues greater than the unity. These eighteen factors were enumerated as follows:

**Table 8. Factors that Cause the Anxiety in English of University Students of Universitas Advent Indonesia**

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Participation in class           | 10. Bases for evaluation                    |
| 2. Classroom and chairs arrangement | 11. Teaching procedure by the teacher       |
| 3. Difficult words in English       | 12. Previous experiences in English subject |
| 4. Reference material               | 13. Unpreparedness                          |
| 5. Audio and visual materials       | 14. Tension if there something to clarify   |
| 6. Voice of the teacher             | 15. Confusing words                         |
| 7. Overcrowded classroom            | 16. Presentation of the lesson              |
| 8. Strategy used by the teacher     | 17. Teacher has no sense of purpose, etc.   |
| 9. Games employed in the subject    | 18. Type of school graduated                |

The above factors identified and affirmed Mitchell and Gibson's (1997) study that environment may cause high level of anxiety. Also, gender has something to do with students' anxiety. They added that preparation for the subject may also cause anxiety.

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **SUMMARY**

This research sought the relationship between anxiety in English, the achievement in English and the factors that cause anxiety of the university student of Universitas Advent Indonesia.

The respondents were 128 university students enrolled during the first semester of school year 2011 - 2012 from the different courses of Universitas Advent Indonesia. They were classified according to gender and the type of school they graduated from. They were asked to answer the survey on Anxiety in English.

The grades in English III subject of sophomore students taken at the university by the respondents served as dependents variables while gender and the type of schools were the independent variables.

For statistical treatment, Descriptive Statistics was used to determine the anxiety level according to variables (gender, type of school ) and the level of achievement according to variables (gender and school). Correlational Analysis was used to determine the relationship of the anxiety level and the achievement. And factor analysis served as tool to identify the factors that cause the anxiety in English.

**This study sought to answer the following questions:**

What is the level of anxiety in English of university students according to gender, type of school they graduated from?

**Findings:**

Regardless also of what type of school they graduated, the level of anxiety is Closely the same described as **oftentimes anxious**. Both male and female students were oftentimes anxious as revealed in the finding.

Is there a significant difference in the level of anxiety of these university students in English according to gender and type of high school they graduated from?

**Findings:**

There was no significant difference on the level of anxiety of these university students in English according to gender and type of high school they graduated from since they fall on the same range as interpreted **oftentimes/highly anxious**

What is the level of achievement of university students in English according to gender and the type of the school they graduated?

**Findings:**

Both male and female students have fair performance in their English subject. There was no difference also in English achievement in terms of the type of school the respondents graduated from

Is there a correlation of anxiety level and the academic achievement?

**Finding:**

There was no significant correlation on the anxiety level of the students and their Academic achievement. It might be because intelligence plays a major role here. And the anxiety of the students was a *Facilitating anxiety* - motivates the learner to *‘fight’* the new learning task

Which among the factors cause the level of anxiety?

**Finding:**

There were 14 factors identified that cause anxiety in English. These were Enumerated in chapter 4.

**CONCLUSION**

In the light of the foregoing findings, the researcher would like to conclude that the anxiety of students in English does not only caused by a single factor. Gender, type of school, environment, teachers, instructional media and the student himself may cause anxiety in any specific instance.

Males and females were anxious in English. Also both students coming from urban and rural schools manifested closer level of anxiety.

Therefore it is concluded that the anxiety of these students was the *facilitating anxiety* - motivates the learner to *‘fight’* the new learning task

EFL (English as A Foreign Language) students who scored high on *facilitative anxiety* employed certain structures in English which other members of their language group tended to avoid. In other words, (Scovel 1978,p.137) those students who scored high on *facilitative anxiety* *‘were emotionally equipped to approach (to —fightl in primitive terms) the very structures that their peers tended to avoid .*

**RECOMMENDTION**

Based on the foregoing findings and conclusion, the researcher would like to recommended the following:

1. Teachers should always create an atmosphere that is conducive to learning.

Teachers are encouraged to use other strategies of teaching that will lessen anxiety on the part of the students.

These strategies must be carefully selected in suitable to the learning situations.

Classroom must be properly structured and cleanliness must be maintained.



Teacher should be friendly to develop students-teacher rapport thus, expect high degree of participation.  
English must be taught in such a way that students are stimulated to participate in the class discussion.  
In-service training for teachers on classroom management and strategies of teaching must be sponsored by the school.

A replicate study must be conducted to further identify other causes of anxiety in English.

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