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Penulis : Nailul Authar, Nurul Latifatul Azizah, Husnul Khotimah, Seftia
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NPP. 16081074

LPPM Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Surabaya

Website : lppm.unusa.ac.id

Email : lppm@unusa.ac.id

Hotline : 0838.5706.3867

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STUDENT'S AFFECTIVE FILTERS AT A SUBURB AREA IN JEMBER

Nailul Authar¹, Nurul Latifatul Azizah², Husnul Khotimah³, and Seftia Ani
Fidyaningrum⁴

¹ Nahdlatul Ulama University of Surabaya,
Surabaya, Indonesia
Nailulauthar@unusa.ac.id

² English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Nahdlatul Ulama
University of Surabaya
Surabaya, Indonesia
Nurullatifatul011.ig17@student.unusa.ac.id

³ English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Nahdlatul Ulama
University of Surabaya
Surabaya, Indonesia
Khotimahhusnul357@gmail.com

⁴ English Education Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Nahdlatul Ulama
University of Surabaya
Surabaya, Indonesia
seftiaaaniiii@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the prevalence of the affective filter faced by students at suburb area in Jember, and thereby recommends some change to improve the situation. This study focuses on the cause of affective filter and how it interferes students' language learning. The term affective filters are first introduced by Dulay and Burt in 1977 then developed by Krashen in 1985 as one of his five input hypothesis, people acquire second language if they obtain comprehensible input and their affective filters are low enough to allow the input in (Krashen, 2009). The affective filters itself refer to the barriers which block or filtrate the input in the learner's brain. It is a mental wall which hampered the learners' in acquiring the language. In other words, the learners with lower affective filters will allow more input into their language acquisition device than the learners with the high affective filters. Affective filters embraces motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. According to the interview, this study notices that from 10 students who are interviewed most of them (8 of 10 students) have low motivation in learning English. Only one student has high self-confidence while the rest of the participants do not believe in their own ability. And 9 of the participants show that they are anxious English learners. Based on the finding and discussion, there are 8 of 10 students have low motivation. For most of them learning English is only about passing the English test and following the rule of the curriculum and teacher.

Keywords: *students affective filter, suburb area, English education.*

Introduction

Nowadays, in Indonesia English has become a compulsory subject for the high school students, both for junior high school or senior high school students. The Indonesian ministry of education aims to improve Indonesian students' English proficiency through making it into compulsory subject for the high school students. Furthermore, in the digital era like now, most of the supporting life tools especially the electronic devices are using English as their primary language. Thus, learning English becomes more important than just the compulsory subject in the school.

The improvement of students' English proficiency is affected by some factor, internal factors and external factors (Brown, 2001). Internal factors are the factor influenced the students' proficiency from the students itself, such as age, aptitude, affective factors, and etc. Whereas, for the external factor comes from the environment, the teacher,

and etc. In order to reach maximum proficiency, the students should maximize every potential of their internal factors as well as they should get appropriate input from the external factors. However, these factors do not always give beneficial for the students. Thus, instead of helping the students' language acquisition it becomes the barrier for them. Some of the factors which can become the barrier for the students' development in acquiring second language are known as the affective filters.

This study aims to investigate the prevalence of the affective filter faced by students at suburb area in Jember, and thereby recommends some change to improve the situation. This study focuses on the causes of affective filter and how it interferes students' language learning.

The term affective filters are first introduced by Dulay and Burt in 1977 then developed by Krashen in 1985 as one of his five input hypothesis, people acquire second language if they obtain comprehensible input and their affective filters are low enough to allow the input in (Krashen, 2009). The affective filters itself refer to the barriers which block or filtrate the input in the learner's brain. It is a mental wall which hampered the learners' in acquiring the language. In other words, the learners with lower affective filters will allow more input into their language acquisition device than the learners with the high affective filters. Affective filters embraces motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety.

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Motivation

Gardner (1985) defines motivation as the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity. Motivation is the extent to which you make choices about goals to pursue and the effort you will devote to that pursuit (Brown, 2001). In other words, the learners' motivation is the desires and propulsion of the learners to make effort in acquiring the language. Krashen (2009) notes there are two motivations in language learning, integrative and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation makes the learners interested in the target language and willing to participate in using the target language. Instrumental motivation leads the learners to pay attention to target language because they only want to pass some examination, go overseas to study, travel or be promoted.

Self-confidence

The term self-confidence is the feeling of trust to own self, to the ability, power, and capability he had. Having a high self-confidence will result in a better language acquisition. Krashen (2009) claims language learners with self-confidence and a good self-image tend to get better result in their language learning. It means that those who have enough self-confidence and positive personal image succeed more. It is because self-confident people dare to adventure, to communicate in foreign language and can gain more. While those who lack self-confidence will lose the chances to practice their target language, for they are afraid of losing face and making mistakes.

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Anxiety

Anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system (Spielberger in Horwitz, 2001). MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) claim anxiety as the physiological responses in the form of apprehension which are experienced when the individual is not fully proficient to deal with the situation. In other words, anxiety refers to the feeling unrealistic fear or an uncomfortable situation of persons feeling about what might happen, usually associated with uneasiness, frustration, self doubt, apprehension, and worry. Anxiety is one of the affective filters which play important role in language learning. Cassady and Johnson (2001) found that higher levels of test anxiety were associated with significantly lower test scores. It means that high anxiety has been found to reduce student's performance on doing English tasks.

According to the function to the students, there are two types of anxiety; facilitating and debilitating anxiety (Ellis, 1994). The former anxiety promotes the students to make extra effort to fight the learning task. In contrary, the debilitating anxiety makes the learner avoid the source of anxiety and flee from the learning task. Ellis (1994) claims the low-anxiety state leads to facilitating anxiety while the high-anxiety has debilitating anxiety. From the occurrence of the anxious feeling, Izard (as cited in Tasnimi, 2009) differentiates anxiety into trait, state, and situation-specific anxiety. Trait anxiety refers to the students' part of personality to be anxious. State anxiety is the apprehension felt at the particular moment in time, while situational-specific anxiety refers to the anxiety to the specific events or situations.

Overcoming Students' Affective Factors

Robertson (2011) notes teachers should make the learning atmosphere in which students do both learning and enjoyment at the same time. They should not behave as a dictator but as a guide or facilitator inside the classroom. Teachers should involve themselves as their classmates and work as their group partner or mentor but not as a tester or judge. They should introduce more diversified teaching method, use vivid and humorous language to enlighten students, create a harmonious and light atmosphere for learning, and regularly introduce some culture and

background knowledge of the target language. If possible, teachers also can help students attend some social activities where they can use their target language, through which students can know their advantages and disadvantages, can know what they can do and what they cannot do, and then can have a clear idea of the future SLA. It is also very important to create more chances for students to practice in the classroom. The teacher needs to encourage students to make mistakes. As students appear to be acutely sensitive to fear of making mistakes, teachers should encourage students to have the confidence to make mistakes in order to acquire communication skills (Farzana, 2012). In addition, the teacher should provide the student with successful feeling. It is because feeling of success is the greatest motivation in any field. Teachers have to give the brightest student a chance to show his talents and avoid the slow student to have the feeling of defeat. For the best students, give them a challenge. For the slow students or isolated students, give them a chance to taste the joy of success by providing more support and assistance.

Research Methods

According to Lodico et al. (2010), case study research is a form of qualitative research that endeavors to discover meaning, to investigate process, to gain insight into and in-depth understanding of an individual, group, or situation. Furthermore, Cohen and Manion (in Bassey, 1999) stated that the case study researcher typically observes the characteristics of an individual unit to analyze intensively the multifarious phenomena of the unit with a view to establishing generalizations about the wider population to which that unit belongs. In other words, descriptive qualitative research is the research that aims to gain insight of an individual, group, technique, or situation by observing and analyzing intensively the characteristics of the unit researched. Thus, the qualitative approach in the form of case study is the appropriate design for the study describing the affective filter faced by English learners at suburb area in Jember.

Participants

The subjects of this study are the English learners who live at the suburb area in Jember. A total of 10 English learners responded to the invitation to become the participant of the study. From the total amount of the participants, 6 are female and 4 are male. The ages of the participants range from 14-15 years old and still in junior high school. They go to the same school and are taught with the same English teacher. The English teacher is also interviewed and becomes the source of the data for this study.

Data Collection Technique and Instrument

The interview is the only instrument used to get the data from the participants. Interview is a form of data collection in which questions are asked orally and the subject's responses are recorded (McMillan, 1992:132). He divides interview into three categories. They are structured interview, semi structured interview, and unstructured interview. Semi structured interview had been chosen to be applied in this study because it is flexible. It means that semi structured interview has key questions to be interviewed but the researcher can add other questions in the process. In other words, the key questions are just as the guide or main-line for the interview. In this study, the interview is conducted one on one to every participant and the teacher. Several questions relating to affective filters are asked to the students to gain the data. The interview will be conducted in Indonesian language in order to avoid misunderstanding between the interviewer and interviewee.

Data Collection Procedure

There are several phases in collecting the data of this study. First, the data about the affective filter will be collected from the participants. Each participant is introduced one by one and asked several questions related to the affective filter the students faced when learning English. Any information harvested from the interview is noted as the source of data. Then the data collected are analyzed and validated. The last phase is the conclusion is made from the data analysis result.

Data Analysis

First of all, the data from interview are transcribed and coded to make it easier to be interpreted and analyzed. The data then are evaluated to flush out what factors contributed to students high or low affective filter in the areas of motivation, anxiety and self-confidence. Data was grouped by concepts of affective filter and its sub-categories anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence. The primary data collected are analyzed based on Krashen's affective filter theory. The data from the interview with the English teacher is used as the supporting data to support the findings of the primary data. The last step, the brief conclusion can be made based on the data analysis.

Research Results and Discussion

This study aims on gathering the data about the affective filters faced by the students at suburb area in Jember. The questions asked to the participant during the interview are focused on revealing their motivation, self-esteem, and anxiety when learning English. According to the interview, this study notices that from 10 students

who are interviewed most of them (8 of 10 students) have low motivation in learning English. Only one student has high self-confidence while the rest of the participants do not believe in their own ability. And 9 of the participants show that they are anxious English learners.

Student's Motivation

From the interview done to 10 English language learners, finds out that 8 of 10 participants have low motivation in learning English. When asked about their reason of learning English, 2 of the interviewer, AS and MR, replied they are learning English because they want to be able to use English. They want to have the ability to communicate in English. These students connect learning English to their prosperity. Zull (2002) explains that when learning is related to students' life goals and personal identity motivation is "intrinsic" and stronger. They think that English is cool language, it can be found everywhere. Starting from the electronic device and tools to the movies in the television used English. Moreover, in their opinion people who can communicate in English especially speaking English fluently is very cool. In their eye, the individual with the ability to use English is the reflection of the modern person. In contrary, 1 other the participants study English only because of English is compulsory subject for the junior high school students. They added that if they do not learning English at school, the teacher will not let them continue to the higher class. The other 6 interviewer told their reason is because they do not want to fail in English test, the semester test and also the national examination. Their reason is simply because English is one of the requirement subjects in national examination. It means that they need to pass the English test in national examination if they want to graduate from this school. Furiously, the rest of the participants said that his only motivation in learning English is because of the fear of the punishment from the teacher. Actually, he does not want to join the English class, but the teacher will give him punishment for this. Thus, he is joining the English class even if he does not really want to do it.

From the interview with the English teacher reveals that AS and MR, who learn English for communication, are more motivated in the class. They are more active and enthusiast in English learning process than the other students in class.

Student's Self-confidence

As the result of the interview, only 1 of 10 participants in this study has high self-confidence. One of the students interviewed, AS, shows high self-confident in this study. When she asked whether she is afraid or not while learning English, she replied "*kalo sudah belajar kenapa harus takut, kan sudah siap-siap dari rumah*". From AS answer, we can see that she is the student who believes in her own ability. She believes in herself and builds her self-esteem by studying from home for the learning preparation. The teacher also said that AS has high self-confidence compared to her class mates. When the teacher asked for the volunteer to do the task or give example in front of the class, AS is never hesitant to raise her hand as a gesture that she wants to be the volunteer. The other students feel afraid if they cannot do their best in the class.

Student's Anxiety

Moreover, this interview also leads to the fact that 9 of the participants in this study are anxious English learners. When the students are asked about their feeling of apprehension when learning English, only a single students (AS) who does not feel afraid while the other students are feeling afraid in learning English. Three of the anxious students are feeling anxious because of they are afraid in making mistakes when answering the teacher questions or mispronounce the words when perform in front of the class. The other six anxious students are afraid of making fun of them self in front of their class mates. They are hesitant to speak up even when the opportunity is rising. It can be done because of the brain which is necessary for learning is shutting down because of the anxious feeling. It is in line with Zull (2002) and Krashen (1988), physically when a person is anxious or fearful, the amygdale releases adrenaline in the brain which shuts down parts of the brain which are necessary for learning. In other words, the students are afraid to be asked and/or to do performance in front of their class mates, especially when they are asked to do speaking performance. They are reluctant of making any mistakes or making fun of them self and become the "laugher object" for their class mates.

Conclusions and recommendations

Based on the finding and discussion, there are 8 of 10 students have low motivation. For most of them learning English is only about passing the English test and following the rule of the curriculum and teacher. While in the term of self-esteem is not better. Only one from ten students who has high self-confidence in learning English while the others are do not believe in their own ability in learning English. The condition is not better for the anxiety term, from 10 students interviewed there is also only one students who has low anxiety, the rest of them are anxious English learners.

From the interview with the English teacher, reveals that students with high motivation are more active and enthusiast in learning English. The students with high self-confidence are seen more active and willing to

communicate with the others. This condition is also seen from the students with low anxiety state, they seem to be more active and willing to communicate. They found not hesitate in expressing they idea and answering teacher's questions. The students with low affective filter, high motivation and self-esteem and low anxiety, seem to be more active, enthusiast, and willing to communicate, as well as unhesitant to express their idea and answer teacher's question. This should lead the students to learn English easily and better.

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