

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

**TRANSFORMING ANXIETY INTO MOTIVATION: A QUALITATIVE
STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' ENGLISH LEARNING
BEYOND THE CLASSROOM AT MAN 1 MAJENE**



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**TRANSFORMING ANXIETY INTO MOTIVATION: A QUALITATIVE STUDY
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CLASSROOM AT MAN 1 MAJENE**

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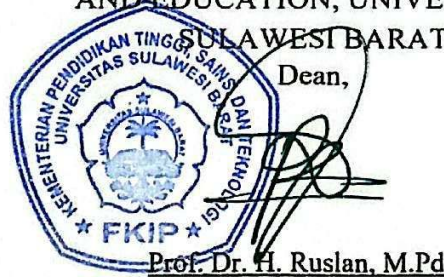
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ABSTRAK

KHAERUNNISA. H0121303. Mengubah Kecemasan Menjadi Motivasi: Studi Kualitatif tentang Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Siswa SMA di Luar Kelas di MAN 1 Majene. Dr. Reski, S.S., M.Hum. dan Hustiana, S.Pd., M.Pd., di Departemen Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris. **Skripsi, Majene: Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Sulawesi Barat, 2025.**

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi bagaimana siswa MAN 1 Majene mengalami kecemasan dalam belajar bahasa Inggris di luar kelas dan proses transformasi kecemasan menjadi motivasi belajar. Penelitian ini juga menganalisis peran keterlibatan mereka dalam mata pelajaran tambahan, kegiatan ekstrakurikuler, dan pembelajaran mandiri. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologi kualitatif, penelitian ini melibatkan lima siswa MAN 1 Majene sebagai partisipan yang setara dalam wawancara dan observasi. Wawancara mendalam dianalisis menggunakan teori motivasi Ryan & Deci (2017), sementara observasi mengikuti kerangka kerja siklus belajar eksperiensial Kolb (1984). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa mengalami kecemasan dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, ditandai dengan rasa takut melakukan kesalahan, kekhawatiran penilaian negatif, dan perasaan rendah diri jika dibandingkan dengan teman-temannya. Akan tetapi, kecemasan ini tidak bersifat statis. Siswa mengembangkan strategi coping seperti berbagi cerita dengan teman, mengatur pernapasan, menulis untuk menenangkan diri, atau mencoba untuk tetap tenang agar tetap terlibat dalam pembelajaran. Keterlibatan yang berkelanjutan ini memungkinkan siswa untuk mendapatkan keberhasilan kecil yang secara bertahap membangun kepercayaan diri mereka. Siswa lebih memilih belajar mandiri melalui media seperti video *YouTube*, *game online*, dan aplikasi seperti *Duolingo* memberikan ruang belajar fleksibel dan aman, memungkinkan siswa untuk berlatih sesuai dengan minat dan kemampuan mereka tanpa tekanan penilaian langsung. Selain itu, dukungan sosial dari teman, guru, dan keluarga memperkuat rasa saling memiliki dan mendukung, membantu siswa menginterpretasikan kecemasan sebagai bagian dari proses belajar, bukan sebagai hambatan. Dengan demikian, kecemasan siswa bukanlah penghalang permanen tetapi dapat diubah menjadi motivasi melalui kombinasi strategi coping, pengalaman belajar yang positif, otonomi dalam belajar mandiri, dan dukungan sosial.

Kata Kunci: Kecemasan, Transformasi, Motivasi, Pembelajaran Mandiri, Kegiatan Ekstrakurikuler.

ABSTRACT

KHAERUNNISA. H0121303. Transforming Anxiety into Motivation: A Qualitative Study of High School Students' English Learning Beyond the Classroom at MAN 1 Majene. Dr. Reski, S.S., M.Hum., and Hustiana, S.Pd., M.Pd., at the English Education Department. **Thesis, Majene: Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Sulawesi Barat, 2025.**

This study aims to identify how students at MAN 1 Majene experience anxiety in learning English outside of class and the process by which this anxiety transforms into learning motivation. The study also analyzes the role of their involvement in additional subjects, extracurricular activities, and independent learning. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, this study involved five students at MAN 1 Majene as equal participants in interviews and observations. In-depth interviews were analyzed using Ryan & Deci's (2017) motivation theory, while observations followed Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle framework. The results of the study show that students experience anxiety in English language learning, characterized by a fear of making mistakes, concerns about negative assessment, and feelings of inferiority when compared to their peers. However, this anxiety is not static. Students develop coping strategies such as sharing stories with friends, regulating their breathing, writing to calm themselves, or trying to stay calm in order to remain engaged in learning. This sustained engagement allows students to achieve small successes that gradually build their confidence. Students prefer independent learning through media such as *YouTube* videos, video games, and apps such as *Duolingo* provides a flexible and safe learning space, allowing students to practice according to their interests and abilities without the pressure of direct assessment. In addition, social support from peers, teachers, and family reinforces a sense of belonging and support, helping students interpret anxiety as part of the learning process, not as an obstacle. Thus, student anxiety is not a permanent barrier but can be transformed into motivation through a combination of coping strategies, positive learning experiences, autonomy in independent learning, and social support.

Keywords: Anxiety, Transformation, Motivation, Independent Learning, Extracurricular Activities.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Anxiety is described as a sensation of unease with an uncertain outcome. In the context of education, anxiety is related to various forms of threats, including symbolic threats that arise when students struggle to connect new information with their prior knowledge. Research indicates that students learning English as a foreign language often experience anxiety levels that can hinder their motivation and performance, with studies showing that up to 40% of learners report feeling anxious in language classes. In addition, the threat of uncertainty can arise due to perceptions of how others perceive such difficulties in an academic context. Anticipatory threats are also a factor, especially for students from minority groups who face stereotypical pressures in the educational environment. (Paolini, 2021). However, anxiety is a condition in which the body detects danger in its surroundings. Our instincts keep us from doing unsafe things like walking in front of cars. It was problematic if this instinct is engaged in benign conditions, creating discomfort and worry. This can cause issues in daily life. Anxiety is frequently linked with other mental health issues. Adrenaline helps us escape or fight back. This occurs when the risk is real, or when we believe the danger exists when it does not. It serves as both the body's alarm and survival mechanism. This mechanism is so effective that it frequently occurs when it is not required, when the danger is imagined rather than genuine. Theoretically, there must be an explanation between the dependent and independent variables. There must be explanations if there are other variables, such as moderator variables and intervening variables (NHS Oxford, 2020).

The definition above provides a general overview of anxiety. The discussion was now focused on anxiety in the educational context. According to Grimes & Gardner (2023), anxiety in education is associated with various forms of threats, including symbolic threats that arise when students struggle to connect new information with their prior knowledge. This highlights the urgent need to address these issues, as many students face significant challenges in their learning environments.

Various studies have identified multiple sources of anxiety, including speaking activities, error correction, and communication with native speakers (Jugo, 2020). Additionally, students' educational backgrounds and unfamiliar teaching methodologies contribute to increased anxiety during the learning process. This discrepancy between previous learning experiences and new teaching approaches can create uncertainty and difficulties in understanding the material. The mismatch between previous learning experiences and the teaching approaches applied in new environments can lead to uncertainty and difficulties in understanding the material. Furthermore, a lack of understanding of the learning strategies employed by instructors can exacerbate students' perceptions of their abilities, thereby increasing psychological pressure that negatively impacts their motivation and academic outcomes. This situation underscores the need for effective teaching methods that can transform anxiety into motivation. Research indicates that language anxiety negatively correlates with English proficiency, with speaking anxiety being a significant predictor (Jugo, 2020).

Based on initial observations and informal interviews with several students and teachers at MAN 1 Majene, it was found that many students experienced significant anxiety while learning English. This anxiety comes in many forms, such as fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence in speaking, and fear of negative judgments from friends or teachers. The impact of this anxiety is evident in the low participation of students in the classroom, such as being reluctant to answer the teacher's questions, avoiding group discussions, or even not completing English assignments optimally.

In addition, this anxiety also affects students' motivation to learn. Many students feel pressured and lose interest in continuing to develop their English skills. Although the school has provided adequate learning facilities and programs, such as English extracurricular activities, student participation in such activities is still limited. This shows that the anxiety experienced by students has not been fully resolved, and they have not made the most of opportunities for learning outside the classroom.

Furthermore, there has been no research that specifically addresses how students at MAN 1 Majene overcome their anxiety in learning English, primarily through

extracurricular activities such as extracurricular courses, extracurriculars, or independent learning. These activities have great potential to help students turn anxiety into motivation to learn. Therefore, it is crucial to identify the factors that influence students' anxiety as well as explore how their experience in activities outside the classroom can be a means to improve motivation and English language skills.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the role of student involvement in English language course activities, extracurriculars, and independent learning in transforming anxiety into learning motivation. Using a qualitative approach, this study analyzes students' experiences in various learning contexts outside the formal classroom as well as their impact on improving English language skills. MAN 1 Majene was chosen as the research locus given the relevance of its context to the focus of this study.

The researcher's personal experience was also one of the triggers in designing this research. During the third semester, when taking the Intermediate Grammar course, the researcher encountered difficulty understanding the material, necessitating remedial sessions twice. This situation triggered feelings of anxiety, disappointment, and lack of confidence. However, through the advice of the instructor at the English course institution that was followed at that time, the researcher decided to join the dormitory program as an effort to improve her understanding of grammar. After attending the intensive program for one month, the researcher felt an increase in ability and stronger motivation to learn. From this experience, the researcher began to realize that anxiety in learning can turn into positive motivation if supported by the right learning environment and strategies. This prompted the researcher to explore further the topic of "Transforming Anxiety into Motivation" in the context of secondary school students.

B. Problem Identification

Based on initial observations and brief interviews with related teachers at MAN 1 Majene, it was found that many students experienced significant anxiety when learning English. This anxiety appears in various forms, including:

1. Fear of making mistakes in the use of English.
2. Lack of confidence in speaking English in front of friends and teachers.
3. Concerns about negative assessments from the surrounding environment.

C. Research Focus

The focus of this research is to explore the relationship between the anxiety that students experience in learning English and their participation in activities outside of the classroom, as well as how involvement in such activities can transform anxiety into motivation to learn. This research analyzed the role of activities outside the school, such as supplemental English courses, extracurriculars, and self-paced learning, in helping students cope with anxiety and increase their motivation. Using a qualitative approach, this study delved deep into the experiences of MAN 1 Majene students, understanding how they deal with anxiety, and identifying strategies used to turn such anxiety into positive impulses in English language learning.

Research Focus:

1. How can students at MAN 1 Majene transform their anxiety in learning English into motivation?
2. How does student involvement in supplemental English courses, extracurricular programs, and independent learning contribute to transforming their anxiety into motivation for learning English?

D. Research Objective

The objectives of this research are:

1. To identify and understand how MAN 1 Majene students experience anxiety in learning English outside the classroom and the process of transforming this anxiety into learning motivation.
2. To analyze the role of student involvement in English courses, extracurricular programs, and independent learning in helping them transform anxiety into motivation to learn English.

E. Research Benefits

This research is expected to provide the following benefits:

1. Theoretical Benefits

To add insight and understanding to the relationship between anxiety, motivation, and student engagement in the context of English language learning, as well as to contribute to the existing literature on anxiety in language learning.

2. Practical Benefits

Provide recommendations for teachers and educators on strategies that can be implemented to help students overcome their anxiety and increase motivation to learn through activities outside of the classroom.

3. Policy Benefits

Provide helpful information for education policymakers in designing programs and policies that support the development of students' English language skills, especially for those who experience learning anxiety.

4. Benefits for Students

Provide students with an understanding of how to manage their anxiety and leverage experiences outside of the classroom to improve their motivation and English language skills.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

Based on the results of research on the transformation of anxiety into motivation among students at MAN 1 Majene in learning English outside the classroom, several conclusions can be drawn, namely the following:

1. Anxiety experienced by students is not static or permanent, but dynamic and continuously negotiated. At the beginning, students often feel fear, worry, and insecurity. Especially when they compare their abilities with peers who appear more fluent. However, this anxiety does not always hinder learning. Through emotional regulation strategies such as taking deep breaths, writing to calm the mind, or seeking emotional support from peers, students are able to stay engaged in learning activities even when they feel uncomfortable. This ongoing engagement allows students to gradually build familiarity and self-confidence. Small achievements, such as successfully answering a question or pronouncing a word correctly, function as emotional reinforcement that strengthens their sense of ability. In this way, anxiety can be gradually reframed into motivation. Thus, the transformation is not instantaneous, but occurs through the process of managing emotions, staying involved in learning despite discomfort, and gradually developing self-belief.
2. Independent learning activities outside the classroom play a key role in sustaining this transformation. Students often learn English through activities such as watching *YouTube* videos, using *Duolingo*, playing English-language video games, and recording new vocabulary. These activities provide a comfortable and independent learning environment where students can repeat, experiment, and tailor their learning to their interests. This space reduces pressure and supports emotional security, which helps lower anxiety. More importantly, these independent learning experiences encourage autonomy, allowing students to take control of how they learn and what strategies they use. Students who are able to manage their own learning process tend to show greater persistence and enthusiasm, even when they still experience anxiety.

Therefore, a self-directed learning environment provides a context in which anxiety can be transformed into motivation, as students feel capable and responsible for their own progress.

B. Suggestion

Based on the results of this study, some suggestions that can be given are as follows:

1. For Students

Students are advised to continue to develop independent learning by utilizing various media that suit their interests, such as digital applications, videos, and language games. In this way, students can reduce anxiety and strengthen the intrinsic motivation in learning English.

2. For Teachers

Teachers are expected to provide more consistent emotional and social support, for example through positive feedback and a pleasant classroom atmosphere. Teachers can also facilitate students with learning strategies that foster independence, so that students' anxiety is not only minimized but also channeled into motivation.

3. For Schools

Schools should provide more space and opportunities for students to access non-formal learning media, both through extracurricular activities and independent learning facilities. This will enrich the student's learning experience outside of the formal classroom.

4. For the Next Researcher

This study involved only five students as participants and focused on independent learning outside the classroom. In addition, data on outside-class learning were mostly obtained through interviews and video documentation, rather than through direct observation in natural situations. Therefore, further research could involve a larger number of participants with varying backgrounds in English language proficiency to obtain a more diverse picture of anxiety transformation.

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