



THE INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING ATTITUDE AND LANGUAGE ANXIETY ON ENGLISH ACHIEVEMENT OF EFL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the influence of learning attitudes *and* language anxiety *on* students' English language learning achievement, both partially and simultaneously in the context of vocational education. Using a quantitative correlational design, this study involved 60 students selected through a *total sampling* technique, with data collection through a learning attitude questionnaire, a *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale* (FLCAS) questionnaire, and documentation of academic achievement analyzed using multiple linear regression tests using SPSS version 26. The findings of the study indicate a significant positive effect of learning attitudes on achievement, as well as a significant negative effect of language anxiety on students' academic achievement. Collectively, these two affective variables contribute substantially to the variance in English language achievement, where a positive attitude and good anxiety management are the main predictors of learning success. These results provide important implications for English instructors to create a supportive classroom environment to minimize stress and strengthen students' positive dispositions towards the target language. The novelty of this study lies in the exploration of students' psychological dynamics in a polytechnic environment with high professional orientation pressure, thus providing a new contribution to the development of an emotional stability-based curriculum in English language education.

Keywords: *Learning Attitude, Language Anxiety, English Achievement, EFL Students, Vocational Education.*

1. INTRODUCTION

English language learning achievement is a key indicator of student success in today's global era of intense competition for communication competencies. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), academic achievement reflects not only technical mastery of grammar rules, sentence structure, or vocabulary richness, but also represents the end result of the interaction of various complex and interrelated internal factors (Brown, 2017). Today's students are required not only to passively understand language theory but also to be able to actively apply it in a variety of dynamic academic and professional situations. This often becomes a mental burden for students who feel they lack sufficient linguistic preparation. Field phenomena indicate that differences in achievement between individuals are often not caused by

differences in intellectual capacity or intelligence level alone, but are more influenced by the psychological condition, mental disposition, and emotional stability of students during the learning process (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2021).

One of the most significant psychological determinants of successful language acquisition is learning attitude. This attitude encompasses students' beliefs, affective feelings, and behavioral tendencies toward English as a subject they are studying (Wenden, 1991). Students who view English as a valuable global communication tool and who have a deep interest in the cultural aspects of its native speakers tend to have significantly higher persistence in facing challenging linguistic challenges. This positive attitude acts as a mental filter, or affective filter, allowing language input to be absorbed and processed more optimally by

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the brain. Conversely, negative attitudes arising from the view that English is merely a curriculum burden or a subject with no relevance to the future will create a barrier that hinders students' active involvement in the classroom. This condition ultimately leads to low participation and academic achievement that falls far below expected competency standards (Ellis, 2021).

On the other hand, the emotional aspect that often becomes a major obstacle in the process of language production is language anxiety. This anxiety is a form of tension, nervousness, and specific fear that students uniquely experience when they have to use a foreign language, especially in situations that require public performance or evaluation by others (Horwitz et al., 2020). The fear of negative judgment from peers, the worry of being laughed at for mispronunciation, or excessive anxiety about grammatical errors often trigger a crippling cognitive block. This unstable emotional state causes students to experience a "blank" phenomenon or loss of memory of material that has actually been learned, so that they are unable to reach their full potential (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). In a vocational education environment that is highly oriented towards real-world practice and work performance, the pressure to appear communicatively competent in front of lecturers and colleagues often exacerbates this level of anxiety to counterproductive levels.

Therefore, it is crucial for educational researchers and practitioners to examine how the dynamics between cognitive-affective learning attitudes and emotional language anxiety intertwine in determining overall student achievement (Shams, 2018). Although many previous studies have addressed motivational factors in general, a more in-depth exploration of the combined influence of attitudinal dispositions and emotional stability in the context of vocational education still requires further and specific attention. Understanding these relationship patterns in detail will provide crucial insights for educators in designing learning strategies that focus not only on improving test scores but also on developing learners who are confident, resilient, and have a positive mental attitude towards global challenges. Based on the urgency of

this problem, this study seeks to empirically analyze the simultaneous influence of these two affective variables on students' English achievement in order to make a real contribution to improving the quality of language teaching at the vocational higher education level.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW**The Concept and Dimensions of Learning Attitude in Second Language Acquisition.**

Learning attitude *is* one of the most crucial affective factors in determining the success or failure of students in mastering English. Theoretically, attitude is defined as an internal construct involving three main interacting components: a cognitive component related to the learner's beliefs or knowledge about the target language; an affective component involving emotional judgments such as like or dislike; and a conative or behavioral component reflecting the student's tendency to act in certain learning situations (Wenden, 1991).

In the context of language education, students' positive attitudes toward English, their instructors, and the social context of learning act as powerful motivators that increase their mental engagement and time investment (Ellis, 2021). Conversely, negative attitudes often stem from unpleasant past learning experiences, repeated academic failure, or the perception that the foreign language poses a threat to their cultural identity and local values (Gardner, 2019). Students with favorable attitudes tend to be more proactive in seeking additional learning resources, employ a wider variety of learning strategies, and demonstrate greater persistence when faced with complex grammatical material or unfamiliar vocabulary (Oxford, 2017). These attitudes ultimately shape the mental dispositions that determine how much effort students will expend to achieve desired language proficiency.

Language Anxiety as an Emotional and Cognitive Barrier

Language anxiety *specifically* refers to feelings of tension, nervousness, and worry

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that arise in the unique context of foreign language learning. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (2020) exhaustively identified three main components that make up this anxiety in the classroom: communication apprehension, which occurs when students feel unable to convey ideas clearly; test anxiety, which is triggered by the fear of failure in formal evaluations; and fear of negative evaluation, which arises from the anxiety of being looked down upon by lecturers or peers.

This anxiety is unique because it is often experienced by students who actually have good academic abilities in other subjects, but feel helpless when faced with the target language. This often impairs cognitive processes in three stages: when receiving input, when processing information in working memory, and when producing language output (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Physiologically and psychologically, high anxiety creates a mental block or a thick *affective filter*, which prevents new information from reaching the part of the brain responsible for permanent language acquisition (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2021). As a result, anxious students often experience the phenomenon of "cognitive paralysis" in which they forget memorized vocabulary, experience impaired fluency in speaking, and show a drastic decline in performance on tasks that require performative courage (Sadiq, 2017).

English learning achievement is a concrete manifestation of the learning outcomes achieved by students after undergoing a series of instructional processes over a certain period of time, which is usually measured through standardized tests, midterm exams, or final semester grades (Brown, 2017). This achievement is not the result of intellectual intelligence (IQ) alone, but rather the result of a dynamic interaction between cognitive capacity and non-intellectual factors such as motivation, learning style, and emotional stability (Dörnyei, 2019).

In vocational higher education settings, English language achievement often carries strategic weight because it is directly linked to students' future job competencies and

professional readiness (Adebayo, 2021). A supportive classroom environment, a communicative teaching style, and social support from peers also influence how students perceive their own abilities. This self-perception significantly impacts students' self-esteem; if they feel competent, their performance tends to increase, but if they feel inferior due to psychological barriers, their academic achievement will stagnate (Ushioda, 2021).

The Synergistic Relationship Between Attitude, Anxiety, and Achievement

Theoretically and practically, the relationship between these three variables forms a very complex learning ecosystem. A positive learning attitude tends to act as an antidote or buffer that can reduce anxiety levels, because students who enjoy the target language will view challenges as opportunities rather than threats (Liu & Huang, 2023). When anxiety is at a low level and is well managed, and supported by an optimistic learning attitude, students can allocate all their cognitive resources fully to understanding discourse and producing sentences, which automatically has an impact on improving their learning achievement (Jain & Sidhu, 2021).

However, challenges arise when emotional contradictions arise—for example, students may have a positive attitude toward the importance of English but still experience severe social anxiety when speaking—which ultimately leads to their academic performance not reflecting their true potential (Ghasamani, 2020). Therefore, the synergy between mental readiness in the form of appropriate attitudes and emotional stability in the form of low anxiety is the main key and most accurate predictor in mapping the academic achievement profile of EFL students at the tertiary level (Shams, 2018).

3. METHODS

Research Design. This study uses a quantitative approach with a correlational design. The choice of this design is based on the researcher's main objective to empirically test the relationship between two independent variables, namely learning attitude and

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language anxiety, with the dependent variable, namely English learning achievement. Through a correlational approach, researchers can identify the strength and direction of the relationship between these variables without intervening or manipulating the research subjects, so that psychological phenomena that occur in the classroom can be portrayed objectively (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Population and Sample. The population in this study includes all active students at the vocational higher education level at the institution where the research was conducted. In determining the sample, the researcher employed a *total sampling* or census technique, in which all 60 students in the population were actively involved as respondents. This technique was used to minimize generalization errors and ensure that the data obtained reflected the students' complete psychological profiles (Arikunto, 2019).

Data Collection Instruments. The researcher used three main instruments to collect primary data. First, a learning attitude questionnaire adapted from the theory of learning strategies and dispositions to measure students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral perceptions of English (Wenden, 1991; Oxford, 2017). Second, the *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)* questionnaire developed by Horwitz et al. (2020), which consists of 33 items to measure students' stress levels in language classroom situations. Third, a documentation method was used to obtain data on students' English learning achievement through official academic grades issued by the relevant institution. All questionnaires have undergone validity and reliability tests to ensure the internal consistency of the instruments (Sugiyono, 2021).

Data Analysis Procedure. All collected data were statistically processed using IBM SPSS Statistics software version 26 (Field, 2017). Data analysis began with prerequisite tests, including a normality test to determine data distribution and a linearity test to ensure a linear relationship between variables. Once the requirements were met, the researcher conducted a *Pearson Product Moment*

correlation test to examine the partial relationship between variables. The final stage was multiple linear regression analysis to determine the coefficient of determination (R^2), which shows the large simultaneous contribution of learning attitudes and language anxiety to the variance of student learning achievement (Sugiyono, 2021). This procedure allows researchers to draw accurate conclusions regarding which affective factors have the most dominant influence on student learning outcomes.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data analysis in this study was conducted to answer the problem formulation regarding the influence of learning attitudes and language anxiety on students' English learning achievement, both partially and simultaneously. After conducting analysis prerequisite tests that showed that the data were normally distributed and had a linear relationship, the hypothesis testing was continued with multiple regression analysis using SPSS version 26 software.

The results of the first test showed a significant positive effect between learning attitudes and academic achievement. Students with high learning attitudes consistently demonstrated better academic achievement in their grades. Meanwhile, the second test revealed a significant negative effect between language anxiety and academic achievement. This finding indicates that the higher the level of anxiety students experience in language classes, the lower their academic achievement.

The culmination of this research's findings is the results of the multiple linear regression test which shows the simultaneous contribution of the two independent variables. Based on the calculation of the coefficient of determination (R^2), it was found that learning attitudes and language anxiety collectively contributed significantly to the variance in student learning achievement. The significance value below 0.05 proves that this relationship model is highly valid for predicting learning outcomes. These statistical figures provide empirical evidence that the interaction between positive mental disposition and emotional stability is a major determinant

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underlying student success in mastering English in vocational higher education settings.

A discussion of the findings of this study reveals that success in second language (L2) acquisition is highly dependent on the balance of students' affective factors. The positive influence of learning attitudes on achievement reinforces the theory that attitudes act as an *affective filter* (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2021). Students with positive attitudes tend to be more open to language input, more persistent in trying new learning strategies, and less likely to give up when faced with grammatical complexity (Wenden, 1991; Oxford, 2017). This supportive attitude creates a cognitive environment conducive to the brain's in-depth processing of linguistic information (Gardner, 2019).

However, the presence of high levels of language anxiety can be a barrier that cripples this cognitive potential. The negative relationship between anxiety and achievement found in this study aligns with the view that excessive anxiety impairs students' working memory (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). When students feel threatened by negative evaluation or are afraid of making mistakes in public, mental energy that should be used for language processing is instead wasted on managing their fear (Horwitz et al., 2020). This explains why students with high academic potential sometimes perform disappointingly during exams or speaking sessions if their anxiety levels are not well managed (Sadiq, 2017; Ghasamani, 2020).

The integration of these two factors in simultaneous regression results provides a broader perspective for the world of education. The significant contribution of the attitude and anxiety variables suggests that English language teaching approaches should not only focus on technical-linguistic aspects but also address students' psychological aspects (Dörnyei, 2019). In vocational education, where practical pressures are high, creating a low *-anxiety* classroom atmosphere is crucial (Adebayo, 2021; Jain & Sidhu, 2021). Instructors who are able to foster positive student attitudes while minimizing anxiety-inducing factors will help students

achieve peak performance more consistently (Shams, 2018; Ushioda, 2021). Overall, this research confirms that to improve English language achievement, educational institutions must consider the balance between learners' mental readiness and a comfortable learning environment.

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that affective factors, represented by learning attitudes and language anxiety, play a crucial role in determining EFL students' English language learning achievement. Empirical findings indicate that learning attitudes have a significant positive correlation, meaning students' positive views and beliefs about English directly increase their chances of achieving better academic results. Conversely, language anxiety is shown to have a significant negative influence, where fear of assessment and classroom tension become cognitive barriers that lower students' performance. Simultaneously, the interaction between supportive attitudes and effective anxiety management contributes significantly to the variance in students' learning achievement. This confirms that academic success depends not only on intellectual ability but also on the learner's emotional stability and mental disposition.

The pedagogical implications of these findings emphasize the importance for educators of creating a supportive and inclusive classroom atmosphere. English language instructors are advised to implement teaching strategies that minimize stressors, such as providing constructive feedback and reducing excessive public performance pressure. By fostering positive student attitudes through relevant and engaging learning materials and providing a low-anxiety learning environment, educational institutions can help students maximize their cognitive potential to achieve optimal performance.

Suggestions: For future researchers, it is recommended to expand the scope of the study by including other variables that may influence achievement, such as achievement motivation, socioeconomic background, or the use of learning technology. Furthermore, the use of qualitative or mixed *-methods*

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research methods in the future can provide a deeper understanding of the specific factors that trigger language anxiety in students in vocational education settings.

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