

# Negative Anxiety Reduction through Communicative English Teaching Material

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**Abstract** – The research was intended to investigate the students' negative anxiety in learning English language by developed communicative English teaching material. Anxiety plays an important role in foreign language students' classroom performance. It determines students' success or failure in foreign language classes. Therefore students' anxiety will influence negatively to students' achievement in language learning. It is essential to place the learner at the centre of your teaching endeavors, and structure learning environments and activities to help learners construct knowledge rather than just absorb it. The study is an educational research and development or R&D (Borg and Gall, 1983), which aims at developing communicative English teaching material to reducing student's anxiety in performance. From the data, it is known that at first most of the students felt anxious during the language class but then after the treatment by using the teaching material developed, the students' anxiety is getting lower. The findings show that the students were more active because they were ready to prepare and to recall their background knowledge. They were sharing in pairs and with friends in bigger groups to present and to discuss their result of performance. The students agreed if the teacher should apply the communicative English teaching material. According to the ordinal level determined for test anxiety, 36 (14.5%) students had low anxiety, 91 (36.7%) students had moderate anxiety, 96 (38.7%) students had high anxiety, and 25 (10.1%) students had very high anxiety in test anxiety.

**Keywords** – Anxiety, Communicative, Achievement, Language Learning, Teaching Material.

## I. INTRODUCTION

English is an international language that functions as a medium for communication among people in the world both spoken and written. To communicate is to understand and express information, thought, feeling, and to develop science, technology, and culture. English lesson for LPK students aims to develop the four basic skills namely listening, speaking, reading and writing in order to be able to access the knowledge by mastering English because they are prepared to get a job both in national and international companies. One factor that obviously influences the success and failure in learning and teaching foreign language, such as English, is anxiety. Anxiety plays an important role in foreign language students' classroom performance. It determines students' success or failure in foreign language classes. Therefore students' anxiety will influence negatively to students' achievement in language learning. This problem needs to be handled by the educators. One way in dealing with the students' difficulties to increase their achievement is by developing the communicative English teaching material. Killen (2007) said that a student centered learning where the students are given the freedom to be active socially in constructing the knowledge, attitude and behavior and the teacher is as facilitator and manager in learning process is essential to place the learner at the centre of teaching endeavors, and structure learning environments and activities to help learners construct knowledge rather than just absorb it. Learning is social process in which learning is interaction between individual and individual, among individual and group, and also among group and groups. Suprijono (2011) stated that interaction with others can open the chance for students to evaluate and fix their understanding when they face other people's opinion and when they participate in finding the understanding <sup>[2]</sup>. More, Rachmand (2004), Horwitz (1991) and Emanuel (2000) analyzed that

when feeling anxious, someone has difficulty in identifying the cause of the tension; the emotion can be puzzling for the person experiencing it. In its purest form, anxiety is abstract and unpleasant. It is difficult to predict when it starts and finishes and it lacks clear borders. It is an unpleasant and unsettling feeling. It is pointed out that the responses that are showed by someone who feels anxious are physical responses, psychological responses and behavioral responses. Foreign language anxiety is “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process, it may arise from self-doubt, frustration, and perceived (or fear of) failure”, as it was mentioned by Elkhafafi (2005). This sentence describes that the particular anxiety is an uncomfortable and tense feeling arising from the student’s self when the second or foreign language is being learned in the class, which is caused by his hesitancy, fear of failure and frustration. Most teachers are familiar with test anxiety and public-speaking anxiety that happens to the students during language learning process in the classroom. To reduce the students’ language learning anxiety, the cooperative efforts of both teacher and students are required. Teacher must help students to understand why the students become anxious and offer them strategies for coping with anxiety. Teacher must listen to the students when they offer their reactions to language learning. Tsiplakides and Keramida (2009) examined that teacher’s openness of mind and closeness to the students will help the students to cope the student’s foreign language anxiety and it is expected to be able to create the unstressed atmosphere in the classroom. Classroom interventions to reduce foreign language speaking anxiety can be: creating project work, establishing a learning community and a supportive classroom atmosphere. Worde (2003) suggests that an unstressful classroom atmosphere can reduce students’ anxiety and it is related to how the teacher conducted the class. The students’ language anxiety will decrease when the teacher is appropriate in determining the learning model to make the class interesting.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

This study is developing a model of communicative ESP learning material for the students at LPK in Semarang. Sukmadinata (2005) said that based on the object, namely the developing of teaching materials that are closely related to the learning process, this study includes educational research. More, the essence of the activity of developing materials based on the strengths and weaknesses of existing materials and relevant scientific principles as an effort to produce superior teaching materials and in accordance with the context of the wearer, the study is categorized into research development or research and development. Borg and Gall (1983) and Gall, et al. (2007) classifies such research as educational research and development or R and D which is defined as a process used to develop and validate educational products. More, Gall, et all (2007) said that a research model for developing and checking ready-made products in schools is ready for operational use in the school.

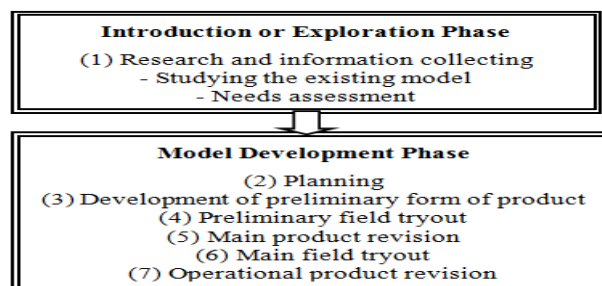


Fig. 1. The research procedure of this study.

The explanation of the research procedure is as follows: (1) Exploration Phase. This exploration stage involved the teacher, the students, the director, and the stakeholders of LPK education in Semarang as research subject which was determined purposively, as done by MacMillan (2001). The activity was done by doing interviews, classroom observation, and document analysis. The design and the use of the material should be viewed by its need analysis as requirements of starting point in identifying texts and activities, (2) Development Phase. The development stage was implemented by adapting the action research procedure to improve the quality of the ESP learning material. The purpose of action research is to bring about the improvement in social life as in the educational context. Thus, the improving of the developed material was really needed. The design and use of vocational English materials offered the evidence on how the social-semiotic theory can contribute to ESP materials development and instructions, (2) Testing Phase. This experiment was conducted by using Pretest-Posttest Control Group Design (MacMillan, 2001) whether teachers play the main role in testing the designed material which can be the stimulated-recall for the students.

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Exploration Phase

In this exploration phase, the students' anxiety level in English as a foreign language was computed to find out the impact the three components had on the students of LPK in Semarang. The results are reported in table 1 below.

Table 1. Level of foreign language anxiety of students' foreign language.

	Score	N
Overall Anxiety	74.7	248
Communication Apprehension	25	248
Fear of Negative Evaluation	25	248
Test Anxiety	24.6	248

As the score for overall anxiety was between 74.26 and 87.75 according to the ordinal level determined, it could be concluded that the level of students' anxiety defined was high level anxiety. Communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation were also defined as high level anxiety, while test anxiety was defined as moderate level anxiety.

#### B. Developing Phase

In model development phase, the first meeting showed the lowest rating scores: 60 for discussion and 60 for cooperative attitude, while the last meeting showed the highest rating: 90 for discussion and 100 for cooperative attitude. The scores were the result of evaluation and discussion between the English teacher and the researcher. The scores for discussion and cooperative attitude in development phase can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. Scores for discussion and cooperative attitude.

	Monday 10.45-12.15				Wednesday 10.45-12.15			
	Group				Group			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Week 1 (Reading Skill)								

	Monday 10.45-12.15				Wednesday 10.45-12.15			
	Group				Group			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Discussion	60	60	60	60	63	63	63	63
Cooperative Attitude	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60
Week 2 (Listening Skill)								
Discussion	70	70	70	70	74	74	74	74
Cooperative Attitude	70	70	70	70	76	76	76	76
Week 3 (Speaking Skill)								
Discussion	77	77	77	77	80	80	80	80
Cooperative Attitude	79	79	79	79	80	80	80	80
Week 4 (Writing Skill)								
Discussion	80	80	80	80	90	90	90	90
Cooperative Attitude	80	80	80	80	100	100	100	100

The developed teaching material gave an opportunity to the students to obtain the preparation of both in learning material and mentally, so students could be more active in English class. Liu writes that to become confident, preparation is important. Good preparation can make good results. Bad preparation results in anxiety and makes the performance worse. It is obvious that preparation could enhance students' confidence in speaking English though it might not be able to get rid of anxiety.

### C. Testing Phase

In tryout at LPK GW in Semarang, the first meeting showed the lowest rating scores of 60 for discussion and of 60 for cooperative attitude, while the last meeting showed the highest rating of 90 for discussion and of 100 for the cooperative attitudes. The increasing score of discussion and cooperative attitude was seen on every meeting. From the rubric of class management, it was noted that the scores obtained for four meetings were more than 45.51 as the highest category. The first meeting showed scores of 80 for discussion and of 80 for cooperative attitude, while the last meeting showed the highest rating of 90 for discussion and of 100 for cooperative attitude. Students' activeness in discussion as a positive effect of developed model was a manifestation of decreasing students' negative anxiety in English classroom.

English teachers should be encouraged to incorporate communicative teaching so that students could develop positive interest and enhance their self-confidence in English, which would bring their activeness in English classroom up. One reason in using cooperation in the language classroom is that it makes students feel less anxiety and less stress and the teacher should act as a counselor, make the students to encourage each other in the group, especially the students who are suffering from anxiety and competitiveness, and give them a sense of belonging, thus enhancing their learning.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the research questions and on the process of developing the communicative English teaching material, the students' anxiety reduction in foreign language class could be concluded that first, based on the introduction or exploration phase, the existing learning model used by English teachers at LPK Hotel Schools in

Semarang were not based on negative anxiety reduction, they referred to the characteristics of the conventional learning model, teachers and students need the English learning model based on negative anxiety reduction through communicative English teaching material explicitly in order to improve the students' achievement quality. It is assumed that the students' high level of anxiety was caused by two factors; they are internal and external factors. Internal factor is connected with students' self-confidence and being afraid to be laughed at by others, while external factor is connected with environment and English teachers role. Second, in the model development phase, the researcher developed the communicative English teaching material based on negative anxiety reduction involving syllabus, lesson plan, and evaluation system. The effectiveness of the model could be seen by the increasing result of the students' performance in speaking. The role of English teacher was very important in reducing students' negative anxiety and in motivating the students, so this learning model could be held effectively. Students' activeness in discussion increased in every meeting as a positive effect of students' negative anxiety reduction in English class. It is assumed that the effectiveness of the model was caused by two factors; they are preparing the student's preparation and the English teacher role.

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