

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY AND
ORAL PERFORMANCE AMONG
FORM ONE STUDENTS IN
KUCHING SARAWAK**

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Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
**Master of Education
(TESL)**

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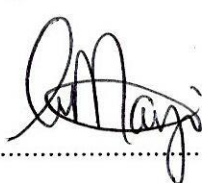
NOVEMBER 2015

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the results of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.

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ABSTRACT

The Oral Proficiency in English Language for Secondary School (OPS English) programme for secondary schools will be starting in 2017. Due to this, there is an urgent need to understand the impact of this programme on students' anxiety levels. Thus, the main aim of this study is to investigate students' perceptions regarding Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) in OPS English classrooms. This study also examines the relationship between FLA and students' grades, interest and language exposure. Mixed methods are employed, using survey and interview methods. A modified version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale questionnaires (FLCAS) by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) was deployed in six (6) schools in Kuching division, with a total of 187 students. Meanwhile, a set of semi-structured questions was used with ten students divided into an equal number of male and females at different levels. The results revealed three interesting findings. Firstly, the students were experiencing moderate levels of language anxiety ($M=2.40$, $S.D.=0.45$). Secondly, the weak or struggling students manifested the highest level of anxiety. The correlation analysis revealed that there was very significant negative relationship between FLA and students' grades, interest and language exposure. However, the strength of these relationships was rather weak, except for language exposure. The findings implied that there were other variables that may influence FLA level. In the interview, it was revealed that teachers' pedagogical approaches were considered as factors that contribute to language anxiety in the OPS English classroom. Recommendations were made regarding teachers' pedagogical approaches and limitations of the study.

Keywords: Language Anxiety, Foreign Language Anxiety, Language Acquisition, Language Learning, OPS English Programme

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 ENGLISH AND THE MALAYSIAN SCENARIO

English has always been considered an important language in Malaysia. Prior to independence, it was used as the official language; however, after independence, it became the second official language of the country. Regardless of the era, English has been used extensively in various activities such as education, politics, social interaction, business transaction and telecommunication (Le Haa, Kho, & Chng, 2013). Notably, the dependency on English as medium of communication is greater than before due to globalisation and the aspiration to achieve developed country status by 2020.

From a wider perspective, the need to master English is driven by globalisation. Without mastering English, Malaysians will not be able to stay competitive in the current global scenario. This is because English is highly desirable as a medium of communication in international conferences or seminars which may discuss global issues such as security, politics, finance and migration (Haas, 2010; Russ, 2012). In addition, effective communication does not only help Malaysia to prosper but also generates good rapport with her neighbouring countries (Fischer, 2003).