

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**SECOND LANGUAGE ANXIETY:
GENDER INFLUENCE, BELIEFS
ABOUT LANGUAGE LEARNING AND
SECOND LANGUAGE ACHIEVEMENT**

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ABSTRACT

English language is an important language and the use of this language has extended in formal occasions, media, jurisdiction, and even in daily conversations. Malaysians are using the language widely and the language is introduced formally to young learners as early as kindergarten years. There are many aspects and factors that should be considered in second language learning and one of the crucial aspects in second language learning is second language anxiety. Second language anxiety is believed to have a debilitating effect on the learners' performance. This study was conducted to better help educators in Malaysia to understand the second language anxiety and beliefs about language learning among Malaysian students. Furthermore, the study also looked at second language anxiety across gender as previous research has indicated discrepancy across genders in second language learning. Thus, a quantitative research with correlational approach design was conducted by using 334 polytechnic students from Commerce Department as the samples. From the findings, it is found that the students have moderate level of anxiety and positive beliefs about language learning. Apart from that, it is also portrayed that the higher the anxiety is, the lower the achievement of the English test. Findings from this study have also indicated that there is no significant difference across gender for second language anxiety.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

English language is a lingua franca of the world. It is a common language used and applied in daily life among the native speakers of English as well as the non-native speakers of the language. The widened use and research on the language further explain different perspectives of the language. Why is there a need for citizens around the world to learn English? Here is an example where the English language comes in handy and it may save one's life. In an incident that happened in Thailand, a country located at Southeast Asia, the world was shocked and moved by an incident which is known as the Thai Cave Rescue. The Thai Cave Rescue is an incident which initially included 12 players and their football coach stayed in the cavern for shelter where they took refuge from rising water. Reading the newspaper and news portal online on this incident has given the proof that English language is important and crucial for everyone. According to a news portal, one of the victims, named Adul Sam-On, played an important role in the rescuing mission (Fernando, 2018). Some might wonder what it has to do with English. According to the report, the 14-year-old boy was the only person who can speak in English language and able to communicate with the rescue team. His crucial ability to communicate with the rescuers eased their job and they were able to contact the victims as well as update on their conditions. From this incident, it is implied that communication may save one's life someday. Thus the effectiveness and knowledge on the English language are very important for us especially new generations nowadays.

The Thai Cave Rescue is one of the cases that proves English language is important for all. Even for Malaysians, the importance and needs to learn and master English language would be value-added. In Malaysia, Malaysians learn English as a second language. Students in school are exposed to the language since toddlers and since they are young. Therefore, it is widely used in conversations especially with those who have different first language. Bahasa Melayu is the first choice to be used, but English language has become the best alternative for Malaysians in their conversations. Nowadays, parents and caregivers often put an emphasis on the language. They choose