

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**LANGUAGE CLASSROOM ANXIETY: A STUDY
OF MALAYSIAN AND CHINESE ESL
UNIVERSITY LEARNERS**

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Candidate's Declaration

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

In the event that my thesis be found to violate the conditions mentioned above, I voluntarily waive the right of conferment of my degree and be subjected to the disciplinary rules and Universiti Teknologi MARA.

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Abstract

Malaysia has taken the decision to use English as a medium of instruction at university level beginning in 2002 and much debate has surfaced since then. English has also increased in importance in the People's Republic of China (PRC) since the nation joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) and implemented an Open Door Policy. This study investigates and compares perceived second language anxiety and attempts to identify whether there are any significant differences in the level of anxiety of male and female ESL university students at Stamford College, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia, from the PRC and Malaysia. It also attempts to identify the factors that could contribute to language classroom anxiety. Although the study did not control for factors that may influence language apprehension, the results suggest that nearly half of the total number of respondents are anxious about learning the English language. English Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (ELCAS) with 32 items was constructed and used for the purpose of the study which was adapted and adopted from Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) of Horwitz et. al. 33 items (1986). Findings show that gender is of slight significance but nationality is an important variable in identifying the anxiety level with the various factors that may contribute to English language classroom anxiety.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background

The role and status of English language in Malaysia was drastically reduced during the post independence period, putting Bahasa Melayu in a position of paramount importance (Gill, 2005). Since education is linked to upward social mobility, the education system has to provide methods of teaching and learning that enable students to function in more than one language. This would give them the opportunity for equal access to education as well as economic opportunities (Gaudart, 2003). Thus, Malaysia has taken the move to introduce the use of English as a medium of instruction at university level in 2002. Much debate has taken place about the move which was envisioned by Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamed, who was then Prime Minister of Malaysia.

The importance of English has widely spread all over the Asian region and its importance rapidly acknowledged all over the People's Republic of China (PRC) since the nation enlisted in the World Trade Organization (WTO). In addition to this, English gained its new height of popularity in the PRC when the 'Olympic Games' was scheduled for Beijing in 2008. Policy makers, educationist and individuals in China find that English is therefore compellingly linked to continued economic growth (Bolton, 2002).