

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER BELIEFS AND
SPEAKING ANXIETY OF DIPLOMA LEVEL
STUDENTS IN UITM KOTA SAMARAHAN**

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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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 result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This dissertation 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

Speaking anxiety is one of the most pressing problems that both learners and instructors of a language are likely to experience or encounter. This is especially so when the target language is not the speaker's native or first language. In fact, it would be a foreign language or a second language. While in some cases the anxiety may produce positive results, more often than not the opposite happens. Related to anxiety is the learner's set of beliefs which can affect the teaching as well as the learning process. The objectives of the present study were to identify learners' speaking anxiety levels and also their language learning beliefs. In addition, the research also aimed to investigate if there was a relationship between speaking anxiety and beliefs. The study employed a quantitative method of research for data collection and analysis. Findings showed varying levels of speaking anxiety, a range of positive as well as negative beliefs associated with language learning and different relationships for different belief items. The findings from this study could be used to further enhance learning and teaching in the second language classroom with respect to motivation, strategies and resource materials for the learners of the target language. It is hoped that the implications will benefit all language learners and the weaker ones in particular.

Key words: speaking anxiety, learners' speaking anxiety levels, learner beliefs, second/foreign language, learning and teaching, second language classroom, relationship between speaking and anxiety

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Learning a foreign or a second language may not always be an easy ride for many people. The situation for learners of English in Malaysia is not much different compared to learners of foreign languages in other parts of the world. However, a lot of the research that has been conducted in this area tends to point towards learning a foreign language (mainly English) in the context of non-native speakers who are either migrant workers or students in countries such as the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

The context of learning English in a country like Malaysia appears to be different from that in a country where English is a foreign language for the learners. In Malaysia, English is used as a second language. That is to say, Malaysians are taught the English Language as a subject in school because it is considered as important in their daily lives. For example, English is also used in the workplace, in business, in government offices, and in institutions of higher learning. This is so in spite of Bahasa Malaysia or Malay Language being the official language. Many people may not use English extensively but they are aware of its use within the environment that they are in every day. Hence, it has become important for Malaysians to be able to master the English Language, or at least, be able to use it at a reasonably acceptable proficiency level.

However, such is not the case for many Malaysians. It seems that even after about eleven to twelve years of learning the language in school, it still poses problems. Prospective employers complain about the falling standard of English proficiency even among so called professionals and graduates. Educators bemoan the declining levels of performance and proficiency among students in schools and even universities (Hariati &