

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of The Study

English plays a very important role in higher education. In addition, the ability to speak English can allow students to access a variety of knowledge and the latest information. In the era of globalization, as well as advances in the field of technology today, English language skills are an individual investment that can improve the quality of life. English is an individual investment that can improve the quality of competitiveness in the world of work (Andika & Mardiana, 2023). However, in the foreign language learning process there are also various obstacles, one of which is Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA). This phenomenon is commonly experienced by foreign language learners (Beatrix & Hastuti, 2022).

Among English learning for non-English students in a university, English is taught as English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which is useful for equipping students with technical literature skills in their respective fields of study. However, the curriculum is more focused on meeting administrative requirements due to a lack of teachers who are experts in these fields (Iswati & Triastuti, 2021). The limited class time is a major obstacle to achieving fluency, with low interaction outside the classroom due to a lack of support from the campus, which does not encourage daily use (Huang, 1997). The existence of a double curriculum exacerbates the situation for students, who are required to divide their focus between their major courses and English language

competency standards as a graduation requirement. This triggers anxiety due to a lack of basic understanding of the language (Deiniatur & Hasanah, 2024). Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that although ESP is designed to support students' specific skills, its implementation in the field is still hampered by limitations in teaching staff, minimal interaction time, and the burden of a dual curriculum that actually triggers academic anxiety.

English learning outcomes among non-English majors show very clear differences, mainly due to the influence of the students' self-confidence and support from their surroundings. This can be seen from the students' achievements which shows significant variation, with some students achieving satisfactory results through active participation and high self-confidence (Poyungi, 2025), while another group has low abilities due to obstacles such as weak self-efficacy and difficulty understanding the material (Azzahra & Purnawan, 2025). This difference can be clearly seen from test scores, class activity levels, and overall academic ability, where low-achieving students have difficulty expressing ideas verbally and evaluating themselves effectively due to low self-motivation and anxiety (Suryadi et al., 2022). Conversely, high-achieving students are accustomed to showing greater activity and confidence during learning activities (Daflizar, 2024). This disparity shows the uneven results of English learning among non-major students, which is influenced by internal factors such as anxiety and external factors such as environmental support (Amin et al., 2025).

The primary internal determinants influencing differences in English achievement among non-English students are students' affective states, especially foreign language anxiety (FLA). When engaging in EFL activities, low-achieving students frequently express feelings of anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and lack of confidence, which impede information processing, classroom performance, and the attainment of optimal results (Azzahra & Purnawan, 2025). High-achieving students, on the other hand, typically have lower levels of FLA, which allows them to participate actively and perform better academically (Poyungi, 2025). As a result, FLA plays a crucial role in explaining why some non-English students have serious performance issues (Suryadi et al., 2022).

Language anxiety can be triggered by various factors such as fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, academic pressure, negative learning experiences, cultural differences, public speaking anxiety, lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge, and inappropriate teaching methods (Mulyani, 2018). Even students who have high interest and motivation in learning English are not immune to these problems. Pressure to meet high academic standards, demands to communicate effectively in English, and competition among peers can further increase the level of anxiety experienced. High levels of anxiety can negatively impact students' participation in learning activities, speaking performance, and understanding of learning materials (Putri & Fauziah, 2023).

Previous studies have shown a significant relationship between foreign language anxiety and academic achievement. Students who experience high

levels of anxiety often face difficulties in speaking, writing, and listening skills, which in turn affect their academic achievement (Wulandari, 2022). Additionally, anxiety has been shown to reduce students' motivation and confidence in actively using English (Susanti & Pratama, 2020). Despite this, most existing research tends to focus on students in English Education Departments (English Majors) who already have intensive exposure to the language. On the other hand, there is still lack of study on FLA among students in non-English departments, where English is usually taught with fewer course hours and less often throughout the course of study. This group of students often faces unique challenges, as their limited exposure, combined with the professional demands of their respective fields, may lead to distinct or even higher levels of anxiety when compared to English major.

B. Identification of the Problem

According to the background of the problem, there are some problems;

1. Non-English major students, particularly in the primary Islamic teacher education program, experience various levels of anxiety that may hinder their English learning process at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang.
2. High levels of anxiety in learning English contribute to students' low involvement, passivity, or hesitancy in attending and participating in foreign language classes.
3. There are potential variations in English learning anxiety levels influenced by students' diverse gender and previous educational backgrounds.

4. The presence of English learning anxiety negatively affects the learning motivation of non-English major students.
5. Various internal and external factors significantly influence and trigger English learning anxiety among non-English major students.
6. English learning anxiety is specifically manifested in language skills such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing, causing students to struggle in these areas.
7. Many non-English major students still struggle to find and apply effective strategies to manage their anxiety during the English learning process.

C. Limitation of The Study

This research has clear limits to keep things focused and not go beyond its main goals. The study looks only at how much foreign language learning anxiety experienced by Non-English Department students (specifically focusing on the primary Islamic teacher education sample) at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang. The main topic is anxiety related to learning a foreign language, so the study doesn't look into other things that might influence this anxiety, like teaching methods, student personalities, or the learning environment. It also only includes students who are currently taking or have taken foreign language classes at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang and not students from other universities. Other factors will only be mentioned if they are directly connected to the level of anxiety found. Because of these limits, the research can give a clear and focused view of foreign language learning anxiety in this specific setting.

D. Formulation of The Problem

Based on the problems described in the background, the researcher formulates the following research questions: What is the level of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) among Non-English Department students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang?

E. Purpose of The Study

Based on the researcher's question above, the purpose of the study entitled “Analysis of Foreign Language Anxiety in Learning English Among First Semester Students of the Primary Islamic Teacher Education Department at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang” is to: to find out the level of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) among Non-English Department students and identify most dominant component based on mean score and percentage.

F. Significance of The Research

This research holds practical significance, contributing to the field of Foreign Language Education Studies and the specific context of foreign language education in Indonesian universities.

Practical Contribution:

- a. For the University/Faculty: The research provides empirical evidence regarding the actual affective challenges faced by students in non-English majors. This can serve as a crucial basis for UIN Imam Bonjol's language centers and faculties to re-evaluate and adapt their foreign language curriculum, teaching methodologies, and assessment methods to be more anxiety-reducing and supportive.

- b. For Foreign Language Lecturers: The findings offer practical guidance by identifying specific student cohorts or learning contexts within the non-English departments where anxiety is most prevalent. This enables lecturers to implement targeted, sensitive pedagogical strategies, such as creating low-stress learning environments and incorporating anxiety-management techniques, to improve student performance and engagement.
- c. For Future Researchers: The study serves as a foundation and reference point for subsequent investigations into affective factors in language learning within a similar academic or religious university context in Indonesia, facilitating comparative studies and deeper exploration of mitigating strategies.
- d. For the students: This research helps students recognize their anxiety levels and understand the factors that trigger their nervousness in English class. Furthermore, it is significant as it highlights the psychological resilience of non-English major students, particularly in the primary Islamic teacher education program, by demonstrating their ability to maintain a manageable level of anxiety despite the academic challenges of learning a foreign language.

G. Definition of key term

1. English Learning Anxiety

In the context of this study, it is a specific type of foreign language anxiety (FLA) experienced by students when involved in the process of

learning or using English. ELA is measured as a psychological and emotional condition characterized by feelings of worry, nervousness, lack of self-confidence, and discomfort, especially in formal situations such as speaking in class, taking tests, or fear of negative evaluation. Operationally, ELA is measured using the total score from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) instrument. As Horwitz (1986) stated, FLA 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," which emphasizes that this anxiety is not just general fear, but a specific response to communication and evaluation challenges in the context of a foreign language. This opinion supports measuring ELA thru FLCAS, which is designed to capture dimensions such as fear of communication, negative evaluation, and social discomfort in English language learning (Horwitz et al., 1986).

2. Non-English Department Students

This term specifically refers to active students at the Bachelor's level (S1) at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang who are not enrolled in study programs focused on linguistics or English language education (such as the English Language Teaching Department).

3. Anxiety Level

Anxiety level is a quantitative classification of the intensity of anxiety experienced by respondents. This level is determined based on the aggregate score obtained from the FLCAS questionnaire.