



## **A Survey Study: The Students' Reticence in English Classroom at Senior High School in Pekanbaru**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The students are expected to be active in teaching and learning process. However, according to the preliminary study on Senior High in Pekanbaru. The students still have problem in learning English. They are reticent and passive in the classroom. They tend to be silent and quiet during the learning process. The class participation is far from the expectation of the learning objective from the curriculum. Therefore, this research was aimed to find out the factors that influenced students' reticence in English classroom and the dominant factor that caused students reticence at Senior High School in Pekanbaru. This research is descriptive quantitative research, which data were collected by a questionnaire. The sample was randomly selected for 102 students out of 289 students of population. the writer found the factors that influence of students' reticence in English classroom; First, they are the individual factors with 3.05 mean score by the percentage was 61.1%. Second, psychological factors with 2.71 mean score by percentage 54.3%. Third, affective factors with 2.65 mean score by percentage 53%. Fourth, environment factors with 2.60 mean score by percentage 52.1%. Finally, linguistic factors with 2.53 mean score by 50.6%. Meanwhile, the dominant factor that caused the students' reticence in English classroom is individual factors that were the main indicator is underprepared with the percentage of 62.6%. The students felt nervous and did not confident to speak English. Therefore, it is better for the teacher to know the factors contribute to that reticence and could minimize the dominant factors in order to pursue the teaching and learning process more efficiently and enjoyable in learning English.

**Keywords:** *Learning, Reticence, English Classroom.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Reticence is a problem that usually occurs in teaching and learning process. Especially in Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, the students tend to be reticent in the classroom. The reticence of the students is a phenomenon makes the students passive and furthermore makes the teacher/educator frustrated (Zahra Hashemi & Rezaeian, 2013). Students' reticence is a major issue in teaching and learning a language. Chang (2011) stated that, students' reticence is an obstacle when it comes to language learning. Students' participation in the classroom is important to improve students' ability. Students' verbal communication is a proof for their good performance in English.

Reticence frequently prevents the students from making progress and accomplishing the result planned for the course. According to July (2013), students' participation and engagement is very crucial in the classroom. Furthermore, the students make an oral communication with the teacher or among peers, they will automatically build up their ability. Nevertheless, when they are passive, the progress will be slower.

The aim of teaching and learning a language is the students able to utilize the language in communication inside and even outside the classroom (Riasati, 2014). Means that the students learning English for their communication purpose. In fact, in the classroom the students reluctant to participate in classroom activities. This kind of reluctant influences the students to lose their eagerness to learn the language.

Pertaining to Witayarat (2015), he stated that the students could be judged as a passive and reticent learner due to; Not participate in classroom activities, no confident when speaking in the classroom, unable to propose question, passive in the classroom, over-dependent on the teacher. However, it has indicated that those symptoms might happened to the students in Pekanbaru, who learn English once in a week within 90 minutes. It has been proclaimed in PERMENDIKBUD 2016, that the students are expected to be active in learning by promoting student-centered learning process. They also expected to be an enthusiast in learning; be motivated, interested, inspired, as well as creative, initiative. They can make an innovation and to be independent learners. According to writer's preliminary study at Senior High School Pekanbaru, most of the students still have problem in learning English. They are reticent and passive in the classroom. They tend to be silent and quiet in the learning process. The participation of the students is not same with the expectation of thirteen curriculum. This problem can be proved by the students' activities and participation in the classroom.

## **2. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The study focuses on the problems of factors that influence students' reticence in English classroom and the dominant factor that impact the students reticent in English classroom at Senior High School Pekanbaru. The research questions has been formulated as follow:

1. What are the factors that influence students' reticence in English classroom at Senior High School Pekanbaru?
2. What is the dominant factor that makes students' reticence in English classroom at Senior High School Pekanbaru?

### 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### a. Definition

According to Delima (2015), reticence is a performance that happens when someone avoid communication with other people. The reticence persons trust that it is better to be quiet rather than take a threat. It occurs because they are too worried to utter some talk and scared to losing face. Moreover, Zhang and Head (2009) pointed out that reticence is a barrier in speaking activities because it preserves the students to build development when they are learning a language. This negative outlooks and performance headed to frustration and failure for both teacher and the students. In addition, Chang (2011) stated that reticence is a boundary in language learning, since students' participation in the classroom is an activity that can increase students' ability in that language and also students' verbal contribution is an essential proof that learners turned out to be aware about the language.

Keaten and Kelly (2000) said reticence is a behavior when someone keep her/his self from doing communication because they believe it is better to stay silent than to take risk to show up like a brainless, this behavior called reticence. Individuals who are referred to as reticent are people who tend to evade communication because they afraid to seem foolish. Briefly, reticence refers

to demeanor. Individuals are reticence when she/he has a propensity to avoid communication, that is, to involve in continuing silent because fear of silliness. Furthermore, Izadi and Zare (2016) said that reticence is the reluctance of the students to involve in classroom argument, request question, or provide replies. The students are passive and too dependent on the teacher. It happens since the learners evade communication and made them behave quiet. Reticence also identified from the negative attitude of learners to have communication. However, S. & S., July (2013) pointed out that reticence is a situation when the students remain non-participatory, quiet or behave passively. This is an uncomfortable feeling as it reflects negatively on their instructional practice. This problematic attribute would hinder the development of oral proficiency in English for the students.

Baktash and Chalak (2015) argued that reticence occur when the students tend to be inactive and silent in EFL classroom. Meanwhile, the relation between classroom-spoken contribution and students' development in language learning is irrefutable. Spoken participation offers the chance for students to attest themselves as active members of the classroom and increase their language skill. Thus, reticence is an obstacle for language learning.

#### b. The characteristics of reticence

Witayarat (2015) described the characteristics of students' reticence in the classroom as follows: (1) Not confidence when speaking; (2) non-participation; (3) non-questioning; (4) Passivity; (5) Too dependent on the teacher. Moreover, Izadi and Zare (2016), the reticence students can be

described when they are: (1) Silent in communication doings; (2) Not willingly contribute in language classroom every time; (3) More worried and anxious when asked to involve in a conversation.

Zhang and Head (2009) also explained the characteristics of reticence students in the classroom in their journal. They stated that the reticence students prefer to be silent or sit down at the back row of the classroom to avoid being observed and called upon to contribute.

Carter and Henrichsen (2015) also explain the characteristic of students' reticence. They seem to drop behind and seldom communicate. They naturally take a seat in the back and see, displaying to changing degrees a nervous, uncommunicative, or quiet attitude. They rarely to offer to response a question and through group activities that they regularly seem more introverted and reserved than their colleague students.

### *c. The factors of reticence*

Regarding to Irwanti (2017), there are five factors of students' reticence: affective factors, individual factors, psychological factors, linguistic factors, and environment factors, which are explained as follows:

#### 1) Affective Factors

Affective factors also have three aspects, they are personality factors (introversion and shyness), anxiety, and motivation (being lazy and do not want to ask questions). Personality factors containing introversion and shyness. Commonly, the extroverted people were more willing to interact to other people, while the introverted and shy people tend to be quiet and listen to others.

The other factor that make some students choose to be reticent because they felt shy to speak English, they are shy when speaking in front of classroom, giving an opinion or asking a question. The students' shyness had affected their contribution in classroom discussions.

Anxiety was also a crucial factor of students' reticence. The students were anxious and nervous when speaking in front of the whole students in classroom, responding to the teachers' questions and even asking questions. It showed anxiety was a main cause of students' reluctance to participate in the classroom.

Motivation was also a factor causes make students' reluctance to speak English, they are being lazy and do not want to ask questions although they know the lesson being discussed. The students were too lazy to speak English and they do not have anything to say. These are happened because they are not interested to the lessons/materials. Interest is very important for making students active in classroom activities. When something is not interesting, the students are unwilling to talk about it, while if they are interested to the lesson/materials, they will try to speak as asking questions or giving opinion.

#### 2) Individual Factors

There were two individual factors causes for students' reticence in the English classroom. They were being underprepared and unfamiliarity with the topics/materials. Being underprepared was a big problem to students' reticence in the classroom. The students felt nervous and not confident speaking English without any

preparation. Meanwhile, they were not anxious and become more confident if they have a preparation

Another crucial factor for students' reticence was unfamiliarity with the topics/materials. The students remain silent because they do not have any ideas about the materials. They have lack of knowledge. Because of that, they choose not to participate. They did not know how to speak in the class discussions. They get anxious to raise their hand since they were do not know how saying something.

### 3) Psychological Factors

Psychological factors containing afraid of making mistakes, lack of confidence, comparison to peers, fear of being the focus of attention, and fear of being laughed at. The students were afraid of speaking English and making mistakes that made them anxious to speak English in the classroom. Because of that, they became further diffident to give respond to their teachers or their friends in the classroom. The students were scared to make faults when they are speaking English. In addition, the students afraid of making mistakes in front of their classmates. It shows the students more afraid of making mistakes in front of the classmates rather than afraid of making mistakes because it will influence their score.

Another significant factor that causes the students' reticence to contribute in the classroom discussion was lack of confidence. This factor affects students' participation in the classroom that lead to reticence. Lacking confidence makes the students believe that their language abilities is lower than their classmates. Even though some students may have good pronunciation and have proficiency, they still chose to be reticent because of

the lack of nerve. Sometimes they take part verbally in a soft voice. Speaking with soft voice is a means for students to treat their deficiency confidence. The students stated that they feel not self-assured when speaking in front of the whole class. Moreover, when the discussion is conducted, only little students asked a question and giving judgement, some students talked softly among themselves. It may be that some students tried to resolve one-another. This is to proof the students do interaction between themselves verbally and the casual talk does not seem to prevent them from listening to the presenters at the same time. The students' individual chats in show that the students were relaxed with talking softly among themselves to meet their own needs while they felt nervous at being put in a spotlight when they were requested to talk individually in front of the entire class.

Several students assumed that there was a significant difference between them and their peers. So that they feel worried, uneasy, and jealous because of the differences. The students became concerned when they found their peers is better that make them to be infrequently participate in the classroom discussion. The students concerned because they believed their peers were better than they were. They matched themselves with their classmates, feeling lower to others. Such negative thoughts put serious barriers in their language improvement; it leads to sensitive awareness of their lacks and as a result to reticence when they are called upon to display their competence in the English.

Furthermore, the slight causes for students' reticence were dread of being the focus of attention and dread of being laughed at. Several students were unwilling to speak English in front of

the entire class because they were scared of being the focus of attention and others students would laugh at them if they make faults. Being the focus of attention is not relaxed for some students. When they asked to present their assignment and speaking in front of the class, they feel worried and uncomfortable because all the other students look focus on and watch him/her. So that, they feel wary and worried to speak English. It will make them always seeing at the floor and afraid to see their colleagues. Therefore, it can affect their performance and mark. Moreover, the students also concerned about losing face in speaking classrooms. They tend to be silent and wait until they were able to speak English.

#### 4) Linguistic Factor

The linguistic factor causes students' reticence was low English proficiency. This factor was one of the main reasons to the students' reticence in the classroom discussion. Low English proficiency such as vocabulary, pronunciation, cannot speak fluently and respond fast influenced the participation of students in classroom. Normally, the more talented students tended to be more confident, less nervous in oral English lessons, and more active to reply to their teachers as well. The less talented students, on the other hand, often became worried and nervous when speaking English in class, especially when they had a lack vocabulary and insufficient knowledge of grammar. Because of the lack of vocabulary, students hard to express ideas or find suitable words to express themselves. So that, they choose to keep quiet. The students were concerned about their English proficiency. They were concerned

about their vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation when speaking English.

#### 5) Environment Factors

Environment also influence students' participation in the classroom. There were two environment factors as class arrangement and class atmosphere.

Class arrangement was also one of the factors influencing students' involvement. The students do not like to sit down at the front row because they were anxious of being the focus of the teachers. They felt more relaxed sitting at the middle or back rows. Besides, the students like to contribute in a small and comfortable class. They felt more confident in a small class rather than a big class.

The atmosphere in the classroom also influenced students' participation, the students may be participated if the situation and condition supported, and otherwise she/he only stayed silent. Sometimes, some students like to compete in a bad way. They are not supportive one another. This situation might affect some students to be reticence in the class.

Competition often caused students to become unwilling to speak English language, while a supportive relationship among students made them feel free to do so in class. It is not only competition, but the lecturer also plays the important role in influencing the reticent behavior of the students. Some lecturers have negative characters in the teaching and learning process. These negative lecturer characters make students to remain soundless rather than to participate verbally in the classroom as to avoid teacher's roughness, strictness, and negative signals. The students get more anxious when their teacher is very strict. At the same, they feel ease when the teachers respond in a friendly manner.

#### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a descriptive quantitative study, which purposes to describe the phenomena and symptoms in in the natural setting (Priyono, 2016). This research conducted by analyzing students' reticent in English classroom and looking at the factors that contribute their reticence. The subject of this research was the tenth-grade students of Senior High School Pekanbaru that has randomly selected for 102 students out of 289 students of population. In order to have the data, the questionnaire was questioned in 35 items. According to Sugiyono (2014), Likert Scale is used to measure attitude, opinion, and perception of a person or a group of people about an event or social phenomenon. The respondents answered the questionnaires by using the following answer; 5 = Always, 4 = Often, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = Seldom, 1 = Never.

In order to analyze the data, the writer used descriptive statistics with SPSS Statistics version 20. Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle (2010) suggested that descriptive statistics is applied in analyzing the data by using graphic and charts. Every single study that use a quantitative degree will use descriptive statistics to display the data configuration.

#### 5. RESULTS

This research investigated the information about the factors that influence students' reticence and the dominant factor that makes students' reticence in English classroom the writer used questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed based on the indicator of students' reticence by Irwanti (2017). The total number of the items were 35. The result of the analysis of each item of the questionnaire is as follows:

**Table 5.1**

**The Percentage of Factors of the Students' Reticence in English Classroom**

No.	Factors	Item Number	Mean Score	Percentage
1	Affective Factor	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	2.65	53%
2	Individual Factor	9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14	3.05	61.10%
3	Psychological Factor	15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26	2.71	54.30%
4	Linguistic Factor	27, 28, 29	2.53	50.60%
5	Environment Factor	30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35	2.6	52.10%

The table 5.1 shows that the affective factors had 2.65 mean score by percentage 53%. The individual factors had 3.05 mean score by percentage 61.1%. The psychological factors had 2.71 mean score by percentage 54.3%. The linguistic factors had 2.53 mean score by

percentage 50.6%. The environment factors had 2.60 mean score by percentage 52.1%. Therefore, we could find that the dominant factor of students' reticence in English classroom at Senior High School is related to individual factors by the percentage of 61.1%.

The dominant factor of students' reticence was found from the percentage on table 5.2. Moreover, the study needs to find out the indicators contribute to the students' reticence and

analyzed it, because the study wants to know the dominant indicators of students' reticence in English classroom. The analysis will explain in the table as follows:

**Table 5.2**

**The Percentage of Indicators of the Students' Reticence in English Classroom**

No.	Factors	Indicator	Item Number	Mean Score	Percentage
1	Affective Factor	Personality	1, 2	2.57	51.4%
		Anxiety	3, 4, 5	2.89	57.8%
		Motivation	6, 7, 8	2.49	49.8%
2	Individual Factor	Underprepared	9, 10, 11	3.13	62.6%
		Unfamiliarity	12, 13, 14	2.98	59.6%
3	Psychological Factor	Making mistakes	15, 16, 17	3.08	61.6%
		Confidence	18, 19, 20	2.27	45.4%
		Comparison to peers	21, 22, 23	2.78	55.6%
		Being focused and laughed	24, 25, 26	2.73	54.6%
4	Linguistic Factor	Proficiency	27, 28, 29	2.53	50.6%
5	Environment Factor	Classroom arrangement	30, 31, 32	2.58	51.6%
		Classroom atmosphere	33, 34, 35	2.63	52.6%

The table 5.2 shows that the indicator related to personality had 2.57 mean score by percentage 51.4%. The indicator related to anxiety had 2.89 mean score by percentage 57.8%. The indicator related to motivation had 2.49 mean score by percentage 49.8%. The indicator related underprepared had 3.13 mean score by percentage 62.6%. The indicator related to unfamiliarity had 2.98 mean score by percentage 59.6%. The indicator related to making mistakes had 3.08 mean score by percentage 61.6%. The indicator related to confidence had 2.27 mean score by percentage 45.4%. The indicator related to comparison to peers had 2.78 mean score by percentage 55.6%. The indicator related to being focused and laughed

had 2.73 mean score by percentage 54.6%. The indicator related to proficiency had 2.53 mean score by percentage 50.6%. The indicator related to classroom arrangement had 2.58 mean score by percentage 51.6%. Finally, the indicator related to classroom atmosphere had 2.63 mean score by percentage 52.6%. Therefore, we could find that the dominant indicator of students' reticence in English classroom is underprepared with the percentage of 62.6%. Underprepare means the students felt nervous and not confident speaking English without preparation.

**6. CONCLUSION**

This research was conducted to find out the factors that influence

students reticence and the dominant factor that caused the students' reticence in English classroom at Senior High School in Pekanbaru. It might conclude that; 1) The factors that influence students' reticence in English classroom are the “**individual factors**” with 3.05 mean score by percentage 61.1%. Second, “**psychological factors**” with 2.71 mean score by percentage 54.3%. Third, “**affective factors**” with 2.65 mean score by percentage 53%. Fourth, “**environment factors**” with 2.60 mean score by percentage 52.1%. Finally, “**linguistic factors**” with 2.53 mean score by percentage 50.6%. 2) The dominant factor that caused the students' reticence in English classroom is “**individual factors**” by the percentage 61.1 % and the main indicator is “**underprepared**” by the percentage 62.6%. The students felt nervous and not confident speaking English without preparation.

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