

CAUSES OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' RETICENCE IN MALAYSIAN ESL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

Student reticence has become one of the main concerns in the English language classroom. It is frequently labeled as a problematic, frustrating, and disturbing classroom phenomenon by many instructors. The purpose of this study was to explore the degree to which undergraduate students experienced reticence and the factors that caused them to refrain from participating in classroom oral participation. To this end, a total of 122 Malaysian undergraduate students from a university participated as respondents in a self-assessment conducted using the Reticence-Scale 12 (RS-12) and a survey. The results of the self-assessment revealed that the majority of the students experienced high reticence in the classrooms. Additionally, the students' reticent behaviour was caused by virtual of their personality traits, lack of self-confidence, anxiety, poor language skills, and teacher factors. This study highlights the need for more research in this area in different learning contexts.

Keywords: reticence, undergraduate students, personality traits, self-confidence, anxiety

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Oral participation is one of the most critical and compulsory productive skills all tertiary students need to learn in ESL (English as a Second Language) or EFL (English as a Foreign language) classroom. This skill's mastery is expected to help university students complete various educational tasks that require an active verbal contribution. Despite much emphasis has been put on teaching this skill in ESL/EFL classrooms, many students are still found to be