

BUILDING PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE AND OVERCOMING ANXIETY OF SPEAKING THROUGH A CURRENT HUMANISTIC PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH IN PANDANSARI VILLAGE

¹⁾ Firdiony Nur Azizah*, ²⁾ Chindy Hanggara Rosa.

^{1,2)} Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Universitas Insan Budi Utomo, Malang Indonesia

Email Corresponding: firdiony@gmail.com*

Received: Juni 7 2026, Accepted: Juni 9 2026, Published: Juni, 19 2026

INFORMASI ARTIKEL	ABSTRAK
Kata Kunci: <i>Penelitian Tindakan Partisipatif, Model ACT, Teori Sistem Dinamis Kompleks (CDST), dan Kecemasan Berbahasa.</i>	<i>Anak-anak di daerah pedesaan biasanya menghadapi tantangan terbesar dalam mempelajari bahasa asing karena mereka sering mengalami ketakutan, ketakutan, dan ketidakstabilan emosional saat menghadapi lingkungan baru. Dalam program Pengabdian Masyarakat Berbasis Potensi (PMBP) di Desa Pandansari, Kecamatan Poncokusumo, Kabupaten Malang, penelitian tindakan partisipatif ini (*Penelitian Tindakan Partisipatif Kontemporer*) bertujuan untuk mengetahui seberapa efektif intervensi psikologi pendidikan modern dalam mengurangi rasa takut selama proses belajar. Dalam program ini, 95 siswa dari MA Al-Hidayah dan 50 siswa dari SDN Pandansari 2 mengikuti siklus perencanaan, tindakan, pengamatan, dan refleksi yang kompleks. Solusi yang disarankan oleh teori Sistem Dinamis Kompleks (CDST) dan paradigma Terapi Penerimaan dan Komitmen (ACT) adalah mengubah ruang kelas yang kaku menjadi lingkungan yang ramah dan inklusif, seperti English Café dan ekosistem pembelajaran berbasis permainan. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keberanian remaja untuk berbicara, motivasi intrinsik, dan arah masa depan mereka meningkat. Untuk saat ini, tinjauan beban psikologis yang dilakukan tim peneliti merekomendasikan penggunaan kalender akademik yang komprehensif untuk mencegah kelelahan mental yang luar biasa.</i>
	ABSTRACT
Keywords: <i>Participatory Action Research, ACT Model, Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST), and Language Anxiety.</i>	<i>The most difficult aspect of learning a foreign language for children in rural settings is typically their fear, anxiety, and emotional instability when confronted with a new environment. This participatory action research (*Contemporary Participatory Action Research*) was conducted through the Potential-Based Community Service (PMBP) program in Pandansari Village, Poncokusumo Subdistrict, Malang Regency to investigate the effectiveness of contemporary educational psychology interventions in alleviating these learning fears. The program included 50 students from SDN Pandansari 2 and 95 students from MA Al-Hidayah, who went through a cycle of planning, action, observation, and deep reflection. According to *Complex Dynamic Systems Theory* (CDST) and the *Acceptance and Commitment Therapy* (ACT) paradigm, the solution involved changing rigid classrooms into friendly, accepting settings (*English Café* and a *gamified learning* ecosystem). The findings revealed that teenagers' courage to speak up increased, as did their intrinsic motivation and future orientation. Meanwhile, a review of the research team's psychological burden suggests using an integrated academic calendar to avoid extreme mental tiredness.</i>
This is an open access article under the CC-BY-SA license.	

I. INTRODUCTION

In modern education, a child's ability to absorb knowledge is no longer considered as a strict, linear cognitive process. We now realize that each student's emotions and thoughts are part of a dynamic system that constantly influences one another. This is consistent with Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST), developed by Larsen-Freeman and De Bot (2021). According to this modern viewpoint, students' fear, drive, and self-confidence are not fixed attributes, but rather energies that change over time based on how social interactions in the classroom are arranged. The concept of a linear affective filter has evolved into a dynamic one, in which a supportive learning environment is critical to unleashing children's full potential.

We witnessed this reality among children and teenagers in Pandansari Village, Poncokusumo Subdistrict, Malang Regency. Because of a lack of exposure to other languages and interactive learning methods outside of school, kids develop psychological defenses such as dynamic situational anxiety. When evaluated via the framework that updates Erik Erikson's stages, the subjects of this community service initiative are in two highly vulnerable transitional phases:

- a. Elementary school children (SDN Pandansari 2) are developing their academic self-concept. According to the modern neuro-educational approach (Immordino-Yang, 2016), if the classroom environment does not nurture happy emotions during this phase, children's brains will biologically block neural learning synapses, resulting in learning burnout at a young age.
- b. High school students (MA Al-Hidayah) are navigating self-identity exploration while dealing with "Contemporary Future Anxiety." Rural socioeconomic pressures frequently skew their outlook on life, increasing the probability of rash decisions—such as early marriage—due to a lack of long-term academic ambition.

The Potential-Based Community Service Program (PMBP) at Insan Budi Utomo University (UIBU) addresses complicated emotional complexities and social concerns by implementing the ideas of Critical Humanist Pedagogy. Our approach prioritizes connecting with children's humanity before teaching them language, grammar rules, and academic concepts. Humanizing classroom relationships prioritizes safety, emotional recognition, and warmth as the cornerstone for effective knowledge transfer. This study investigates how a humanizing approach to students, combined with a quantified action technique, might reduce language fear and foster a spirit of independent learning from within.

This study examines how warm and participatory educational psychology interventions reduce language anxiety, improve intrinsic motivation, and foster psychological resilience among adolescents in Pandansari village. This article combines complex dynamic systems theory (CDST), the cognitive model of ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy), and action research methodology to explore how a student-centered and humanizing approach can overcome learning barriers and create new opportunities for children in rural areas.

II. PROBLEM ANALYSIS

Before developing any field interventions, the facilitator team performed an intensive diagnostics phase to identify the underlying psychosocial and academic difficulties faced by both partner institutions in Pandansari Village. We uncovered a number of deeply interwoven systemic concerns through preliminary mapping, compassionate open-ended interactions with local educators, and direct observation of student behaviors. These difficulties include a paralyzing sort of language anxiety, a socio-cognitive vulnerability that views early marriage as a life shortcut, and a significant workload crisis that has an influence on the student facilitators' internal mental well-being.

The most noticeable symptom upon entering the classrooms at SDN Pandansari 2 and MA Al-Hidayah was severe, pervasive language anxiety. This barrier is caused by severe situational anxiety, which entirely paralyzes linguistic speech, rather than a lack of raw intelligence or cognitive competence. When foreign language training began, the classroom climate became palpably tight and hushed. Most students demonstrated traditional symptoms of acute anxiety, such as avoiding direct eye contact with facilitators, dropping their

heads deeply during question-and-answer sessions, and returning to complete silence or uneasy mumbling when requested for spontaneous input.

At MA Al-Hidayah, this fear resulted in significant passive coping and disguised academic resistance. Students saw foreign language output as a serious danger to their social standing and self-esteem. There was widespread concern that any grammatical error or mispronunciation would result in social humiliation or peer criticism. This fear of unfavorable judgment seriously damaged their speech production pathways, making classroom dialog utterly one-sided and mechanical. Meanwhile, at the elementary school level (SDN Pandansari 2), the problem appeared as severe academic disengagement and an early onset inferiority mentality. Because of a lack of exposure to innovative, enjoyable learning approaches in the past, the youngsters saw foreign languages as daunting and strange. If not handled, this extended anxiety has the potential to profoundly damage their academic self-concept during their formative years.

The final problem node discovered in this study is the high emotional strain and systemic pressure encountered by the internal team of student facilitators at Universitas Insan Budi Utomo (UIBU). The PMBP program required a massive, unwavering investment of physical presence, emotional work, and cognitive output in the hamlet for two months. Crucially, the university's overlapping academic schedule required these same students to complete their intense field teaching practicum (PPL). Furthermore, a sizable proportion of the team was made up of non-traditional, working-class students who had to balance both academic and professional obligations.

The structural compounding of schedules caused an extreme time-demand stress situation. Continuous long-distance travel to the rural site, along with severe sleep deprivation, began to damage the team's physical condition, quickly leading to emotional instability. As physical stamina diminished, the group's internal communication broke down, resulting in misunderstandings, conflict, and emotional strain during strategic sessions. This internal instability jeopardized the continuity and quality of the field intervention. It became evident that in order to properly heal the partner students' psychological scars, the facilitators needed to publicly address their own vulnerabilities and actively create adaptive coping methods to safeguard the team's unity and professionalism.

III. METHODOLOGY

This community-based psychological intervention took place on-site at SDN Pandansari 2 and MA Al-Hidayah in Pandansari Village for two months, from April 1 to May 31, 2026. To collect real, highly contextualized qualitative data, this study used a descriptive qualitative technique based on a Contemporary Participatory Action Research (PAR) paradigm. This action-oriented research paradigm was chosen because it rejects the detached spectator perspective, requiring the research team to fully immerse themselves as active stakeholders and change agents in the students' local learning ecosystem. The action research approach was implemented through a continuous, cyclical four-stage procedure that included the following components:

- a. Planning Stage: The team identified baseline affective issues through in-depth qualitative interviews with school counselors and structured baseline observations of student behavior during ordinary classes. These diagnostic findings were used to create personalized daily affective adaption tracking sheets and humanistic pedagogical guidelines based on the developmental needs of each target age group.
- b. Acting Stage: The field interventions were deployed simultaneously across two specialized action clusters based on age cohort demographics:
 - 1) Primary School Action Cluster (SDN Pandansari 2, Grades IV & V; N=100):
Implementation of a Gamified Learning Ecosystem for teaching basic vocabulary about time and transportation through physically active, kinesthetic team-based games.
 - 2) Adolescent Action Cluster (MA Al-Hidayah, Grades X, XI, and XII, N=95): The launch of an emotionally safe verbal production space through the informal English Café simulation,

as well as structured, nonjudgmental dialogue circles focusing on future planning and early marriage prevention.

- c. Observing Stage: Throughout the activities' implementation, real-time data collection was continuous. Researchers served as participant observers, taking comprehensive qualitative field notes, recording transcripts of verbal encounters, and using descriptive affective adaption scales to closely monitor daily fluctuations in student anxiety levels.
- d. Reflecting Stage: At the end of each weekly cycle, the full facilitator team convened for a collaborative data analysis session. During these reflection meetings, the weekly qualitative trajectory of student affective reactions was critically assessed to see whether the current interventions were effective in lowering language anxiety or if tactical adaptations were needed for the next cycle.

IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Managing Language Anxiety using Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST).

Upon initial entry into MA Al-Hidayah's upper secondary environment, baseline observational data collected during the planning stage confirmed severe clinical symptoms of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). When students were asked to engage, they displayed severe passivity, lowered gazes, and defensive-negative answers. Evaluated via the modern perspective of CDST (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2022), we conceived this anxiety as an unstable state inside the student's socio-affective system generated by a strict, traditional classroom architecture.

In response to feedback from the first action cycle, the team created the English Café intervention. By physically and psychologically transforming the traditional classroom into a fluid, replicated café setting, the intimidating teacher-student hierarchy was broken down.



Picture 1. English Café

From an emotional neuroscience standpoint, removing the persistent threat of overt grammatical correction rapidly reduced the kids' hyperactive amygdala responses. This emotional down-regulation opened their prefrontal brain circuits, allowing them to communicate naturally and spontaneously without fear of being mocked by their peers.

Concurrently, at SDN Pandansari 2, the physical games were aligned with *Embodied Cognition Play Theory*. Integrating vocabulary acquisition (time and transportation themes) with gross motor kinesthetic play successfully shifted cognitive load away from conscious anxiety.



Picture 2. Vocabulary Acquisition

This significantly expanded the children's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as they absorbed linguistic structures organically while immersed in play. By the final evaluation cycle on May 25, 2026, tracking data revealed a radical shift: student response curves migrated decisively from passive academic resistance to warm, highly active participation.

II. Mitigating Facilitator Burnout using the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model

The high emotional and physical toll of conducting this participatory action study had an undeniable psychological impact on the internal facilitator cohort. Navigating the tough field schedule while also fulfilling concurrent university field teaching commitments (PPL) and external professional activities resulted in significant time demands. According to the task Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), the rapid escalation of task demands without quick institutional support pushed the team toward physical weariness and interpersonal tension.

To systematically minimize this internal crises during our weekly reflection cycles, the team actively designed new Job Resources through the cultivation of strong intra-group social support. We established required, non-evaluative emotional sharing circles to address field tiredness and interpersonal strain. We implemented an agile method of Cross-Functional Job Crafting. Team members were given complete latitude to reallocate field tasks on a regular basis based on their current physical stamina and psychological capacity. This deliberate use of humanistic care to the facilitators successfully stabilized group cohesion and maintained professional performance until the program concluded.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

This community-based educational psychology intervention, designed within a current Participatory Action Research (PAR) paradigm, effectively eliminated academic resistance among rural students in Pandansari Village. The English Café, viewed through the lens of Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST), proved extremely efficient in changing volatile situational anxiety into active, confident verbal participation. Concurrently, the humanistic application of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) principles fostered vital cognitive flexibility among rural adolescents, successfully redirecting their attention away from premature marriage and toward committed actions aimed at self-actualization through higher education.

Based on the structural workload insights generated from the JD-R model, this study makes two institutional recommendations to university policymakers:

- a. Academic Calendar Synchronization: To safeguard students from toxic task compounding and extreme academic stress, university administrators should structurally separate the field timelines of community engagement programs (PMBP) and intense teaching practicums (PPL).
- b. Engagement Timeline Repositioning: It is strongly advised to place extensive community engagement courses in the intermediate/short semesters preceding the final year (before semester 8), ensuring that students have the cognitive bandwidth to engage with rural communities without jeopardizing their thesis progress.

REFERENCES

- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2017). Job demands-resources theory: Taking stock and looking forward. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, 22(3), 273.
- Hayes, S. C., Strosahl, K. D., & Wilson, K. G. (2011). *Acceptance and commitment therapy: The process and practice of mindful change*. Guilford press.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern language journal*, 70(2), 125-132.

- Immordino-Yang, M. H. (2015). Emotions, learning, and the brain: Exploring the educational implications of affective neuroscience. WW Norton & Company.
- Larsen-Freeman, D., & Hiver, P. (2025). Complex dynamic systems theory. In Theories in second language acquisition (pp. 217-244). Routledge.
- Gregersen, T., & Mercer, S. (Eds.). (2022). The Routledge handbook of the psychology of language learning and teaching. Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.
- Mustamin, R., Mobonggi, A., & Wantu, H. (2026). Internalization of Character Education Values in the Khuruj Extracurricular Program. PEDAGOGIKA, 17(1), 20-33.