

Predictors of Success in Coping with Learning Anxieties

Kristhel Erica F. Gaoat¹, Marie Jane A. Caligan¹, Mae Angelica S. Butel¹, Mee Jay A. Domingo^{1*}

¹Mariano Marcos State University, City of Batac, Ilocos Norte, 2906, Philippines

*Correspondence email: meejaydomingo@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Language anxiety is a state of apprehension occurring in the process of a second/foreign language use. Using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), this study aimed to determine the level and causes of English language learning anxiety of indigenous peoples as well as their English language learning strategies. Moreover, the study also determined the learning strategies that predict success in overcoming their anxiety. Data show that: 1) the students experience moderate level of English language learning anxiety; 2) in-class activities and classroom atmosphere are the main causes of students' anxiety; 3) metacognitive strategy topped the strategy that the respondents use; and 4) the cognitive and affective strategies are the best predictors of success in coping with learning anxieties.

Keywords: Learning Anxieties, Predictors, Success

INTRODUCTION

Among the different languages in the world today, English is said to be the most important (Razzaque, 2012) as it links the whole world together. As a proof, at least a few people in a language community know and use it, disregarding the accent used. Moreover, English is the global language or the lingua franca used comprehensively by many countries as a second language throughout the globe. It is the language for trade and industry, information technology, the leading medium for the transmission of information and knowledge, socio-economic mobility, educational and professional advancement, international diplomacy, and air traffic control operations, among others.

This impact of the language on humanity pushes educational institutions to better the English language instruction in schools. The success of a language learner may be attributed to the nature of the teaching and learning context, learners' motivation level, personality, physical as well as demographic characteristics. Along the process, learners may suffer from language anxiety.

There are classroom problems that may cause language anxiety. First, the students feel that they are being judged in the classroom by their teachers. There are also students who are judgmental and they either express their approval or disapproval or mock one another (Turula, 2002). In addition, the feeling of isolation inside the classroom is another problem. According to Shavelson and Stern, cited in Nunan (1981), teachers tend to have their favorite students and that teacher favoritism is manifested in the classroom mainly by inconsistent error correction and unfair distribution of turns. The favorite students have more opportunities to speak and their errors are often disregarded. According to Batara (2012), the feeling of loss of control is also considered as a factor. This problem inside the classroom makes the interaction futile because the students are not empowered. It makes the students feel that they are being compared with each other and they would feel that they do not have a control over the language system.

Students who experience these kinds of anxiety tend to sit inactively in their classes and decide not to participate in activities that could enhance their current level of language proficiency. Worse, said students may drop out from school. Hence, the conduct of this research.

The current research determined the English language learning anxiety of the Grades 9 and 10 indigenous peoples of Nueva Era and Carasi, Ilocos Norte.

Specifically, it aimed to: 1) determine the level of English language learning anxiety of the respondents; 2) identify the causes of English language learning anxiety as experienced by the respondents; 3) probe

Proceeding books:

The 2nd International Conference and Innovation Exhibiti on Global Education (ICEGE)

the English language learning strategies used by the respondents in their language classes; and 4) determine the language strategies that predict success in overcoming the English language learning anxiety of the respondents.

Review of Related Literature

Strategies in Learning the English Language

As the teaching and learning of the English language continue and grow from time to time, different strategies were developed and are still being developed. Also, in teaching or learning the language, for any length of time, there are innumerable strategies which claim to be the most effective in teaching students a new language.

There are six major groups of L2 learning strategies which were identified by Oxford (1990). These are memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. Alternative taxonomies have been offered by O'Mailey and Chamot (1990) and others.

Second Language Learning Anxiety

In general, anxiety is defined as a psychological construct that is described as a state of apprehension, a vague fear that is only indirectly associated with an object (Hilgard, Atkinson, & Atkinson, 1971).

Anxiety has been found to interfere with several types of learning but when it is associated with learning a second or foreign language it is coined as second/foreign language anxiety. McIntyre and Gardner (1994) defined this linguistic phenomenon as a subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system. Furthermore, McIntyre (1999) states that language anxiety refers to the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning a second language.

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) defined foreign language anxiety as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process.

Pekrun (1992) states that in situations where there is high anxiety, habitual reactions can cause learners who have encountered many threatening situations in the past to perceive future situations as threatening. In the same vein, Vasey and Daleiden (1996) argue that highly anxious learners may have a lower threshold of threat recognition, perceiving vague situations as potentially threatening more than moderately anxious persons. Due to the possibility that some learners are more prone to anxiety than others, it is important to differentiate between individuals who are often anxious and those who are not.

A distinction can be made between the various types of anxiety- trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. Drawing on work in psychology, Scovel (1978) defines trait anxiety as a permanent predisposition to be anxious. Those who are able to perceive situations as being threatening are said to have state anxiety, a social type of anxiety that occurs under certain conditions. Situation - specific anxiety is caused by specific situation or event such as public speaking, examinations or recitations.

Moreover, they also found that foreign language anxiety can be related to the following: communication apprehension (the fear of communicating with other people), test anxiety (fear of exams, quizzes, and other activities used to evaluate one's competence) and fear of negative evaluation (the worry about how others view the speaker).

Some experts further differentiate the concept of anxiety by distinguishing between cognitive (worry) and affective (emotional) components of anxiety (Deffenbacher, 1980; Schwarzer, 1986). As posited by Deffenbacher (1980), anxiety produced by cognitive interference (e.g. learning challenges) is due to extreme instances of worry and not the arousal of anxiety. Therefore, this cognitive anxiety type associated, for instance, classroom learning is rarely facilitative that is the learners have to struggle in order to change their perspective on the new learning task.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The study employed the descriptive –correlation research design. For the purpose of this study, the descriptive research design was used to determine the respondents' level and causes of language

Proceeding books:

The 2nd International Conference and Innovation Exhibiti on Global Education (ICEGE)

learning anxiety and their learning strategies. However, the correlational research design was used in identifying the relationship between the respondents' language learning anxiety and language learning strategies. Moreover, in determining the language strategies that could predict students' coping strategies with their anxiety, the multiple regression analysis was used.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at the selected secondary schools in Ilocos Norte: Nueva Era National High School (NENHS), Uguis Integrated School (UIS), Adriano P. Arzadon National High School (AANHS), and Carasi National High School (CNHS). These schools were chosen as they are situated in a community where the majority of the indigenous peoples in Ilocos Norte live. Moreover, these areas were suggested by the National Commission of Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) of the province of Ilocos Norte.

Population and Sampling Procedures

This study involved Grades 9 and 10 students who: a) are enrolled during the academic year 2016 - 2017 at the selected locale of the study; b) are members of an IP community; and c) were raised and schooled only in the municipalities of Nueva Era and Carasi, Ilocos Norte during their pre-secondary education.

There are 391 Grades 9 and 10 students enrolled during the academic year 2016 – 2017. Of which, 171 students (43.73%) served as participants in the study. Of the 171, 22.22% are from APANHS, 49.7% are from NENHS, 12.87% are from UIS, and 15.20% are from CNHS.

Research Instruments

In order to realize the objectives of the study, the following research instruments were used: Profile Inventory Form (PIF), Horwitz's (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), and Oxford's (1989) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL).

Although both instruments are found to be reliable and valid, the researchers still pilot-tested said instruments to the would-be respondents. Afterward, necessary revisions were done to suit the instruments to the respondents' needs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Level of Language Learning Anxiety of the Respondents

The first problem of this study calls for the identification of the level of the English language learning anxieties of the Grades 9 and 10 IPs in the selected schools in Ilocos Norte. To address such, the researchers used the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) questionnaire designed by Horwitz et al. (1986).

Table 1 shows the result of the FLCAS scores of the Grades 9 and 10 students enrolled in the schools of the selected IP communities of Ilocos Norte.

Table 1. Level of English Language Learning Anxiety of the Respondents

Schools	Grades 9	V.I	Grade 10	V.I	X	V.I
APANHS	92.48	Moderate	87.82	Moderate	90.15	Moderate
UIS	82.11	High	93.92	Moderate	88.02	Moderate
NENHS	90.79	Moderate	93.7	Moderate	92.25	Moderate
CNHS	89.31	Moderate	98.4	Moderate	93.86	Moderate
X	88.67	Moderate	93.46	Moderate	91.07	Moderate

Legend:

33.00 - 59.40	Very high	(VH)
59.50 - 85.80	High	(H)
85.90 - 112.20	Moderate	(M)
112.30 - 138.60	Low	(L)
138.70 - 165.00	Very Low	(VL)

Proceeding books:

The 2nd International Conference and Innovation Exhibiti on Global Education (ICEGE)

As shown in the Table, Grade 9, with 88.67 FLCAS score, experience a *moderate* level of language learning anxiety. However, it is interesting to highlight that among the schools, Grade 9 students of UIS experience a *high* anxiety level as reflected in their mean score of 82.02.

The table also shows the FLCAS score of the Grade 10 students (M=93.46). Like the Grade 9 students, it was found that the Grades 10 students experience a moderate level of language learning anxiety. Generally, it shows that the Grade 10 experience has a lower level of anxiety compared to the Grade 9 students.

The table shows that the overall result of the level of anxiety is *moderate* as reflected in the mean score of 91.07. This corroborates with the findings of (Elkhafaifi, 2005; Hismanoglu, 2013; Liu, 2006) when they found that language anxiety is expected to decrease as the students age and reach higher educational attainment. Grade 10 students feel less anxiety than the Grade 9 since the former has received more language inputs brought by their longer learning experience with the language. According to Liu (2011), students with more English learning experiences are less likely to feel anxious when learning the target language. The findings also relate with the results of Batara’s (2012) when she found that college freshman students moderately experience all types of anxieties (situation-specific anxiety, trait anxiety, and state anxiety in their language classrooms).

Among the four schools, UIS with the total average of (M=88.2) got the highest anxiety level. This school also reported a high level of anxiety among the grades 9 students. This is may be attributed to the location of the place. The three schools Adriano P. Arzadon national High school, Nueva era National High school, and Carasi National High school are situated near the heart of the municipality while Uguis Integrated School is located an hour away from the town’s downtown.

2. Causes of Anxiety of the Respondents

The second problem of this study calls for the identification of the causes of language learning anxiety as experienced by the respondents. Horwitz (2001) posited that said anxiety is caused by the uniqueness of the language learning processes. Tran (2012), too, mentioned about its volatile effect on language learning. Thus, it is needed to determine the causes that trigger anxiety so as to find remedies in minimizing and/or overcoming said anxiety.

Based on the classification established above, four causes of language learning anxiety were identified. These are *communication anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and anxiety in English classroom classes*.

Table 2. Causes of anxiety

Causes of Anxiety	X	V.I
Communication Apprehension Anxiety	2.64	Moderate
Fear of Negative Evaluation Anxiety	2.72	Moderate
Test Anxiety	2.67	Moderate
English Classroom Anxiety	2.88	Moderate

As shown in Table 2, all the four causes of anxiety were rated moderate. However, of the four, the *English Classroom Anxiety* (2.88). This is followed by *Fear of Negative Evaluation Anxiety* (2.72), *Test Anxiety* (2.67), and *Communication Apprehension Anxiety* (2.64), respectively. The findings imply that the students tend to experience anxiety brought by the various in-class activities required by the course and the atmosphere created by both the teacher and the students.

3. Language Learning Styles of the Respondents

The SILL was developed by Oxford (1990) and was used in this study to determine the language strategies used by the Grades 9 and 10 Indigenous Peoples in their language classes.

After the analysis on the data gathered, it was known that IPs generally use all the six strategy groups. The table 3 presents the summary of the language learning styles of Grades 9 and 10 Indigenous peoples enrolled in the selected high schools in Ilocos Norte.

Proceeding books:

The 2nd International Conference and Innovation Exhibiti on Global Education (ICEGE)

Table 3. Language Learning Styles of the Respondents

Language Learning styles	X	V.I
Memory Strategy	3.04	STM
Cognitive Strategy	2.96	STM
Compensation Strategy	2.94	STM
Metacognitive Strategy	3.38	STM
Affective Strategy	3.00	STM
Social Strategy	3.09	STM

Legend:

- 4.51-5.00 Always or almost true of me or ATM
- 3.51-4.50 Usually true of me or UTM
- 2.51-3.50 Somewhat true of me or STM
- 1.51-2.50 Usually not true of me or UNTM
- 1.00-1.50 Never or almost true of me NTM

As shown in Table 3, all the six language learning styles were rated as somewhat true of me (STM). Specifically, the most used is the *Metacognitive strategy* (3.38) followed by *Social strategy* (3.09), *Memory strategy* (3.04), *Affective Strategy* (3.00), *Cognitive Strategy* (2.96) and *Compensation Strategy* (2.94). Examples of the most used strategy are identifying one’s own learning style preferences and needs, planning for an L2 task, gathering and organizing materials, arranging a study space and a schedule, monitoring mistakes, and evaluating the success of any type of learning strategy. Among native English speakers learning the foreign language, Purpura (1999) found that metacognitive strategies had “a significant, positive, direct, effect on cognitive strategy use in task completion”.

4. Predictor of Success in Overcoming Language Anxieties

To determine the predictors of success in overcoming language anxiety, the researchers examined the responses of the samples and utilized multiple linear regression technique to gain insights in the data using the R programming software. Mean is computed from each of the indicators of FLCAS, SILLA or Memory Strategy, SILLB or Cognitive Strategy, SILLC or Compensation Strategy, SILLD or Metacognitive Strategy, and SILLE or Affective Strategy and SILL F or Social Strategy for each of the samples in order to model the respondent’s behavior.

One of the problems in multiple linear regression is multicollinearity. This is a state where the indicators or the variables under investigation are correlated to each other which may lead to higher error scores in the models.

To study the data further, the researchers built multiple linear models to identify the other predictors. The best model that fits the data identifies the predictors. In here, the researchers used the standard error, p-value, and f-statistic as metrics. The standard error determines the distance of the data points from the regression line while the f-statistic and p-value presents the overall significance of the model. Since the indicators are highly collinear, the researcher built 64 models representing the 64 possible arrangements of the strategies to see the best predictors that fit the data.

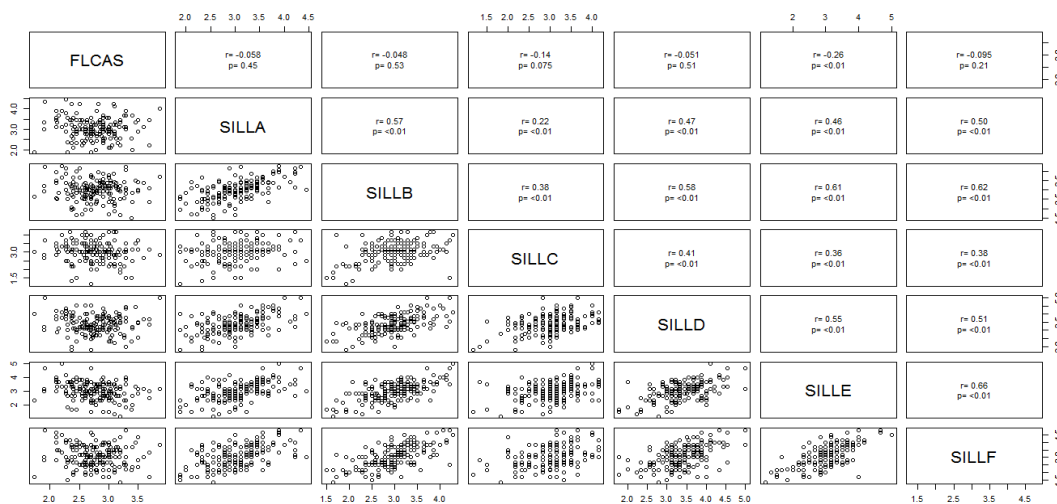


Figure 1. Predictors of Success in Overcoming Language Anxiety of Grades 9 and 10

Proceeding books:

The 2nd International Conference and Innovation Exhibiti on Global Education (ICEGE)

Using Pearson correlation coefficient, the researchers observed that most of the indicators are significantly correlated to each other with p-values <0.01. SILLB or Cognitive Strategy and SILLE or Socio-Affective Strategy are predictors of success in overcoming the language learning anxieties of the students.

With a p-value of 0.0006329 (<.01) indicates that the model is highly significant thereby rejecting the null hypothesis. Also, this model suggests that SILLB or Cognitive Strategy and SILLE or Socio-Affective Strategy are predictors of success in overcoming the language learning anxieties of the students.

Among the 64 multiple linear models for Grades 9 and 10, the best model that predicts the data is
 $FLCAS = 3.033963 + 0.12196 SILLB - 0.21079 SILLE$
 $FLCAS = 3.033963 + 0.12196 SILLB - 0.21079 SILLE$.

The Grades 9 and 10 multiple linear regression model specifics are presented in Table 4. Residuals:

Min 1Q Median 3Q Max
 -1.14285 -0.22108 -0.02458 0.24048 1.05386

Table 4. The Grades 9 and 10 Multiple Linear Regression Model

Coefficients:	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr (> t)
(Intercept)	3.03963	0.16293	18.656	< 2e-16 ***
SILLB	0.12196	0.06556	1.860	0.064607
SILLE	-0.21079	0.05448	-3.869	0.000156 ***

Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 0.3667 on 168 degrees of freedom
 Multiple R-squared: 0.08395, Adjusted R-squared: 0.07304
 F-statistic: 7.698 on 2 and 168DF, p-value: 0.0006329

In this model, a p-value of 0.0006329 (<.01) indicates that the model is highly significant hereby rejecting the null hypothesis. Also, this model suggests that SILLB or Cognitive Strategy and SILLE or Socio-Affective Strategy are predictors of success in overcoming the language learning anxieties of the students.

CONCLUSIONS

The selected grades 9 and 10 Indigenous peoples experience a moderate level of English language learning anxiety. External factors such as in-class activities and classroom atmosphere are the main causes of language learning anxiety of the respondents. The metacognitive strategy is the commonly used strategy of the respondents. This is followed by social, memory, affective, cognitive, and compensation strategies.

The language learning strategies used by the indigenous peoples are all beneficial in their attempt to improve their proficiency in the language. However, the cognitive and affective strategies are the best among the six.

REFERENCES

- Batara, M. (2012). *Anxieties of College Freshmen Student in Language Classroom*. Mariano Marcos State University, Batac City, Ilocos Norte.
- Elkhafaifi H (2005). Listening comprehension and anxiety in the Arabic language classroom. *Modern Lang. Journal*. 89:206-220.
- Hilgard, E. R., Atkinson, R. C., & Atkinson, R. L. (1971). *Introduction to psychology* (5th ed.). New York: Harcourt
- Hismanoglu M (2013). Foreign language anxiety of English language teacher candidates: A sample from Turkey. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sci*. 93, 930-937

Proceeding books:

The 2nd International Conference and Innovation Exhibiti on Global Education (ICEGE)

- Horwitz, E. K. (1986). *Preliminary Evidence for The Reliability and Validity of a Foreign Language Anxiety Scale*. *TESOL Quarterly*, 20(3), 559-562.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety. *Modern Language Journal*, 70(1), 125-132.
- Liu, M. (2006). Anxiety in Chinese EFL at different proficiency levels. *System* 34:301-316
- MacIntyre, P. D. (1999). *Language anxiety: a review of the research for language teachers*. In D. J. Young (Ed.), *J/ F. Lee & B. Vanpatten (Gen. Eds.), affect in foreign language and second language learning: a practical guide to creating a low-anxiety classroom atmosphere* (pp. 24-33). New York: McGraw Hill.
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1994). The subtle effects of language anxiety on cognitive processing in the second language. *Language Learning*, 44, 283-305.
- Nunan, D. (1981). *New directions of TESOL*. Adelaide: Language Press
- O'Malley, J. M. & Chamot, A. U. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Oxford, R. (1989). Strategy inventory for language learning. Retrieved March 11, 2004 from the World Wide Web: http://ell.phil.tu-chemnitz.de/cing/frontend/questionnaires/oxford_quest.php
- Oxford, R. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. Rowley, Mass: Newbury House, 284-297
- Pekrun, R. (1992). Expectancy-value theory of anxiety: Overview and implications. In D. Forgays & T. Sosnowki (Eds.), *Anxiety: Recent developments in cognitive, psychophysiological, and health research*. Washington, DC: Hemisphere
- Purpura, J. (1999). *Learner characteristics and L2 test performance*. In R. L. Oxford (Ed.), *Language Learning strategies in the Context of Autonomy; Synthesis of findings from the international invitational conference on learning strategy research* (p. 61-63), Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, NY
- Razzaque, F. (2012). *Importance of English language*. <http://fahadrazzaque.wordpress.com/2012/10/26/hello-world/amp/>
- Schwarzer, R. (1986). *Self-related cognition in anxiety and motivation: An introduction*. In R. Schwarzer (Ed.), *Self-related cognition in anxiety and motivation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Scovel, T. (1978). The Effect of Anxiety on Language Learning: A Review of The Anxiety Research. *Language learning*, 28 (2), 129-142
- Tran, T.T.T. (2012). A review of Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's theory of foreign language anxiety and the challenges to the theory. *English Language Teaching* 5 (1), pp. 69-75.
- Turula, A. (2002). *Language anxiety and classroom dynamics: A study of adult learners*. English Teaching Forum, 28 – 37.
- Vasey, M. W., & Daleiden, E. L. (1996). *Information Processing Pathways to Cognitive Interference In Childhood*. In I. G.