

.....

Exploring Foreign Learners' Language Anxiety: The Case of Pre-University English Orientation Students

John Edgar C. Rubio

Warlito S. Caturay Jr.

Joan C. Generoso

Department of English and Literature

College of Arts and Sciences

Silliman University

Language anxiety has been identified as a contributory factor in language learning. However, there are contrasting results from different studies, which seem to stem from students' socio-cultural differences. In Silliman University, the English Orientation Program (EOP) is designed for pre-university students from a non-English medium background and have various proficiency levels upon entry. This being the case, the researchers attempted to explore the students' level of language anxiety and how socio-cultural differences play a role in their language learning. Using a mixed-method research, the study involved 12 EOP students. Quantitative data were elicited using the modified Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) questionnaire by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). The instrument addresses four sources of language anxiety: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, and anxiety of an English class. Qualitative data were solicited through a focus group discussion with selected students. The weighted mean reveals that students' anxiety level is average (\bar{x} = 2.575, 2.5111, 2.56, and 2.66364 for each predetermined category, respectively), indicating that students are not anxious at all. However, insights gathered from the focus group discussion reveal that students' language anxiety is relatively high during test-taking, which is customarily performance-based; they get inhibited from performing to a big audience. Students also do retrospection and feel upset for unsatisfactory performance. Results of the study provide many pedagogical implications, specifically on limiting students' anxiety and improving students' motivation to learn English.

Keywords: EFL, language learning anxiety, affect

INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language could be a daunting task. In fact, its challenge is best captured by Williams (1994, cited in Cohen, 2010, p. 169) when he said that “the learning of a foreign language involves far more than simply learning skills, or a system of rules, or a grammar. It involves an alteration of self-image, the adoption of new social and cultural behaviors and ways of being, and therefore has a significant impact on the learner’s social nature.” Aside from this, there are factors inherent in the learner that affect his/her language learning experience. Among these are the learner’s aptitude, personality, age, gender, motivation, learning style, and strategies.

One crucial factor that has been studied since the 1980s is anxiety. One can refer to the term anxiety, which comes from general psychology, as the emotional state in which people feel uneasy, apprehensive, or fearful. Ellis (1994) explained that learners become either fearful or confident of learning the target language depending on the anxiety developed. These types of anxiety are “due to learners’ competitive nature and their perceptions of whether they are progressing or not” (p. 472).

As manifested in most students, anxiety is categorized by MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) into three types: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. Trait anxiety is the learner’s likelihood of becoming anxious in a given learning situation, closely related to personality. A person whose trait anxiety is high would likely become apprehensive when given communicative tasks. Trait anxiety is responsible for any impaired cognitive process and memory, leading to avoidance behavior and several other consequences (p. 87). On the other hand, state anxiety refers to the occasional state of being nervous experienced by learners, which is typically momentary and can differ in intensity and time. Lastly, situation-specific anxiety is highly dependent on the situation or context. It has been studied using different scales, suggesting that “respondents are tested for their anxiety reactions in a well-defined situation such as public speaking, writing examinations...” (p. 90).

Learning anxiety and language anxiety have been perceived as synonymous and used interchangeably by several pieces of literature. However, there seems to be a distinction between the two concepts. Coutu (2002) explained that “learning anxiety comes from being afraid to try something new for fear that it will be too difficult” (p. 104). In this type of anxiety, learners

are uncomfortable because it threatens their self-esteem and even their identity. Learning anxiety refers to the general anxiety dealt with by learners in whatever course or learning activity they are thrown into.

On the other hand, language anxiety is perceived by Horwitz, et al. (1986) as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128). Hence, language anxiety encompasses feelings of apprehension and fearful emotions experienced by an individual when specifically learning or using the target language apart from his or her mother tongue.

The concept of anxiety in language learning is related to Krashen’s affective filter hypothesis, positing that the primary factor affecting language acquisition is the learners’ input. Krashen (1982) took a firm position on the importance of input, asserting that comprehensible input is necessary for second language acquisition. In his Affective Filter Hypothesis (AFH), affective factors such as anxiety may correlate to second language acquisition. Krashen asserted that many affective non-linguistic variables play a facilitative, but noncausal role in language learning. These are the variables identified: motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety.

Furthermore, learners will presumably become successful in language learning by having high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety. Otherwise, learners’ affective filter will increase and eventually form a ‘mental block’ of information and skills about the target language. When learners have low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety, the comprehensible input is blocked from reaching the mind’s language area. If left unaddressed, the acquisition process will soon fail.

Learners with favorable attitudes have low affective filters and tend to seek more comprehensible input. Moreover, those with unfavorable attitudes are hypothesized to have high affective filters. Even if these learners understand the message, the input is prevented from reaching the language acquisition device (LAD), which, according to Noam Chomsky, is the innate language faculty responsible for language acquisition. As a result, language learning may be impeded (Krashen, 1982).

The theory also explains that the impediment can be reduced by considering the learners’ interest, boosting their self-esteem, and providing a low anxiety environment. According to Krashen (1982), more students

will be successful in learning the target language. In this manner, language pedagogy should include sufficient comprehensible input and less anxiety-induced learning activities. However, he argued that language acquisition does not take effect with comprehensible input alone. Language learners also have to be receptive to that input. Thus, if they are demotivated, distant, or anxious, the possibility is that they screen out the input. This screen is the affective filter that determines how much a person learns in a formal or informal language setting. Comprehensible input, then, has to be appropriate and substantial, especially in low anxiety-provoking classrooms. Learners' willingness to speak and communicate in the classroom language is dependent on their affective filter, whether it hinders or helps students' ability to receive the needed input for the foreign language learning process.

Another theory related to Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis is the model on the cognitive effects of anxiety by Sigmund Tobias (1986). He suggested three stages of learning tasks focusing attention on the various ways of anxiety arousal that can affect learning. The stages include input, processing, and output. Anxiety prevents information into the cognitive processing system like a filter during the input stage. It somehow impedes students from learning new forms, words, phrases, and grammar because they are worried. During the processing stage, anxiety can influence both the speed and accuracy of learning as attention is distracted from making connections between new material and existing knowledge structures. Anxiety arousal at the output stage can influence the quality of second language communication. Anxious learners report "freezing-up" on an important test or have words on the "tip-of-the-tongue" but cannot express them. The frustration in such experiences heightens anxiety, creating a vicious cycle that maintains heightened anxiety even among learners whose proficiency level is improving.

Horwitz et al. (1986) identified three prevalent sources of language anxiety in most performance cases: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension is described as the feeling of shyness when engaging in any communicative discourse. Difficulties in speaking within a small group or in front of a large crowd and listening to a spoken interaction indicate that a learner has communication apprehension. If a learner displays this kind of behavior in a social situation, all the more, he or she will likely find greater difficulty

when asked to use the target language in communicative tasks, especially that performance is closely monitored.

Test anxiety is a psychological condition in which a learner experiences discomfort before, during, or after a test. Consequently, the inability to manage this anxiety results in poor performance and ineffective learning. Test anxiety can also come from learners' lack of awareness of the nature of the exam. If learners are unprepared for the exam, they might experience test anxiety for that particular exam and cause a long-term effect of the learner. Moreover, test-anxious learners demand high expectations on themselves, presuming that anything less than perfect is a failure.

Fear of negative evaluation is mainly concerned with other's evaluations. A learner with a high affective filter will avoid communicative tasks because of negative feedbacks and unfavorable judgment. In a language class, fear of negative evaluation is commonly displayed through either student's over-concern with the academic evaluation or competence in the target language.

Also, anxiety has been related to students' 'willingness to communicate.' Learners willingly communicate in any conversational interaction because they have developed a sufficient degree of self-confidence, communicative competence, and immersion in pleasant communicative situations. All these anxiety variables indicate that the interactive nature of language classrooms and the demand for learners to communicate successfully tend to make the language classroom more anxiety-inducing than other classroom contexts.

It must be noted that anxiety is not often seen to be a detrimental factor. Instead, others have suggested that a certain amount of apprehension can positively affect and even facilitate learning. Learners who experience anxiety before an examination or an oral presentation can foster enough motivation and impulse to succeed in a given situation. Due to the negative connotation attached to anxiety, a few researchers have opted to use other terms that seemed more neutral. According to Ellis (1994), investigating the relationship between the students' achievement and anxiety is not a linear one. In their Achievement Anxiety Test, Alpert and Haber (1960) presented two anxieties. The debilitating anxiety motivates them to escape the new learning task, whereas facilitating anxiety motivates them to struggle when they encounter learning new takes.

Language anxiety, as it influences students' language learning, can enhance or inhibit the learner's academic performance (Alpert & Haber,

1960). Facilitative anxiety compels learners to become motivated in learning the target language and performing communicative tasks. This effect of anxiety helps the learners to improve their performance. Students tend to exert more effort in their learning and may 'overstudy,' which is typical among anxious students, especially if they think they are not performing well academically. Learners tend to work hard in order to pass examinations and procure a satisfactory grade.

Besides its facilitative effect, language anxiety may also have a debilitating effect on language learning and performance. Learners tend to run away from the learning task, which "stimulates the learners emotionally to adopt avoidance behavior" (Alpert & Haber, 1960, p. 212). Such anxiety makes the students run away from examinations and avoid communicating with other learners. As learners strive to learn the language, anxiety hinders their learning development, which affects their academic achievement. He adds that this is one of the many concerns and issues of language teachers, administrators, and parents in schools and universities.

According to Spolsky (1989), anxiety as a negative factor is perceived as a sense of threat to the learner's self-concept in the learning situation. For instance, a learner avoids any situation that would make him or her ridicule for an error he or she has committed. Hence, learners tend to worry about their mistakes and become anxious, which leads to poor academic achievement.

Related to Spolsky's idea of anxiety is MacIntyre and Gardner's (1991) proposed model that explains the significant role of anxiety in language learning contexts. It presents "the relationship between anxiety and learning as moderated by the learner's stage of developing and situation-specific learning experiences (cited in Ellis, 1994, p. 483)." That is, anxiety is a cause of poor performance in language learning. Given a relatively simple task, learners do not mind anxiety and desire to improve performance through conscious effort. However, when the learning tasks' demands increase, the concerted effort may not cope with the complexity; thus, anxiety will begin to pose a negative effect. The damage caused by negative anxiety will heighten when demands imposed are beyond learners' capabilities. On the other hand, learners with low anxiety will have a smooth and effective transfer of information. Deficiency in cognitive processing is mainly caused by heightened anxiety in most performance tasks.

Over the years, several studies have been done on language anxiety and its effect on language learning. Among these are studies done by Gerencheal and Mishra (2019), Phongsa et al. (2017), and Jin, De Bot, and Keijzer (2015).

Gerencheal and Mishra (2019) examined the anxiety level of Ethiopian university English major students. The study also aimed to examine if anxiety level is significantly varied by gender. Background information questionnaire and FLCAS by (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) were distributed to 103 respondents from four EFL classes of two Ethiopian universities. Findings of the study showed that the mean anxiety level of the students was 3.47 (SD=0.45), which is above the average, i.e., 3.00, and the descriptive analysis revealed that a large number (83.5%) of students were suffering from some levels of anxiety ranging from medium- to high level. The analyses also revealed that most students had a higher level of communication apprehension than the other domains of anxiety proposed by Na (2007). Lastly, the independent t-test analysis revealed that female students were found to have a significantly higher level of English language anxiety ($t=-4.049$, $p=0.000$).

For their study, Phongsa, Ismael, and Low (2017) compared the foreign language anxiety experienced by monolingual and bilingual tertiary students in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) who were learning English as a Foreign Language. The monolingual students were learning English as their L2, while the bilingual students were learning it as their L3. Generally, both EFL learners reported moderate to high levels of foreign language anxiety in relation to EFL learning. They found out that bilingual students were reportedly feeling more comfortable with the native speakers of English and had increased self-confidence in using English compared to the monolingual students. This finding was interesting since the bilingual students had minimal exposure to English in their everyday conversation and lack of encouragement from their English teachers in the learning process. The findings emphasized positive, multilingual effects in linguistic self-confidence that would help multilingual individuals reduce foreign language anxiety.

In 2015, Jin, De Bot, and Keijzer investigated the foreign language anxiety' effects on foreign language proficiency over time within English and Japanese learning contexts. It also explored the stability of anxiety in English and Japanese over time and anxiety across English and Japanese. The administration of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, the English Proficiency Scale, and the Japanese Proficiency Scale revealed that

anxiety changes a significantly negative but weak correlation with the overall proficiency and the proficiency in sub-skills such as reading or speaking for both English and Japanese. The results suggest that the increase or decrease of foreign language anxiety over time can lead to an inverse change in either overall or specific proficiency. In other words, evidence was found to support the interference of FL anxiety with FL learning. Moreover, the findings also suggest the necessity to trace the changes of anxiety at the level of individuals or learner groups that can shed light on proficiency development.

In Silliman University, very few studies have been done on language anxiety, and all of them involved students who are learners of English as a second language. Carin (2012) examined BC 11 students' language anxiety and correlated this with their academic achievement and sex. Her study revealed no significant relationship among the variables. For their undergraduate thesis, Rubio, Sabanal, and Banaybanay (2018) investigated the relationship between language anxiety and academic achievement of Grade 9 students at a local high school and found out that students' level of language anxiety did not have any significant relationship with their grade.

To date, no study in Silliman had been done on language anxiety that involved students who come from countries where English is merely an adjunct language. Hence, this study attempted to explore this group of students' level of language anxiety. This exploration is important since the students' learning context – from that of English as a foreign language to English as a second language – is significant.

This study then involved students in the English Orientation Program (EOP) offered by the Department of English and Literature. This is a 15-unit program, designed primarily for international students from non-English medium backgrounds who desire to be enrolled in any of the university's undergraduate programs. Designed as a preparatory course, the EOP orients students to the university life's academic demands, equipping them with the necessary skills to survive.

This study attempted to answer the following:

1. What is the level of language anxiety among EFL students in the English Orientation Program?
2. What are the EFL students' perceptions towards their language anxiety in English Orientation Program?

Answers to these questions provide many pedagogical implications that will enhance the teaching and learning processes in the EOP.

METHODS

A mixed-method design was used for this study. Quantitative and qualitative strategies, techniques, and methods were used to elicit answers to posited questions. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2014) said that using this research design "...allows researchers [to] take an eclectic approach to method selection and the thinking about and conduct of research" (p.17).

The respondents of the study were the students of the English Orientation Program of Silliman University during the second semester of Academic Year 2019-2020. They came from Japan, Vietnam, Korea, and Tibet. Since only ten of them enrolled in the program, they were all included; hence, the study used complete enumeration.

To determine the international students' level of English language anxiety, a modified version of Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (1986) was used. The said instrument contains 33 items with the following categories: communication apprehension, test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and anxiety in an English class. Initially, many statements include negation, which the researchers removed and adjusted to make them easier to process for the respondents who then indicated their level of agreement in a Likert scale: 4 = strongly disagree, 3 = disagree, 2 = agree, and 1 = strongly agree. Their responses were averaged and interpreted using Table 1.

Table 1

Interpretation of FLCAS' Scores

Range	Interpretation
1.00 – 1.74	Very High Anxiety
1.75– 2.49	High Anxiety
2.50 – 3.24	Low Anxiety
3.25 – 4.00	Very Low Anxiety

Focus group discussion (FGD) was also done to enable the researchers to corroborate and validate the data from the FLCAS. This allowed

participants to explain and expand their quantitative answers. The FGD also gave the participants a venue to express their perceptions toward the language anxiety that they experienced in the EOP.

All ten students were invited to the FGD. However, only seven were able to join, as the others had previous appointments on the scheduled day of FGD. One of the researchers facilitated the proceeding, while the other researchers served as a note-taker and an observer.

Excerpts from the FGD are inserted into the results and discussion sections of the paper when they expand or support ideas.

Participants' consent was asked in all phases of the data collection process. This ensures that the participants were apprised of the project and of their right to refuse participation.

RESULTS

In the study, the FLCAS questionnaire results determined the level of language anxiety through mean computation. Moreover, responses to the focus group discussion through thematic analysis corroborated the quantitative data. The FLCAS questionnaire findings revealed that EFL students had low anxiety in their EO classes; however, select items that indicate a high level of language anxiety were highlighted and explored in the focus group discussion. The researchers then identified the recurring ideas and established themes and descriptions from the participants' responses. Furthermore, the implications drawn from both survey and focus group discussion offer recommendations to address concerns towards the English Orientation Program.

Table 2

Level of Language Anxiety of English Orientation Students

Language Anxiety	Level of Anxiety	Interpretation
Communication Apprehension	2.58	Low Anxiety
Fear of Negative Evaluation	2.51	Low Anxiety
Test Anxiety	2.56	Low Anxiety
Anxiety in an English Class	2.66	Low Anxiety
Level of Language Anxiety	2.58	Low Anxiety

Table 2 presents the results of each predetermined category and the level of language anxiety among EO students. They obtained a weighted mean of 2.58, implying that EO students were not anxious to communicate and take language examinations. Students were neither afraid of negative evaluation as well. However, select items in the FLCAS questionnaire were found indicative of students' language anxiety. These are enumerated in Table 3.

Table 3*FLCAS Items that are Indicative of High Level of Language Anxiety*

No.	Statement	Mean
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English language class.	2.20
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English language class.	2.40
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.	2.40
8	I am not at ease during tests in my English language class.	2.30
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English language class.	2.50
10	I worry about the consequences of failing my English language class.	2.40
11	I understand why some people get so upset over English language classes.	2.20
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English language class.	2.50
16	Even if I am well prepared for English language class, I feel anxious about it.	2.50
20	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in English language class.	2.50
21	The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.	2.50
22	I feel pressured to prepare very well for English language class.	2.50
23	I always feel that the other students speak the language better than I do.	2.30
30	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a language.	2.50
33	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	2.50

Although the FLCAS questionnaire uncovered students' low language anxiety levels, the highlighted items indicated relatively high anxiety and

could be further explored. Substantial inputs would then supplement and corroborate the results of the quantitative data. Hence, these were considered as potential topics for the focus group discussion. The researchers further outlined the FGD questions drawn from these statements' recurring themes, soliciting EFL students' perceptions of their language anxiety in the English Orientation Program.

Based on the findings from the FGD, the researchers established three salient themes: self-confidence in speaking, test-taking, and language learning. These themes are considerably aligned to their language anxiety in the English Orientation Program. Moreover, particular issues are explored and discussed in each theme. The results' discussion is then substantiated with excerpts from the FGD, theoretical considerations, and related studies.

Self-confidence in speaking. Items 1,3,7,9,13,16,20, and 33 are directed towards students' self-confidence in an English class, especially in speaking. EO students shared a thorough discussion on their attitude towards speaking, which can be further classified into three situations: interaction towards classmates, class discussion, and performance tasks. All students unfolded that they are confident to interact with their EO classmates; however, it is not the same for their Immersion classmates. Most students admitted that they were less confident to interact in the Immersion class due to personality and paralinguistic factors (e.g., shy personality, pronunciation variations, speed, etc.).

Moreover, EO teachers frequently held class discussions, so students found it challenging to talk about or share their review of an article. As elicited from one student, class discussions were rather taxing because they *"needed to have a good vocabulary, and speak in front of the class."* Lastly, all students agreed that presentations and other performance tasks are challenging because they usually memorize their outputs. However, one student need not worry about these factors because *"teachers were helpful in [building his self-] confidence."*

The findings presented are relatively reflective of MacIntyre and Gardner's (1991) concept of trait anxiety. It is patently reasoned that students' anxiety is developed based on their personality. To reiterate, students would likely become apprehensive about performing communicative tasks if their trait anxiety is high. EO students assumed that they need to have a good command of the target language during classroom interaction. Consequently,

they became conscious of speaking and less confident in communicative situations.

Test-taking. There were five items (8, 10, 11, 21, and 30) addressed towards test-taking; however, much of the sharing in the FGD transpired around how EO students prepared, took, and evaluated themselves during an examination. It should be noted that the EO teachers employed performance-based exams for the students. The focus of the responses is on presentations, speech delivery, role-plays, and the like.

EO students invested more in preparing for their performance tasks. A few students felt excited because these performance tasks “provide opportunities for them to learn.” They added that there was more time to prepare because they only had fewer subjects. Among the preparations were reading the material thoroughly, understanding its meaning and context, and rehearsing for the presentation. However, one student often felt annoyed because of his lazy attitude; he usually procrastinates, influencing his anxiety and performance.

Moreover, students acknowledged that no matter how prepared they were, they still were anxious during the presentation day. Anxiety was brought about by performing in front of an audience. Students furthered that “many eyes are looking” at them, making them concerned with the way they presented and the mistakes they might commit. Moreover, how the EO teachers looked at them was quite intimidating, making them feel uncomfortable and anxious during the presentation. With that, students preferred to present in a smaller audience and equip themselves with “enough vocabulary.”

In the FGD, students were given the opportunity to evaluate their performance. All students claimed that they felt upset with their performance during the midterm and final examinations. Some of the challenges obtained from their reflection were as follow:

- forgetting a line after memorizing the script
- lacking emphatic expressions
- locating the appropriate words
- losing one’s train of thought
- improvising the dialogue because of ‘mental block’

Students blamed this on their anxiety during the presentation. Moreover, their performance could have been better had they managed their anxiety well.

The discussion on EO students' performance anxiety is associated with Ellis's (1994) assumption towards anxiety development. It is explained that these anxieties arise because of "learners' competitive nature," making students pressed for satisfactory performance. Ellis's (1994) claim somehow underpins Alpert and Haber's (1960) idea on facilitative anxiety. EO students indeed were driven to 'overstudy' and become prepared for their performance tasks. However, students were found dissatisfied with their performance despite the preparations. Students perhaps overlooked the factors that might affect their performance, which is presumably natural among EFL learners.

Language learning. It is relatively rare to perceive anxiety as a contributory factor in the students' language learning. Based on the students' reflections, being anxious in their EO classes helped them learn English. Given that around 75 percent of the EO class size is Japanese, the rest who are non-Japanese found it laborious to establish rapport and communicate effectively with other students; as the Vietnamese student commented, "everything was strange" the first few weeks of the program. However, the students had no choice but to communicate and learn the target language. Anxiety-induced activities such as conversing with foreign classmates in the English language somehow benefited them in their language learning.

Students acknowledged several factors that influenced their language learning despite dealing with language anxiety. All of them affirmed that their classmates in the Immersion classes helped manage the former's anxiety. The classmates were there to assure the students and support them whenever they need help. Also, it was mentioned earlier that EO teachers were also instrumental. Both teachers and classmates helped the students cope with their language anxiety and make their language learning insightful and worthwhile.

DISCUSSION

Insights drawn from both the FLCAS findings and the FGD provided the researchers with realizations and pedagogical implications towards EFL learners' language anxiety and the English Orientation Program in general.

The existence of language anxiety among EO students is relatively natural; this can either be classified as trait anxiety, state anxiety, or situation-situation anxiety, as posited by MacIntyre and Gardner (1991). Moreover, the anxiety developed among language learners is caused by socio-cultural, personality, and pedagogical factors.

As extracted from the discussion, the sense of foreignness primarily influenced EO students' language anxiety. Students were grappling with learning English and immersing in the target culture. It is also found that establishing rapport with fellow foreign classmates was a challenge, and the struggle of becoming comprehensible to their classmates pushed them to double the effort of learning the English language. Students were then managing facilitative anxiety, which would eventually benefit the language learners (Alpert & Haber, 1960).

On the other hand, students' personality traits and attitudes played a crucial role in developing language anxiety and language learning. Although it revealed in the FLCAS findings that students were not anxious in their EO classes, they admitted in the FGD that they became conscious to interact with other classmates and present in class. They felt the need to save their self-image and create a positive impression on their teachers and classmates. That explains why they were less confident and anxious because of mispronunciation, inappropriate use of words, or mistake in delivering dialogues. With this, anxiety comes in as a negative factor, as Spolsky (1989) reasoned because it poses a threat to the learners' self-image. Students need to effectively manage such anxiety, for it could emanate a debilitating effect in the long run, whether for a specific communicative goal or in their language learning.

Lastly, implications on the pedagogical aspect were acquired from the quantitative and qualitative findings. Language instructors are apparently at the forefront of the teaching-learning process, and instructional factors aside from content should be closely monitored. EO students opined that emphasis on pronunciation and vocabulary building would somehow address challenges with their language anxiety. That is, the more accurate their pronunciation and reading comprehension, the less anxious they become. The suggestion offered possibilities for the teachers' modification of learning contents or teaching strategies. Overall, students were immensely grateful for their EO teachers' thoughtfulness and rearing support in the former's language learning.

The findings and implications are somehow correlated to those of the studies presented in the previous sections. The study conducted by Jin, De Bot, and Keijzer (2015) yielded similar results to the present study, whereas those conducted by Phongsa, Ismael, and Low (2017) and Gerencheal and Mishra (2019) instead obtained varying results. Moreover, Dumaguete-based studies by Carin (2012) and Rubio, Sabanal, and Banaybanay (2018) also obtained negative findings; however, these were only limited to the ESL learners' language anxiety. Gleaned from the related studies, language anxiety is not caused by socio-cultural and personality factors alone. There is a need to explore further other sources of language anxiety in different communicative situations. Moreover, the attempt to solicit insights from the EFL learners is a significant initiative in addressing students' language anxiety and improving the English Orientation Program.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the students' level of anxiety does not directly influence their performance in English Orientation classes. Anxiety in the presentations has stood out to be the most challenging in their classes and their discourses with other students in their immersion classes. As they have strived to learn the target language, they expressed facing pressure and anxiety. These EO students have also rated their anxiety low because they want to present themselves better. The majority of them disagreed with most of the FLCAS questionnaire's statements while the FGD says otherwise. There is no doubt then that these international students regarded English language acquisition as a critical component in their academic life's success and survival in a foreign country like the Philippines.

Admittedly, this study has its limitations. First of all, it only included a small number of participants. Therefore, the results cannot be generalizable in all contexts. However, they reveal insights that can help teachers design their classroom activities to help students minimize their language anxiety and heighten their confidence in using the language. Second, the instrument used, FLCAS, depends on self-rating. The participants likely rated their anxiety low to present themselves better. It must be noted that all of these students come from collectivist cultures, in which the concept of

the face is crucial. While the FGD elicited a clearer picture of the students' actual feelings about learning the English language, the study could have had richer findings had it included more variables.

Despite these limitations, the study found many insights that can help improve the learning and teaching processes in the EO Program. First, teachers need to employ activities that limit students' language anxiety continuously. They can do this by implementing many motivational activities. Second, since students expressed performance and evaluation anxieties, teachers may also introduce some strategies that can help students cope with these.

REFERENCES

- Alpert, R., & Haber, R. N. (1960). Anxiety in academic achievement situations. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 61, 207-215.
- Carin, N.V.B. (2012, May). *BC 11 students' language anxiety: Its correlation with academic achievement and sex*. Dumaguete City: Silliman University [MA thesis].
- Cohen, A.D. (2010). Focus on the language learner: Styles, strategies and motivation. In N. Scmitt (Ed.), *An introduction to applied linguistics* (2nd ed., pp. 161-177). Abingdon, Oxon: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Coutu, D. (2002, March). The anxiety of learning. *Harvard Business Review*, 7(3), 100-107.
- Ellis, R. (1994). Individual learner differences. In *The study of second language acquisition* (pp. 471-527). Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- Gerencheal, B., & Mishra, D. (2019). Foreign language anxiety among Ethiopian university EFL students. *International Journal of Innovative Technology and Exploring Engineering (IJITEE)*, 8(7C), 43-48.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125-132.
- Jin, Y., De Bot, K., & Keijzer, M. (2015). The anxiety – proficiency relationship and the stability of anxiety: The case of Chinese university learners of English and Japanese. Retrieved from <http://www.sssl.t.amu.edu.pl/doi:10.14746/ssl.t.2015.5.1.3>
- Johnson, R.B., & Onwuegbuzie, A.J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33 (7), 14-26.
- Krashen, S. D. (1982). Second language acquisition theory. In *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Pergamon Press.

- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). Individual differences in second language learning. In *How languages are learned* (4th ed., pp. 60-65). Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1991). Methods and results in the study of anxiety and language learning: A review of the literature. *Language Learning*, 41(1), 85-117.
- Phongsa, M., Ismail, S. & Low, H. (2017). Multilingual effects on EFL learning: A comparison of foreign language anxiety experienced by monolingual and bilingual tertiary students in the Lao PDR. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2017.1371723>
- Rubio, J.E.C., Sabanal, A.M.C., & Banaybanay, I.M.F. (2018). *Relationship between language anxiety and academic achievement of Grade 9 Piapi High School students*. Dumaguete City: Silliman University. [Undergraduate thesis]
- Spolsky, B. (1989). Ability and personality. In *Conditions for second language: Introduction to a general theory* (pp. 113-116). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tobias, S. (1986). Anxiety and cognitive processing of instruction. *Research Institute for Behavioral and Social Sciences*, 1-23.