

English Language Learning Anxiety Vis-À-Vis Coping Strategies of English Major Students of City College of Angeles

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This study investigated the English language learning anxiety level and coping strategies among students taking up Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies at City College of Angeles, Philippines. Specifically, this study also looked into the most experienced cause of anxiety together with the most frequently used coping strategy of the respondents. Self-rating questionnaires adapted from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) and the typology of coping strategies by Kondo and Yang (2004) served as the instruments of the study. Results showed that among the 82 respondents, majority experienced a moderate level of English language learning anxiety, with fear of negative evaluation serving as the main cause of their anxiety. When it comes to dealing with their anxiety, it was found out that the students often resort to peer seeking and preparation for their coping strategies. The results also suggest that English language classrooms should promote a motivating and encouraging atmosphere for the students.

Keywords: language learning, anxiety, English language learning, English language, coping strategies

Introduction

With globalization in full swing, the role of the English language has been given emphasis more than ever. Malone (2005) maintained that language is the single greatest need in the intelligence community; therefore, the need to learn language becomes more apparent. It is in this aspect that Magno (2010) stated that English has become a principal asset in the world today that about 350 million people in Asia alone speak it as a foreign or a second language. A lot of countries had already made the learning of English a top priority in order to compete in the international setting (Jung, 2011). This is the reason why international education has become a major phenomenon with more and more students trying to learn the English language (de Guzman et. al., 2006).

In terms of language learning, English can be classified as a first, second, or foreign language. In 1985, Braj Kachru developed the Three Concentric Circles of English as an attempt to explain the spread of the language around the world. The model consists of the Inner Circle, Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle. According to Kachru (1985), the Inner Circle refers to the countries that regard English as their first or native language; the Outer Circle includes countries colonized either by the United States or Britain, making English as their second language; and the Expanding Circle refers to countries that regard English as a foreign language.

In the Philippines, English is considered as a second language that has been deeply assimilated into the society. This is evident not just in various street signages, TV programs, or business and academic transactions, but also in the country's educational system, where English is one of the core subjects taught to students in primary schools all the way to higher learning institutions.

While many Filipinos view English as the language of the educated, students, on the other hand, fear the language (Berowa, 2016). This worry or anxiety oftentimes manifests in classrooms every time they are tasked to accomplish any communicative activity in English, paving way for the term “nosebleed” to be widely used to refer to one’s difficulty in engaging in English conversations (Berowa, 2016).

As an important affective variable, anxiety has been studied in the field of second language acquisition since the 1970s, focusing on its effects on language learning performance and achievement (Gao, 2016).

Anxiety can cause many potential problems for foreign language learners since it can interfere with the retention, acquisition, and production of the language being learned (McIntyre & Gardner, 1991 as cited by Yamat & Bidabadi, 2012). It makes learning stressful, affecting the performance of the students in their language classes. It is said that foreign language anxiety is associated with problems in listening comprehension, reduced word production, impaired vocabulary learning, lower grades in language courses and standardized exams (Horwitz & Young in Kondo & Yang, 2004 as cited by Yousofi and Ashtarian, 2015).

One of the pioneering studies about foreign language anxiety is the research conducted by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). According to them, foreign language anxiety is 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). It is often characterized as the emotional experiences of being worried or a negative feeling as a reaction to learning a second or a foreign language (MacIntyre, 1998 as cited by Toyoma & Yamazaki, 2018). As such, language learners may exhibit symptoms such as freezing in class, going blank before exams, and feeling worried in entering their classrooms (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986 as cited by Gatcho & Haja, 2019).

Based on the study conducted by Horwitz et al. (1986) on English learners of Spanish, results revealed that a significant level of foreign language anxiety was experienced by majority of the students, which adversely affected their performance in the target language (as cited by Yamat & Bidabadi, 2012).

Budiman, Ngadiso, and Suparno (2018) supported the claim that students’ anxiety has an impact on language learning. Based on the results of the study they conducted among Indonesian students, it was discussed that the largest proportion of students experienced severe anxiety which affected their ability to learn and to understand their language lessons. In a similar study among English language learners in Iran, it was observed that majority of the said students also experienced anxiety which resulted in stuttering and fast heartbeats while inside an English classroom (Yamat & Bidabadi, 2012). Also, Zhao’s (2007) study on 115 Chinese students learning English showed that students had comparatively high anxiety in English language learning and that this anxiety played a debilitating role in their language learning, especially when they are tasked to speak in class.

The same observation was noted by Ardi (2007) when he found out that most English language learners in the Malaysian setting experienced a certain degree of anxiety in foreign language learning. In the said study, it was shared that students agreed to statements such as “trembling when I know that I am going to be called in my class” and “being embarrassed to volunteer answers in English class”.

In contrast, in a study conducted by Berowa (2018) among students from Davao del Norte, Philippines, ESL learners showed enough self-confidence and balanced emotions towards English language learning. Then again, the results still showed a moderate level of language anxiety in all areas among the said Filipino students.

The theory on foreign language anxiety proposed by Horwitz, et al. (1986) further explained that foreign language anxiety is a situation-specific anxiety, a type of anxiety that happens to people only in specific situations. They also theorized that foreign language anxiety can be caused by the following factors: a) communication apprehension, a type of shyness that occurs when communicating with other people; b) test anxiety, a performance anxiety that stems from fear of failure; and c) fear of negative evaluation which results from one's fear of being evaluated negatively by others (Horwitz et al., 1986).

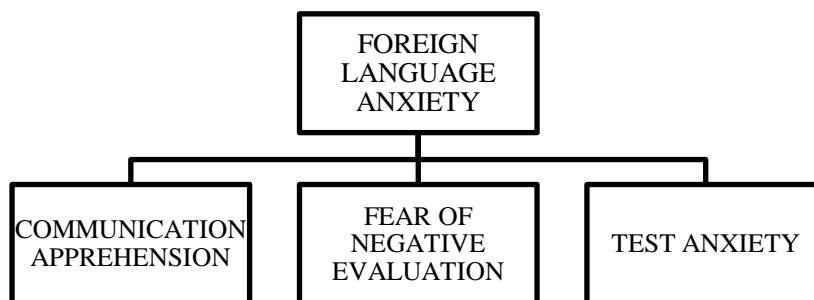


Figure 1. Foreign Language Anxiety Model (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986)

Given the incapacitating effect of anxiety on language learning, Horwitz et al. (1986) devised the Foreign Language Class Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to measure the level of anxiety felt by learners of a foreign language. FLCAS aims to examine the scope and severity of second or foreign language anxiety (Hasenan & Ghani, 2017). The items on the scale also reflected the same three components that cause anxiety. Through the years, the said scale has been extensively utilized and adapted by different researchers who delved on foreign language anxiety and its debilitating effects on students' language learning (Tang, 2008).

Delving deeper, various studies also tried to identify the causes of anxiety among foreign and second language learners.

Factors such as lack of confidence, lack of preparation, and fear of failing classes were the primary causes of anxiety among students (Ardi, 2007). This was supported by Budiman, Ngadiso, and Suparno (2018) who enumerated fear of examinations and worry about communicating as the most anxious factors for language learners. Alsawat (2016) also asserted that the highest causes of students' anxiety included worrying about consequences of failing, forgetting things they knew, and feeling of uneasiness during language tests.

Cao (2011) cited Young (1991) when he enumerated six potential causes of language anxiety, which involve personal and interpersonal, learner beliefs about language learning, instructor beliefs about language teaching, instructor-learner interactions, classroom procedures and language tests. The said causes can be specifically classified into three components: learners, teachers, and instructional practice.

Using Horwitz, et al's (1986) components of anxiety sources, Yousofi and Ashtarian (2015) posited that Iranian students experienced four types of anxiety: test anxiety, communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and English class anxiety. The same types were also cited by Lucas, Miraflores, and Go (2011) as anxiety factors experienced by foreign language learners in the Philippines.

Given its debilitating nature to foreign language learning, anxiety is considered as a factor to be controlled, if not removed, with various pedagogical suggestions being proposed by various authors (Iizuka, 2010). One such suggestion is looking at the students' coping strategies in terms of their foreign language learning anxiety.

Coping strategies refer to the various ways that people apply in order to manage their stress levels. One of the most popular studies used as basis in students' coping strategies in foreign language anxiety is that of Kondo and Yang (2004) who developed a typology of strategies used by Japanese students in dealing with their anxiety. The findings of the said study listed 70 basic tactics that were classified into five categories: Preparation, Relaxation, Positive Thinking, Peer Seeking, and Resignation. They maintained that these strategies are very useful for learners to help them reduce their foreign language anxiety (Ardi, 2007).

Several researches that explored coping strategies in foreign language anxiety patterned theirs with that of Kondo and Yang (2004). One example is the study of Iizuka (2010) who concluded that students are most likely to use positive strategies by being well-prepared and by exerting greater effort; passive strategies, on the other hand, included giving up and ignoring difficult situations. In a similar study, Yousofi and Ashtarian (2015) also identified preparation, positive thinking, relaxation, peer seeking, and resignation as the coping strategies employed by Iranian high school students in dealing with their language anxiety. Then again, the said study also added reliance on first language as a compensation strategy and religious beliefs as another coping strategy.

Kondo and Yang (2004), as cited by Tang (2018), concluded that most students want to minimize the feeling of anxiety in the foreign language classroom. It was also reported that preparation was used more frequently than other strategies when coping with anxiety. Every time students exert effort in studying and prepare in advance, they develop a feeling of confidence in their abilities where the fear of negative evaluation is lessened (Yasuda & Nabei, 2018).

Lucas et al. (2011) believed that foreign language learners would always equip themselves with strategies that could assist them not only in learning the target language but also in coping using various language learning strategies.

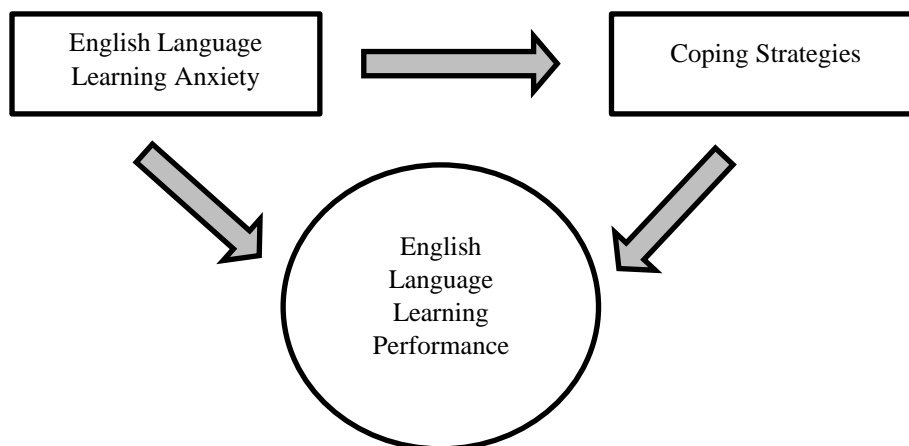


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Anchored on the theory of foreign language anxiety postulated by Horwitz, et al. (1986), this research assessed the levels of anxiety experienced by the English major students of City College of Angeles. Specifically, it also presented the causes of their anxiety using the same components proposed by the given theory. The different coping strategies of the students, on the other hand, were enumerated based on the typology and classification theorized by Kondo and Yang (2004).

As argued, foreign language anxiety can impact negatively on students' foreign language learning performance (Chen & Chang, 2004; Casado & Dereshiswsky, 2004 as cited by Ardi, 2007). Thus, there is a need for learners to identify the causes of their anxiety and apply the appropriate strategies to deal with them. Furthermore, despite the numerous studies made regarding language learning anxiety, it continues to matter because it is a variable that allows educational institutions to take action to improve student performance in the target language.

In a nutshell, this study aimed to assess the overall English language learning anxiety level of the students taking up Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies at City College of Angeles. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How may the respondents be assessed in terms of their overall English language learning anxiety level?
 - 1.1 High
 - 1.2 Moderate
 - 1.3 Low
2. How may the English language learning anxiety levels of the respondents be assessed in terms of its components?
 - 2.1 Communication Apprehension
 - 2.2 Fear of Negative Evaluation
 - 2.3 Test Anxiety
3. How may the respondents be assessed in terms of the coping strategies they employ in dealing with their English language learning anxiety?
 - 3.1 Preparation
 - 3.2 Relaxation

3.3 Positive Thinking

3.4 Peer Seeking

3.5 Resignation

4. Is there significant difference between the components of English language learning anxiety and the overall English language learning anxiety level of the respondents?
5. Is there significant relationship between the coping strategies of the respondents and their English language learning anxiety?
6. What are the implications of the results of the study for English language teaching?

Furthermore, it also looked into the following hypotheses:

H₀: There is no significant difference between the components of English language learning anxiety and the overall English language learning anxiety level of the respondents.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the coping strategies of the respondents and their English language learning anxiety.

It is hoped that the results of the study will provide information that could lead to a better way of teaching and learning English subjects, not just for City College of Angeles, but also in the community at large. Through this, both learners and instructors will be given a chance to work together as they create a more conducive and accepting environment that promotes effective English language learning.

Methodology

This study employed descriptive-correlation research design. A descriptive study aims to describe the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of the study, and to explore the causes of particular phenomenon (Adanza, 2009). In doing so, it gathered data without changing the environment. A correlation is

The instruments used included the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz, et al. (1986) and the typology of coping strategies devised by Kondo and Yang (2004).

The FLCAS is one of the most commonly used instruments for assessing foreign language anxiety. It is a 33-item questionnaire that describes specific situations that might trigger anxiety among students while learning a foreign language.

Total anxiety scores for the scale ranges from 33 to 165 points with nine items (2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, 32) having reverse scores. Slight modifications were made in this paper, like the original term, foreign language, being replaced with the term English language. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), the higher the score, the higher the anxiety level. The scale used in this study was patterned after the one formulated by Alternative Curriculum Education out of the Wild from the Erasmus+ which is a European Union program for education. The scale is as follows:

33 – 75 points: low level of anxiety

76 – 119 points: moderate level of anxiety

120 points above: high level of anxiety

The questionnaire is also categorized according to the causes of anxiety that may be prevalent among foreign language learners of English (Lucas, Miraflores, & Go, 2011). These causes are the same components that make up foreign language classroom anxiety theorized by Horwitz et al. (1986). The specific components of the questionnaire are as follows:

Table 1. Components of Foreign Language Anxiety

Causes of Language Anxiety	Question Number
Communication Apprehension	1, 4, 9, 14, 15, 18, 24, 27, 29, 30, 32
Fear of Negative Evaluation	2, 7, 13, 19, 23, 31, 33
Test Anxiety	3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 28

The range used for determining the level of anxiety for each component is patterned after the one developed by Liu and Jackson (2008) who suggested to multiply the number of items by five as the highest Likert scale value then subtracting the number of items to give the range per level. Specifically, the scale is as follows as based on mean scores:

- 4 and above: high level
- Between 3 and 4: moderate level
- 3 and below: low level

The FLCAS has been deemed by most researchers as one of the most reliable scales used in assessing the levels and causes of foreign language anxiety. It has shown evidence of satisfactory reliability, internal consistency, and construct validity (Horwitz, 1991 as cited by Hasenan & Ghani, 2017). In a study conducted by Cao (2011) examining the various components of the FLCAS, he confirmed that the original three-factor domain by Horwitz et al. (1986) has the best fit for observation and use in measuring the foreign language anxiety level of students.

This can also imply that for English language anxiety to exist, the different components should also be present, which is supported by Cao (2011) who examined the different factors of foreign language anxiety and discovered that the 33 items used as indicators for each component were significant, $p > .001$. Moreover, it was confirmed by the same study that the three factors are indeed present in the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale. As Horwitz et al. (1986) posited, foreign language anxiety is complex and involves the three components proposed (as cited in Toyoma & Yamazaki, 2018).

The second instrument was derived from Kondo and Yang's (2004) typology of strategies used by students to cope with the anxiety they experience in English language classrooms. The findings of their research yielded 70 basic coping tactics which were classified into five categories: Preparation, Relaxation, Positive Thinking, Peer Seeking, and Resignation. Furthermore, the coping strategies were extracted from the ones used by Japanese EFL learners in real life.

These coping strategies were further classified by Kondo and Yang (2004) as cognitive, affective, and behavioral components of language learning, with Resignation as a separate component. They claimed that Positive Thinking and Peer Seeking are cognitive strategies since they are attempts to alter problematic thought processes in language learning; Relaxation aims to alleviate bodily tension associated

with emotional arousal, making it an effective strategy; and Preparation is considered as a behavioral strategy as it focuses on tactics related to effective class performance.

Both questionnaires made use of Likert scale responses in gauging both the most experienced causes of English language learning anxiety and the most frequently used coping strategies of the students.

The participants included the 82 students taking up Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies at City College of Angeles. The said curricular program was just introduced in the college in academic year 2018-2019. At the time of the study, the students are only in their first and second-year levels.

Results and Discussions

Overall Level of English Language Learning Anxiety of Students

Table 2. Overall English Language Learning Anxiety Level of Students

Level	No. of Students	Percentage (%)
Low	3	3.7
Moderate	66	80.5
High	13	15.9

Table 2 presents the overall English language learning anxiety levels of the respondents. As can be gleaned from the table, out of 82 respondents, majority or 66 respondents experience a moderate level of anxiety (80.5%), while 13 experience a high level of anxiety (15.9%), and only 3 experience a low level of anxiety (3.7%). This is similar with the results of the studies conducted by Berowa (2018) among ESL learners in the Philippines, Al-Khasawneh (2016) among EFL learners in Saudi Arabia, Elaldi (2016) among English language and Literature learners in Turkey, and Baharuddin and Rashid (2014) among ESL learners in Malaysia, all of which showed that the learners experience a moderate level of anxiety.

Generally, ESL learners in the Philippines acknowledge the fact that they feel some form of anxiety in learning the English language which is not high but not also low (Mamhot et al., 2013 as cited in Berowa, 2018).

This moderate level of anxiety being experienced by the respondents can be attributed to their familiarity of the English language since it has been a subject taught to them since primary school. This is similar with Malaysian L2 learners who also exhibited an average level of English language learning anxiety which was probably because they are also exposed to the language not only during their English classes but also during their other courses or lectures (Hasenan & Ghani, 2017).

Delving deeper, another factor that can be considered for the respondents' moderate level of anxiety could be their choice to study English Language Studies. In the Philippines, it is a common practice among college students to choose programs that they are interested in or that they believe they have some considerable skills already. This could mean that the students already possess some level of confidence in terms of their knowledge and skills in the English language. On the other hand, this could also be the reason why they still experience anxiety since they are expected to perform with competency

and expertise in their English language classes, given the fact that their subjects are more technical in nature than other students.

This moderate level of anxiety can be used both by the learners and the teachers to their advantage as students can be motivated to work harder in order to develop the competency needed to master the target language (Khairi & Nurul Lina, 2010 as cited in Al-Khasawneh, 2016). This is a good indication since English language teachers should be able to provide students with just the enough level of anxiety to keep them exerting efforts in learning the English language (Na, 2007 as cited in Berowa, 2018).

Causes of English Language Learning Anxiety among Students

Table 3. Causes of English Language Learning Anxiety among Students

Cause	Mean	Standard Deviation
Communication Apprehension	3.17	.5352
Fear of Negative Evaluation	3.47	.7093
Test Anxiety	3.09	.5142

Table 2 shows the assessment of the components of English language learning anxiety. These components are also considered to be the causes of anxiety among the students when it comes to their English language learning. It is reflected that, among the components, the major cause of anxiety among English majors is Fear of Negative Evaluation (mean = 3.47, SD = .7093), followed by Communication Apprehension (mean = 3.17, S = .5352), and the least being Test Anxiety (mean = 3.09, SD = .5142).

This result is similar with that of Gatcho and Hajan (2019) who assessed the language anxiety of Filipino college students. Based on the results of their study, Filipino college students were said to also experience fear of negative evaluation and communication apprehension as the most likely causes of their English language learning anxiety.

Furthermore, the findings of this study are consistent with previous researches that also confirmed that the said components are the same causes of English language learning anxiety among students in the Philippines (Berowa, 2018; Lucas, Miraflores & Go, 2011), Iran (Yousofi & Ashtarian, 2015; Nuranifar, 2014), Saudi Arabia (Alsowat, 2016), Malaysia (Hasenan & Ghani, 2017), and Turkey (Elaldi, 2016) among others.

Fear of Negative Evaluation can be characterized as the worry one may feel about others' evaluations and that others may evaluate oneself in a negative manner (Horwitz et al., 1986). This fear may present itself in social situations like being asked to speak in a foreign or second language class. Some classroom activities which are perceived by students as anxiety-producing include: spontaneous role play in front of the class, speaking in front of the class, oral presentations, and writing work on the board (Young, 1991 as cited in Lucas et al., 2011). Generally, students feel anxiety when being evaluated by both their classmates and their teachers in their performance in using the English language (Lucas et al., 2011).

Results revealed that most of the students admitted to thinking that "others are better in English" and that "other students speak English better". It can be concluded from these statements that the

respondents may not be confident enough in their own English language skills, thus inciting anxiety in situations where they are asked to speak in the target language. Thinking that others are better, these learners feel their anxiety that causes them to think that their classmates may negatively judge them if they commit any mistakes. This is justified by their agreement in the statement, “I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the English language”. In connection with this fear, it was suggested that the worry of “losing face” in front of others was discovered to be a shared anxious feeling by language learners (Ohata, 2005 as cited in Lucas et al., 2011). Consequently, students are reported to be passive in their classes making them withdraw from tasks that could otherwise enhance their improvement in the target language (Nurafinar, 2014; Aida, 1994).

In terms of Communication Apprehension, Horwitz et al. (1986) defined this as the reluctance to communicate with people due to shyness. They further characterized this as “oral communication anxiety, stage fright, or in listening to or learning a spoken message” (p.127). The respondents’ communication apprehension is very apparent in their agreement with the statement, “I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my English language classes”. This is further supported by their feeling of being “very self-conscious about speaking in English in front of others”. This anxiety stems from the knowledge that one may have difficulty comprehending others (“I get nervous when I don’t understand every word the English language teacher says.”) or make oneself understood which may be caused by the number of English language rules one has to master, causing an overwhelming feeling among the learners. In relation with this, communication apprehension may happen when language learners lack established communication skills even if they have developed ideas and thoughts (Aydin, 2008 as cited in Gatcho & Hajan, 2019).

In subjects such as English, performance evaluations are given to gauge the students’ mastery and competence. This may lead to test anxiety, which is “a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure” (Horwitz et al., 1986: 127) which can be traced to the students’ “worry about the consequences of failing their English language classes”. Also, most respondents agreed to “feel their hearts pounding” whenever they are going to be called in their English language classes. The respondents also claimed that they get so nervous during their English language classes that they forget things they know. Then again, the fear to fail may sometimes cause students to feel anxious even if they are “well-prepared for the subject” which may be explained by the unrealistic demands they have on themselves, making them feel that anything less than a perfect test performance is a failure (Horwitz et al., 1986). This may have resulted from the learners’ fear of test-taking as brought about by the negative consequences of getting a bad grade that could also lead to other stresses like fear of losing self-confidence or feeling inferior to others (Ohata, 2005 as cited in Lucas et al., 2011).

Coping Strategies of the Students

Table 4. Coping Strategies of the Students

Coping Strategy	Mean	Standard Deviation
Preparation	3.84	.4299
Relaxation	3.45	.6035
Positive Thinking	3.77	.4667
Peer Seeking	3.85	.7523

Resignation	2.34	.6451
Overall Coping Strategies	3.62	.3384

Table 3 presents the assessment of the different coping strategies employed by the students in dealing with their English language learning anxiety. Results show that the most frequently used coping strategy is Peer Seeking (mean = 3.85, SD = .7523) followed closely by Preparation (mean = 3.84, SD = .4299). On the other hand, Resignation (mean = 2.34, SD = .6451) appears to be the least employed coping strategy, followed by Relaxation (mean = 3.45, SD = .6035).

As already established, anxiety affects the performance of learners in a foreign or second language classroom. As such, students are expected to find some ways to cope with this anxiety should they want to be successful in their learning (Kondo & Yang, 2004). This is why it is important to look at how students cope with their English language learning anxiety.

The coping strategies used in this study are based on the typology devised by Kondo and Yang (2004) which was the result of their study among Japanese students learning English. The same coping strategies had been adapted by several studies including that of Yasuda and Nabei (2018) who revealed that Japanese ESL learners often use preparation and positive thinking as their coping strategies; Ardi (2007) who also cited peer seeking and relaxation as the coping strategies used by majority of English language learners in Malaysia; and Yousofi and Ashtarian (2015) who reported that Iranian students also use the same strategies of preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking, and resignation.

For this study, results revealed that the respondents often resort to Peer Seeking in order to cope with their anxiety. Peer seeking is the act of finding comfort in the thought that others may also be experiencing the same difficulties that one has. This is supported by the agreement of the respondents to the statement about “looking for others who are also having difficulty understanding the class”. Furthermore, when anxiety arises, the respondents tell themselves that “difficult problems are also experienced by others”. According to Kondo and Yang (2004), the realization that others are having the same problem serves as a source of emotional regulation by social comparison (p. 262).

The second coping strategy employed by the respondents is Preparation, which is the attempt to control the anxiety by improving learning and study strategies (Kondo & Yang, 2004). One tactic used by majority of the respondents to be prepared is to “practice English in their minds”. Other strategies include assessing the areas where the respondents are having trouble, trying to perform their best, trying to guess the meaning of a difficult passage, and trying to get used to using English. It is suggested that being prepared in classes makes one reduce the anxiety felt in the language classroom as well.

Other students, on the other hand, practice Positive Thinking. Based on Kondo and Yang’s (2004) assertion, positive thinking is a strategy where one diverts attention from the stressful situation to positive and pleasant cues. As for this study, majority of the respondents agreed to the statement, “I tell myself I can do it”, whenever pressed with anxiety in the English language classroom. They also agreed employing tactics such as “thinking positively”, “trying to enjoy English classes”, “trying to be confident”, “believing in one’s self”, and “telling myself that I am okay”. These tactics are all directed to believing in one’s capability, thus stirring confidence when faced with anxiety. In conclusion, positive thinking is oftentimes the course of action to bring relief to an anxious predicament.

Another strategy is Relaxation. This is a tactic where anxious students try to “calm down” and “relax” by “taking deep breaths”. These tactics aim to reduce somatic anxiety symptoms (Kondo & Yang, 2004: 262). It can be concluded that when faced with fear and difficulty, most students try to control emotions by relaxing themselves through mental exercises.

The least used strategy by the respondents is Resignation which is described as the students’ hesitation to do anything to ease their language anxiety (Kondo & Yang, 2004). Similarly, he also asserted that the respondents in his study did not consider resignation as a coping strategy. These results are contrary to the study conducted by Bailey et al. (1999) and Pappamihel (2002) who maintained that students who feel anxious in language classes often resort to resignation or avoidance as a strategy (as cited in Ardi, 2007). While majority of the respondents admitted that they just “accept the situation” whenever faced with anxiety in their English language subjects, only a few resorts to other tactics like sleeping in class, not paying attention, or simply giving up. In this context, it can be concluded that students who employ resignation simply do not want to face their problem.

Significant Difference between English Language Learning Anxiety and Its Components

Table 5. Test of Difference between the Overall Mean of English Language Learning Anxiety and the means of its Components

	Communication Apprehension	Fear of Negative Evaluation	Test Anxiety	Overall Average
Mean	3.1729	3.4704	3.0854	3.1962
Variance	0.2864	0.5031	0.2644	0.2623
Observations	82	82	82	82
Pearson Correlation	0.9114	0.8871	0.9247	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	0	0	
df	81	81	81	
t Stat	-0.9515	7.1405	-5.0397	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.3442	0.000000004	0.000003	
t Critical two-tail	1.9897	1.9897	1.9897	

Table 5 presents the result on the test of difference between the means of each component of English Language Learning Anxiety and its overall mean. The p-value for the difference between the mean of Communication Apprehension and the overall mean is 0.3442, which fails to reject the null hypothesis (There is no significant difference between their means). Meanwhile, the p-value for the difference between the mean of Fear of Negative Evaluation and the overall mean is less than 0.05, which suggests that there is a significant difference between the two means. Moreover, the p-value for the difference between the mean of Test Anxiety and the overall mean is also less than 0.05, which also proposes that there is a significant difference between the two means.

A quick look at the means of the given components of English language learning anxiety shows that Fear of Negative Evaluation has the highest mean while Test Anxiety has the lowest mean. This

could explain the result of the test of difference among the said means against the overall mean of English language learning anxiety, which recorded significant difference for both components. Therefore, Fear of Negative Evaluation can be confirmed as the main cause of anxiety among the respondents, and Test Anxiety as the component inciting the least fear among them.

Significant Relationship between English Language Learning Anxiety and Coping Strategies

Table 7. Correlation between English Language Learning Anxiety and Coping Strategies

	Preparation	Relaxation	Positive Thinking	Peer Seeking	Resignation	Overall Coping Strategies
Communication Apprehension	-.056	.142	.012	.192	.201	.100
Fear of Negative Evaluation	-.087	.301**	-.041	.281*	.173	.127
Test Anxiety	.068	.189	.096	.280*	.230*	.225*
Overall Language Learning Anxiety	-.014	.225*	.032	.285**	.225*	.175

*Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 6 presents the correlation between the components of English language learning anxiety and the different coping strategies employed by the students. Results reveal that Fear of Negative Evaluation has a weak positive correlation with Relaxation ($r = .301$) and Peer Seeking ($r = .281$). Test Anxiety also has weak positive correlation with Peer Seeking ($r = .280$) and Resignation ($r = .230$). In terms of its overall level, English language learning anxiety was found to have a weak positive correlation as well with Peer Seeking ($r = .285$), Relaxation ($r = .225$), and Resignation ($r = .225$).

Based on the results, although correlation exists, the variables are not strongly correlated. Therefore, there is no empirical data to support the correlation between English language anxiety and the coping strategies, as supported by the studies of Kondo and Yang (2004) and Nurafinar (2014) who both revealed that the correlation between the overall foreign language anxiety level and the frequencies of the coping strategies were not statistically significant.

It can be concluded from the result that increases or decreases in the overall level of anxiety the students do not significantly relate to the increases or decreases in the coping strategies used. Simply put, the students at different levels of language anxiety do not differ in the number and types of coping strategies used and vice versa (Nurafinar, 2014).

Moreover, there is no enough evidence to show a strong correlation between a specific coping strategy and level of anxiety. It can be assumed that the students, regardless of their anxiety level, try various strategies to reduce their anxiety. Taking into account the adverse effect that anxiety has on language learning, in addition to the fact that anxiety itself is an unpleasant experience, it is reasonable to assume that most students will want to minimize its impact (Kondo and Yang, 2004).

The next step now is no longer to identify whether students use certain coping strategies, but how effectively these strategies may be used to reduce their anxiety levels (Kondo & Yang, 2004).

Implications to English Language Teaching

This study presents a number of implications based on its results. Most importantly, it provides information both to the learners and the teachers that English language learning anxiety is a usual issue within the context of second or foreign language learning. Then again, despite being common, there is still a need to look into the said type of anxiety among students in order to allow educational institutions to make the necessary actions to assist and guide them in achieving better performance in the target language. Consideration of language learners' anxious reactions by a language teacher is deemed highly important in order to assist them to achieve the intended performance goals in the target language (Tanveer, 2007 as cited in Gao, 2016).

As proven by the various studies cited in this research, anxiety plays a significant role in the performance and proficiency of the students in the target language. Even though majority of the respondents scored moderately on their overall English language learning anxiety, teachers should still address the issue by devising immediate and effective ways to help them manage this anxiety. Horwitz et al. (1986) suggested that educators have two choices when dealing with anxious students: to help them cope with anxiety-provoking situations or to make the context of learning less stressful by providing support, understanding, and encouragement. They also recommended using welcoming teaching methods, providing positive reinforcements, and avoiding negative evaluation in the foreign language classrooms. It is imperative for teachers to create a welcoming, relaxed, and supportive English language classroom (Gatcho & Hajan, 2019). It is also equally essential for them to help improve the self-esteem and self-confidence of learners (Gao, 2016).

Furthermore, it has been noted that students often devise coping strategies to manage their anxiety. These strategies can be positive and negative; therefore, by being aware of these strategies, both the students and the teachers can work together in finding the best ones that can improve the teaching-learning process. Based on the results, the respondents admitted to using Peer Seeking tactics as coping strategies. Teachers, then, can use this strategy to help students gain confidence in their language learning by providing more opportunities for them to interact with one another in safe groups in which they feel comfortable (Hasenan & Ghani, 2017).

In the end, students should be reminded that their English language learning anxiety should not discourage them from taking an active role in the classroom; moreover, it should also not stop them from trying to learn the English language. This can be used instead to strive to becoming better.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the following conclusions were drawn: 1) Majority of the students taking up Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies in City College of Angeles experience a moderate level of English language learning anxiety; 2) The most commonly experienced anxiety type is Fear of Negative Evaluation, which is a type of performance anxiety characterized as the worry one may feel about others' evaluations and that others may evaluate oneself in a negative manner (Horwitz et al.,

1986); 3) On the other hand, the most frequently-used coping strategies are Peer Seeking and Preparation; 4) A test of difference between the means of the components of English language learning anxiety and its overall mean showed significant difference between the overall mean and Fear of Negative Evaluation and Test Anxiety; 5) Based on data analysis, correlations between the coping strategies and components of anxiety showed weak positive correlations among Fear of Negative Evaluation with Relaxation and Peer Seeking, Test Anxiety with Peer Seeking and Resignation, and English language learning anxiety with Peer Seeking, Relaxation, and Resignation; and 6) Implications included teachers acknowledging the levels of anxiety and its causes among students in order to manage the said anxiety and achieve optimal performance in language learning.

Given its limitations, this study recommends other researchers to assess the anxiety levels of students from other programs alongside other factors such as study habits, teacher-learner interaction, characteristics of students and teachers, mother tongue, and teaching strategies among others. Also, as stated in the study, the effectiveness of the coping strategies in reducing student anxiety could also be explored.

With full understanding of the phenomenon of English language learning anxiety, a change of policy or strategy in terms of teaching English among Filipino students can be implemented to provide opportunities that maximize learning and eventually improve performance and proficiency in the English language.

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