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English Language Anxiety among College Students

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ABSTRACT

Most Filipinos spend their time learning the English language in schools, given the mandate of the government. Hence, English is used as a medium of instruction in many higher education institutions in the Philippines. Despite its prevalence, many Filipinos, including college students, are still anxious when utilizing it in communication. In research undertakings, little is being discussed about this type of language anxiety in the Philippine context. To bridge this research gap, the aim of this study, hence, is to explore the English language anxiety among Filipino college students in state universities and colleges in Metro Manila, Philippines. Data were obtained from 37 college students through purposive sampling. Then, the data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Four themes emerged, namely: (1) lack of language skills, (2) personal insecurities, (3) judgment of others, and (4) negative influences on performance and being. Students are recommended to work on their problems related to English language skills and make ways to improve such as through practicing, listening open-mindedly to constructive criticism, and building self-esteem. College teachers, meanwhile, are advised to foster a psychologically safe atmosphere where mistakes are seen as a learning opportunity, refrain from using deprecating comments to students, and undertake planned and meaningful class sessions.

INTRODUCTION

English is commonly used as a second language in the Philippines where most Filipinos spend their time learning the English language. As stated by Lazaro and Medalla (2004), English has played a critical role as a popular foreign language in connecting people of various mother tongues. The English language has become the foundation of communication between people with first language diversity and people of a foreign language.

As eloquently studied by Barrot (2018), the presence of English has been additionally expanded by globalization as it forces the Philippine government and the corporate area to receive English as a language of exchange. Thus, the public authority embraced strategies to guarantee that Filipino students create adequate capacity for the English language. Hence, the Philippine government implemented Executive Order 210 which mandates strengthening the use of the

English language as a medium of instruction in the educational system.

However, in this process of involving the English language from childhood up until now, there are instances that a student is having a hard time learning and using the English language. According to Sabbah (2018), the receptivity of students to all subjects and a second language directly affects various variables. These factors include anxiety, classroom climate and procedures, cultural shock, attention span, and confidence. In behavioral sciences, anxiety is known to be a sense of worry, nervousness, or discomfort over something with an unsure result and a deep willingness or concern to do or do something (Russell, 2020). Therefore, we can say that all these factors are somehow connected.

Several researchers have been attracted to examine situations that influence language students' language learning anxiety. Learning a new language

can lead to anxiety especially if an individual is not diverse in the language he is learning. Na (2007) stated that one of the major emotional components that can enormously influence second language learning is anxiety.

Shekan (1989) also expressed that these language anxieties, a sort of tension explicitly connected with learning the subsequent language (L2), can emerge from numerous sorts of sources. For example, the classroom exhibits anxiety-triggering phenomena that can affect the student's mental capacity and capability. In such semantic circumstances, Ohata (2005) accentuated that this assessment may trigger uneasiness concerning the students as they are helped to remember their present L2 skills.

Because of the use of the English language in the Philippines, many students are engaged in learning activities that will help them to improve their language and communication skills in English. However, some of these students encountered anxiety as they acquired and further manifested the English language. Anxiety is one of the factors that hinder the student's development in the English language. As eloquently studied by Nechita, Nechita, and Motorga (2018), anxiety is a condition that can influence life on multiple levels without having a predetermined way of action.

According to Hyland (2010), many students devoted their time studying and practicing their English language outside the classroom in the form of more receptive activities such as listening and reading than speaking. Some of the students are well-focused on private rather than public activities that involve face-to-face contact. The motive behind this avoidance of using the English language involved both individual and socio-political factors.

However, Hyland (2010) also found out that, despite the negative feelings of students in public using English, successful English students remain active in the private area of use of English. The private domain could provide an excellent environment for out-of-class language learning since it is less threatening and easier to manage.

A study conducted by Ferdous (2012) considered anxiety as a vital variable in English language learning which involves non-conformity in the physical and emotive state. Among non-English undergraduates in the first year, foreign language anxiety could make students feel insecure

when they do not attempt to lower it. Teachers, as advised, should consider the emotional factors of their students to minimize such anxiety, because a low anxiety atmosphere will help students achieve a smooth learning process (Ferdous, 2012).

Alfadil (2012) discussed that anxiety has been discovered to be associated with English-learning accomplishment among various gatherings of individuals in different settings. He, then, investigated English learning anxiety among the students of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities-Red Sea University. This examination analyzed 74 students studying English. The outcomes showed that female students had similarly high anxiety in English learning compared to male students having higher anxiety in English classes.

In relation to that, separate studies by Cui (2011) and Na (2007) both examined high school students. The result showed that male students have a higher tendency of anxiety compared to female students in learning the English language in China. Interestingly, it was likewise discovered that high anxiety assumes to some degree a debilitating function in students' language learning (Na, 2007; Cui, 2011).

Moreover, Russell (2020) studied how language anxiety affects students in the mode of online learning using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) from the beginning and at the end of the course. It was found that at the end of the course, the anxiety of students was slightly lower than at the start of the semester (Russell, 2020). Although these findings are promising, it is not possible to ascertain if the lower degree of language anxiety among students at the end of the course was the outcome of peer-focused conversations, the familiarity with the online learning environment and the learning tools, or the hours of practice with native speakers (Russell, 2020).

Jugo (2020) published a report on language anxiety among 242 learners in a Philippine learning institution she found that behaviors such as speaking, error correction, and communication with English speakers are a source of high anxiety among Filipino learners, whereas writing, negative self-perception, and lack of understanding are a source of moderate anxiety. However, she noted that further study of individual causes of anxiety using multiple regression analysis established

speech activity anxiety as the only important indicator of English proficiency.

In addition, Go, et. al (2011) studied the major causes of anxiety in English language learning among tertiary foreign students, especially at institutions within Manila. Findings suggest that these types of students have used the jargon method to effectively familiarize themselves with the English language and to respond to their English class anxieties.

It has been discovered that the work of this technique empowers students to take responsibility for their learning, as this is their foundational guide to learning other large-scale skills in the target language. They also observed that test anxieties and fear of harsh evaluations give rise to anxieties encountered by students which are very rare if peers and teachers make regular assessments of their results.

METHODS

The objective of the Study

This study endeavors to explore the English language anxiety of college students in different state colleges and universities in Metro Manila, Philippines. In this study, we applied a qualitative research design that conveys an interpretive approach to its subject (Denzin, Lincoln, & Giardina, 2006; Tesch, 2013). It is not modeled through numerical measurement as in quantitative research design. Moreover, qualitative research design targets to comprehend how meanings are constructed, and it investigates how the participants use the experience to construct reality (Jootun, McGhee, & Marland, 2009; Aspers & Corte, 2019).

Such design is appropriate in this study for our aim was to explore the English language anxiety among college students it is fitting that a qualitative research design was used in this scholarly endeavor since we wanted to capture the experiences of college students. The context was in the various state and local universities in Metro Manila, Philippines. We hope, in the end, that the findings and conclusions gathered could serve as a thinking tool in curriculum development in higher education, and as a reflective instrument in the policy formulation in the participant universities.

Participants

We gathered data from 37 college students in various universities in Metro Manila, Philippines.

The participants were taken using the methodology of convenience sampling meaning that this sample was taken from the population of those who were easy to reach. The participants gave their permission to participate in the study. To secure their identity and to preserve anonymity, names were changed to pseudonyms.

Among those surveyed and interviewed 16 were male, 19 were female, and 2 preferred not to say their gender. All of them were college students in universities in Metro Manila, Philippines. The location of their universities ranged from but was not limited to, the cities of Muntinlupa, Makati, Paranaque, Taguig, and Manila. 73% of the participants were aged 18-20; 24% of them were 21-22, and 3% were aged 25 and up. Most of them were single (99%); only one person was married (1%). 22 students were taking courses related to Physical and Applied Sciences (59%). 11 students were in Humanities and Social Sciences (30%), and 4 were from Management, Administration, and Business (11%).

Data Collection

We collected qualitative data electronically through open-ended qualitative surveys (Google Forms). These data-gathering techniques helped us to investigate English language anxiety learning among undergraduate students. Under the qualitative research design, the iterative process is carried out to consider the perspectives and experiences of the participants (Agee, 2009). This has been made possible by the cooperation of our colleagues, teachers, and networks. Responses were obtained during December 2021 and were used as the basis for this study.

Data Analysis

We used thematic analysis to make sense of the data gathered. It is an approach to classifying, evaluating, and understanding patterns, otherwise known as themes (Braun, Clarke, & Weate, 2016). Thematic analysis is commonly used in qualitative studies because of the flexibility of its process, which is suited to an attempt to explain English language learning anxiety learning in college students.

We also adopted the six steps of the thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, we (1) got to know and familiarize ourselves with the data. Then (2) we developed codes, and (3) we looked at potential themes. After that, we (4)

checked them, (5) put names and descriptions. Finally, (6) we presented the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part focuses on discussing the results of the survey from the participants. After collecting and analyzing the responses, we used thematic

analysis to interpret and analyze the data. We came up with four themes namely: 1) lack of language skills, (2) personal insecurities, (3) judgment of others, and (4) negative influences on performance and being.

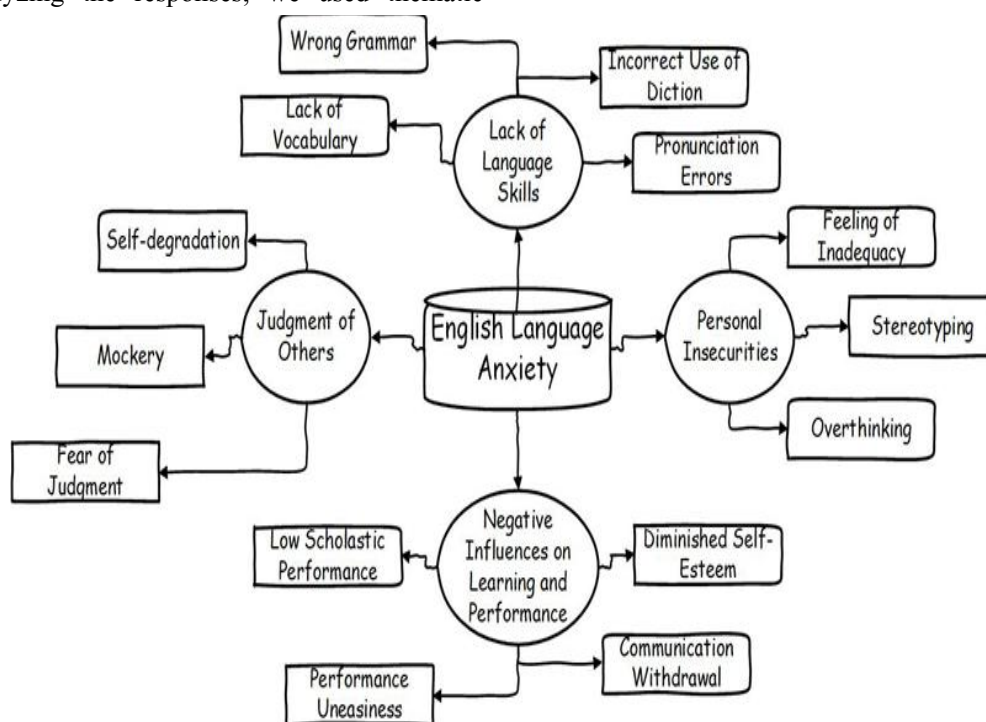


Figure 1. Thematic Analysis of the English Language Anxiety among Filipino College Students

Theme 1: Lack of Language Skills

This theme pertains to the lack of language skills among college students that causes their anxiety in using the English language. The factor that causes their lack of language skills can be morphological, syntactical, and phonetical. Most of the participants primarily answered that the reason for their anxiety in using the English language was the fear of committing grammatical errors. They believed that these errors were the impetus for people to criticize them. "People might judge you for speaking English in wrong grammar..." narrated by Roben, aged 21. Gezette, aged 20, declared, "I'm afraid that they might judge me if my grammar is bad..." Aira, aged 19, stated, "I feel anxious most especially when speaking in English because I'm not good at grammar..." In the same vein, Sophia, aged 20, echoed a similar sentiment: "I feel most anxious when speaking English because people can hear or witness me if ever, I commit some grammatical errors." Thus, improper use of

grammar causes anxiety in college students in using the English language.

Moreover, the English language involves different kinds of practices that will engage the college students, not only to learn but also to use and apply the language in authentic discourse. Speaking, for example, engages the college students to communicate using the said language. However, since speaking involves communication, this further amplifies the fear of college students committing mistakes in using the English language.

"When I talk, I am afraid to speak out my grammar." (Gianne, 21)

"It makes me feel ashamed whenever I make a little grammatical error and I find it hard to forget." (Princess, 20)

"I am sometimes afraid to commit grammatical errors in front of a large number of audiences." (John, 21)

Evident in the answers of many participants that causes their anxiety in using the English language was their fear of having grammatical

errors. That fear restricts their ability to further involve themselves in the said language, especially in speaking. Some of them were afraid to use the English language as a method of genuine conversation because they also feared that they might mispronounce a word.

"I feel more anxious when I'm speaking English because of the possibility that I can mispronounce [a word]." (Vhenlyn, 20)

"Most of the time, I feel anxious especially when it comes to speaking. I am anxious that people can judge me easily, with the way I am pronouncing the words..." (Eunice, 18)

Thus, using the English language in a discourse without the command of the language greatly causes anxiety in college students. The practicality and implementation of the knowledge they learn and adapt become the passage of their uneasiness and fear that causes their anxiety in using the English language.

However, lack of engagement in the English language also affects the learner's comprehension of things that are necessary for using the English language, causing them to be more anxious in involving themselves in the said language. Thus, things that are critical to the English language like vocabulary are prominent in the said language. Gianne, aged 21, stated, "When I'm reading some theories of English study, I feel confused [on] some terms." Following this, Princess, aged 20, mentioned, "There are a lot of different words that are hard to understand and to pronounce..." Moreover, Lester, aged 19, declared, "The grammar and vocabulary are difficult to [understand] if your knowledge is just average." Such statements show that the relationship between engagement and mastery will help college students to further improve their English language skills without causing their anxious feelings.

Having a large vocabulary can be a great asset to an individual. Through proper use of words and phrases is also necessary to create a concrete idea. In addition to the reason that causes anxiety to the college students in using the English language mentioned above, some participants were also having a hard time choosing the proper words some were afraid to cause embarrassment to themselves just because of improper use of diction.

"[I am] shy that I can't fully understand English." (Ervin, 19)

"One of the causes is that English is a broad language, and it's really hard to learn words that are appropriate in certain situations." (Gene, 21)

"Sometimes I am having a hard time constructing words." (Aira, 19)

"For me, writing is better than speaking because when we write, we have time to think and decide if it is the appropriate words or sentences." (Jezel, 19)

These statements show that having enough vocabulary will not help college students to overcome their anxiety, without knowing how to use and construct phrases and sentences that are good enough to satisfy their listeners. Some mentioned that they prefer writing to speaking using the English language for it helps them think more precisely in comparison to a real-time discourse. Thus, improper use of diction contributes to the anxiety of college students in using the English language.

The commonality that can be observed in all the statements mentioned above is the lack of language skills. This factor is one of the reasons for the uneasiness and fear of college students that causes anxiety in the English language. Vocabulary, diction, pronunciation, and grammar, for instance, plays a big role in a learner to use of the English language. However, the findings show that if college students are lacking in these skills, it will cause them fear that restricts them to further involvement of themselves and manifesting the English language.

There are different ways and practices to understand a language, and these practices are prominent to develop an individual's skill and mastery of a language. However, some of these practices cause distress to college students, hindering them to use the English language. Ironically, practices like communication or speaking were developed to help college students to be practically engaged in a language, but in some sense, these practices became the reason why some college students do not want to further involve themselves in using the language. Some of the participants thought that these practices become a force that could lead them to embarrassment and distress, causing them anxiety in the English language. Lack of language skills is the main reason that causes anxiety to college students in using the English language.

Theme 2: Personal Insecurities

This particular theme refers to the personal insecurities of the college students in a state university affecting their anxiety following using the English language. Examining the student's answers, this theme comes up with three subthemes which are: (1) feeling of inadequacy, (2) overthinking, and (3) stereotyping. Many participants responded that they have this feeling of inadequacy or the fear of being not good enough to express themselves using the English language and they overthink how they are perceived by other people. Not only that, but they also added that stereotyping the language makes the anxiety even worse.

The first subtheme conveys a feeling of inadequacy. This is a lack of self-confidence, doubting one's capabilities and highlighting own insecurities. According to Hashemi (2011), language learners typically show fear, anticipation, and nervousness as they learn a foreign language. Language anxieties may derive from the learners' sense of 'self.' It is also important to be knowledgeable about one's personal characteristics to understand and articulate a language and to imagine oneself while practicing a language.

Gene, 21, shared that his reason for having language learning anxiety is, "the fear of being embarrassed in front of the people..." that he is speaking with. Ervin, aged 19, also feels the same way as he stated, "I am so anxious when I speak and write because I am not good at English. "He also mentioned that he is very shy and stutters every time he uses the language. It is conspicuous that they had personal issues and insecurities which had become the reason for their language learning anxiety. Similar to the previous respondents, here are the others who felt inadequate in learning and expressing the English language:

"I am not that confident when speaking English because I am scared to make and speak a sentence or phrase with the wrong grammar. Also, I have a stage-fright whenever I need to speak or face the public." (Jezel, 19)

"I feel really anxious when I use English to communicate with other people. It makes me feel uncomfortable to speak when I stutter especially when I'm relaying important details." (Gene, 21)

"I sweat a lot in front of many people when I speak English because I'm not really good at it. I am confident when I write my essays or reflections and such because I can think slowly unlike speaking." (Katrina, 19)

"I am anxious in terms of speaking because sometimes I am not that confident in speaking or presenting in front of others." (Alyssa, 20)

The second subtheme pertains to overthinking. It is viewed as an over pondering or the overponderabilia of actual life (Vangkilde & Sausdal, 2016). Learners seem to be more anxious about how others may perceive them and how awful it may become when their lack of knowledge and low confidence comes up when trying to use the English language. Gezette, aged 20, articulated, "I'm afraid that they might judge me if my grammar is bad and how I will pronounce those words correctly. I can understand fluent English whenever I listen and view them especially when I write them down because it gives me time to think about how I am supposed to translate those words in my mind." It is clearly seen in their answers that even if they do have sometimes confidence in utilizing the language, they are afraid of what other people would think about them for using it in a way they don't expect it to be used. Grammar is also associated with their anxiety because people might give them rude remarks for not being able to use it properly.

Overthinking will not make the learner focused on the accurate usage of the language whenever it arises, it also causes unsatisfactory performance to the learner. As expressed by Christopher, aged 20, a sophomore student, "Overthinking things about grammar and the way I would speak English to other people stress [me]. They might criticize me and make me feel down, or things like that." The stares and judgment of the audience also contribute to the language learning anxiety of the respondents.

The last subtheme is about stereotyping or the unsupportive environment towards an individual. Given the instances that Filipinos are not native speakers of the English language, several people seemingly feel superior in this language. The major part of the respondents emphasized how anxiety emerges whenever they encounter it. It is evident in the statement of Princess, aged 20, that "I'm scared to be judged. There are a lot of people right now who will make you feel bad just because of a simple

mistake. I sometimes feel ashamed when I commit a little grammatical error and someone will make fun of me.” Moreover, Alyssa, 20, supported this idea with her thoughts about stereotypes. She said, “I think the stereotype is associated with speaking in English here in the Philippines. If you tend to be wrong in terms of grammar or even pronunciation, some Filipinos will mock you or even level it in terms of your intelligence.” Hence, it creates a social standard that can possibly make the speaker uncomfortable when using the language.

Several participants mentioned that whenever they utilize the English language, it greatly affects how they converse with other people which creates a sense of embarrassment. Luis, aged 20, stated that whenever he tried to speak in English, it suddenly brought him to a state of embarrassment, “the expressions that the people are giving [when using the English language] are sometimes distracting.” The participant brings to a state of intimidation in which he feels that what he was saying is inappropriate. Plus, the fact that audiences are not responsive and merely listens to what he says. Aira, aged 19, supports the idea by sharing that “I feel intimidated when communicating.”

Relevant to this is the expression of Eunice, aged 20, that “most of the time I feel anxious especially when it comes to speaking. I am anxious that people can judge me easily, with the way I am pronouncing the words or by constructing grammar.” Glen, 19, also stressed, “Speaking makes me most anxious because it triggers my Social anxiety.” Similar remarks below are evident for this subtheme:

“People around me cause my anxiety in learning the English language. I am thinking that they are superior. I am also thinking that they will laugh at me when I make mistakes.” (Mary, 18)

“English is a broad language, and it's really hard to learn words that are appropriate in certain situations.” (Gene, 21)

“People will judge even if you make the slightest mistake...” (Kyle, 19)

To sum up, personal insecurities are the individual's uncertainty and fear of not being good enough at using the English language in front of many people. Therefore, it has a great impact on the students' language anxiety.

Theme 3: Judgment of Others

This theme applies to other people's judgment of English language anxiety, a popular commonality in the participants' answers. Several replied that while talking, they ought to feel being judged directly. Under this group, multiple subthemes appeared, as can be realized in the participants' responses. Here are the following: (1) mockery, (2) degradation of oneself, and (3) fear of judgment.

The first subtheme is a mockery. The sense of mockery as meaning to “make fun” or “make insult” something (Haugh, 2010). For this case, many respondents claimed that they experienced being laughed at during their class discussions including Czarina, aged 20. Czarina reported that learning the English language brought her anxiety “when someone makes fun of my English.” Mary Joyce, aged 18, agreed by saying “I am also thinking that they will laugh at me when I make mistakes”. Mark Lester, aged 21, stated that he is “scared to be laughed at and due to the accent of some countries, I wasn't able to comprehend it. Evident in their answers was the fear of being mocked by the people around them when using the English language which adds up to their anxieties. A marketing student had a similar reflection as well in relation to the reasons that lead to anxiety when speaking the English language:

“[Speaking in the English language,] sometimes makes me feel uneasy and makes me just a bit scared to say something because I don't want to be laughed at.” (Mayacris, 39)

The second subtheme is degradation in oneself. On this matter, the respondents particularly referred that using the English language is self-degrading which adds up to their anxiety that causes them to refuse the use of the language itself. Particularly, Alyssa, aged 20, felt degraded due to “the depreciation of some teachers or even some friends, especially in speaking or presenting in English.” The 20-year-old added that “I don't usually speak in English because I feel like I'm pretending to meet my professor's standards even though I tried so hard.” Manifested in the participant's response that utilizing the English language can be self-degrading that could possibly affect not just only the self-esteem of an individual but as well as the way a student performs in class.

The third subtheme mainly focuses on the fear of being judged. Several respondents claimed that

mostly, speaking in the English language causes them anxiety due to the fear of being judged. Roben, aged 21, mentioned that “people might judge you for speaking English in wrong grammar or spelling.” Meanwhile, Gene, aged 21, echoed the same response “I always fear that people will judge me for stuttering and making mistakes when speaking in English.” Glen, aged 19, stated that “[Speaking in the English language] creates a stressful environment brought about by the fear of judgment and failure.” Clearly, based on the responses gathered, the fear of being judged by a large number of audiences greatly affects the well-being of an individual. Relatively, it might affect some of their activities such as class discussions and presentations. Similar responses of the participants explicitly revealed that most of them refused to learn and use the English language due to the fear of being judged by people which made them more anxious about how they use the language, particularly in a formal setting. Moreover, similar sentiments of the participants in relation to the mentioned subtheme are as follows:

“People's judgment is what makes me anxious in learning the [English] language further, most specifically in speaking. I am sometimes afraid to commit grammatical errors in front of a large number of audiences.” (Edison, 21)

“I'm scared to be judged. There are a lot of people right now who will really make you feel bad just because of a simple mistake.” (Jamirine, 20)

“The people and their judgments cause my anxiety in learning the English language.” (Sophia, 20)

In general, participants interpreted learning the English language with fear of being judged predominantly because English is not their first language. Mastering one takes a lot of time. Therefore, English language anxiety stems from other people's fear of judgment. English language learning anxiety is significantly influenced by the environment itself it can even add a feeling of intimidation and humiliation.

Theme 4: Negative Influences on Performance and Being

This theme refers to the negative influences of English language anxiety on performance and being, a prominent commonality in the responses of the participants. They viewed English language

anxiety as negative and can damage psychologically and in presentations. The participants perceived and experienced one or more of the negative influences. Several subthemes emerged under this category which conveys the variety of influences. Here are the following: (1) diminished self-esteem, (2) communication withdrawal; (3) low scholastic performance; and (4) performance uneasiness.

The first subtheme is diminished self-esteem. Self-esteem is utilized to describe one's general sense of personal worth subjectively (Coelho, Bear, & Brás, 2020). In short, it is about how one appreciates himself. Self-esteem plays a pivotal role in the success of an individual in studies and in life. Regretfully, English language anxiety was reported to diminish the participants' self-esteem. Des, aged 20, pinpointed that because of English language anxiety, she “could not talk confidently in class.” Alexander, aged 21, echoed the same sentiment, “My confidence reduced to the extent that whatever I work on leads to disappointment.” Evident in their answers was a dim outlook on themselves, affected adversely by the mentioned anxiety. A computer science student had a similar reflection as well in relation to this matter:

“It lowers my confidence when I'm trying to do certain tasks. I always fear that I might get low scores because of the grammatical errors I make. [English language anxiety] also lowers my confidence knowing that I graduated from a Science High School, yet I am not confident enough to speak English in front of many people.” (Gene, 21)

The second subtheme is communication withdrawal. It pertains to behavior that deliberately avoids communication (Amiri & Puteh, 2018). In this case, participants particularly referred to speaking in English as an anxiety-inducing activity and hence they would try to retreat or avoid such endeavors. They declared they wanted to withdraw from communication because they reminisced about the errors made in the past and the unsupportive reaction of the people before. They also wanted to do that to avoid further mistakes in diction, pronunciation, or grammar.

Vhen, aged 20, articulated, “Oftentimes, I don't speak English to avoid mistakes.” Meanwhile, Sophia, aged 20, revealed that because of English language anxiety that she “does not voluntarily recite and participate during class.” Manifested in

their answers was the mindset that avoids the speaking activity. If this continues, it would not sharpen their verbal dexterity and could debilitate them to grow not only in undertakings related to speaking but to other related areas in which such skills are intertwined and needed.

Participants attributed the withdrawal in communication to the people who would tease them. For example, Ervin, aged 19, stressed that he does not want to be embarrassed. He said, "Because of the people laughing when I used the wrong words when I try to speak and write in English, I developed my anxiety. I personally don't want to speak English anymore." The comments and reactions of other people surrounding them made an impact on their perceptions of speaking and communication. In the preceding case, a laugh was interpreted as humiliation by Ervin and hence influenced him undesirably. Moreover, a sophomore Information Technology student made a similar remark:

"[Making a mistake] when speaking in English feels like a nightmare that will continue to haunt me. Anxiety [on speaking the English language] affects me a lot. In class, I don't sit near the board or where the professor is. I am afraid I will be called. I do that because I hate speaking and I might make mistakes again. I don't like that." (Princess, 20)

The third subtheme is low scholastic performance. College students, being in the university, need to comply with the various requirements and perform capabilities to successfully accomplish a certain course subject. Oftentimes, the skills in the English language are necessarily a part of those required competencies. Unfortunately, many participants reported that because of their English language anxiety, they received low grades and performed poorly in academics. It is evident in the statement made by a college student majoring in education. He expressed that:

"[English language anxiety] influences me by being nervous in studying. It disrupts my mind and because of that, I cannot concentrate. It also makes me low scores in activities." (Lester, 19)

Several participants attributed their low academic performance to the anxiety gotten from the English language. They could not perform or undertake assessments and activities with a quiet

mind and efficacy. This created a feeling of psychological tension for them. In turn, they could not do their best and because of that, there is a tendency to score low or even get failing marks. Mark, aged 21, described the repercussion of such an experience: "I sometimes receive failing grades in exams leading to low academic performance." They also commented that such a position could make them feel demotivated and lose their interest in studying. This is evident in the answer of Angel, aged 19, "I am affected by anxiety [on learning the English language] in such a way that I become unmotivated to learn and study since all I feel is an unwanted irrational fear."

The fourth and last subtheme is performance uneasiness. It was revealed after careful inductive analysis that the participants could not perform well due to English language anxiety, most especially when it comes to speaking. Several pieces of literature accentuate that anxiety about speaking a foreign language, such as English, is a chief and perennial problem in classrooms worldwide (Aichhorn & Puck, 2017; Galante, 2018). Research has frequently quoted that speaking is the most anxiety-provoking task among students who use a foreign language as a medium of instruction (Fajri, 2020).

Several participants revealed that whenever they speak in class or in public, they become nervous and can feel the tension. Gezette, aged 20, stated, "Though I am prepared, I feel nervous when speaking [using the English language] in front of a crowd." Yessa, aged 20, shared the same view, "[Utilizing English language,] I can feel the tension in my body when I do class reporting or speak in front of my classmates." Jezel, aged 19, made the same comment, "I have stage fright, especially when speaking in English. I'm very scared of speaking." Manifested in their answers that they could not become at ease when speaking which, if felt over, may incapacitate them from the task.

"[English language] anxiety inhibits my efficacy in terms of my performance. It hinders me from achieving my fullest potential. Additionally, having [English language] anxiety makes me appear as an individual who projects failure, stress, and social ineptitude." (Glen, 19)

"[English language anxiety] always gives me the feeling of frustrations. It often makes me feel uneasy. It makes me a bit scared to say

something. I know I am not as good as the rest of the students at school [when speaking in English]." (Maya, 39).

Participants, in general, viewed English language anxiety as a hindrance to their growth and success in life and schooling. They reported that it makes them feel bad about themselves. Also, they conveyed feelings of uneasiness and frustration when speaking. It gives them the external image that they are not capable individuals.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results given, the following conclusions are put forward:

Lack of Language Skills. Lack of language skills, especially in vocabulary, grammar, diction, and pronunciation, hinders college students to learn and use the English language. This is alarming since it causes a great impact on college students' emotional health also. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) strongly agreed that anxiety is a major obstacle in learning a language. Thus, anxiety produces a negative effect on learning a language. Such a result shows that lack of language skills causes anxiety, and hence impediment, to college students in using the English language.

Personal Insecurities. Personal insecurities of college students play a role in their English language anxiety. It is viewed the same way as the previous study by Hashemi (2011) which explained that language anxiety can originate from learners' sense of self it is, therefore, crucial to be informed about one's personal characteristics to learn and express a language and to visualize themselves when performing the language. Moreover, college students seem to be more anxious about how others may perceive them and how awful it may become when their lack of knowledge and low confidence come up when trying to use the English language.

Judgment of Others. College students fear that they are judged, especially in relation to speaking. This result is similar to a previous study (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992). Thus, negative influences such as the fear of being insulted by others while using the English language are visible among college students. Meanwhile, self-degradation can be the result of that frequent judgment. Many college students also decline to learn English because they are afraid of being criticized by others, which can

them more nervous about how they use the language, especially in a formal environment.

Negative Influences on Performance and Being. Filipino college students are affected negatively by English language anxiety, both in performance and being. Such type of anxiety tends to diminish their self-esteem which is alarming. Without that, there is a high probability of failure in the university (Lane, Lane, & Kyprianou, 2004). Many teachers might not be aware or even consider this phenomenon which absolutely can impair the budding communication skills and psychological development of college students. In the study, it is proven that such issues are real and being experienced by them. As a consequence and the saddening part, college students tend to withdraw from tasks and activities that use the English language. For instance, they sit far from the professor so as not to be called for recitation or they refrain from voluntarily participating. The reason behind that is they do not want to make mistakes. They think that their colleagues and professors will tease them based on their previous experiences. College students find humiliation painful and nightmarish. They feel bad about themselves so they cannot do their best. Additionally, when college students seldom or do not participate in class, their academic achievement is negatively influenced. Some of them even get failing grades. This, in turn, may cause general disinterest and demotivation.

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