LEVELS OF LANGUAGE ANXIETY TOWARD ENGLISH: A SAMPLE FROM DAVAO DEL NORTE

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Abstract. This study was conducted to provide insights on the levels of language anxiety experienced by learners of English as a second language (ESL) in Davao del Norte, Philippines. Additionally, it tried to determine the significant relationship between anxiety vis-à-vis gender and year level variables that could be influential factors in the success or failure in learning English. The data were obtained from 60 university students using a two-part questionnaire which contained Park's (2014) modified version of the 33-item Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The results showed neutral level of language anxiety among the respondents in all areas. Furthermore, no significant relationship between English language anxiety vis-à-vis gender and year-level of the students was found. Since all the aspects that could provoke anxiety are kept to their adequate level, it could be a good indication of the learning and teaching environment of the students since neutral level of anxiety is believed to perform a positive role in keeping the motivation of the learners to maintain their efforts in language learning.

Introduction

Philippines is a linguistically, culturally, socially and religiously diverse country which is composed of 7,107 islands. In 2017, the Philippine Ethnologue reported that the country is the home of 187 individual languages. Of these Philippine languages, 183 are said to be living while the other 4 are already extinct (Lewis, Fennig & Simons, 2017). Additionally, 41 Philippine languages are already institutionalized, 72 are developing, 45 are vigorous, and 14 are sadly in trouble while 11 are already dying. From all these Philippine languages, the Department of Education (DepEd) identified 12 major languages to be used as a medium of instruction in the currently implemented Mother-Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) policy in the educational system of the country particularly in public schools. These languages include Tagalog, Kapampangan, Pangasinense, Iloko, Bikol, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Waray, Tausug, Maguindanaon, Maranao, and Chabacano (DepEd, 2013).

However, it is the English language which is considered as the language of power and of progress in the country that has played a major role in the lives of the Filipinos in improving their socio-economic status and in achieving a much better life. In fact, it has become the lingua franca in the country even before the world treated English as such because of the country's great linguistic diversity (Wa-Mbaleka, 2014b). But even if it is highly valued because of its functional and practical use in the Philippines and in many countries around the world, learning the English language is still found to be very challenging since the process goes through complicated tasks that involves psychological as well as social factors (Berowa, 2016). In fact, a large number of investigations in the fields of English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) have emphasized the roles of different variables that could facilitate or impede language learning. It has been stressed that affective factors like language anxiety have an effectual role in language achievement and proficiency.

Anxiety performs an important role in the success of learning or the lack of it. Over the years, language educators have placed great interest in investigating language anxiety as it is believed to hamper learning (Elaldi, 2016). As claimed by Horwitz (2001), a significant portion of the total population of foreign language learners feels some level of anxiety. This may suggest that even Filipino ESL learners are not exempted from experiencing such anxiety.

Thus, this study was conducted to provide insights on the levels of English language anxiety among ESL learners in Davao del Norte, Philippines. Furthermore, it explored the gender and year-level variables that may predict English anxiety that could be significant in the success or failure in learning the target language. Moreover, the author hopes to provide an additional resource to the very limited literature about the topic which examined those students who come from Mindanao.

1.2 Review of Related Literature

The idea of language anxiety is illustrated as the emotive reaction and the fear that is stimulated when one learns or uses a target language (MacIntyre, 1998 as cited in Zheng, 2008). Anxiety is seen to be a very prevalent phenomenon in the acquisition and learning of a language which is found to be a negative variable (Elaldi, 2016). Since there is a high possibility that it may hinder the attainment of the fundamental aim in language learning, researchers have conducted several studies to discover the different causes of anxiety in order to properly address its occurrence.

It was in 1986 when Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope made an important notion to theorize and to measure anxiety in language learning. They maintained that factors like apprehension in communication, anxiety to a test and fear to be negatively evaluated play great roles in creating anxiety in the context of target language learning. From this investigation, a thirty-three item Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was formulated that was also thought to be the most vital aspect of the study. In the analysis, the FLCAS instrument was able to show that a significant level of language anxiety affects the performance of the students in learning the second language. In spite of this result, the authors failed to identify the most influential factor of anxiety.

Since the creation of the anxiety model of Horwitz et al. in 1986, the framework has been constantly challenged by the researchers in the different contexts. Aside from seeking the vital factor that contributes to language anxiety in which the three-factor model failed to identify, several investigations were also carried out to test the validity of the FLCAS.

1.2.1 English language anxiety among university students

One of the investigations that aimed to test the validity of the proposed anxiety model of Horwitz et al. in language learning was made by Aida in 1994 that involved 96 students in the university who were learners of the Japanese language in the University of Texas, USA. It was an exploratory study that was meant to know the core structure of the FLCAS and to investigate whether the structure mirrors the three kinds of anxiety that were previously distinguished or otherwise. Furthermore, the research was aimed to assess the reliability of the FLCAS instrument and to show the relationship between the levels of anxiety of the students and their performance in Japanese. Based on the analysis of the data gathered, it was found that the adapted FLCAS was highly reliable with regard to evaluating the level of anxiety level among learners in the university who were learning the Japanese language. It was also discovered that anxiety associated to tests was established only in the aspect of learning in general but not in a more specific area just like in foreign language learning. The author further asserted that the test factor must be eliminated as this component was not supported based on the results of the study in contrast to the claim previously made. Such results lead the researcher to devise a model of anxiety which included the fear of being negatively evaluated, the fear of experiencing failure in the class, the degree of comfort in speaking with native speakers, and the attitude toward the class which is negative. The researcher also added that anxiety toward speech and the fear to be negatively evaluated are the components found to be part of the cause of anxiety.

Another research was made in 1999 by Cheng, Horwitz and Schallert who explored the relationship between anxiety toward classroom and writing in the target language and tried to know their connections to their achievement in writing and speaking. It was conducted in the four universities in Taiwan in which 433 English major students took part as participants. For the instrument, a modified FLCAS questionnaire was used to gather the data along with the adapted SLWAT. The instrument was translated to Chinese and the pilot test was conducted before the research was formally performed. The results indicated that anxiety in classroom and writing in the target language are two independent but related constructs. Furthermore, it was illustrated that classroom anxiety is an overall type of anxiety which is relevant to the speaking task in the target language while in writing, anxiety was seen to be specific in the language skills. Nevertheless, the study was able to demonstrate that self-confidence which is low appeared as a vital aspect of anxiety both in speaking and writing.

In the context of the Philippines, Mamhot, Martin and Masangya (2013) conducted a comparative study on the language anxiety of Filipino ESL and EFL learners from two (2) institutions based in the Philippines. The study aimed to determine the language anxiety as experienced by both groups of learners and to discover the causes and effects of these anxieties. The investigation included a total of 40 respondents where there were 20 ESL and 20 EFL students. The data were gathered through a two-part questionnaire in which one contains the 33-item FLCAS developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) while the other part comprises a 2-item questionnaire adapted from Williams and Andrade (2008). The results showed that Filipino ESL learners have neutral level of language anxiety while the fear of negative evaluation in the area of low self-perceived linguistic competency was displayed. As regards EFL learners, they reported no level of language anxiety. In the end, both groups expressed they are the one responsible for the language anxiety that they experienced.

1.2.2 Anxiety vis-à-vis gender and year-level
In 2001, Kitano investigated the anxiety toward foreign language among university students enrolled in Japanese language in the context of the United States. The study aimed to examine two (2) potential sources of anxiety of the students in Japanese oral tasks. These identified sources include the individual students' fear of negative evaluation and the self-perceived speaking ability. A survey was conducted that included 212 students in Japanese courses. It was found that the individual student's anxiety was higher as his or her fear of negative evaluation was stronger, and the strength of this tendency is dependent on the instructional level and experience of going to Japan. Additionally, an individual student's anxiety was higher as he or she perceived his or her ability as lower than that of peers and native speakers. Also, male participants reported higher level of anxiety as compared to females and that anxiety was stronger for advanced-level students than those students from intermediate and elementary levels.

Still on language anxiety, Matsuda and Gobel (2004) investigated anxiety in classroom and reading, and explored gender, classroom performance, and overseas extended experience variables. The study was accomplished in a Japanese university in Kyoto that was joined by 252 students from the English classes of the first semester. The year level of the students was represented through random sampling by year level. There were 89 first-year students, 85 second-year and 78 third-year participants respectively. The students had mixed-English proficiency levels that ranged from beginner to high intermediate. For the instruments, FLCAS and FLRAS were employed to determine the anxiety self-reports of the students that could either be influenced by different aspects of reading or by anxiety in the foreign language class in general. The MANOVA was employed to analyze the data. The results of the study demonstrated that self-confidence in the use of English was significantly influenced by the ability to travel abroad. This means that lower anxiety level was found among students who had gone abroad. It was also found that among first year students, self-confidence, gender, and proficiency performed vital roles in their actual performance in the classroom. However, unlike the other studies, gender was not found to be significant as to its effect on the overall reading/general anxieties, although among first year students, gender was discovered to be one of the vital elements in achieving language learning success. Moreover, it was shown that self-confidence when one speaks the English language was a predictor in the performance of the female participants for the content courses and in the four skills which are basic language learning.

Apart from the university students, the conception of second language learning anxiety was also examined among high school students. Na (2007) explored the level of anxiety experienced by high school students in China who were learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). The researcher surveyed the participants that involved 115 students from Shandong. The instruments employed included a questionnaire and an achievement test to gather the data necessary to attain the aims of the investigation. The questionnaire, the Chinese version of FLCAS, was used to collect the demographic information of the students and the English language anxiety they encountered. The participants were found to possess level of English learning anxiety which is high and it was the males who were found to have higher anxiety toward English classes. In the end, the researcher claimed that high level of anxiety somehow hindered the language learning of the students.

The English language anxiety among students was also explored by Elaldi (2016) in Turkey. Aside from exploring the anxiety of the English learners, the research also compared the anxiety experienced by the students when they were in the preparatory class and when they were already in fourth grade. Additionally, it also tried to determine if gender variable influence language anxiety. Through the use of FLCAS questionnaire, it was found that students have moderate level of anxiety both in preparatory and fourth grades. It was also illustrated that the anxiety of the students increased as they advance to higher level. Moreover, the results showed that males were found to have higher language anxiety as compared to the female participants.

From the trends in language learning anxiety research, there is an indication that different factors contribute to anxiety from one context to another. This means that one cannot exactly determine the factors that may predict language anxiety in various language communities. Thus, the theoretical model devised by Horwitz et al. in 1986 cannot be always found to be truthful as shown in the previous studies and it should not be taken as one size fits all anxiety predictors. Some language learners may likely suffer anxiety in the second language while some may suffer anxiety depending on the language skill that has to be performed. The literature discussed also showed that gender and the year level of the students play a part in the anxiety experienced in language learning.

However, it must be emphasized that previous research projects had participants who were mostly learning intensive English courses and appeared to be homogenous in terms of linguistic backgrounds. Less is known as to the factors that may predict the anxiety among second language learners of English in a multi-cultural context.

Thus, the researcher of this current study believes that it would be interesting to discover the levels of English anxiety of the participants in diverse environment, particularly in Davao del Norte in the Philippines, where students come from extremely different linguistic, social, cultural and religious backgrounds.

1.3 Research Questions
This study aimed to determine the levels of English language anxiety of the students from Tagum City, Davao del Norte in the Philippines. Specifically, it tried to answer the following questions.
1. What are the levels of anxiety of the respondents toward English based on gender and year-level?
2. Is there a significant relationship between the levels of English language anxiety and the gender of the respondents?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the levels of English language anxiety and the year-level of the respondents?

1.4 Theoretical Framework
This study is anchored on the Foreign Language Anxiety Theory as postulated by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope in 1986. Horwitz et al. (1986) provides that language anxiety is composed of and a combination of the following components: communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. The first component pertains to the anxiety experienced by the students when they communicate with the use of the target language to others. Additionally, the second component refers to the concept of fear in taking the examination, while the third component concerns the worry of the students that they may be misunderstood. It has been frequently argued by Horwitz et al. (1986) that anxiety toward a language happens in a particular situation. Thus, a language learner may experience anxiety every time he/she speaks with fellow students, or when talking to teachers of native speakers of the language. It is also possible that students feel uneasiness during class recitations, reports, presentations or dialogues among others.

The theory of Horwitz et al. (1986) is used to analyze the anxiety level of the respondents for this present study.

Methodology
The study employed a quantitative research method to investigate the levels of English language anxiety of the ESL learners from Tagum City, Davao del Norte, Philippines. The quantitative method was an appropriate research approach since it involves the measurement of the data gathered to examine the levels of English language anxiety of the respondents and to discover the significant relationship between the respondents' anxiety vis-à-vis gender and year-level. The data were collected through a questionnaire that reflects the thirty-three item Foreign Language Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) which uses a five-point Likert scale adopted from Park in 2014.

This study was conducted in a university in Tagum City, Davao del Norte, Philippines. The setting was chosen since it is the largest university in the locality that is assumed to have students from different backgrounds linguistically, culturally, socially and religiously that could provide a good representation of the tri-people from Mindanao. The investigation included 60 undergraduate students, 30 males and 30 females, who were enrolled in the different degree courses in the university who were chosen through systematic sampling method. From the number of respondents, each level from second to fourth year were represented by 20 students.

To obtain the necessary data, the researcher made use of a-two part survey questionnaire. The first part was intended to collect personal information about the participants such as gender and year-level. The second part was on the purpose of gathering the data on language anxiety using the 33-item *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale* (FLCAS) adapted from Park (2014). The scale is a self-report measure of the learner's feelings of anxiety as a specific reaction to English language learning as a second language in the classroom (Wang, 2010). From the 33 statements which are found in the FLCAS, different statements pertain to different components that could provoke English language anxiety as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Statements in the FLCAS based on different components

Area	Number	Statement
Communication Anxiety		
	1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English class.
	9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.
	14	I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers.
	18	I feel confident when I speak in English class.
	24	I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.
	27	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class.
	29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says.
	32	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English.
Test Anxiety		
	2	I don't worry about making mistakes in English class.
	8	I am usually at ease during tests in my English class.
	10	I worry about the consequences of failing my English class.
	19	I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.
	21	The more I study for an English test, the more confused I get.
Fear of Negative Evaluation		
	3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.
	7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.
	13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class.
	15	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.
	20	I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in English class.
	23	I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.
	25	English class moves so quickly, I worry about getting left behind.
	31	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.
	33	I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.

As regards the other 11 remaining items, they were put in a group which was named anxiety of English classes (Na, 2007) as the following statements found in Table 2.

Table 2
Statements in the FLCAS grouped as anxiety of English classes

Number	Statement
4	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.
5	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language classes.
6	During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.
11	I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.
12	In language class, I can get so nervous when I forget things I know.
16	Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.
17	I often feel like not going to my language class.
22	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.
26	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.
28	When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.
30	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.

The FLCAS uses a 5-point Likert scale with 33 items, ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). Total anxiety scores for the scale range from 33 to 165 points. While the answer *strongly agree* (5) indicates high level of anxiety, *strongly disagree* (1) indicates low level of anxiety that students feel (Horwitz, 2008). As reported by Park (2014), the Cronbach's coefficient alpha of all 33 items in the FLCAS was .93 which is excellent. Thus, the instrument is a valid and a reliable scale that has been consistently used in various studies to measure anxiety.

The data gathered through the use of the questionnaire were then coded. For gender, male is coded as 1 while female is coded as 0. With regard to the year level of the respondents, 1-first year, 2- second year, 3-third year, and 4-fourth year. The statements were anxiety coded based on the scale of 1-5. The null and alternative hypotheses were formulated in this study.

A. English language anxiety and gender

Null Hypothesis:

H_0 = There is *no significant relationship* between the English language anxiety of the respondents vis-à-vis gender.
Alternate Hypothesis:

H_1 = There is *a significant relationship* between the English language anxiety of the respondents vis-à-vis gender.

B. English language anxiety and gender

Null Hypothesis:

H_0 = There is *no significant relationship* between the English language anxiety

of the respondents vis-à-vis year level.

Alternate Hypothesis:

H_1 = There is *a significant relationship* between the English language anxiety of

the respondents vis-à-vis gender.

For the statistical analysis of the data, *mean* was used to determine the levels of English language anxiety of the respondents. After the mean and the standard deviation were determined for each statement, the interpretation was based on the following scheme.

Table 3
Mean interpretation

Mean	Interpretation
4.20-5.0	Very High
3.40-4.19	High
2.60-3.39	Neutral
1.80-2.59	Low
1.0-1.79	Very Low

Additionally, *Pearson r correlation* was employed to determine the significant relationship between English language anxiety and gender and year level, the.

Results and Discussion

3.1 Level of Anxiety toward English language

The overall mean of all the level of English anxiety among the respondents is as shown in Table 4 is 3.0518 while the standard deviation is 0.17746 which implies that these university students experience neutral level of anxiety toward English language.

Table 4
Levels of English anxiety among respondents

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Description
1	2.90	0.933	Neutral
2	3.10	1.085	Neutral
3	3.02	0.948	Neutral
4	2.85	1.039	Neutral
5	3.35	0.899	Neutral
6	2.92	1.094	Neutral
7	3.30	1.109	Neutral
8	3.10	0.817	Neutral
9	3.27	0.821	Neutral
10	3.22	1.059	Neutral
11	3.00	0.921	Neutral
12	3.02	0.930	Neutral
13	2.67	0.857	Neutral
14	2.98	0.892	Neutral
15	2.96	1.006	Neutral
16	3.33	1.036	Neutral
17	2.62	1.091	Neutral
18	2.95	0.999	Neutral
19	3.00	1.193	Neutral
20	3.17	0.924	Neutral
21	2.85	1.039	Neutral
22	2.97	0.843	Neutral
23	3.20	0.971	Neutral
24	3.10	0.896	Neutral
25	3.15	0.917	Neutral
26	2.92	1.030	Neutral
27	2.98	1.000	Neutral
28	2.98	0.725	Neutral
29	3.15	0.917	Neutral
30	3.35	0.860	Neutral
31	3.15	1.055	Neutral
32	3.03	0.823	Neutral
33	3.18	0.892	Neutral
OVERALL	**3.0518**	**0.17746**	**Neutral**

Note: Scale: *1.0-1.79= Very Low; 1.8-2.59= Low; 2.6-3.39=Neutral; 3.40-4.19=High; 4.20-5.0= Very High*

As clearly shown in Table 4, respondents experience certain level of anxiety toward English. Although there are variations, the mean of each statement and the overall mean results generally suggest that respondents have neutral level of English language anxiety. The findings largely differ from the previous investigations which recorded either high or low language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986; Aida, 1994; Cheng et al, 1999). Instead, the result appears to be consistent with the findings made by Mamhot et al. (2013) that Filipino ESL students generally do not acknowledge nor deny that they feel certain level of anxiety toward the English language. Similar to their finding, the respondents of this investigation provide the impression that they have adequate level of anxiety, not high but not also low. This could be a very good indication since according to Na (2007), the real task of English teachers is to provide students with just enough level of anxiety in learning the English language. Such adequate amount of anxiety plays a significant role in keeping students' motivation and in maintaining their efforts in the target language learning. With this, teachers should not try to completely help students to get away from English anxiety.

The anxiety as reported by these students from Mindanao may be influenced by different factors. Horwitz et al. (1986) provide that foreign language anxiety is caused by communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. As they argued, communication apprehension happens when the learner is challenged not only in speaking but also in comprehending messages from the other. In the context of the present study, it could be possible that respondents do not find the use of English to be very or less difficult particularly in oral communication activities. It is very likely that they have enough self-confidence as they do not seem to show extreme anxiety or confidence when they need to communicate with people especially that English oral communication subject performs dyadic interaction, group discussions and even public speaking. This line of argument is supported by the statements referring to the aspect of communication anxiety in the FLCAS just like statement number 1 that goes *"I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English class"* in which neutral level is reported.

Furthermore, it was theorized that anxiety is predicted to happen during language test when there is fear of negative evaluation. As asserted by Horwitz et al. (1986), test anxiety happens when students fear of getting a failing grade or that they could not achieve unrealistic expectations. Based on the scores, the students may have maintained neutral level of anxiety as they may not have erroneous expectations and beliefs about language standards during test or language tasks that are identified to bring the feeling of anxiety among second language learners. As evident in statement number two (2) that pertains to test anxiety, *"I don't worry about making mistakes in English class,"* it could be speculated that these learners do not feel extremely anxious or otherwise as they have been exposed to the language since childhood. They have been learning the English language and probably been into different communication interactions with teachers and classmates that in turn, allow them to feel neutral toward English language learning situations (Mamhot et al., 2013).

As regards fear of negative evaluation, Elaldi (2016) explained that it happens when high expectations and standards are set as learners communicate and speak in public. The fear of not meeting these expectations worries the students that would tend to hinder their learning process. In this investigation, it seems that students hold tolerable level of fear as seen on the mean results of the statements pertaining to negative evaluation such as in statement number three (3) that says, *"I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class."* It could be possible that students have friendly classroom and learning environment where teachers and peers are supportive, and where language evaluation are done in a constructive manner, and activities are encouraging that do not provoke high or low anxiety. As asserted by Na (2007), the more friendly and informal the language classroom environment becomes, the less likely it causes anxiety.

Still on English anxiety, previous studies illustrated that gender variable was found to predict the level of anxiety among ESL learners. However, the current study shows otherwise as both gender groups reported the same level of language anxiety toward English as presented in Table 5. The results show that the mean score of language anxiety among female students is 3.0737 while males reported 3.0292. Although females appear to have higher mean scores, results from both gender groups are similarly interpreted as neutral.

Table 5
English anxiety by gender

Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Female	3.0737	0.43534	Neutral
Male	3.0292	0.27619	Neutral

As described in Table 5, the results point to the same direction as both male and female research participants are found to have adequate level of English language anxiety. This finding disputes numerous investigations in the past as cited in this study that overwhelmingly assert that males have higher level of anxiety toward English as compared to females (Kitano, 2001; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004; Na, 2007; Elaldi, 2016). Females have always been regarded as more adept in language learning than males as they have been found to achieve higher score in English exams than males (Cui, 2011). With such trend in English language performance, it is assumed that females are more confident in learning the language and they are more ready in approaching threatening situations in language learning. As a result, females are less anxious than the males.

However, such is not the case in this research as male and female respondents have shown the same level of anxiety. This may be due to the fact that they have somehow shared almost the same experience and knowledge about English especially that all of them come from the same school. In the study of Kitano (2001), it was found that Japanese male students had higher anxiety as they view their spoken Japanese competence to be less than the others that was not actually experienced by females. In this context, male and female respondents possibly share the same language competencies, perception and motivation in learning English language competencies that might have influenced the same level of anxiety regardless of gender.

Aside from gender, the aspect of year-level was also explored to determine the level of language anxiety toward English among the respondents. As illustrated on Table 6, the year-level of the students do not generate different results.

Table 6
English anxiety by year-level

Year-Level	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
2	2.8139	0.24605	Neutral
3	3.0879	0.46655	Neutral
4	2.9394	0.22734	Neutral

The respondents of this study from different year-level yield similar results in relation to English language anxiety as shown in Table 6. All the students reported a neutral level of language anxiety regardless of their academic standing. These findings are inconsistent with the previous investigations that illustrate an increase of anxiety as the learner advances to higher level of study (Kitano, 2001; Aydemir, 2011; Liu, 2006; Elaldi, 2016). According to Kitano (2001), the level of anxiety toward foreign language learning tend to increase as the students progress to advanced-level because they may fear the possibility of being negatively evaluated more strongly by their teachers and peers as compared to the those in the lower levels. The same line of argument was presented by Elaldi (2016) who revealed that language anxiety in foreign language of the students progressed from preparatory to grade four. These researchers maintain that the increase of language anxiety among students as they progress to higher year-level is associated with the belief that their additional knowledge in English might increase the chances of noticing their own errors in speaking that will make them more anxious.

Another assumption that is offered for such increase of anxiety has something to do with the expectation that their teachers in the higher level may not be as considerate as those in the lower level. It is very likely for students to feel more anxious as teachers may become stricter and less generous with praise than teachers in the lower level, and that also increase their fear of being negatively evaluated in the advanced level. In contrast, Liu (2006) maintained that there is a decrease of the level of English language anxiety as one increases proficiency and learning experience that can happen as the learner proceed to higher year level.

However, the result of this research in relation to the year-level of the respondents cannot support these previous findings since this study offers a different perspective. As shown in the table above, there are no variations as to the anxiety experienced based on the year-level of the students. This means that the year-level of the students do not show an increase or a decrease of language anxiety instead, the level of anxiety is being maintained. Although they feel anxious, such similar results from different year-levels could be attributed to their almost similar knowledge, experience and exposure to the target language. The situations that encourage anxiety in language learning as mentioned in the previous studies might have been felt by these students, but it appears that they are able to maintain just an adequate level of anxiety which is evident in the mean scores.

3.2 Significant relation between English anxiety and gender

The Pearson r Correlation analysis was carried out to determine if there is a significant relationship between anxiety and gender. The result of the correlation analysis is illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7
Correlation of English anxiety vis-à-vis gender

Variables		p-value	Interpretation
ANXIETY	Gender	0.639	Not Significant

As presented in Table 7, the correlation analysis indicates that the p-value is 0.639 which is greater than the alpha (0.05). Therefore, the NULL hypothesis (H_0) should not be rejected. This implies that there is no significant relationship between English language anxiety and the gender of the respondents. This finding supports the investigation made by Matsuda and Gobel (2004) who advocated that gender was not significant in relation to the gender of the Japanese university respondents. This means that gender variable does not determine the level of English language anxiety of the respondents because, as previously mentioned, both gender groups have the same level of anxiety. It could be a possibility that anxiety is not determined by the gender of the learners as they may have the same level of experience, exposure and knowledge as regards English language that explains the result.

3.3 Significant relation between English anxiety and year-level

Aside from gender, Pearson r Correlation was also employed to determine the significant relationship between English anxiety and the year-level of the respondents. As shown in Table 8, consistent result is generated as compared to gender variable.

Table 8
Correlation of English anxiety vis-à-vis year-level

Variables		p-value	Interpretation
ANXIETY	Year-level	0.270	Not Significant

Table 8 shows that the correlation analysis between English anxiety and year-level has the p-value of 0.270 which is greater than the alpha (0.05). Therefore, the NULL hypothesis (H_0) should not be rejected. This implies that there is no significant relationship between English language anxiety and the year level of the respondents. This means that the year level of the students does not have anything to do with the level of their English language anxiety. In line with this idea, the present study provides that as an individual proceeds to an advanced level, it does not mean that their anxiety would also increase or decrease. The students may have perceived and approached English language learning similarly regardless of the year level.

Thus, the results of this current research generally dispute previous findings that second language learners of English experience high anxiety as influenced by gender and year-level variables.

Conclusion
This study illustrates that ESL learners from the south tend to maintain enough self-confidence and balanced emotions toward English language learning. It appears that their anxiety is just enough for them not become very anxious nor very relaxed that may actually prevent them from achieving the ultimate success in their language learning. It is very likely that they are able to handle communication tasks, tests and evaluations in relation to English fairly well that resulted to an adequate amount of anxiety. It gives the impression that their peers, teachers, administrators, curriculum and institution are welcoming and understanding. In line with this, it seems that the people and the institution involved in their language learning are doing a good job in just keeping the right amount of anxiety.

Although speculations are the only option that could be provided in this study, this investigation sustains the assertion that the respondents experience certain level of anxiety. Nevertheless, all aspects that could provoke

anxiety are kept to their adequate level that seems to provide a very good indication of their learning and teaching environment. As Na (2007) believes, neutral level or adequate level of anxiety performs a positive role in keeping the motivation of the learners to maintain their efforts in language learning.

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