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Abstract

Language learning anxiety has been known to have adverse effect not only on students' second language learning processes but also on second language performance. This study aims at investigating the level of English Language Anxiety among undergraduates at UiTM Perak, Seri Iskandar Campus and to determine the main source of anxiety among them. The study employed purposeful sampling, and the participants were chosen from three intact groups of 93 undergraduates in total. They were Bachelor of Arts students from the Department of Built Environment Studies and Technology enrolled in English for Specific Purpose (ESP) course which was English for Presentation. The data were collected through the distribution of questionnaires adapted from Horwitz' (1989) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) which consists of 33 statements. It was found that the majority, 48 (51.6%) of the respondents have moderate anxiety levels, 24 (25.8%) respondents fall under the category of high anxiety while 21 (22.6%) respondents have low anxiety. The main source of anxiety among the respondents was fear of negative evaluation (mean=3.2), followed by communication apprehension (mean=3.0) and test anxiety (mean=2.8).

Keywords: Language Anxiety, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), Communication Apprehension, Test Anxiety, Fear for Negative Evaluation

Introduction

English is the second language in Malaysia and is taught at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Despite learning English for about 11 years in school, many Malaysian undergraduates still find it difficult to use English effectively (Rusli et al., 2018) especially in speaking. According to Bygate (2009), ESL/EFL learners found speaking challenging because it involves a complex cognitive process. In addition, there are some psychological factors that contribute to the difficulty in acquiring speaking skill, such as self-confidence and anxiety (Pasaribu & Harendita, 2018). Anxiety has been identified as one of the many factors that hinders second language learners from acquiring the target language, especially speaking skill (Ab Rashid et al., 2017; Badrasawi et al., 2020; Hewitt & Stephenson, 2012; Zhang & Rahimi, 2014). A study

conducted by Cubukcu (2007) which examined the students' level of anxiety and its relationship to second language learning, found that there are several factors which contribute to anxiety among them. Among the factors were the fear of making mistakes, the fear of losing face, the fear of failure and the fear of not being able to achieve a certain standard. Thus, he concluded that students' poor performance in language assessments may not be due solely to their lack of ability or inadequate background or poor motivation but may also be due to language anxiety (Cubukcu, 2007).

This study was conducted to determine the level of English language learning anxiety among ESP students and to determine the main source of anxiety among them. The research objectives of the study were:

- RO1: To determine the level of English language anxiety among ESP students.
- RO2: To determine the main source of English language anxiety among ESP students.

Based on the study objectives, two research questions were formulated which were:

- RQ1: What is the level of anxiety experienced by ESP students towards the learning of English?
- RQ2: What is the main source of English language anxiety among ESP students?

Literature Review

Horwitz et al (1989); Maclntyre (1999) were among the early researchers to propose the definitions of language anxiety. The former defines language anxiety as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128) while the later describes language anxiety as a feeling of stress, nervousness, emotional reaction, and worry that are associated to second/ foreign language learning. Horwitz et al. (1989) have identified three main interrelated types of anxiety which negatively affect the learning of the second/ foreign language. They are communication apprehension (CA), test anxiety (TA) and fear of negative evaluation (FNE).

Communication apprehension is a fear of using the target language when communicating with or presenting in front of other people. Meanwhile, test anxiety refers to fear of performing poorly or failing in tests. Most language learners would experience a certain level of anxiety when sitting for examinations (Zeng & Cheng, 2018). Test-takers would experience differential levels of anxiety in different testing situations. According to Zeng and Cheng (2018), even students who considered themselves to be experienced test-takers and were adept at test-taking, expressed their anxiety about speaking or presenting in English. The third type of anxiety is fear of negative evaluation which refers to the learners being anxious of negative judgement or evaluations from their teachers or classmates. Students who are anxious about negative evaluation may avoid interacting in the target language, which consequently inhibit them from developing their oral communication skill in the language (Arnaiz & Guillen, 2012).

Many studies investigating second/foreign language anxiety levels have been conducted by researchers around the world utilizing Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), a self-report instrument developed by (Horwitz et al., 1986). FLCAS has been adapted and translated into Spanish (Perez-Paredes & Martinez-Sanchez, 2001), Japanese (Masutani, 2021), Chinese (Liu & Jackson, 2008), Indonesian (Djafri & Wimbarti, 2018) and Turkish

(Karatas et al., 2016). Many studies have documented the use of FLCAS to measure anxiety level among language learners of different languages such as: American learners learning Japanese (Aida, 1994), Chinese learners of English and Japanese (Jin et al., 2015), Indonesian learners learning English, French, Japanese, Arabic and Korean (Djafri & Wimbarti, 2018) and Malaysian learners learning Japanese (Othman & Abdul Latif, 2021). The findings of these studies vary depending on a lot of internal and external factors. Therefore, Horwitz (2016) has recommended that the FLCAS measure be investigated in different cultures because a different factor structure might be discovered.

Methodology
The current study employed purposeful sampling, and the participants were chosen from three intact groups of 93 undergraduates in total. They were 39 male and 54 female students who were pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Department of Built Environment Studies and Technology, enrolled in English for Specific Purpose (ESP) course which was English for Presentation. Table 1 shows the participants' demographics.

Table 1
The participants' Demographic

Groups	Group A	Group B	Group C	Total
Male	17	14	8	39
Female	15	15	24	54
Total (N)	32	29	32	**93**

The Research Instrument
The instrument used for data collection in this study was the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), a self-report instrument developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), to assess students' anxiety levels in the classroom context. The FLCAS consists of 33 items, each measured on a 5-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree.' For positively worded items, 'strongly agree' receives 5 points, and 'strongly disagree' receives 1 point. However, there are 9 items (2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, and 32) in the questionnaires which are negatively worded, thus were inversely scored. Higher scores indicate that the respondent experience more anxiety in his/her English language classrooms. The total scores range from 33 to 165. FLCAS developed by Horwitz (1986) has an internal reliability coefficient of .93 and has been widely accepted by other language researchers. Additionally, it has been found to be a highly reliable and valid instrument to measure students' foreign language anxiety level (Aida, 1994; Paneerselvam, & Yamat, 2021).

Data Collection
The FLCAS questionnaire was administered to all participants during September to December 2021 semester. FLCAS was used to measure three types of anxieties associated with learning the foreign language. The different types of anxiety are communication apprehension (items 1, 4, 9, 14, 15, 18, 24, 27, 29, 30 and 32), test anxiety (items 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26 and 28) and fear of negative evaluation (items 2, 7, 13, 19, 23, 31 and 33). The FLCAS score is derived for each respondent by adding up his or her ratings on the thirty-three items. Based on the scores, the respondents were placed in one of three groups: low, moderate, or high anxiety level.

Results and Findings

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the respondents' FLCAS results.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of FLCAS

Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Dev.	Range	Minimum	Maximum
97.91	99	93	16.82	101	41	142

The mean score is 97.91 while the standard deviation is 16.82. Table 2 also indicates that the median, mode and range of the scores are 99, 93 and 101 respectively while the maximum score is 142 out of 165 and the minimum is 41.

To address the first research question (RQ1) for the study, the respondents were assigned into three anxiety groups (low, moderate and high) based on their FLCAS scores. The 25th and 75th percentiles of the FLCAS scores were used as cut-off points for the three anxiety groups as proposed by Cheng (2005). The 25th and 75th percentile for the FLCAS data set for this study are 89 and 110 respectively. Table 3 shows the score range for each anxiety level.

Table 3
The Respondents' Anxiety Level

Score Range	Anxiety Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
33-89	Low	21	22.6
90-109	Moderate	48	51.6
110-165	High	24	25.8

It was found that forty-eight (48) of the respondents in the study were students with moderate anxiety levels which accounted for 51.6%. Twenty-four (24) of the respondents which accounted for 25.8 % were identified as students with high anxiety and twenty-one (21) of them which accounted for 22.6% were classified as students with low anxiety. Therefore, 77.4% of the respondents seemed to experience moderate to high anxiety levels.

Next, to address the second research question (RQ2) for the study, the respondents' scores on the different types of anxieties were scrutinised. There are 11, 15 and 7 items under the categories of communication apprehension, test-taking anxiety and fear for negative evaluation respectively. The respondents' ratings for each item on the scale of one (1) to five (5) for each category were summed up separately, and the total scores were averaged. The anxiety levels for each category were determined using the 25th and 75th percentile of the average scores.

As mentioned in the previous section, communication apprehension scores were based on items 1, 4, 9, 14, 15, 18, 24, 27, 29, 30 and 32 on the FLCAS. Table 4 shows the average score or mean (M), standard deviation (SD), rank (RK) and anxiety level (AL) of each item. Item 9 which is a statement; *I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class,* was rated the highest with an average score of 3.42 out of 5. Item 18 (which was inversely scored) with a statement; *I feel confident when I speak in my English class,* was rated the lowest with an average score of 2.8 out of 5. The average score for the eleven (11) items under communication apprehension is 3.0.

Table 4
Average scores for items under Communication Apprehension

Item	Communication Apprehension	M	SD	RK	AL
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.	2.89	0.93	8	L
4	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	2.72	1.01	11	L
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.	3.42	1.14	1	H
14	I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers.	2.94	0.98	5	M
15	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	2.91	1.18	7	M
18	I feel confident when I speak in my English class.	2.84	0.96	10	L
24	I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	3.13	0.86	2	H
27	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class.	2.86	1.09	9	L
29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says.	2.95	1.08	4	M
30	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.	2.94	0.75	5	M
32	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English.	3.09	1.05	3	H
	Average	2.97			

The 25th and 75th percentile for the average scores in this category were 2.86 and 3.02 respectively. Table 5 shows the anxiety level scale for communication apprehension.

Table 5
Anxiety Scale for Communication Apprehension

Scale	Level	Total
3.02-5.0	H	3
2.87-3.01	M	4
1.0-2.86	L	4

Out of the eleven items measuring communication apprehension, three (3) were rated by the respondents as contributing to high anxiety level while four (4) items contributed to moderate anxiety level and another four (4) contributed to low anxiety.

The next type of anxiety, is test anxiety which were based on items 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26 and 28. Table 6 shows the average scores of each item. Item 10 which is a statement; *I worry about the consequences of failing my English class,* was rated the highest with an average score of 3.74 out of 5. Item 17 with a statement; *I often feel like not attending*

my English class, was rated the lowest with an average score of 1.80 out of 5. The average score for the fifteen (15) items under communication apprehension is 2.8.

Table 6
Average scores for items under Test Anxiety

Item	Test Taking Anxiety	M	SD	RK	AL
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class	2.98	1.17	7	M
5	It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English classes.	2.43	1.03	12	L
6	During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	2.19	0.95	14	L
8	I am usually at ease during tests in my English class.	2.94	0.79	8	M
10	I worry about the consequences of failing my English class.	3.74	1.13	1	H
11	I don't understand why people get so upset over English class.	3.04	0.93	6	M
12	In English class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	3.31	1.12	4	H
16	Even if I am well prepared or English class, I feel anxious about it.	3.34	1.17	3	H
17	I often feel like not attending my English class.	1.80	0.95	15	L
20	I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in my English class.	3.57	1.11	2	H
21	The more I study for an English test the more confused I get.	2.29	1.02	13	L
22	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for English class.	2.63	0.96	10	M
25	English class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	2.70	1.17	9	M
26	I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes.	2.45	1.14	11	M
28	When I'm about to start my English class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	3.27	1.05	5	M
	Average	2.85			

The 25th and 75th percentile for the average scores in this category were 2.44 and 3.29 respectively. Table 7 shows the anxiety level scale for test anxiety.

Table 7
Anxiety Scale for Test Anxiety

Scale	Level	Total
3.3-5.0	H	4
2.45-3.29	M	7
1.0-2.44	L	4

Four (4) out of the fifteen (15) items measuring test anxiety were rated by the respondents as contributing to high anxiety level while seven (7) items contributed to moderate anxiety level and another four (4) items contributed to low anxiety.

The last type of anxiety, is fear of negative evaluation which were based on items 2, 7, 13, 19, 23, 31 and 33. Table 8 shows the average scores of each item. Item 23 which is a statement; *I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do,* was rated the highest with an average score of 3.86 out of 5. Item 17 with a statement; *I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make,* was rated the lowest with an average score of 2.4 out of 5. The average score for the seven (7) items under fear of negative evaluation is 3.22.

Table 8
Average scores for items under Fear of Negative Evaluation

Item	Fear of Negative Evaluation	M	SD	RK	AL
2	I don't worry about making mistakes in English classes.	2.76	1.00	6	L
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.	3.74	1.03	3	M
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class.	2.94	0.98	5	M
19	I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make	2.44	1.05	7	L
23	I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	3.86	0.98	1	M
31	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English	3	1.25	4	M
33	I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	3.77	1.11	2	H
	Average	3.22			

The 25th and 75th percentile for the average scores in this category were 2.85 and 3.76 respectively. Table 5 shows the anxiety level scale for test-taking Anxiety.

Table 5
Anxiety Scale for fear of Negative Evaluation

Scale	Level	Total
3.76-5.0	H	3
2.85-3.75	M	7
1.0-2.84	L	4

Three (3) out of the fourteen items measuring fear of negative evaluation were rated by the respondents as contributing to high anxiety level while seven (7) items contributed to moderate anxiety level and another four (4) items contributed to low anxiety.

Discussion

The first research question of the study is; 'What is the level of anxiety experienced by ESP students towards the learning of English?' Based on the findings it can be concluded that more than half (51.6%) of the respondents in the study experience moderate anxiety level which is consistent with the findings of another study conducted among Malaysian undergraduates learning English by (Balakrishnan et al., 2020). Othman and Abdul Latif (2021) who conducted a study among Malaysian undergraduates learning Japanese also reported similar findings. Thus, it can be concluded that learning another language would trigger a certain level of anxiety irrespective of the length of time one has been exposed to that particular language. Even Malaysian undergraduates who have had exposure to English for at least eleven years in schools experience moderate level of anxiety when learning English, what more when learning the third language such as Japanese. The same conclusion was made by researchers who conducted similar study among undergraduates in Pakistan (Abbasi et al., 2019). Although English is taught from primary level in Pakistan, the undergraduates in their study still face moderate level of anxiety when they were in their English classes. Another way to conclude the findings is that since 51.6% of the respondents in the current study were students with moderate anxiety levels and 25.8% were students with high anxiety level, the majority of the respondents (77.4%) seemed to experience moderate to high anxiety levels. This is in congruence with the studies conducted among Spanish ESP learners (Amengual-Pizarro, 2018) and Japanese EFL learners (Masutani, 2021) who also concluded that most respondents in their studies suffered from average to high anxiety level.

Next, the second research question will be addressed. 'What is the main source of English language anxiety among ESP students?' Based on the mean scores for all the three categories of anxiety, fear of negative evaluation (FNE) has the highest mean followed by communicative apprehension (CA) and finally test anxiety (TA) with the mean scores of 3.22, 2.97 and 2.85 respectively. The results are rather unexpected since Malaysian education system is exam-oriented, thus one would expect that tests and assessments to be the main sources of anxiety. Test anxiety was the main source of anxiety among Pakistani (Gupang et al., 2017) and Iraqi (Ali at al., 2017) undergraduates due to the importance of passing the English course. However, this was not the case for the respondents in the current study based on the overall mean score for TA category (2.85). A closer look at the means for individual item reveals that item 10 with the statement 'I worry about the consequences of failing my English class', has the second highest mean of 3.74. It shows that some respondents were indeed anxious about their exam results although collectively not as anxious as being negatively evaluated. A close

scrutiny reveals that the highest mean for individual item was item 23 with the statement '*I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do*' under FNE category which has the mean score of 3.86. Fear of negative evaluation was also found to be the main contributing factor of anxiety in Rahmat's et al (2021) study. The respondents in their study were fearful of negative evaluation by their peers and teachers. Although Horwitz et al. (1989) have distinguished three types of anxiety namely communication apprehension (CA), test anxiety (TA) and fear of negative evaluation (FNE) it is difficult to separate between CA and FNE. In EFL setting, most learners may only have the opportunity to use English during class hours thus, it is not surprising that they feel anxious about speaking in English. Furthermore, they are at risk of making mistakes and being negatively evaluated by their peers and lecturers as highlighted by Liu (2012). They would feel apprehensive and anxious to speak in class which would consequently deter them from mastering the language. Therefore, it can be said that CA and FNE are interrelated.

Conclusion
Based on the findings it can be concluded that more than half (51.6%) of the respondents in the study experience moderate anxiety level while 25.8% experienced high anxiety level. This means that the majority of the respondents (77.4%) seemed to experience moderate to high anxiety levels. Fear of negative evaluation (FNE) was found to be the main factor contributing to language anxiety among the respondents followed by communicative apprehension (CA) and finally test anxiety (TA) with the mean scores of 3.22, 2.97 and 2.85 respectively.

Implication and Future Research
The findings of the study have some pedagogical implications. To prevent the debilitating effects of language anxiety, it is crucial that language educators adopt teaching method which create a supportive and friendly classroom environment. It is imperative that language educators be aware of the factors contributing to language anxiety among their EFL learners. According to Marcos-Llińas and Garau (2009) there are several factors which are associated with language anxiety including behavioural, cognitive, psycholinguistic, physical, and sociolinguistic factors. Nonetheless, there are still some factors in foreign language anxiety which are not yet fully understood. More research concerning the factors that may provoke learner anxiety is still needed in the future. As proposed by Horwitz (2016) FLCAS measure should be investigated in different cultures because a different factor structure might be discovered among learners from different cultural background.

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