

English Language Learning Anxiety in Classroom Communication Among Junior High School Students at Notre Dame of Jolo for Girls

Alkap P. Asanji¹, Raugda J. Julhamid

¹ School of Graduate Studies, Sulu State College, Jolo 7400, Philippines

*Corresponding author: gs@sulustatecollege.edu.ph

ABSTRACT. This study examined the English language learning anxiety in classroom communication among junior high school students at Notre Dame of Jolo for Girls. A descriptive quantitative research design was employed, involving 100 junior high school students selected through stratified random sampling during the School Year 2025–2026. The study assessed learners' level of English language learning anxiety in terms of speaking, writing, and listening, as well as differences when grouped according to age, parents' educational attainment, parents' monthly income, and grade level. It also examined the correlation among the subcategories of English language learning anxiety. Results showed that the majority of the respondents were aged 15 years old and below and were fairly distributed across Grade 7 to Grade 10. Most learners had parents who were college level or graduates and belonged to families with relatively higher income levels. Findings revealed that learners demonstrated a neutral level of English language learning anxiety in speaking, writing, and listening, indicating a moderate level of anxiety in classroom communication. Statistical analyses indicated no significant differences when grouped according to age, parents' educational attainment, parents' monthly income, and grade level. Correlation analysis revealed significant high positive co-relationships among speaking, writing, and listening anxiety. Based on the findings, it is recommended that school administrators strengthen supportive language programs, teachers adopt anxiety-sensitive instructional strategies, parents provide encouragement at home, students develop confidence through active participation, and future researchers explore additional variables related to language learning anxiety.

KEYWORDS: *English Language Learning Anxiety, Classroom Communication, Speaking Anxiety, Writing Anxiety, Listening Anxiety, Junior High School Students*

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Introduction

Proficiency in English is advantageous in both academic and social contexts; however, numerous students encounter difficulties in classroom communication. Nervous students impede their language development by avoiding speaking and refraining from practicing. In classrooms, English Language Learning Anxiety (ELLA) is a prevalent occurrence that can impede learning. Active participation is frequently restricted by the fear of making mistakes, discomfort speaking, and withdrawal from group interactions (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986).

The effects of ELLA have been consistently substantiated by international studies. Zhang (2018) discovered that anxious learners experience reduced motivation and English performance due to their increased disengagement and reduced participation. Lee and Chiu (2023) discovered that anxious students avoid speaking, doubt their abilities, and underestimate their competence. These results demonstrate the extent of ELLA and its impact on language development and confidence.

In the Philippines, where English is a widely used language in education, it is essential to comprehend ELLA. According to Soriano and Co (2022), anxiety is influenced by cultural and social factors, including teacher factors, negative comments, and fear of committing mistakes. Maines et al. (2025) found that language anxiety lowers students' academic performance, with test anxiety having the strongest negative effect, highlighting the need for supportive classroom environments and reduced assessment pressure.

Gao (2023) demonstrated that mindfulness practices enhance emotional well-being and performance and reduce anxiety. Similarly, Delos Santos et al. (2025) showed that the classroom environment, including dynamics, peer interaction, and physical setting, can be effectively improved to reduce language anxiety among Filipino freshmen.

Given these findings, it is imperative to investigate the contextual and individual factors that influence the ELLA of Filipino students. This study examines the anxiety associated with learning the English language in classroom communication among junior high school students at Notre Dame of Jolo for Girls in order to develop more inclusive and effective language teaching strategies.

Research Questions

1. What is the demographic profile of the junior high school students in terms of:
 - 1.1. Age;
 - 1.2. Parents' Educational Attainment;
 - 1.3. Parents' Monthly Income; and
 - 1.4. Grade Level?
2. What is the level of English language learning anxiety experienced by the junior high school students at Notre Dame of Jolo for Girls in terms of:
 - 2.1. Speaking;
 - 2.2. Writing; and
 - 2.3. Listening?
3. Is there a significant difference in the level of English language learning anxiety in classroom communication when data are grouped according to their demographic profile in terms of:
 - 3.1. Age;
 - 3.2. Parents' Educational Attainment
 - 3.3. Parents' Monthly Income; and
 - 3.4. Grade Level?
4. Is there a significant correlation among the subcategories under English language learning anxiety (speaking, writing, and listening) in classroom communication?

Literature

Nature and Impact of ELLA

Anxiety is a major emotional barrier in second-language learning, often mistaken for lack of ability rather than a psychological constraint. It consistently shows negative effects on academic performance. A meta-analysis by Botes, Dewaele, and Greiff (2020) found that higher anxiety levels are associated with lower achievement across language skills. Similarly, Zheng and Cheng (2018) reported that anxiety disrupts cognitive processing during communication and assessment, limiting real-time language performance. Liu and Yuan (2021) further emphasized that language anxiety is not only situational but persistent, affecting both productive and receptive skills over time. Supporting these findings, Salve (2025) confirmed that English language anxiety is strongly linked to lower academic performance, reduced classroom participation, and decreased communication confidence.

Emerging studies in related fields suggest that anxiety may be reduced through supportive interventions. Inoferio et al. (2024) found that AI-assisted learning tools, acting as non-judgmental mentors, help reduce anxiety and improve learner confidence through personalized guidance. Meanwhile, Savellon et al. (2024) highlighted that communication anxiety also manifests physically and cognitively, such as nervousness, mental blocks, and reduced clarity during speaking tasks.

Anxiety in Classroom Communication (Speaking and Listening)

Speaking is one of the most anxiety-inducing language skills, as learners often avoid participation due to fear of negative evaluation and peer judgment, even when competent (Liu & Jackson, 2011). Learner readiness to communicate also varies depending on classroom environment and emotional state (Macintyre, 2007). Communication style further influences anxiety levels, as Cuilan et al. (2024) found that verbal and non-verbal cues such as tone, facial expression, and confidence affect student comfort and engagement.

Listening anxiety also limits comprehension, as unfamiliar vocabulary, fast speech, and processing pressure reduce learners' understanding of spoken input (Wang & Cha, 2019). Overall, both speaking and listening anxieties significantly restrict classroom participation and interaction.

Local Context of English Language Anxiety in the Philippines

In the Philippine context, English language anxiety is influenced by cultural and social factors. Pabro-Maquidato identified fear of embarrassment (*hiya*) and negative evaluation as key causes of speaking anxiety. Cabansag reported moderate speaking anxiety, especially during unprepared tasks, which negatively affects proficiency. Macayan et al. similarly found that anxiety weakens speaking performance, while Giray et al. (2022) highlighted self-doubt and fear of judgment as major barriers to classroom participation. These findings show that anxiety is shaped by both personal and classroom-related factors.

Research Gap

Although many studies examine language anxiety, most focus on higher education or general language proficiency. Limited research addresses classroom communication anxiety—particularly speaking and listening—among junior high school students in localized contexts such as Notre Dame of Jolo for Girls. This highlights the need for a context-specific study to better understand and address learners' communication challenges.

Methodology

1. Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design to examine the level of English language learning anxiety among junior high school students in classroom communication. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire rather than interviews or focus groups to quantify students' anxiety in speaking, writing, and listening during English classes.

2. Participants and Sampling

The respondents consisted of 100 Grade 7 to Grade 10 students enrolled at Notre Dame of Jolo for Girls during the 2025–2026 academic year. Students from kindergarten, grade school, and senior high school were excluded. A stratified random sampling technique was utilized, with grade levels serving as strata to ensure equal representation. Respondents were randomly selected using the fishbowl technique. Participation was voluntary, with informed consent secured, and confidentiality and anonymity strictly maintained.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Grade Level

| Grade Level | Number Of Respondents |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Grade 7 | 28 |
| 2. Grade 8 | 21 |
| 3. Grade 9 | 29 |
| 4. Grade 10 | 22 |
| Total: | 100 |

3. Instruments

A two-part structured survey questionnaire was employed to collect data. Part I involved the collection of the demographic profile of the respondents, while Part II administered a 5-point Likert scale to assess the anxiety associated with learning the English language. Specifically, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) and the English Language Anxiety Scale by Ali (2017) were used to adapt the instrument. A review of the instrument was conducted by the Graduate School to guarantee its relevance to modern contexts.

4. Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, ethical clearance and permission to conduct the study were secured from the Dean of Sulu State College Graduate Studies, as well as from the school principal and coordinators of Notre Dame of Jolo for Girls. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents. The researcher personally administered and retrieved the questionnaires to ensure completeness and accuracy of responses.

5. Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Demographic profiles of respondents were described using frequency counts and percentages. The level of anxiety associated with learning the English language was determined by computing the mean and standard deviation. To identify significant differences when demographic variables were grouped, inferential analyses were conducted, including t-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA). Pearson's *r* correlation analysis was implemented to investigate the correlation between students' anxiety levels and their speaking, writing, and listening communication abilities in the classroom.

Results

1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Analysis of the demographic profile of the Junior High School students of Notre Dame of Jolo for Girls (N = 100) shows that the majority of respondents are 15 years old and below (85%), with only a small proportion aged 16 (13%) and 17 years old and above (2% combined). In terms of parents' educational attainment, most respondents have parents who are college level or

graduates (78%), followed by those with post-graduate education (18%), while only a few have parents who reached high school (3%) and elementary level (1%). Regarding parents' monthly income, half of the respondents (50%) reported an income of 21,000 pesos and above, while 32% fall within 11,000–15,000 pesos and 18% within 16,000–20,000 pesos. As to grade level distribution, respondents are relatively evenly distributed across year levels, with Grade 7 and Grade 9 each comprising 29%, and Grade 8 and Grade 10 each representing 21% of the sample.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

| Demographic Variable | Number of Respondents (n=100) | Percentage (%) |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Age | | |
| 15 years old and below | 85 | 85.0% |
| 16 years old | 13 | 13.0% |
| 17 years old | 1 | 1.0% |
| 18 years old and above | 1 | 1.0% |
| Parents' Educational Attainment | | |
| Elementary level graduate | 1 | 1.0% |
| High school level/graduate | 3 | 3.0% |
| College level/graduate | 78 | 78.0% |
| Post graduate (master's/doctorate degree) | 18 | 18.0% |
| Parents' Monthly Income | | |
| 11,000 – 15,000 pesos | 32 | 32.0% |
| 16,000 – 20,000 pesos | 18 | 18.0% |
| 21,000 pesos and above | 50 | 50.0% |
| Parents' Monthly Income | | |
| Grade 7 | 29 | 29.0% |
| Grade 8 | 21 | 21.0% |
| Grade 9 | 29 | 29.0% |
| Grade 10 | 21 | 21.0% |

2. Extent of Teachers' Role as Facilitators in Student-Centered Approaches

Overall, the Junior High School students of Notre Dame of Jolo for Girls experienced a moderate level of English language learning anxiety across Speaking, Writing, and Listening, all interpreted as Neutral. As shown in Table 2, Speaking recorded the highest mean ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 0.66195$), followed by Writing ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.62103$), while Listening obtained the lowest mean ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 0.79137$).

In Speaking, anxiety is most evident when students are required to speak without preparation ($\bar{x} = 3.66$), while other indicators such as trembling, fear of mistakes, and self-consciousness were generally rated Neutral, indicating occasional anxiety in oral activities. In Writing, higher anxiety is linked to receiving corrections and embarrassment from marked outputs ($\bar{x} = 3.53$), while most other indicators remain Neutral, suggesting moderate concern mainly during evaluation. In Listening, the highest anxiety is associated with fear of being judged when misunderstanding English ($\bar{x} = 3.68$) and difficulty understanding discussions ($\bar{x} = 3.54$), while other indicators were Neutral, showing occasional difficulty in comprehension.

Overall, the results indicate that learners experience moderate anxiety in all language skills, with slightly higher levels in speaking and listening situations involving spontaneity and comprehension.

Table 3: Extent of English Language Learning Anxiety Experienced by Junior High School Students

| Statements | Mean | Standard Deviation (S.D.) | Descriptive Interpretation |
|--|---------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Speaking | 3.3200 | .66195 | Neutral |
| 1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class. | 3.25 | .845 | Neutral |
| 2. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class. | 3.42 | 1.130 | Neutral |
| 3. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class. | 3.66 | 1.085 | Agree |
| 4. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers. | 3.20 | 1.110 | Neutral |
| 5. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class. | 3.16 | 1.098 | Neutral |
| 6. I am afraid of being corrected while I am speaking in English. | 3.18 | 1.192 | Neutral |
| 7. I am afraid I will sound absurd when speaking with a foreigner. | 3.36 | 1.330 | Neutral |
| 8. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the English language in front of native speakers. | 3.34 | 1.224 | Neutral |
| 9. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language. | 3.14 | 1.073 | Neutral |
| 10. I feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class. | 3.49 | 1.275 | Neutral |
| Writing | 3.2090 | .62103 | Neutral |
| 1. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class. | 3.53 | 1.049 | Agree |
| 2. I get upset when the class is required to write a composition in English. | 2.66 | 1.056 | Neutral |
| 3. I am not confident in my writing skills in English. | 3.08 | 1.125 | Neutral |
| 4. I get nervous when the test requires essay writing in English. | 2.68 | 1.286 | Neutral |
| 5. I worry that my English composition will be criticized. | 3.43 | 1.148 | Neutral |
| 6. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class. | 3.19 | 1.116 | Neutral |
| 7. I feel embarrassed about seeing red marks in my English compositions. | 3.53 | 1.226 | Agree |
| 8. I am afraid that my classmates will criticize my written works in English. | 3.30 | 1.210 | Neutral |
| 9. I am anxious that my English composition would turn out funny. | 3.34 | 1.130 | Neutral |
| 10. I am afraid I may not understand directions written in English. | 3.35 | 1.192 | Neutral |
| Listening | 2.9860 | .79137 | Neutral |
| 1. I feel nervous when I listen to native English speakers. | 2.43 | 1.148 | Neutral |
| 2. I get anxious when I don't understand every word I hear in English. | 3.13 | 1.269 | Neutral |
| 3. I fear being judged if I misunderstand spoken English. | 3.68 | 1.230 | Agree |
| 4. I feel anxious when listening to English audio without subtitles. | 2.59 | 1.326 | Neutral |
| 5. I feel confident when listening to English conversations. | 3.36 | 1.106 | Neutral |
| 6. I get confused easily while listening to English. | 2.50 | 1.040 | Neutral |
| 7. I feel more nervous during English listening tests than in other skills. | 2.64 | 1.177 | Agree |
| 8. I panic when I miss part of a spoken English sentence. | 3.30 | 1.227 | Neutral |
| 9. I try to avoid situations where I need to listen to English. | 2.69 | 1.195 | Neutral |
| 10. I am afraid of not understanding discussions in English. | 3.54 | 1.259 | Agree |

Legend: (5) 4.50 – 5.00=Strongly Agree; (4) 3.50 – 4.49=Agree; (3) 2.50 – 3.49=Neutral; (2)1.50 – 2.49=Disagree; (1)1.00 – 1.49=Strongly Disagree

3. Differences in English Language Learning Anxiety Based on Demographic Profiles

To determine whether significant differences exist in the level of English language learning anxiety when grouped according to demographic profile, one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The results revealed that there were no significant differences in speaking, writing, and listening when grouped according to age ($p > 0.05$ for all domains), parents' monthly income ($p > 0.05$ for all domains), and grade level ($p > 0.05$ for all domains).

However, when grouped according to parents' educational attainment, no significant differences were found in speaking ($p = 0.177$) and writing ($p = 0.204$), while a significant

difference was observed in listening ($p = 0.030$). Overall, the findings indicate that most demographic variables do not significantly influence English language learning anxiety across speaking, writing, and listening, except for parents' educational attainment, which shows a significant difference only in listening anxiety.

Table 4: Differences in the Level of English Language Learning Anxiety in Classroom Communication When Grouped According to Demographic Profile

| Demographic Grouping | Domains | Test Statistic (t / F) | p-value (Sig.) | Description |
|--|-----------|------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Age | Speaking | .634 | .595 | Not Significant |
| | Writing | .317 | .813 | Not Significant |
| | Listening | .803 | .495 | Not Significant |
| Parents' Educational Attainment | Speaking | 1.76 | .177 | Not Significant |
| | Writing | 1.62 | .204 | Not Significant |
| | Listening | 3.62 | .030* | Significant |
| Parents' Monthly Income | Speaking | .125 | .945 | Not Significant |
| | Writing | .316 | .814 | Not Significant |
| | Listening | .441 | .724 | Not Significant |
| Grade Level | Speaking | 1.27 | .289 | Not Significant |
| | Writing | .802 | .496 | Not Significant |
| | Listening | 1.11 | .349 | Not Significant |

*Significance at alpha 0.05

4. Correlational Analysis Among Pedagogical Domains

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (Pearson's r) was used to determine the relationships among the sub-categories of English language learning anxiety in classroom communication. As shown in Table 4, all variables demonstrated statistically significant positive correlations ($p = 0.000$). The results reveal a high positive correlation between Speaking and Writing ($r = 0.579$), indicating that increased speaking anxiety is associated with increased writing anxiety. A similarly strong relationship is observed between Speaking and Listening ($r = 0.668$), while the highest correlation is found between Writing and Listening ($r = 0.696$).

Overall, the findings indicate that Speaking, Writing, and Listening are significantly and positively interrelated, suggesting that higher anxiety in one skill is likely associated with higher anxiety in the other skills. Thus, the hypothesis stating that there is no significant correlation among the subcategories is rejected.

Table 5. Correlations Among the Sub-Categories of English Language Learning Anxiety in Classroom Communication

| Variables | Pearson r | Sig. | N | Description |
|-----------------|-------------|------|-----|------------------|
| Speaking | | | | |
| Writing | .579** | .000 | 100 | High Correlation |
| Listening | .668** | .000 | 100 | High Correlation |
| Writing | | | | |
| Listening | .696** | .000 | 100 | High Correlation |

** Correlation Coefficient is significant at alpha .01 level

Discussion

The assessment of junior high school students of Notre Dame of Jolo for Girls reveals a generally balanced demographic profile characterized by a predominance of learners aged 15 years old and below. The respondents are distributed across Grade 7 to Grade 10, with slightly higher representation from Grade 7 and Grade 9. In terms of socioeconomic background, most students come from families with parents who are college level or graduates, with a smaller proportion having postgraduate qualifications or lower educational attainment. Likewise, the majority belong to households earning 21,000 pesos and above monthly, followed by those within lower income brackets. This profile suggests that the respondents come from relatively diverse but moderately advantaged educational and economic backgrounds, providing a stable context for examining language learning experiences.

In terms of English language learning anxiety, the findings indicate a generally neutral level of anxiety among students across speaking, writing, and listening domains. Speaking emerged as the highest among the three, suggesting that learners are more likely to experience nervousness during oral participation, particularly in spontaneous communication. This finding is supported by Berry et al. (2025), who found that self-doubt, characterized by fear of judgment and overthinking, can disrupt students' ability to organize and express ideas clearly, thereby increasing anxiety during speaking tasks. Similarly, Chavez et al. (2024) noted that even skilled student writers hesitated to express opinions on social media due to fear of criticism, indicating that evaluation apprehension can inhibit language use across contexts and may especially intensify in situations with an immediate audience, as seen in the elevated speaking anxiety in this study. Writing anxiety is also moderate, reflecting occasional concerns about evaluation and feedback on written outputs. Similarly, listening anxiety remains neutral, indicating that students sometimes experience difficulty in comprehending spoken English but not at an alarming level. Overall, these results suggest that learners experience manageable levels of anxiety in classroom communication, rather than extreme or debilitating levels.

When analyzed based on demographic variables, the results show no significant differences in English language learning anxiety in terms of age, parents' educational attainment, parents' monthly income, and grade level across speaking, writing, and listening domains. This implies that the students' background characteristics do not meaningfully influence their level of anxiety in using English in classroom communication. Regardless of demographic differences, learners appear to experience relatively similar levels of anxiety, suggesting that other factors beyond personal background may play a more critical role in shaping language anxiety.

The correlational analysis further reveals significant positive relationships among the three subcategories of English language learning anxiety, namely speaking, writing, and listening. The findings indicate that students who experience higher anxiety in one language skill are also likely to experience increased anxiety in the other skills. This interrelationship suggests that language anxiety is a connected and holistic experience rather than isolated to a single communication mode. Overall, the results highlight that English language learning anxiety among students is moderately experienced, consistently distributed across skills, not significantly influenced by demographic factors, but strongly interconnected across its different domains.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the respondents predominantly consist of younger junior high school students from supportive socio-educational backgrounds, with parents who are primarily college-educated and relatively high-income earners and are evenly distributed across grade levels.

The students exhibit a moderate degree of anxiety regarding learning the English language in speaking, writing, and listening, with speaking being the most pronounced issue. There were no notable differences in anxiety levels when categorized by age, parental educational attainment, parental monthly income, and grade level, suggesting that demographic factors have a minimal effect on language anxiety. Nonetheless, substantial positive correlations exist among speaking, writing, and listening anxiety, indicating that challenges in one skill are intricately associated with anxiety in the others.

The school administration is encouraged to strengthen programs that promote a supportive, low-anxiety English learning environment through communication activities and enrichment programs. School heads and teachers may enhance professional development focused on learner-centered and anxiety-reducing strategies, while teachers are encouraged to use supportive practices such as preparation time, collaborative activities, and constructive feedback. Parents should continue providing encouragement and opportunities for English practice at home, while students are encouraged to actively participate and practice English regularly to build confidence. Future researchers may explore other factors such as teaching strategies, classroom environment, and learner motivation to further explain English language learning anxiety.

(Disclaimer: While artificial intelligence (AI) was used for language enhancement, all concepts that were generated are entirely original.)

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