The Level of the Language Learning Anxiety of Students during the New Normal

Anliwan, Rhealyn[1], Mangulon, Generose[2], Ana Mae M. Monteza, PhD[3]

[1,2,3]UM DIGOS College, Philippines

ABSTRACT: Acquiring a new language necessitates commitment, regular training, and resilience while addressing fear, which is imperative. This research aims to ascertain the prevalence of language learning anxiety among 101 UM Digos college students. The statistical methods employed included the Kruskal-Wallis test, mean, and frequency. The majority of respondents are already fourth-year students who identify as female. In consideration of the new norm, the level of language-speaking anxiety among college students is average, according to the findings. The result merely indicates that anxiety regarding speaking a foreign language is a prevalent issue among college students. Gender and academic year do not exhibit a statistically significant disparity in language learning apprehension. Therefore, it is encouraged to foster collaboration among diverse sectors and stakeholders to establish an inclusive and supportive environment, effectively tackling language anxiety and facilitating positive language learning outcomes for learners.

Acquiring a new language necessitates commitment, regular training, and resilience while addressing fear, which is imperative. This research aims to ascertain the prevalence of language learning anxiety among 101 UM Digos college students. The statistical methods employed included the Kruskal-Wallis test, mean, and frequency. The majority of respondents are already fourth-year students who identify as female. In consideration of the new norm, the level of language-speaking anxiety among college students is average, according to the findings. The result merely indicates that anxiety regarding speaking a foreign language is a prevalent issue among college students. Gender and academic year do not exhibit a statistically significant disparity in language learning apprehension. Therefore, it is encouraged to foster collaboration among diverse sectors and stakeholders to establish an inclusive and supportive environment, effectively tackling language anxiety and facilitating positive language learning outcomes for learners.

KEYWORDS: language learning anxiety, new normal, descriptive

1. INTRODUCTION

Language learning is a dynamic practice that commences in infancy and continues throughout one's lifetime. The primary intention of language is to enhance communication by transmitting information between individuals. Students develop language through its application in articulating their ideas, emotions, and encounters, forming connections with relatives and companions, and endeavoring to comprehend and organize their surroundings. Language is seen as an entity of attitude when viewed as a means of dialogue. Therefore, certain parts of language learning are marked as instruction based on skills.

On a global scale, individuals who start learning a new language commonly confront feelings of anxiety, uncertainty, and anxiousness, which the ongoing pandemic has exacerbated (Chahrazad & Kamel, 2022). Anxiety is a significant factor that directly correlates with performance in language acquisition. Anxiety can hinder language acquisition, resulting in the student's inability to learn the desired language effectively (Ayuningtyas et al., 2022). Many language learners find it challenging to understand and apply the rules and structures of a new language, which often leads to tension and worry (Mashrabovna & Mohlaroyim, 2022). The issue can be attributed to language learners' linguistic limitations and challenges when acquiring and utilizing the desired language. In the Philippine setting, it is believed that Filipino students' language anxiety goes beyond speaking activities in a second language. It also widely occurs in other English classroom operations, such as writing, error corrections, interacting with native English speakers, negative self-perception, and lack of understanding (Giray et al., 2022). In a study by Jugo (2020), a report on language anxiety among 242 learners in a learning institution in the Philippines came out. The primary reasons why many Filipino learners prefer not to utilize English as their primary medium for discourse are a lack of optimism, timidity, unease, and insufficient chances to talk during their English classes (Said & Omar, 2022).

In the local setup, the process of correcting errors and engaging in conversation with English speakers is perceived as causing significant amounts of anxiety. Students who had significant levels of worry demonstrated lower proficiency in linguistic skills. Students need a steady study schedule or a tendency to quit prematurely to ensure their growth in English. Acquiring a new language

The Level of the Language Learning Anxiety of Students during the New Normal

necessitates commitment, regular training, and resilience while addressing fear, which is imperative. In the current context of the "new normal," this study aims to determine college students' language learning anxiety.

This research is grounded in Holland's theory, which posits that apprehensions towards particular situations and objects could be induced through conditioning (Hoff et al., 2022). Anxiety is a learned dread, in his opinion, that results from social and environmental interactions. It is worth noting that fear is acquired through a process of conditioning. In the same way, this method may be utilized to unlearn anxiety (Mio & Brenner, 2023). Humans, in particular, harbor anxieties within their minds. Cultivation is contingent on the capacity to remain calm while envisioning the object of fear. Furthermore, this research is corroborated by Bandura's situationism, which falls within the framework of social learning theory. The theorist inferred that individuals are susceptible to the effects of their surroundings and circumstances (Firmansyah & Saepuloh, 2022). Thus, a similar circumstance influences various individuals in diverse ways.

Therefore, the forthcoming discoveries provide substantial insights and valuable contributions to the subsequent beneficiaries. The university stands to gain valuable insights from the study, as the results established an empirical correlation between the implementation of coping strategies and the overall level of language learning anxiety encountered by students. Regarding educators, this enables them to discern the coping mechanisms students utilize to manage their anxiety while learning a new language. Students also come to internalize the various strategies that are practical and advantageous to implement when they encounter difficulties or experience a lack of self-assurance. Since this study would provide an additional foundation for intervention programs, its results will benefit future investigators.

Demographic Profile of Respondents
Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

		f	%
Gender	Female	76	75.2
	LGBTQIA+	8	7.9
	Male	17	16.8
Year Level	First Year	31	30.7
	Fourth Year	34	33.7
	Second Year	6	5.9
	Third Year	30	29.7

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents who voluntarily engaged in the survey. Regarding the respondents' gender, the survey comprises input from 76 females, constituting 75.2% of the overall sample. Additionally, seventeen males, or 16.8% of the respondents, are present. Moreover, a minority of eight individuals (7.3%) self-identify as LGBTQIA+. Concerning the distribution among participant years, a significant proportion of respondents (33.7%) are in their final year, comprising 34 individuals. The proportion of first-year students among the respondents is 30.7% or 31 individuals. Thirty third-year pupils, or 29.7% of the total, are represented among the sample. Finally, the second-year students constitute the most modest cohort, comprising six members or 5.9% of the total respondents.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study is focused on determining the level of language learning anxiety prevalent among college students in the new normal. Primarily, it prioritized the pursuit of these particular goals:

1. To assess the demographic characteristics of the respondents concerning:
    1.1 Gender; and
    1.2 Academic Year Level.
2. To measure the level of language-speaking anxiety among college students in the light of the "new normal" in terms of:
    2.1 Communication Apprehension;
    2.2 Test Anxiety;
    2.3 Fear of Negative Evaluation; and
    2.4 English Learning in the Classroom.
3. To determine the presence of significant differences in language learning anxiety among university students when evaluated based on their profile.

The Level of the Language Learning Anxiety of Students during the New Normal

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative and descriptive research methodology. Descriptive research seeks to provide an accurate and methodical depiction of a population, situation, or phenomenon (Taherdoost, 2022). It can respond to inquiries regarding what, where, when, and how and can employ various research methodologies to examine one or more factors (Siedlecki, 2020). A descriptive analysis is appropriate for identifying demographic parameters, frequency ranges, and means in the current research methodology. Using numerical data, the researchers presented a detailed analysis of the respondents' characteristics. Subsequently, they assessed the prevalence of language-speaking anxiety among college students in the context of the new normal. Finally, they compared whether there was a significant difference in the level of language-speaking anxiety when analyzed based on the respondents' gender and academic year level.

Moreover, the researchers followed the succeeding protocols in acquiring data. The researchers solicited prior approval to carry out the study. The immediate action includes submitting letters to the University VP-Branch Operations through the Program Head of Teachers' Education requesting authorization to gather information off campus from the school VP-Branch Operations. Furthermore, researchers directly recorded and acquired all relevant data during the administration and retrieval of the research instrument. During data collection, the researchers compiled all the filled-out questionnaires in preparation for statistical treatment and interpretation. Following the acquisition and classification of the data, consultation with the research statistician was required for the statistics to be accurately quantified and apportioned.

Furthermore, the statistical analysis for this academic endeavor involved calculating the mean frequency and doing the Kruskal-Wallis test. The statistician utilized frequency analysis to ascertain the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of their genders and academic year levels. The mean is a valuable tool for estimating the anxiety college students experience when learning a foreign language. Finally, the Kruskal-Wallis test is employed to assess the normality of the results and evaluate the substantial variation in the level of language learning anxiety when analyzed based on individual profiles.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Level of Language-speaking anxiety experienced by College Students

Table 2 details the level of language-speaking anxiety encountered by collegiate individuals. In its entirety, the outcome earns an average score of 3.09. Furthermore, the marginally elevated standard deviation value of 0.68 indicates a certain level of dispersion among the responses. In light of the new norm, this indicates that the level of language-speaking anxiety among college

Table 2. Level of Language-speaking anxiety experienced by college students

	$\bar{x}$	SD
Communication Apprehension	3.15	0.63
Test Anxiety	2.98	0.69
Fear of Negative Evaluation	3.18	0.97
English Learning	2.95	0.65
Overall	**3.09**	**0.68**

students is average; this is in the middle of low and high anxiety. Drawing from the examination of the average level of anxiety and the noted dispersion of responses, one can deduce that language-speaking anxiety is a pervasive apprehension among college students, specifically in light of the "new normal," which potentially entails heightened dependence on remote learning and virtual communication.

Test anxiety received the lowest mean score of 2.98, with a significant standard deviation of 0.69. The result indicates that there is a considerable amount of variability among the responses. The outcome is apparent in the statement that students are concerned about the repercussions of failing the English course. Fear of negative evaluation, conversely, received the highest mean score of 3.18, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.97, which indicates a substantial level of variability. Respondents state that by calling their names in class, they can sense their anxiety. Another aspect that is apparent in the statement is their perpetual apprehension regarding the superior English proficiency of their peers.

In the domain of second language acquisition, the impact of foreign language apprehension on the learning process has been investigated for quite some time (Handayani et al., 2020). Research has consistently demonstrated for decades that anxiety in foreign language classrooms negatively affects the academic performance of students enrolled in such courses (Mobarak, 2020). Students may experience adverse academic, cognitive, and social outcomes due to foreign language apprehension. Anxiety undermines the confidence of foreign language learners and impedes their proficiency development; this, in turn, fuels additional anxiety, thereby establishing a detrimental cycle (Baroi et al., 2020). Foreign language anxiety can be induced by a multitude of circumstances, as supported by research. Perceived social support stands out as a plausible factor that may exert an influence on such anxiety.

The Level of the Language Learning Anxiety of Students during the New Normal

Difference in language learning anxiety when analyzed by Gender

Table 3 details the gender-based variation in language learning anxiety. It can be concluded, based on the data in the table, that gender does not appear to be a statistically significant factor in language acquisition anxiety. It can be concluded, based on the report, that gender has no bearing on language anxiety levels in the classroom. The variables above may exhibit considerable variation among members of each gender cohort, resulting in, on average, comparable degrees of language anxiety between the sexes.

A study reveals that male students experienced a marginally more remarkable degree of anxiety in comparison to their female counterparts (Saputra et al., 2023). Further research by Fauziyah, Wati, and Solihati (2022) demonstrated that females displayed more apprehension than males. On the contrary, learners of all genders may experience speaking anxiety due to various factors associated with the learning process, such as receiving teacher feedback, delivering speeches in front of fellow students, mispronouncing certain words, or constructing grammatically incorrect sentences (Suparlan, 2021). Individual characteristics, previous language acquisition experiences, and self-confidence are a few variables that may influence language anxiety

Table 3. Difference in language learning anxiety when analyzed by Gender

	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Chi-square	df	Asymp. Sig
Communication Apprehension	Female	67	45.07	0.958	2	0.619
	LGBTQIA+	7	52.64			
	Male	15	41.13			
	Total	89				
Test Anxiety	Female	67	44.84	1.506	2	0.471
	LGBTQIA+	7	55.21			
	Male	15	40.93			
	Total	89				
Fear of Negative	Female	67	43.58	4.532	2	0.104
	LGBTQIA+	7	64.79			
	Male	15	42.1			
	Total	89				
English Learning	Female	67	45.9	2.475	2	0.29
	LGBTQIA+	7	54			
	Male	15	36.77			
	Total	89				
Overall		67	44.63	3.137	2	0.208
		7	60.29			
		15	39.53			
		89				

(Siahpoosh et al., 2022). The variables above may exhibit considerable variation among members of each gender cohort, resulting in, on average, comparable degrees of language anxiety between the sexes.

Difference in language learning anxiety when analyzed by Year Level

Table 4 illustrates the variation in language acquisition anxiety across academic years. The table's data suggests no statistically significant variation in anxiety levels related to language acquisition across different academic years. Students in their first, second, third, and fourth years experience identical language apprehensions. The consistent academic standards for language acquisition across the academic year levels of the institution or program being pursued may account for this phenomenon. Students of all grade levels may encounter comparable levels of apprehension associated with language acquisition if the curriculum, instructional approaches, and standards for

Table 4. Difference in language learning anxiety when analyzed by Year Level

	Year Level	N	Mean Rank	Chi-square	df	Asymp. Sig
Communication Apprehension	First Year	28	37.73	3.356	3	0.34
	Fourth Year	2	53.75			
	Second Year	27	48.22			
	Third Year	32	48.09			
	Total	89				
Test Anxiety	First Year	28	39.79	1.98	3	0.577

	Fourth Year	2	45			
	Second Year	27	45.65			
	Third Year	32	49.02			
	Total	89				
	First Year	28	42.54	0.567	3	0.904
	Fourth Year	2	50.25			
Fear of Negative	Second Year	27	44.63			
	Third Year	32	47.14			
	Total	89				
	First Year	28	44.54	2.521	3	0.471
	Fourth Year	2	46.25			
English Learning	Second Year	27	39.41			
	Third Year	32	50.05			
	Total	89				
	First Year	28	41.91	0.952	3	0.813
	Fourth Year	2	49.5			
Overall	Second Year	27	44.19			
	Third Year	32	48.11			
	Total	89				

language proficiency remain broadly consistent over time.

Numerous researchers have investigated both the etiology of speaking anxiety and the variation in speaking anxiety among students of different academic years (Alzamil, 2022). The investigations yielded inconsistent results. Anxiety regarding acquiring a foreign language is a topic that receives considerable attention in language instruction and acquisition, regardless of the academic year (Fndkl & Büyükkarcı, 2023). Students might develop a comparable degree of apprehension concerning the language learning process and the academic environment as time passes. On the other hand, novice students may encounter elevated levels of anxiety during the process of adapting to the rigors of studying and the language prerequisites (Handayani et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the existence of supportive mechanisms that aid students in adjusting to and managing difficulties associated with language may mitigate these variations in anxiety levels.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusion

This study is focused on determining the level of language learning anxiety prevalent among 101 UM college students. According to the demographic profile of the respondents, women make up the majority (76 percent of the population), men are second, and LGBTQIA+ make up the least. Regarding year levels, the majority are fourth-year students, followed by first-year students, third-year students, and second-year students. Findings revealed that the level of language-speaking anxiety among college students in light of the new normal is average. This only means that language-speaking anxiety is a widespread concern among college students. When analyzing language learning anxiety by gender and grade level overall, there is no statistically significant difference.

4.2 Conclusion

The researchers in this study present their findings regarding various organizations and individuals, and they propose the following recommendations for their consideration:

The **government** should advocate for funding and policies that support initiatives and programs in language education that seek to alleviate students' language anxiety. Furthermore, it is committed to assisting with research and endeavors to comprehend and resolve language anxiety within academic environments.

The **teachers** must use strategies that are fit and effective in dealing with students' language anxiety, particularly in reading and listening. Schedule regular conversations with students to discuss their development, answer inquiries, and give continuous feedback.

The **students** must be at the center of the learning process to enhance their speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills in English. Participate in online discussion boards or language learning communities where individuals share insights and pose queries.

Future researchers must undertake a thorough and more in-depth examination of linguistic anxiety throughout academic institutions. More research should be done to delve deeper into the underlying causes of such anxiety. Individuals should conduct additional scholarly research to strengthen prior research efforts and generate fresh ideas on the topic under consideration.

The Level of the Language Learning Anxiety of Students during the New Normal

REFERENCES

1) Alzamil, A., 2022. Situation-specific speaking anxiety: university-level students experiences. International Journal of English Linguistics, 12(2), pp.18-24. Retrieved from https://scholar.archive.org/work/iyegsjqs6jbb5cwwxpum7nm4re/access/wayback/https://ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ijel/article/download/0/0/46583/49757 on February 23, 2024.

2) Ayuningtyas, P., Mauludin, L.A. and Prasetyo, G., 2022. Investigating the anxiety factors among English for Specific Purposes students in a vocational education setting. Language Related Research, 13(3), pp.31-54. Retrieved from http://lrr.modares.ac.ir/files/lrr/user_files_749497/lutfimauludin-A-10-64081-2-2ff472d.pdf

3) Baroi, B., Sultwana, Z., Sultana, R., Muhammad, N. and Saha, A.K., 2020. Factors influencing foreign language speaking anxiety among undergraduate students. Journal of Psychosocial Research, 15(2), pp.639-649. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Bijon-Baroi/publication/345631155_Factors_Influencing_Foreign_Language_Speaking_Anxiety_among_Undergraduate_Students/links/60b6eb9792851cde884a7f2e/Factors-Influencing-Foreign-Language-Speaking-Anxiety-among-Undergraduate-Students.pdf on February 23, 2024.

4) Chahrazad, M.M. and Kamel, K., 2022. Dealing with foreign language speaking anxiety: What every language teacher should know. Training, language and culture, 6(1), pp.20-32. Retrieved from https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/dealing-with-foreign-language-speaking-anxiety-what-every-language-teacher-should-know

5) Fauziah, A., Wati, S. and Solihati, T.A., 2022. Gender differences in speaking anxiety. Etnolingual, 6(1), pp.1-13. https://e-journal.unair.ac.id/ETNO/article/download/34064/21519

6) Fındıklı, S. and Büyükkarcı, K., 2023. Factors affecting students' speaking anxiety in English language classroom. Focus on ELT Journal, 5(1), pp.98-114. Retrieved from https://www.focusonelt.com/index.php/foe/article/view/110 on February 23, 2024.

7) Firmansyah, D. and Saepuloh, D., 2022. Social Learning Theory: Cognitive and Behavioral Approaches. Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Holistik (JIPH), 1(3), pp.297-324. Retrieved from https://journal.formosapublisher.org/index.php/jiph/article/download/2317/1982

8) Giray, L., Alcala, M.A., Edem, J. and Sabacajan, T.M., 2022. English Language Anxiety among College Students. International Journal of Qualitative Research, 2(1), pp.65-76. Retrieved from https://www.ojs.literacyinstitute.org/index.php/ijqr/article/download/569/230

9) Handayani, T., Rozimela, Y. and Fatimah, S., 2020. An Analysis of English-Speaking Anxiety Experienced by the Second Year Students of English Language and Literature Department of Universitas Negeri Padang and Its Causal Factors. Journal of English Language Teaching, 9(3), pp.580-592. Retrieved from https://ejournal.unp.ac.id/index.php/jelt/article/download/109649/103983 on February 23, 2024.

10) Hidayati, T., 2018. Student language anxiety in learning English: Examining non-English major students in rural area. IJELTAL (Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics), 2(2), pp.95-113. Retrieved from http://download.garuda.kemdikbud.go.id/article.php?article

11) Hoff, K.A., Chu, C., Einarsdóttir, S., Briley, D.A., Hanna, A. and Rounds, J., 2022. Adolescent vocational interests predict early career success: Two 12-year longitudinal studies. Applied Psychology, 71(1), pp.49-75. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Kevin-Hoff-3/publication/348788389_Adolescent_Vocational_Interests_Predict_Early_Career_Success_Two_12-Year_Longitudinal_Studies/links/60107a38299bf1b33e288719/Adolescent-Vocational-Interests-Predict-Early-Career-Success-Two-12-Year-Longitudinal-Studies.pdf

12) Jugo, R.R., 2020. Language anxiety in focus: The case of Filipino undergraduate teacher education learners. Education Research International, 2020, pp.1-8. Retrieved from https://www.hindawi.com/journals/edri/2020/7049837/

13) Mashrabovna, U.M. and Mohlaroyim, E., 2022. Individual differences in foreighn language learning. ACADEMICIA: An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal, 12(5), pp.751-757. Retrieved from https://www.indianjournals.com/ijor.aspx?target=ijor:aca&volume=12&issue=5&article=138

14) Mio, V. and Brenner, B., 2023. "Unlearning and Relearning": Adolescent Students' Perspectives on Transitioning to a New Teacher and Environment. Update: Applications of Research in Music Education, 42(1), pp.72-80. Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/87551233221095051

15) Mobarak, M.S.K., 2020. Reasons for English language speaking anxiety among students in private universities of Bangladesh. Journal of Education and Social Sciences, 1, p.16. Retrieved from https://www.jesoc.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/JESOC16-022.pdf on February 23, 2024.

16) Said, H.M. and Omar, A.S., 2022. Language anxiety towards English among ESL students: The case of first year students at Mindanao state university. The Online Journal of New Horizons in Education, 12(3), p.178. Retrieved from https://www.tojned.net/journals/tojned/volumes/tojned-volume12-i03.pdf#page=8

17) Saputra, D., Akib, M., Patty, A., Hartanti, R. and Hardianti, R., 2023. Anxiety in speaking english; student's attitude and the role of gender. Paedagoria: Jurnal Kajian, Penelitian dan Pengembangan Kependidikan, 14(1), pp.78-83. Retrieved from http://journal.ummat.ac.id/index.php/paedagoria/article/view/12840 on February 23, 2024.

18) Siahpoosh, H., Varghaei, E. and Khodadadi, G., 2022. Gender difference in foreign language speaking anxiety and enjoyment in online classes: The case study of Azari-Persian bilingual context. International Journal of All Research Education and Scientific Methods, 10(2), pp.1512-1520. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Elshan-Varghaei-2/publication/358857106_Gender_Difference_in_Foreign_Language_Speaking_Anxiety_and_Enjoyment_in_Online_Cl asses_The_Case_Study_of_Azari-Persian_Bilingual_Context/links/6315c0635eed5e4bd14b5973/Gender-Difference-in-Foreign-Language-Speaking-Anxiety-and-Enjoyment-in-Online-Classes-The-Case-Study-of-Azari-Persian-Bilingual-Context.pdf on February 23, 2024.

19) Siedlecki, S.L., 2020. Understanding descriptive research designs and methods. Clinical Nurse Specialist, 34(1), pp.8-12. Retrieved from https://journals.lww.com/cns-journal/Fulltext/2020/01000/Understanding_Descriptive_Research_Designs_and.4.aspx

20) Suparlan, S., 2021. Factors contributing students' speaking anxiety. Journal of Languages and Language Teaching, 9(2), pp.160-169. Retrieved from http://e-journal.undikma.ac.id/index.php/jollt/article/view/3321 on February 23, 2024.

21) Taherdoost, H., 2022. What are different research approaches? Comprehensive Review of Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method research, their applications, types, and limitations. Journal of Management Science & Engineering Research, 5(1), pp.53-63. Retrieved from https://hal.science/hal-03741840/document