

English Language Anxiety Level and Coping Processes of Grade 10 Learners in General Luna District, Division of Quezon

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Abstract. English proficiency is a vital global competency, yet language anxiety remains a persistent psychological barrier that inhibits effective communication and academic engagement among secondary learners. This study investigated the levels, causes, and effects of English language anxiety among 183 Grade 10 learners in the General Luna District, Division of Quezon, to address the lack of localized instructional support for anxious students. Using a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods design, the researchers collected quantitative data using a modified Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and qualitative insights through open-ended written surveys to explore lived experiences and coping processes. Results revealed high levels of language anxiety across all dimensions, with test anxiety (Mean = 2.79) and social anxiety (Mean = 2.77) emerging as the most significant stressors. Qualitative findings highlighted that while fear of negative evaluation and peer judgment frequently triggers avoidance behaviors, learners successfully navigate these challenges through a three-stage coping process. This sequential process involves immediate physiological regulation, proactive competence-building through digital self-study, and reliance on social resilience from non-judgmental peer networks. These findings emphasize the critical need for a low-affective-filter environment in the Philippine rural-urban context, leading to the proposal of a comprehensive Learners' Support Plan. This plan aims to institutionalize stress-reduction protocols and peer-mentoring initiatives to balance emotional well-being with academic rigor. By documenting internal mechanisms of student resilience, this research offers a strategic framework for educators to mitigate cognitive overload and foster sustained academic proficiency in English-medium contexts, ultimately transforming the classroom from a competitive arena into a safe learning space.

Introduction

English proficiency remains a vital global competency, serving as the primary medium for international commerce, scientific discourse, and academic advancement. However, acquiring this skill is frequently hindered by language anxiety, a psychological barrier that inhibits effective communication and reduces student engagement in non-native-speaking contexts. Established research by Giray et al. (2022) and Jugo (2020) confirms that this phenomenon is a global struggle, particularly in countries such as Japan and South Korea, and across Southeast Asia, where high-stakes assessments and societal pressure to achieve "native-like" fluency exacerbate students' apprehension. There is a broad consensus in the literature that language anxiety stems from a fear of negative evaluation, linguistic insecurity, and perceived cultural inferiority, often leading to avoidance behaviors in the classroom.

Despite these established patterns, much of the existing work focuses on tertiary students or urban populations, often overlooking the unique socio-cultural triggers and specific coping processes of secondary learners in rural districts. This study addresses the underexplored experiences of Grade 10 learners in the General Luna District, Division of Quezon, where limited exposure to English outside the classroom creates a distinct localized gap in linguistic support.

Addressing this gap has critical implications for the Department of Education's goal of fostering inclusive, low-anxiety learning environments that move beyond mere code-switching toward true communicative confidence. This research is timely and necessary to provide empirical evidence for instructional interventions that can mitigate the debilitating effects of anxiety on adolescent academic performance.

Research Questions

The main objective of this research is to determine the level of English language anxiety and coping processes of Grade 10 learners in General Luna District, Division of Quezon.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of English language anxiety of Grade 10 learners in General Luna District, Division of Quezon, in terms of?
 - 1.1 Communicative Anxiety
 - 1.2 Fear of Negative Evaluation
 - 1.3 Test Anxiety
 - 1.4 Social Anxiety
 - 1.5 Cognitive Anxiety
2. What are the causes of English language anxiety?
3. What are the effects of English language anxiety?
4. How do Grade 10 learners in General Luna District cope with English language anxiety?
5. Based on the findings of the study, what Learners' Support Plan may be proposed to manage English language anxiety?

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a concurrent triangulation mixed-methods research design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of Grade 10 learners' English language anxiety. This design enabled simultaneous data collection and analysis, ensuring a holistic understanding of the phenomenon and enhancing research validity by cross-verifying findings across methods to reduce bias. As noted by Bell et al. (2022) and Vors and Bourcier (2022), such designs were particularly effective in educational research because they enabled triangulation of numerical metrics with qualitative insights, yielding a nuanced understanding of learners' lived experiences. By collecting and interpreting data concurrently, the researcher was able to corroborate findings in real time, ensuring a more accurate representation of linguistic apprehension.

To operationalize this design, the study employed two primary research phases: a quantitative survey and a qualitative open-ended written survey. The quantitative phase utilized a modified Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to measure levels of communicative anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, social anxiety, and cognitive anxiety, as well as the quantified causes and effects of these stressors. Complementing this, the qualitative phase involved written, open-ended questions with selected learners to explore their personal coping processes and perceptions. This mixed-methods approach captured rich, descriptive data that contextualized the statistical trends, facilitating the development of a targeted Learners' Support Plan grounded in both numerical data and personal narratives. While language proficiency was acknowledged as a potential factor influencing these results, it remained beyond the primary scope of this specific investigation.

Respondent /Participants

The study's population comprised 346 Grade 10 learners from five public high schools in the General Luna District, Division of Quezon, during the 2024–2025 academic year. This demographic was selected due to the intensifying oracy requirements at the secondary level, which often trigger significant linguistic insecurity (Giray et al., 2022; Jugo, 2020). Using a mixed-methods approach, the researcher employed two distinct sampling strategies to ensure both statistical breadth and narrative depth.

For the quantitative phase, the researcher used stratified random sampling via Cochran's formula (95% confidence level, 5% margin of error) to select 183 participants. This method ensured proportional representation across all five participating schools (SINHS, GLINHS, MNHS, SNIS, and SBIS), enhancing the study's generalizability (Das, 2022). In the qualitative phase, the researcher utilized purposive sampling to select five "information-rich" cases—one representative

per school. Inclusion criteria required these participants to be currently enrolled, score within the "High" to "Very High" range on the FLCAS, and demonstrate the ability to articulate their coping processes.

Before data collection, the researcher secured formal ethical approval and obtained voluntary informed consent from all learners and their legal guardians. To uphold ethical integrity, the researcher applied strict anonymization and coding protocols to protect participant identities. This dual-layered sampling framework enabled triangulating district-wide statistical trends with the lived experiences of students facing severe communication barriers (Vors & Bourcier, 2022).

Instrument of the Study

The researcher adapted the 33-item FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986) into a four-point Likert scale to measure quantitative trends. This forced-choice format minimized response bias by removing the neutral midpoint (Jebb et al., 2021). The instrument assessed five dimensions—communicative, social, test, cognitive, and fear of negative evaluation—using three evaluative frameworks to categorize anxiety levels, causes, and effects. To ensure clarity, the researcher translated the tool into Filipino and secured expert validation before administration.

For the qualitative phase, the researcher employed written, open-ended questions to capture lived experiences. This phase targeted Grade 10 students who scored in the "High" or "Very High" anxiety range (2.50–4.00) and provided voluntary consent. Choosing written surveys over face-to-face interviews prioritized participant well-being by reducing the immediate stress of oral performance and mitigating the "observer's paradox" (Smit & Simpson, 2022). This bilingual, written format created a safe space for anxious learners to reflect deeply on their coping mechanisms (Pabiton & Alieto, 2021). Language educators and research specialists validated both instruments to ensure content relevance and contextual appropriateness.

Procedure

The researcher collected data over 11 weeks through a systematic three-phase process. In the Pre-Administration phase (Weeks 1–3), the researcher secured formal administrative approvals from the school division and coordinated with Grade 10 English teachers to align schedules; during this time, the research instruments—the modified FLCAS and the qualitative survey—underwent validation and pilot-testing to ensure structural integrity. During the Administration phase (Weeks 4–6), the researcher distributed the quantitative FLCAS to 183 randomly selected learners and, based on the preliminary results, purposively selected five participants scoring in the "High" to "Very High" anxiety range (2.50–4.00) to complete the qualitative open-ended surveys at their own pace. Finally, in the Post-Administration phase (Weeks 7–11), the researcher performed statistical analysis on the survey data and thematic analysis on the qualitative responses, triangulating these findings in Week 10 to ensure a holistic understanding before developing the final Learners' Support Plan in Week 11.

Data Analysis

The data gathered in the study were analyzed and interpreted using appropriate descriptive and qualitative analytical tools. Descriptive statistics, specifically the weighted mean and standard deviation, were used to describe the learners' levels of English language anxiety, as well as the perceived causes and effects of this psychological barrier. A four-point Likert scale was used to interpret responses for each variable, ranging from Very Low to Very High levels of apprehension.

English language anxiety was measured across five dimensions: communicative, social, test, and cognitive anxiety, alongside the fear of negative evaluation. The causes of anxiety were assessed based on the degree to which environmental and linguistic factors triggered stress. At the same time, the effects were evaluated according to the severity of anxiety's hindrance to learners' academic performance and communicative functioning. Corresponding verbal interpretations and qualitative descriptions supported each scale, ensuring clarity and consistency in data interpretation.

To explore the learners' coping processes, thematic analysis was employed. This qualitative treatment involved a systematic six-step process—familiarization, coding, and theme development—to identify recurring patterns in how students navigate linguistic stress. By triangulating survey statistical trends with these thematic insights, the researcher provided a systematic and comprehensive basis for analyzing the data and drawing valid conclusions. These treatments ultimately informed the development of a proposed Learners' Support Plan to foster an anxiety-free learning environment.

Ethical Considerations

This study strictly adhered to established ethical standards for educational research involving human subjects, securing formal approval from the Marinduque State University Research Ethics Committee (REC) and the Schools Division Office of

Quezon before any data collection. Participation was entirely voluntary, with the researcher obtaining written informed consent from parents or legal guardians and separate, simplified assent from the Grade 10 learners to ensure a clear understanding and free choice. To protect participant well-being, the researcher informed all students of their right to withdraw without penalty and provided on-site access to a designated Guidance Counselor to mitigate any potential emotional distress during the assessment of language anxiety. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the process by using code numbers instead of personal identifiers and storing all data in secure, password-protected files accessible only to the research team. Finally, the researcher declared no conflicts of interest and upheld intellectual property rights by obtaining formal permission to utilize the copyrighted FLCAS instrument, ensuring that all data were used solely for the stated academic purposes.

Results and Discussion

Part I. Level of English Language Anxiety in terms of Communicative Anxiety

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Description	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English language class.	2.64	0.806	High	High Level of Anxiety	4
2. I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in an English Language class.	2.56	0.923	High	High Level of Anxiety	6
3. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in an English Language class.	2.55	0.810	High	High Level of Anxiety	7
4. I do not feel confident when I speak in English class.	2.66	0.797	High	High Level of Anxiety	3
5. I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in an English Language class.	2.63	0.758	High	High Level of Anxiety	5
6. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English Language class.	2.69	0.782	High	High Level of Anxiety	2
7. I get nervous when the English Language teacher asks questions that I have not prepared in advance.	2.70	0.705	High	High Level of Anxiety	1
Composite Mean	2.63	0.800	High	High Level of Anxiety	

Table 1. Level of English language anxiety in terms of communicative anxiety

Table 1 presents the level of anxiety among Grade 10 learners in the General Luna District, specifically regarding Communicative Anxiety. The data reveals a Composite Mean of 2.63, which falls under the verbal interpretation of a High Level of Anxiety. It suggests that a significant majority of learners experience substantial physiological and psychological distress when required to speak or perform orally within the English language classroom.

The highest mean score was recorded for Indicator 7, I get nervous when the English Language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance (2.70), followed closely by Indicator 6, I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English Language class (2.69). Even the lowest Mean in this category, recorded for Indicator 3 (2.55), I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation, since 2.55 falls between 2.50 and 3.49; it is correctly classified as High, indicating that communicative apprehension is a pervasive issue across the student population.

The results show that the unpredictability of classroom interaction is a primary trigger for learners' communicative anxiety. The high Mean for unprepared questioning (2.70) indicates that student anxiety is deeply tied to a performance orientation, where the fear of making a public mistake outweighs the intent to communicate. It supports the foundational work of Horwitz et al. (1986), who defined communication apprehension as a form of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety about communicating with others. These findings also align with Luo and Chayanuvat (2023), who noted that spontaneous teacher-led questioning serves as a significant stressor that inhibits linguistic output.

Furthermore, the physical manifestations of this anxiety are evident in the high means for Indicator 5 (heart pounding, 2.63) and Indicator 2 (trembling, 2.56) when being called upon. It draws on the theory of Physiological Arousal, which holds that the threat of social evaluation activates the body's fight-or-flight response. The implications for English Language Teaching (ELT) are profound. If learners are constantly in a state of nervous confusion (2.69), their cognitive resources are diverted from language processing to anxiety management, effectively hindering language acquisition.

As Giray et al. (2022) emphasized, this data rejects the notion that learners are unprepared. Instead, it suggests that the communicative setting itself creates a psychological barrier. In the Philippine context, this form of anxiety is often social; the shared experience of these learners highlights a fear of losing face, a common phenomenon in collectivist cultures that can paralyze a student's willingness to speak. This high level of communicative anxiety serves as a critical Input for the study, justifying the need for the Proposed Learner's Support Plan to create a more supportive, low-anxiety environment.

Level of English Language Anxiety in terms of Fear of Negative Evaluation

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Description	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I worry about making mistakes in English Language class.	2.52	0.903	High	High Level of Anxiety	3
2. I feel embarrassed when volunteering to answer in my English Language class.	2.68	0.837	High	High Level of Anxiety	1
3. I am afraid that my English Language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	2.18	0.881	Low	Low Level of Anxiety	4
4. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	2.63	0.886	High	High Level of Anxiety	2
Composite Mean	2.50	0.877	High	High Level of Anxiety	

Table 2. Level of English language anxiety in terms of fear of negative evaluation

Table 2 presents the level of anxiety among Grade 10 learners in the General Luna District concerning the Fear of Negative Evaluation. The data yield a Composite Mean of 2.50, indicating a High Level of Anxiety. This quantitative result indicates that a significant portion of the learner population is preoccupied with the perceived judgments of others within the English language classroom, creating a psychological environment characterized by social apprehension.

A detailed examination of the indicators reveals that the highest mean was recorded for Indicator 2, I feel embarrassed when volunteering to answer in my English Language class (2.68), followed closely by Indicator 4, the fear of being laughed at by peers (2.63). Conversely, the lowest mean was observed in Indicator 3. I am afraid that my English Language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make (2.18), which falls under the Low Level of Anxiety range.

These findings suggest that the learners' anxiety is primarily socially constructed rather than pedagogically driven. The disparity between the high fear of peer ridicule (2.63) and the low fear of teacher correction (2.18) indicates that students generally perceive their instructors as supportive. Nevertheless, they view their classmates as a primary source of potential embarrassment. Even when learners possess the linguistic competence to answer, the psychological risk of losing face in a social arena outweighs their academic motivation. It supports the assertions of Giray et al. (2022), who argued that social anxiety is a dominant factor in classroom silence, and aligns with the foundational work of Horwitz et al. (1986) regarding the pervasive nature of negative evaluation in language learning.

Furthermore, this data highlights a significant barrier within the learners' process stage of language acquisition. The high level of embarrassment associated with volunteering suggests a heightened Affective Filter. According to Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, when learners experience intense fear of peer judgment, their emotional barrier rises, effectively blocking the processing of linguistic input and inhibiting natural output.

Ultimately, the results characterize the English classroom as a judgment zone for many Grades 10 learners. While the teacher may foster a non-threatening atmosphere, the perceived social hierarchy among peers continues to fuel high anxiety levels. This finding is a critical input for the proposed learners' support plan, suggesting that future strategies must focus on building a collaborative and empathetic classroom culture to lower the social stakes of oral participation.

Level of English Language Anxiety in terms of Test Anxiety

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Description	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I am not at ease during tests in my English Language class.	2.98	0.880	High	High Level of Anxiety	1.5
2. I worry about the consequences of failing my English Language class.	2.98	0.835	High	High Level of Anxiety	1.5

3. I am more confused the more I study for an English Language test.	2.42	0.906	Low	Low Level of Anxiety	3
Composite Mean	2.79	0.912	High	High Level of Anxiety	

Table 3. Level of English language anxiety in terms of test anxiety

Table 3 presents the level of English language anxiety in terms of test anxiety. Grade 10 learners had a Composite Mean of 2.79, indicating a High Level of Anxiety. This figure represents a significant psychological burden, signifying that formal evaluation is a major stressor for learners in the General Luna District.

The highest scores were observed in Indicator 1, regarding the lack of ease during tests, and in Indicator 2, concerning the consequences of failure, both of which yielded a mean of 2.98. These results signify that learner experience intense psychological discomfort during assessments and are deeply preoccupied with the external repercussions of failing the course. In contrast, Indicator 3, which addresses confusion while studying, received the lowest score (2.42), placing it in the Low Level of Anxiety range.

The disparity between these indicators suggests that the primary issue is not necessarily a lack of cognitive effort or preparation. Instead, the anxiety is specifically performance-based. The high mean for fear of failing (2.98) reflects a results-oriented pressure in which academic grades are often perceived as critical indicators of future success. It reinforces Horwitz's (1986) assertion that test anxiety is a central component of foreign language anxiety, as learners often feel their intelligence is being evaluated rather than their actual learning process.

Furthermore, the data highlights that while learners may be preparing—evidenced by the lower mean for study-related confusion (2.42)—the stress experienced during the actual test raises their affective filter. According to Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, this emotional barrier prevents learners from effectively demonstrating the knowledge they have acquired, essentially blocking their true abilities during high-stakes moments. This finding serves as a critical input for the study, suggesting that the proposed learners' support plan should incorporate low-stakes assessment strategies to mitigate the impact of test-related apprehension.

Level of English Language Anxiety in terms of Social Anxiety

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Description	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I feel nervous when speaking English with native speakers.	2.68	0.873	High	High Level of Anxiety	3
2. I feel very self-conscious when speaking English in front of other students.	2.81	0.769	High	High Level of Anxiety	1.5
3. I am not comfortable around native speakers of English.	2.81	0.919	High	High Level of Anxiety	1.5
Composite Mean	2.77	0.879	High	High Level of Anxiety	

Table 4. Level of English language anxiety in terms of social anxiety

Table 4 presents the level of English language anxiety in terms of social anxiety, which had a Composite Mean of 2.77, indicating a High Level of Anxiety. This statistical result indicates that learners experience significant psychological discomfort and heightened self-consciousness when using English in social or public settings.

Indicator 5 (self-consciousness in front of peers) and Indicator 6 (discomfort around native speakers) both recorded the highest mean score of 2.81. These results signify that learner are equally intimidated by the perceived expertise of native speakers and the potential judgment of their own classmates. Even the lowest mean in this category, Indicator 4 (nervousness with native speakers), remained firmly within the high range at 2.68, reinforcing the pervasive nature of social apprehension in the language classroom.

These findings suggest that a fear of public performance largely drives the learners' social anxiety. Whether addressing peers or anticipating communication with native speakers, learners experience intense pressure to achieve linguistic perfection to protect their social standing. It supports the research of Giray et al. (2022) and Kabigting and Nanud (2020), who observed that social anxiety often leads learners to avoid speaking opportunities as a defense mechanism to preserve their self-image. It also aligns with Horwitz's (1986) Foreign Language Anxiety Theory, which posits that the fear of social

evaluation is a core component of anxiety; learners perceive their social self to be at risk when they cannot communicate effectively in a second language.

The data further implies that Grade 10 learners face a substantial performance barrier. Their high level of self-consciousness (2.81) leads them to focus more on the fear of external judgment than on the actual message they intend to convey. It corresponds to Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which suggests that heightened social-evaluation anxiety raises the affective filter, thereby hindering natural language acquisition and oral fluency.

Level of English Language Anxiety in terms of Cognitive Anxiety

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Description	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I feel anxious when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in English.	2.70	0.805	High	High Level of Anxiety	2.5
2. I find myself thinking about unrelated matters during English class.	2.60	0.878	High	High Level of Anxiety	4
3. I become so nervous that I forget things I know in English class.	2.49	0.977	Low	Low Level of Anxiety	5
4. I feel upset when I do not understand the teacher's corrections.	2.40	0.932	Low	Low Level of Anxiety	6
5. I may be left behind due to the fast pace of the English class.	2.79	0.821	High	High Level of Anxiety	1
6. I feel anxious when I don't understand every word the English teacher says.	2.70	0.802	High	High Level of Anxiety	2.5
Composite Mean	2.62	0.879	High	High Level of Anxiety	

Table 5. Level of English language anxiety in terms of cognitive anxiety

Table 5 presents the level of English language anxiety in terms of cognitive anxiety, which had a Composite Mean of 2.62, indicating a High Level of Anxiety. This statistical finding shows that learners experience significant mental interference and worry, which hampers their ability to process and retain information during English instruction.

The data highlights that the primary driver of cognitive distress is the perceived speed of instruction. Indicator 5, I worry about getting left behind because the English Language class moves so quickly, and I recorded the highest mean of 2.79. It is closely followed by Indicators 1 and 6, which both show that learners feel anxious when they cannot fully comprehend the teacher's verbal delivery (2.70). Conversely, the lowest score was observed in Indicator 4, regarding the teacher's corrections (2.40), representing a Low Level of Anxiety.

These results indicate that comprehension gaps and the pace of the lesson largely trigger cognitive anxiety. When the delivery of the lesson exceeds learners' processing speed, they often experience cognitive overload, a state in which mental resources are exhausted as they try to keep up with the input rather than understand the content. It supports Al Mamun's (2021) findings, which emphasize that an inability to comprehend input leads to increased stress levels. Furthermore, Jugo (2020) noted that rapid delivery in second-language classrooms often heightens learners' fear of being left behind.

In conclusion, the Grade 10 learners demonstrate a clear struggle with the speed of information processing. While their concern about the fast pace of instruction is great (2.79), their anxiety regarding teacher corrections is relatively low (2.40). It suggests that while students are receptive to feedback, they require additional time to assimilate and digest new linguistic material. This finding aligns with Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, which posits that language acquisition is most effective when learners receive comprehensible input. If the input is delivered too rapidly, the affective filter rises, blocking the learner's ability to process the language and leading to higher cognitive anxiety.

Part II. Causes of English Language Anxiety

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I often think that other students are better at English than I am.	2.83	0.872	Moderate Cause	2
2. I feel pressured to prepare thoroughly for English class.	2.55	0.889	Moderate Cause	4
3. I always feel that other students speak English better than I do.	2.89	0.845	Moderate Cause	1

4. I feel stressed by the many rules required to speak English correctly.	2.69	0.803	Moderate Cause	3
Composite Mean	2.74	0.861	Moderate Cause	

Table 6. Causes of English language anxiety

Table 6 presents the causes of English language anxiety; the findings reveal a Composite Mean of 2.74, which is categorized as a Moderate Cause (MoC). This statistical result indicates that Grade 10 learners generally recognize specific environmental and interpersonal factors as significant catalysts for their nervousness. The data suggest that learners do not view their anxiety as a random occurrence but rather as a reaction to specific classroom dynamics.

A detailed examination of the indicators shows that social comparison is the most powerful trigger. Indicator 3, I always feel that other students speak English better than I do, recorded the highest Mean of 2.89, followed closely by Indicator 1, I often think that other students are better at English than I am (2.83). Conversely, the lowest Mean was recorded for Indicator 2, regarding the pressure of thorough preparation (2.55). Although this is the lowest score, it remains firmly within the Moderate Cause range, indicating that academic preparation itself continues to be a source of stress for these learners.

The prevalence of social comparison as a primary cause suggests that learners' anxiety is not necessarily rooted in a lack of linguistic knowledge, but in a perceived lack of relative competence. It supports the findings of Jugo (2020) and Al Mamun (2021), who emphasized that peer competition and perceived lower proficiency are among the most significant sources of language-related stress in collectivist educational settings. These results align with Social Comparison Theory, which posits that a student's self-concept and confidence suffer when they perceive themselves as inferior to their peers. In the context of the General Luna District, this upward comparison leads to a diminished linguistic ego, causing students to withdraw from participation.

Furthermore, the high Mean for Indicator 4 (stress regarding grammar rules, 2.69) indicates that a perfectionist orientation contributes to the learners' anxiety. When learners focus excessively on the technical accuracy of their output to avoid judgment, they experience a performance barrier. This phenomenon corresponds with Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis, where feelings of inferiority and rule-related stress raise the affective filter, thereby blocking the very language input and output necessary for effective acquisition.

Ultimately, the data suggest that for these Grade 10 learners, the classroom is perceived as a competitive arena rather than a safe learning environment. Identifying these causes serves as a vital Input for the study, highlighting that the Proposed Learners' Support Plan may prioritize collaborative learning strategies and low-stakes participation to reduce the weight of social comparison.

Part III. Effects of English Language Anxiety

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Description	Rank
1. I am bothered by the idea of taking more English Language classes.	2.74	0.741	Moderate Effect	3
2. I understand why some people get so upset over English Language classes.	2.57	0.729	Moderate Effect	4
3. I feel anxious even if I am well prepared for the English Language class.	2.75	0.798	Moderate Effect	2
4. I often feel like not attending my English Language class.	2.18	0.997	Minor Effect	6
5. I feel more tense and nervous in my English Language class than in my other classes.	2.31	0.822	Minor Effect	5
6. I don't feel very sure and relaxed when I'm on my way to English Language class.	2.82	0.899	Moderate Effect	1
Composite Mean	2.56	0.867	Moderate Effect	

Table 7. Effects of English language anxiety

Table 7 presents the effects of English language anxiety; the learners obtained a Composite Mean of 2.56, which is categorized as a Moderate Effect (ME). It indicates that learners are experiencing significant psychological consequences from their nervousness, which colors their overall perception of the English language curriculum.

The data show that the most prominent effect is anticipatory stress. Indicator 6, I don't feel very sure and relaxed when I'm on my way to English Language class, recorded the highest mean of 2.82. This is closely followed by Indicator 3, where learners feel anxious despite being well-prepared (2.75). Conversely, the lowest score was observed for Indicator 4, regarding the desire to skip class (2.18), indicating a Minor Effect.

These results show that for Grade 10 learners in the General Luna District, anxiety manifests as a persistent mental burden that exists independently of their actual academic readiness. The high mean for feeling nervous on the way to class (2.82) suggests that the English classroom as a physical and social space has become a conditioned trigger for stress. This supports the findings of Giray et al. (2022) and Jugo (2020), who argued that language anxiety creates a mental block that functions regardless of a learner's preparation level. Furthermore, the higher tension felt in English compared to other subjects (2.31) confirms that this is a subject-specific debilitating anxiety rather than a general academic stress.

A significant finding in this data is the learners' behavioral resilience. Despite experiencing a Severe Effect regarding their internal state, they reported a Minor Effect regarding class avoidance (2.18). This suggests that the students' motivation to succeed and their sense of academic duty currently outweigh their fear of the language. However, entering the classroom already in a state of anticipatory stress (2.82) means they begin the lesson with a pre-elevated Affective Filter. According to Krashen's (1985) Affective Filter Hypothesis, this prevents the effective processing of language input from the very start of the period. This highlights a critical need in the Proposed Learner's Support Plan to incorporate settling activities or ice-breakers designed to lower the affective filter before formal instruction begins.

Part IV. Coping Processes of Grade 10 Learners in English Language Anxiety

This section explores how Grade 10 learners actively combat English language anxiety through a three-stage coping process. These stages are organized into three core themes: Immediate Self-Regulation and Physiological Control, Proactive Competence-Building and Preparation, and External Support and Environmental Influences. Each theme represents a distinct yet connected phase in how learners respond to and manage anxiety-related challenges in English language learning.

Theme 1: Immediate Self-Regulation and Physiological Control

The first stage of the coping process is Immediate Self-Regulation and Physiological Control, which focuses on learners' immediate responses to the onset of English language anxiety. This theme examines how learners employ internal mental strategies and physiological techniques to stabilize their emotional state and regain focus in real time, particularly during anxiety-provoking situations such as speaking, reading aloud, or responding in class.

Under Theme 1, two sub-themes emerged: Physiological Stabilization (Breathing and Calmness) and Cognitive Reframing and Affirmation. These sub-themes illustrate how learners address both the physical symptoms of anxiety and the negative thoughts that accompany them as an initial coping mechanism.

Five participants shared their immediate coping processes when experiencing English language anxiety. The participants consistently described a transition from initial feelings of panic or nervousness to a state of readiness by engaging in specific calming strategies. Physiological control was a prominent response, with learners consciously regulating their breathing to manage stress. One participant described this process as simply breathing in and out, while others highlighted the use of deep breathing to calm their bodies and revive focus during stressful moments.

Overall, Theme 1 demonstrates that immediate self-regulation and physiological control serve as learners' first line of defense against English language anxiety. By intentionally calming their bodies and reframing their thoughts, learners are able to shift from emotional distress to functional readiness. The actual narrations of the participants' statements are quoted and presented in the succeeding section to further illustrate these immediate coping strategies.

Sub-theme 1: Physiological Stabilization (Breathing and Calmness)

Some participants emphasized the importance of maintaining calmness and encouraging themselves through positive internal dialogue. These learners described gaining courage by mentally reminding themselves to stay calm and confident, which helped them confront their anxiety and continue participating in English language tasks. This combination of breathing techniques and cognitive reassurance enabled learners to regain composure and sustain engagement despite their anxiety.

P1 expressed that the immediate physical response to anxiety is to control one's breathing to reset one's emotional state.

I would close my eyes and breathe in and out, letting the nervousness inside me pass. After that, I am ready to do it again.

P2 similarly claimed that breathing is the primary tool for regaining the focus necessary to complete a task.

The first thing I do is to take a deep breath and carefully understand what I should do. I relax and believe na kayang kaya ko itong matapos.

(The first thing I do is to take a deep breath and carefully understand what I should do. I relax and believe that I can finish it.)

P3 reinforced this by describing a specific "method" used during moments of high pressure, such as speaking in public.

The first thing na ginagawa ko is to calm myself, using the inhale-and-exhale method to revive my focus and speak well.

(The first thing I do is to calm myself, inhale and exhale method to revive my focus and to speak well.)

Overall, Sub-theme 1 highlights that physiological stabilization, particularly controlled breathing and intentional calmness, serves as an immediate and effective coping strategy for learners experiencing English language anxiety. Through simple yet deliberate actions such as inhaling and exhaling, learners are able to regulate their physical responses, regain focus, and mentally prepare themselves for participation. These findings suggest that breathing and calmness function as foundational coping mechanisms that help learners transition from anxiety to readiness during English language tasks.

Sub-theme 2: Cognitive Reframing and Affirmation

Cognitive Reframing and Affirmation refers to the learners' ability to consciously manage English language anxiety by reshaping their thoughts and reinforcing positive self-beliefs. This sub-theme highlights how learners reinterpret anxiety-provoking situations by accepting mistakes as part of the learning process and by affirming their own capabilities, thereby reducing self-imposed pressure and fear of failure.

Some participants highlighted the importance of reframing their thoughts and affirming their abilities as a way to cope with English language anxiety. These learners described managing their anxiety by consciously shifting their mindset from fear and self-doubt toward acceptance, self-forgiveness, and confidence. By reminding themselves that mistakes are part of the learning process and by affirming their own capabilities, learners were able to reduce pressure, particularly the fear of making errors or not meeting expectations. This process of cognitive reframing and self-affirmation enabled them to proceed with English language tasks despite feelings of anxiety.

The participant explained that accepting mistakes as a normal and necessary part of learning plays a crucial role in reducing anxiety. Rather than focusing on perfection, the participant emphasized self-forgiveness as a way to ease pressure and continue participating in language activities.

Bukod dito, pinapaalalahan ko rin ang sarili ko na okay lang magkamali at parte ito ng pagkatuto.

(Aside from this, I reminded myself that it is okay to make mistakes, and it is part of learning.)

This statement reflects how cognitive reframing allows learners to reinterpret anxiety-inducing situations as opportunities for growth rather than as sources of fear.

Similarly, a participant highlighted the role of positive self-belief in overcoming anxiety. They shared that simply choosing to believe in one's ability to perform well provides the courage needed to engage in English communication tasks.

I think that I can do it, as it helps me gain the courage to speak well.

Through affirmation, the participant was able to counter negative thoughts and approach English language use with increased confidence. This positive internal dialogue helped lessen anxiety and encouraged active participation despite lingering nervousness.

Overall, Sub-theme 2 illustrates that cognitive reframing and affirmation serve as essential internal coping mechanisms for learners experiencing English language anxiety. When learners accept their mistakes, practice self-forgiveness, and reinforce positive beliefs, they reduce the emotional burden associated with performance. These strategies allow them to sustain engagement and confidence during English language tasks, complementing the physiological regulation strategies discussed in the previous sub-theme.

Theme 2: Proactive Competence-Building and Preparation

The second stage of the coping process is Proactive Competence-Building and Preparation, which focuses on how learners reduce English language anxiety through deliberate preparation and skill development before high-pressure situations. Unlike the immediate regulation strategies in the first theme, this theme emphasizes long-term and preventive coping mechanisms that help learners build confidence and competence over time.

Under Theme 2, two sub-themes emerged: Rehearsal and Deliberate Practice, and Independent Learning and Media Consumption. These sub-themes highlight how learners actively prepare for English language tasks by practicing in advance and seeking learning opportunities beyond the classroom.

Participants consistently described preparation as a vital component of managing anxiety. By engaging in regular practice and self-directed learning, learners reported feeling more confident and less anxious when using the English language. Rehearsal, self-study, and exposure to language inputs were identified as key strategies that strengthened learners' readiness and reduced fear of performance.

Sub-theme 1: Rehearsal and Deliberate Practice

Rehearsal and Deliberate Practice refer to learners' conscious efforts to repeatedly practice English language tasks in preparation for performance situations. Through consistent rehearsal, learners are able to familiarize themselves with content, improve fluency, and reduce anxiety associated with uncertainty.

A participant emphasized that rehearsing before an activity is the most effective way to manage nervousness, particularly during public speaking situations.

Practice. That is all I do whenever I feel anxious or nervous. Practicing or rehearsing beforehand is effective.

Similarly, another participant focused on practicing difficult words prior to speaking as a way to gain confidence and improve pronunciation.

Yes, I read it first before I say it out loud, and I practice saying the words that I find difficult to pronounce.

These responses indicate that repeated practice allows learners to feel more prepared and in control, thereby lessening anxiety during actual performance.

Sub-theme 2: Independent Learning and Media Consumption

Independent Learning and Media Consumption refer to learners' use of external resources, such as books, videos, and online platforms, to improve their English skills outside formal classroom instruction. Through continuous exposure to the language, learners develop familiarity and confidence, which helps reduce anxiety.

One of the participants explained that regular reading and watching English tutorials contribute to skill improvement and decreased nervousness.

I read every day, and I watch English tutorials on YouTube to learn new things about the Language. It helps me improve my English and reduce my nervousness.

Also, another participant described using online videos to become more familiar with correct pronunciation and natural language flow.

Usually, nanunuod lang ako ng videos about it... Malaking tulong ito sa akin dahil mas nagiging familiar ako sa tamang pronunciation.

(Usually, I am watching videos about it. It helps me a lot because I became more familiar with the correct pronunciation.)

Overall, Theme 2 demonstrates that proactive competence-building and preparation play a critical role in helping learners manage English language anxiety. When learners engage in rehearsal and independent learning, they strengthen their language skills and confidence and become better equipped to handle anxiety-inducing situations. These long-term strategies complement the immediate coping mechanisms discussed in Theme 1 and prepare learners for more effective language use.

Theme 3: External Support and Environmental Influences

The third stage of the coping process is External Support and Environmental Influences, which focuses on how learners' social environments shape their responses to English language anxiety. This theme highlights the role of teachers, peers, and family members in either easing or motivating learners as they navigate anxiety-provoking language situations. Unlike the first two themes that emphasize internal regulation and personal preparation, this theme underscores the importance of interpersonal relationships and social contexts in sustaining learners' confidence and resilience.

Under Theme 3, two sub-themes emerged: Peer Encouragement and Safety and Motivation Through Social Responsibility. These sub-themes illustrate how positive reinforcement, non-judgmental interactions, and a sense of responsibility toward supportive individuals influence learners' willingness to participate and persist despite anxiety.

Participants consistently reported that encouragement and understanding from others helped reduce fear and strengthened their motivation to continue using the English language. Although some learners experienced a level of pressure, the overall consensus was that supportive social environments functioned as a safety net that fostered courage, confidence, and perseverance.

Sub-theme 1: Peer Encouragement and Safety

Peer Encouragement and Safety refer to learners' experiences of feeling accepted, supported, and free from judgment within their social circles. In such environments, learners feel more comfortable expressing themselves in English, even when mistakes occur.

The participant emphasized that having peers who do not ridicule errors plays a significant role in reducing anxiety during speaking activities. Instead of being laughed at, encouragement from peers helped the participant remain engaged and confident.

*Hindi nila ako pinagtatawanan kapag nagkakamali ako at sa halip ay in-encourage nila ako na magpatuloy.
(They are not laughing at me; instead, they encourage me to continue what I have been doing.)*

Similarly, another participant highlighted the importance of verbal affirmations from friends, particularly during moments of nervousness. Hearing reassuring words helped strengthen belief in personal capability.

*...sa tuwing kinakabahan ay sinasabi nila sa akin na kaya kong gawin o sabihin ang kahit anong dapat kong gawin.
(Every time I feel nervous, they told me that I can do it and I can say anything that I need to do or say.)*

These responses indicate that rehearsal allows learners to feel more prepared and in control, which helps reduce anxiety during actual English language performance.

Sub-theme 2: Motivation Through Social Responsibility

Motivation Through Social Responsibility refers to how learners feel driven to perform better because of the support, expectations, and trust placed in them by others. While this support may occasionally involve pressure, learners perceive it as motivating rather than discouraging.

One participant shared that their support system helps them practice and improve, even though this sometimes comes with pressure. This sense of responsibility motivates them to do better and avoid disappointing those who believe in them.

They helped me practice, but they also sometimes pressure me. However, it somehow helps me to do it better and not let them down.

Some participants further emphasized that encouragement from others serves as a powerful driving force in overcoming fear. Knowing that others offer support and believe in their ability gives them the courage to persist.

They give me support and courage to keep going and overcome my fears, which really helps me lots and motivates me to push myself.

These narratives indicate that social responsibility transforms external support into motivation, encouraging learners to challenge their fears and improve their performance.

Overall, Theme 3 demonstrates that external support and environmental influences play a crucial role in sustaining learners' coping processes for English language anxiety. Through peer encouragement, reassurance, and motivated responsibility toward others, learners gain the confidence and persistence needed to continue engaging in English language tasks. Positive social interactions create a supportive atmosphere that complements the internal coping strategies and preparatory efforts discussed in the previous themes, completing a holistic coping framework for managing English language anxiety.

In conclusion, the narratives of the participants reveal that the coping processes used by Grade 10 learners in General Luna District form a cohesive, three-stage strategy that aligns closely with the Affective Filter Hypothesis of Krashen (1982) and the Positive Psychology framework of Jin et al. (2021). By prioritizing Immediate Self-Regulation and Physiological Control, learners validate Roos et al.'s (2021) assertions about the critical link between physiological arousal and cognitive performance; through breathing and calming techniques, they effectively lower their affective filter, thereby facilitating better language output. This internal stabilization is reinforced by Proactive Competence-Building and Preparation, specifically

through a reliance on digital media and independent study. Such patterns align with the findings of Sari et al. (2021) and Forro and Ballesteros-Lintao (2023), which suggest that informal digital interactions and media consumption create a relaxed environment that builds confidence and reduces anxiety. Finally, the process is sustained by External Support and Environmental Influences, where the peer group acts as a non-judgmental safety net. This supports the research of Oruç and Demirci (2020) and Dewaele and Dewaele (2020), emphasizing that positive social dynamics and external encouragement are essential for alleviating anxiety and enhancing overall performance. Together, these themes illustrate a holistic transition from internal emotional management to long-term skill development and social resilience.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that Grade 10 learners in the General Luna District experience a pervasive High Level of English Language Anxiety, with Test Anxiety (2.79) and Social Anxiety (2.77) emerging as the most significant inhibitors to communicative performance. These findings demonstrate that learners' distress is rooted less in the linguistic complexity of the English language and more in the socio-evaluative climate of the classroom. The fear of losing face and negative social comparison—specifically the perception that peers possess superior proficiency—creates a high affective filter, triggering silence as a defensive mechanism. Furthermore, the results highlight that instructional variable, such as a rapid teaching pace and spontaneous questioning, heighten cognitive overload and mental blocks. Despite these pressures, learners remain academically resilient, sustaining their commitment through a sequential coping process that involves immediate physiological stabilization, digital self-study, and reliance on non-judgmental peer networks. Ultimately, these results justify the development of the Proposed Learners' Support Plan to balance emotional well-being with academic rigor.

From a theoretical perspective, this research advances the Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1982) by demonstrating that in the Philippine rural-urban context, the "filter" is predominantly social and evaluative rather than purely instructional.

By documenting how learners navigate physiological arousal through controlled breathing and cognitive reframing, the study contributes to Positive Psychology in SLA (Jin et al., 2021). It highlights the internal mechanisms of student resilience. This research extends current knowledge on how secondary learners integrate digital media and social support systems to overcome the psychological barriers inherent in a collectivist learning culture.

The study also offers practical implications for educational stakeholders. Teachers and school administrators should adopt empathetic pacing and provide structured wait times during oral activities to reduce cognitive anxiety. Professional development programs should focus on creating low-stakes, small-group communicative environments that prioritize meaning over grammatical perfection. School leaders play an essential role in fostering a supportive culture by formalizing study-buddy systems and student-led mentor programs. Additionally, the Department of Education (DepEd) may consider refining language assessment methods to include more formative and performance-based tasks that are less intimidating than traditional high-stakes exams. Strengthening these support systems can directly alleviate the pervasive effects of social comparison and enhance the quality of English language instruction.

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations. The sample was limited to Grade 10 learners within a single district in the Division of Quezon, which may not fully represent the experiences of learners in highly urbanized cities or other grade levels. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported narratives through written surveys, which, while mitigating immediate stress, may be influenced by the participants' subjective perceptions.

These limitations provide opportunities for future research. Subsequent studies may expand the sample size and include longitudinal follow-up to examine whether these anxiety levels fluctuate as students transition into Senior High School or specialized academic tracks. Quantitative researchers could also test hypotheses, such as whether integrating AI-driven language tools as a low-pressure practice medium significantly improves communicative confidence. Exploring these areas will further strengthen evidence-based practices that promote an anxiety-free and inclusive English language learning environment.

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Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.