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Language Anxiety at the Transition to University: A Theory-Informed Reanalysis of Freshmen English Learning Across Four Skills

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ABSTRACT

Language anxiety can shape participation, perceived competence, and engagement during educational transitions, yet early evidence is often reported as a local classroom problem rather than as a learning-and-development process. This article presents a theory-informed reanalysis of an archived 2024-2025 cross-sectional study involving 50 randomly selected first-year College of Education students from a population of 500 at Central Luzon State University, Philippines. The archived study combined a questionnaire checklist, four-point response scales, and performance-oriented tasks across reading, writing, listening, and speaking; the available aggregate data were re-examined using descriptive frequencies, percentages, and transparent derived summaries. Anxiety-related responses were most pronounced for fear of speaking ungrammatically (54%), tension when preparing for an English test (46%), and nervousness using English outside school (40%). Lack of time for practice (38%) and insufficient exposure to English (30%) were the leading reported contributors. Thirty percent reported difficulty using English spontaneously in formal or informal conversation. Task evidence showed 60.0% correct responses across reading items, 93.5% across listening items, a mean writing score of 6.68/10, and a mean speaking score of 6.65/10 among 46 scorable responses. Interpreted through situated expectancy-value and contemporary language-anxiety scholarship, the pattern suggests that anxiety is skill-sensitive and linked to exposure, perceived competence, and control. Because the dataset is archival and the original instrument lacks reported psychometric validation, the findings are best treated as a developmental historical baseline rather than a current prevalence estimate.

IMPACT STATEMENT

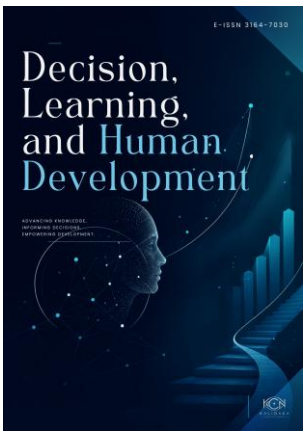
The findings position English anxiety as more than a language-classroom inconvenience: it can constrain students' agency to ask questions, speak spontaneously, and participate during the transition into university. The strongest practical signal is that limited practice and exposure coincide with anxiety in evaluative and communicative situations. Institutions can respond by designing repeated low-stakes language use, psychologically safer feedback, reflective writing, and staged speaking opportunities that strengthen perceived competence and control. The study also shows why educators should combine self-report with task evidence rather than relying on a single anxiety score.

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1. Introduction

Foreign-language anxiety is a situation-linked affective experience that can influence how learners allocate attention, evaluate their own competence, approach communicative risk, and sustain participation. The foundational formulation by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope defined foreign-language classroom anxiety as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors arising from the language-learning process [1]. Subsequent meta-analyses have provided robust evidence that greater language anxiety is associated with lower language achievement across settings and measures [2], [3]. This relationship makes anxiety relevant not only to language pedagogy but also to learning, self-regulation, agency, and adaptation during educational transitions.

The transition into university is developmentally consequential because students encounter new performance expectations, peer comparison, assessment regimes, and demands for autonomous communication. In the present archived study, first-year students were asked about confidence, test tension, English use outside school, stress while listening to instructors, and fear of grammatical error. They also reported possible antecedents—including practice, exposure, instructional experience, accent, and interest—and completed short tasks representing four macro-skills. These data provide an opportunity to reinterpret a historically local study through contemporary perspectives on language anxiety, motivation, and educational transition without altering the original observations.

A contemporary interpretation is especially important because language anxiety is increasingly understood as neither a fixed personal deficit nor a single classroom score. Reviews of the field emphasize its dynamic, context-sensitive, and skill-specific character [4], while longitudinal evidence indicates that anxiety can fluctuate over time and across tasks [5]. Idiodynamic work involving M. Aridan similarly shows rapid changes in second-language writing anxiety, motivation, and perceived control, highlighting control as a meaningful affect-regulation mechanism [6]. In the Philippine context, Villarama and colleagues have also shown that language learning and emotion are tightly intertwined, including persistent sensitivity to peer and teacher judgment even within reflective writing activities [7].

1.1. Research problem and gap

The archived manuscript was primarily descriptive and framed English anxiety as a classroom barrier. Although such descriptive evidence is useful, it offers limited insight into how anxiety may intersect with broader processes of learning, perceived competence, agency, and adaptation during the transition to higher education. The unresolved problem is therefore not simply whether anxiety was present in this sample, but how the observed pattern can be interpreted in relation to learners' perceived competence, task value, contextual exposure, perceived control, and participation across different language-learning situations.

A second gap concerns measurement and interpretation. The archived questionnaire was researcher-developed, no reliability or validity coefficient was reported, and the four performance tasks used heterogeneous formats. The original manuscript also stated a null-hypothesis rejection even though it reported only frequency counts and percentages. The present reanalysis therefore does not reproduce that unsupported inferential claim. Instead, it retains the available aggregate data, recalculates transparent descriptive summaries where possible, distinguishes self-reported anxiety from task-performance evidence, and explicitly acknowledges measurement uncertainty. In doing so, the study provides a theoretically grounded reinterpretation of historical evidence without introducing unobserved participants, raw scores, psychometric properties, or causal effects.

1.2. Research objectives and questions

The study aims to characterize the archived pattern of English-language anxiety among first-year university students and reinterpret it in relation to perceived competence, control, participation, and adaptation during the transition to university. Four research questions guide the reanalysis: (1) What patterns of anxiety-related self-report are evident across classroom confidence, testing, out-of-school use, listening, and grammatical speaking? (2) Which perceived antecedents and functional consequences of anxiety were most frequently endorsed? (3) What does the archived performance evidence show across reading, listening, writing, and speaking? (4) How can the convergence and divergence among these indicators inform context-sensitive language-learning support during the transition to university?

2. Literature review

2.1. Language anxiety, performance, and skill-specific learning

The classic Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety framework distinguishes communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation [1]. Two large meta-analyses reinforce the practical importance of this construct: Zhang synthesized 55 independent samples with more than 10,000 participants and reported an overall anxiety-performance correlation of r = −.34 [2], while Teimouri, Goetze, and Plonsky synthesized 105 independent samples (N = 19,933) and reported a mean correlation of r = −.36 [3]. These effect sizes indicate a meaningful negative association without implying that anxiety alone determines achievement.

Anxiety is also differentiated by skill. Writing anxiety has moderate associations with writing self-efficacy and performance and correlates with speaking, reading, and listening anxieties [8]. More broadly, achievement emotions such as enjoyment, anxiety, and boredom can show domain-specific predictive patterns [9]. The archived study's separate reading, listening, writing, and speaking tasks are therefore useful as exploratory evidence, provided that their heterogeneous metrics are not treated as a single validated scale.

Measurement studies further complicate a purely trait-like account. Test-retest evidence suggests substantial stability in commonly used language-anxiety scales while still recognizing situation-specific variation [10]. A 2025 systematic review of 49 longitudinal studies concluded that foreign-language anxiety is malleable across macro-, meso-, and micro-timescales [5]. This dual perspective—relative stability plus contextual variability—supports triangulating general perceptions with task-level behavior.

2.2. Expectancy, perceived control, exposure, and developmental context

The archived manuscript used a General Expectancy-Value Model via May's work [28]. The present reanalysis updates that foundation through Situated Expectancy-Value Theory (SEVT), which explains achievement behavior through expectations of success, subjective task value, perceived cost, prior experience, socialization, and culturally situated interpretation [11]. For language learners, anxiety can plausibly rise when perceived competence is low, task costs are high, or communicative demands exceed the learner's sense of control. These are theoretical interpretive pathways; the archived design does not permit mediation or causal testing.

Recent empirical evidence supports the relevance of exposure and self-beliefs. Xu and Xie found that language proficiency, language exposure, and cognitive-control processes made distinct contributions to dimensions of foreign-language anxiety [12]. Jin, Gu, and Li linked academic self-efficacy and language anxiety to foreign-language performance [13]. Language environments can also shape anxiety and learning burnout through psychological resources [14]. These findings give contemporary significance to the archived sample's strongest reported antecedents—limited practice and limited exposure.

Relevant contributions by Aridan and Villarama offer direct conceptual bridges to the present interpretation. Demir, Aridan, Zerenay, and Zaimoğlu showed that second-language writing anxiety can shift rapidly with motivation and perceived control [6], while Yanti, Amiruddin, Ayu, and Aridan demonstrated the relevance of motivational and interest processes in language learning [15]. Villarama and colleagues documented the interplay of emotion, judgment, and reflective language learning among Filipino learners [7], and separately showed that changes in learning environments can have implications for student mental wellness [16]. Together, this work supports interpreting anxiety as an affective-developmental process embedded in context rather than as an isolated deficit.

The archived manuscript also drew on earlier developmental and local educational sources [21], [23], Philippine discussions of oral communication and language-learning anxiety [22], [24], a narrative teaching report [25], and early studies or reports concerning attitudes, proficiency, and anxiety [26], [27], [29], [30], [31]. These sources are retained for fidelity to the original study while being complemented by current peer-reviewed literature with verifiable DOIs.

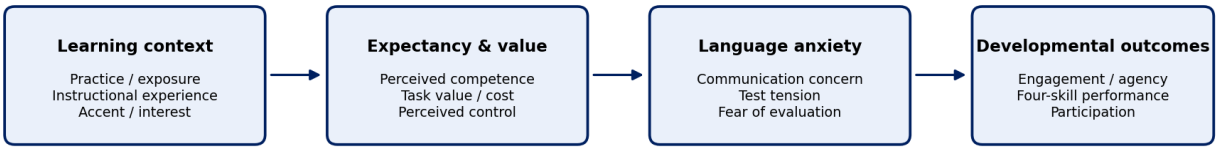


Figure 1. Theory-informed interpretive framework for the archival reanalysis.

3. Methods

3.1. Research design

This article is a theory-informed secondary reanalysis of an archived descriptive cross-sectional study conducted during Academic Year 2024-2025 at the College of Education, Central Luzon State University (CLSU), Philippines. The original study described English anxiety using questionnaire responses and short performance-oriented tasks. No new participant recruitment or data collection was undertaken for the present article. Reanalysis was restricted to the numerical aggregates, instrument wording, procedural descriptions, and conclusions preserved in the archived manuscript and abstract.

3.2. Data universe and analytical units

The archived population comprised 500 first-year College of Education students. The original researchers reported using random sampling to select 50 respondents, giving an archived sample fraction of 10%. The sample contained 30 males (60%) and 20 females (40%); ages ranged from 15 to 19 years. Table 1 summarizes the analytical evidence retained from the source manuscript.

Table 1. Data sources, coverage, and analytical role.

Source / sample / material	Coverage	Role in this study
Archived first-year student sample	N = 50 of 500; A.Y. 2024-2025	Primary aggregate evidence
Instrument 1A	Gender and age	Sample description
Instrument 1B	5 four-point items	Anxiety-related self-report
Instrument 2	5 four-point items	Perceived contributing factors
Instrument 3	7 four-point items	Perceived functional effects
Instrument 4	Reading, listening, writing, speaking tasks	Performance-oriented triangulation

3.3. Operational definitions and variables

The original four-point response scale was coded as 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, and 4 = Strongly Disagree. Because Item 1 of the anxiety scale is positively worded (confidence asking questions), its anxiety-indicative direction is Disagree/Strongly Disagree; for Items 2–5, anxiety-indicative responses are Strongly Agree/Agree. For factors and effects, endorsement is reported as Strongly Agree + Agree. Performance tasks are reported using the original counts and transparent derived summaries rather than being converted into a new psychometric anxiety score.

Table 2. Operational definitions used in the reanalysis.

Indicator	Operationalization	Interpretive role
Anxiety-related response	Direction of item response indicating lower confidence, tension, nervousness, stress, or fear	Self-reported affective signal
Factor endorsement	Strongly Agree + Agree for each proposed contributor	Perceived contextual antecedent
Effect endorsement	Strongly Agree + Agree for each proposed consequence	Perceived functional consequence
Reading / listening accuracy	Correct responses divided by all item responses	Task evidence
Writing performance	Weighted score distribution; 1–10 scale	Task evidence
Speaking performance	Weighted score distribution; 1–10 scale among scorable responses	Task evidence

3.4. Data collection and extraction

According to the archived report, the researchers approached CLSU College of Education freshmen directly, explained the directions, and administered the questionnaire to students who responded positively to the request. Digital camera and cellular-phone audio recording were used to document the data-gathering process. The source instrument included respondent name, gender, and age; the present article does not reproduce names or any individual-level identifier. All values in the results tables were transcribed from the archived manuscript and cross-checked against its summary and abstract.

3.5. Data analysis

The original analysis used frequency counts and percentages. The present reanalysis retains those statistics and adds only arithmetic summaries that can be reproduced directly from the archived aggregate tables: (a) anxiety-indicative response percentages, (b) factor/effect endorsement percentages, (c) overall correct-response proportions for reading and listening, and (d) weighted mean scores for writing and speaking. No inferential tests were performed because respondent-level data, variance estimates for the derived outcomes, and a validated scale score were not available. Consequently, the original manuscript's statement that a null hypothesis was "rejected" is not treated as a statistically verified conclusion in this article.

3.6. Validation, reliability, and uncertainty

The archived manuscript describes a researcher-designed questionnaire checklist, rating scale, and holistic criteria, but it does not report content-validity indices, pilot reliability, internal consistency, inter-rater reliability, or standardized administration evidence. This is a major limitation. The current article therefore avoids labeling the instrument as validated and does not infer prevalence beyond the sample. In addition, the four macro-skill evaluations used different task structures, so the original cross-skill "average" indices (reading 30.0; speaking 30.6; writing 33.4; listening 46.75) are preserved as historical outputs but are not treated as directly comparable psychometric scores.

A further uncertainty concerns speaking data. The archived speaking table reports frequencies totaling 46 scorable responses and a "no answer" entry of 8, while the accompanying percentage total is 92%. The most internally consistent interpretation is 46 scorable responses (92%) and 4 nonresponses (8%). The present reanalysis uses N = 46 to calculate the speaking mean and explicitly flags the discrepancy rather than silently correcting the source table.

3.7. Ethical considerations

The archived manuscript does not provide a formal institutional ethics committee approval number. It indicates that students participated after responding positively to the researchers' request and after study directions were explained. Because formal approval and written consent documentation cannot be verified from the archived materials, this limitation is disclosed transparently. The current article reports only aggregate, de-identified historical results and does not reproduce participant names or collect new human-participant data.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

4.1.1. Participant profile and anxiety-related self-report

The sample was predominantly male (60%) and concentrated at age 16 (66%), with 28% aged 17, 4% aged 15, and 2% aged 19. No 18-year-old respondent was recorded. These demographic results are retained exactly as reported in the archived study.

Table 3. Demographic profile of respondents (N = 50).

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	30	60
Gender	Female	20	40
Age	15	2	4
Age	16	33	66
Age	17	14	28
Age	18	0	0
Age	19	1	2

Item-level analysis shows that anxiety was not uniform. Fear of grammatical error during speaking was the strongest anxiety-indicative signal: 27 students (54%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were afraid to speak ungrammatically when answering an instructor. Test preparation tension was endorsed by 23 students (46%), and nervousness using English outside school by 20 (40%). In contrast, only 12 students (24%) lacked confidence to ask questions in English class, and 10 (20%) reported stress while listening to English instructors. The archived abstract also summarized average counts across its categorical interpretation as 21 "a little bit anxious," 13.8 "anxious," 10.6 "not anxious," and 4.6 "very anxious"; these values are retained as part of the historical report, although the item-level distributions provide a more transparent basis for interpretation.

Table 4. Distribution of the five English-anxiety items.

Item	Strongly agree n (%)	Agree n (%)	Disagree n (%)	Strongly disagree n (%)	Anxiety-indicative %
1. Confident enough to ask questions	11 (22)	27 (54)	11 (22)	1 (2)	24*
2. Tense preparing for an English test	5 (10)	18 (36)	17 (34)	10 (20)	46
3. Nervous using English outside school	7 (14)	13 (26)	21 (42)	9 (18)	40
4. Stressed listening to English instructors	3 (6)	7 (14)	27 (54)	13 (26)	20
5. Afraid to speak ungrammatically	8 (16)	19 (38)	18 (36)	5 (10)	54

4.1.2. Perceived contributors to English anxiety

Limited opportunity to use and practice English was the most endorsed contributor (38%), followed by insufficient exposure to the language (30%). Perceived improper teaching was endorsed by 24%, regional accent by 20%, and lack of interest by 12%. The hierarchy suggests that respondents located anxiety more strongly in opportunities for practice and exposure than in stable disinterest.

Table 5. Perceived contributing factors to English anxiety.

Proposed factor	SA n (%)	A n (%)	D n (%)	SD n (%)	Endorsed (SA+A)
Regional accent	3 (6)	7 (14)	27 (54)	13 (26)	10 (20%)
Not interested in learning English	2 (4)	4 (8)	23 (46)	21 (42)	6 (12%)
Lack of time using and practicing English	4 (8)	15 (30)	21 (42)	10 (20)	19 (38%)
Teacher does not teach English properly	2 (4)	10 (20)	29 (58)	9 (18)	12 (24%)
Not exposed to English	2 (4)	13 (26)	25 (50)	10 (20)	15 (30%)

4.1.3. Perceived functional effects

The most frequently endorsed functional consequence was inability to use English spontaneously in formal or informal conversation (15 students; 30%). Ten students (20%) reported fear of applying for a job because interviews were conducted in English, and nine (18%) reported difficulty following English-medium radio/television programs, seminars, or classroom discussions. Other reported effects were grammatical inaccuracy in oral or written English (16%), inaccurate spelling (12%), lack of interest in reading English materials (10%), and low academic scores (10%).

Table 6. Perceived effects of English anxiety on language use and performance.

Effect item	SA n (%)	A n (%)	D n (%)	SD n (%)	Endorsed (SA+A)
No longer interested in reading English materials	0 (0)	5 (10)	28 (56)	17 (34)	5 (10%)
Unable to spell English words accurately	0 (0)	6 (12)	20 (40)	24 (48)	6 (12%)
Cannot use English spontaneously in formal/informal conversation	0 (0)	15 (30)	30 (60)	5 (10)	15 (30%)
Hard to follow English media, seminars, or classroom discussions	0 (0)	9 (18)	21 (42)	20 (40)	9 (18%)
Always gets low scores in quizzes/exams/papers/projects/presentations	0 (0)	5 (10)	28 (56)	17 (34)	5 (10%)
Cannot use English accurately orally/written because of grammar lapses	1 (2)	7 (14)	30 (60)	12 (24)	8 (16%)

Effect item	SA n (%)	A n (%)	D n (%)	SD n (%)	Endorsed (SA+A)
Afraid to apply for a job because interviews use English	4 (8)	6 (12)	24 (48)	16 (32)	10 (20%)

4.1.4. Four-skill performance-oriented evidence

The performance-oriented tasks provide a second lens on the self-report findings. Across the three reading items, 90 of 150 responses were correct (60.0%). Across four listening items, 187 of 200 responses were correct (93.5%). The weighted writing-score distribution yielded a mean of 6.68/10. For speaking, the 46 scorable responses yielded a mean of 6.65/10; the source table implies four nonresponses (8%), although its "no answer" entry is internally inconsistent. No respondent obtained 9 or 10 in the speaking distribution. These summaries do not establish that anxiety caused performance differences, but they show that reading was substantially weaker than listening and that productive-task scores clustered in the middle-to-upper range.

Table 7. Reading and listening task results retained from the archived manuscript.

Skill	Item	Correct n (%)	Incorrect n (%)
Reading	Item 1	15 (30)	35 (70)
Reading	Item 2	31 (62)	19 (38)
Reading	Item 3	44 (88)	6 (12)
Listening	Item 1	45 (90)	5 (10)
Listening	Item 2	48 (96)	2 (4)
Listening	Item 3	46 (92)	4 (8)
Listening	Item 4	48 (96)	2 (4)

Table 8. Writing and speaking score distributions retained from the archived manuscript.

Score	Writing n (%)	Speaking n (%)
1	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
2	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
3	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
4	4 (8%)	0 (0%)
5	9 (18%)	6 (12%)
6	11 (22%)	15 (30%)
7	8 (16%)	14 (28%)
8	7 (14%)	11 (22%)
9	6 (12%)	0 (0%)
10	4 (8%)	0 (0%)
No scorable response	0	4 (8%)*

The original Chapter 5 reported cross-skill "averages" of reading = 30.0, speaking = 30.6, writing = 33.4, and listening = 46.75, interpreting the smallest value as the greatest anxiety and therefore ranking reading as most affected. Recalculation shows that these figures were produced from different bases: reading and listening are average correct counts per item, whereas writing and speaking correspond to weighted score totals divided by 10. Because these are heterogeneous calculations, the ranking is preserved as an original finding but should not be interpreted as a validated common-scale comparison.

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1. Anxiety as a situated constraint on perceived competence and agency

The strongest item-level signals occurred in evaluative and communicative situations: fear of grammatical error, test preparation, and use of English outside school. This pattern is consistent with the communication-apprehension, test-anxiety, and negative-evaluation dimensions in the classic language-anxiety literature [1]. It also aligns with meta-analytic evidence that language anxiety is negatively associated with achievement [2], [3]. Importantly, the present data do not support a binary claim that students either "have" or "do not have" anxiety. Instead, anxiety appears unevenly distributed across tasks and contexts.

From an SEVT perspective, fear of grammatical error can be read as a perceived cost attached to public performance, whereas confidence to ask questions and willingness to use English outside school index expectations of successful participation. The strongest antecedents—limited practice and exposure—are also theoretically meaningful because repeated successful experience can shape competence beliefs and

the perceived controllability of future tasks [11], [12]. The more recent dynamic evidence reported by Demir, Aridan, Zerenay, and Zaimoğlu [6] strengthens this interpretation by showing that perceived control can move in tandem with anxiety and motivation during L2 performance.

The functional effects further broaden the significance of the findings. Difficulty speaking spontaneously can reduce classroom participation and social communication; fear of English-medium job interviews can affect future career agency; and difficulty following English-medium discussions can constrain access to academic learning. Taken together, these consequences indicate that language anxiety extends beyond linguistic performance. It may shape students' participation in academic learning, willingness to communicate, perceived agency, and readiness to navigate educational and future professional demands. Language anxiety can therefore be understood as part of a broader process through which students negotiate competence, control, and participation during the transition to higher education.

4.2.2. Discrepancy between self-perception and task evidence

The archived abstract noted a contradiction: respondents' general perception suggested that most did not view themselves as anxious, whereas the researchers' instruments suggested anxiety was present. The present item-level reanalysis clarifies this tension. Anxiety was not consistently high across all indicators; instead, it concentrated in particular situations. This is compatible with contemporary scholarship that treats language anxiety as both relatively stable in standard measures and variable in immediate contexts [5], [10].

Task evidence also warns against equating a general self-description with actual performance conditions. Reading accuracy was 60%, compared with 93.5% in listening, while writing and speaking means were about 6.7/10. This does not establish a causal anxiety effect, but it demonstrates why multi-indicator assessment is preferable. Skill-specific research similarly shows that writing, speaking, reading, and listening anxieties are related yet distinguishable [8]. Villarama and colleagues' work on journaling and emotion in Philippine language learning further illustrates that learners can experience positive engagement while remaining sensitive to judgment [7].

4.2.3. Implications for learning support during university transition

The evidence supports a low-stakes, exposure-rich response rather than a deficit-oriented one. Students who fear error need repeated opportunities to communicate without every attempt functioning as a high-cost evaluation. Guided rehearsal, pair or small-group speaking, formative rather than punitive correction, reflective journaling, and gradual movement from supported to spontaneous language use can increase successful experience. The original study itself recommended practice, preparation, confidence, and exposure; contemporary intervention and learning-environment research supports the same general direction [17], [18].

Support should also be skill-sensitive. Reading requires structured comprehension practice and opportunities to experience success with progressively complex texts. Speaking requires psychologically safe opportunities for spontaneous production and feedback. Writing can benefit from reflective practices that integrate emotional and linguistic processing [7]. Across all skills, the goal is not to eliminate normal activation but to strengthen learners' perceived competence, control, self-regulation, and willingness to act.

4.2.4. Methodological implications, limitations, and future research

The main limitations are the age of the data, small single-institution sample, researcher-developed instruments, absence of reported psychometric reliability and formal ethics identifiers, lack of respondent-level data, and heterogeneous performance tasks. The dataset therefore cannot estimate current prevalence at CLSU, test causal pathways, or support subgroup comparisons by age or gender. The cross-sectional design also cannot demonstrate developmental change over time.

Future studies should use validated language-anxiety scales alongside skill-specific measures, academic self-efficacy, perceived control, engagement, and task value. Longitudinal or intensive repeated-measures designs would be especially valuable because current evidence shows that language anxiety is malleable across timescales [5]. Larger multi-institution Philippine samples could test whether exposure, instructional climate, and transition experiences predict anxiety trajectories. Where possible, objective skill outcomes should be linked to anxiety at the same task level, with preregistered scoring and reliability procedures.

5. Conclusion

This theory-informed reanalysis preserves the complete aggregate evidence of an archived study of 50 first-year College of Education students while interpreting English anxiety through the interacting lenses of perceived competence, control, participation, and educational transition. Anxiety-related responses were strongest around grammatical speaking, testing, and English use beyond the classroom; limited practice and exposure were the most frequently endorsed contributors; and spontaneous communication was the most common reported functional difficulty. Performance-oriented evidence showed a marked reading-listening difference and moderate writing/speaking scores, while also exposing weaknesses in the original cross-skill index. The principal contribution is therefore not a current prevalence estimate, but a transparent historical baseline showing how language anxiety can intersect with perceived competence, control, participation, and agency during the transition to higher education. Support should prioritize low-stakes practice, sustained exposure, reflective learning, and psychologically safe feedback, while future research adopts validated, longitudinal, and skill-sensitive measurement.

Ethics approval statement

The archived 2024-2025 study materials available for this reanalysis do not record an institutional ethics committee approval number. No new human-participant data were collected for the present article. Only aggregate historical results are reported, and participant names or other individual identifiers from the original instrument are not reproduced.

Informed consent statement

The archived procedure states that students participated after responding positively to the researchers' request and after instructions were explained. Formal written consent documentation is not available in the archived materials; this reporting limitation is disclosed for editorial assessment.

Author contribution statement

L. B. S, C. K. P, L. A. U. V, J. A. V, and N. V. T are credited as co-investigators in the archived original study and jointly contributed to its conceptualization, investigation, data collection, and original reporting. A more granular CRediT allocation is not documented in the archived materials.

Disclosure statement

No conflict of interest is identified in the archived study materials used for this reanalysis.

Declaration of Funding

No external funding is documented in the archived study materials used for this reanalysis.

AI-assisted technologies disclosure

AI-assisted technology was used during preparation of the revised manuscript for language editing, structural refinement, and reference-verification support. No AI system generated, altered, or imputed the underlying research data. Human authors remain responsible for the accuracy of all data, interpretations, citations, and final text.

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Data availability statement

All aggregate numerical data used in this reanalysis are reproduced in the article and Appendix A from the archived manuscript supplied for revision. Respondent-level raw data were not available to the present reanalysis.

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