



English Speaking Anxiety beyond Low Achievement: Evidence from Spontaneous Role Play in an English for Survival Course

M. Fatkhu Arifin^{1*}
Universitas Tidar¹
mf_arifin@untidar.ac.id¹

Moch. Malik Al Firdaus²
Universitas Tidar²
malik@untidar.ac.id²

Received: April 23, 2026
Revised: May 25, 2026
Accepted: May 26, 2026

***Corresponding author:**
M. Fatkhu Arifin,
Universitas Tidar
Indonesia,

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the level of English language anxiety of EFL students in the *English for Survival* course and the relationship between language anxiety and academic performance. The research used a quantitative approach with a correlational design involving 38 students. Data were collected using a modified *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale* (FLCAS) and final course grades as indicators of academic performance. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation. The results show that 76.4% of students are in the high to very high anxiety category, with **Test Anxiety** as the most dominant dimension ($M = 18.29$). The correlation between language anxiety and course grades is negative and weak, but not significant ($r = -0.272$; $p = 0.099$). Findings show that students with good academic performance can also experience high language anxiety. Therefore, affective aspects need to receive attention in learning English in higher education.

Keywords: foreign language anxiety; FLCAS; EFL; English for Survival; academic performance

Format penulisan naskah artikel minimal 5.000 kata dan maksimal 10.000 kata, yang terdiri dari unsur *Pendahuluan, Literature Review, Metode, Hasil, Pembahasan, Simpulan, Daftar Pustaka*. Penjelasan mengenai penulisan dan struktur naskah dapat dilihat di bawah ini. Size paper A4 (portrait, 21 x 29,7 cm); margin: 3x3x3x3 cm.

Introduction

Previous studies have identified various factors associated with foreign language and speaking anxiety among EFL learners. Erdiana et al. (2020), for example, found that Indonesian EFL students experienced speaking anxiety at varying levels, with spontaneous speaking and concerns about classroom evaluation emerging as important sources of anxiety. Similarly, Hidayati (2018) reported that fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test anxiety were among the major sources of language anxiety among Indonesian non-English major students. Research in ESP contexts has also reported substantial levels of anxiety among university students. Ayuningtyas (2020) found that 92.34% of the students in her study experienced average to high levels of foreign language anxiety. More specifically, Alfiani et al. (2022) identified fear of negative evaluation as the primary factor influencing speaking anxiety, followed by test anxiety and communication apprehension. These findings suggest that anxiety in EFL contexts is strongly associated with situations in which learners are required to perform orally while being evaluated by teachers or peers.

Recent studies further indicate that speaking anxiety is related to several psychological and contextual factors. Qurnia and Marlina (2020) examined the relationship between speaking anxiety and self-efficacy among Indonesian EFL students and highlighted the relevance of learners' perceptions of their own capabilities in understanding speaking-related anxiety. Özer and İspınar Akçayoğlu (2021) similarly examined foreign language anxiety alongside self-efficacy, self-regulated learning, attendance, and academic achievement among 344 tertiary EFL learners, showing that academic performance cannot be understood through anxiety alone. In addition, Ghelichli (2022) found that foreign language anxiety and willingness to communicate should be considered together when examining learners' participation in communicative activities. Coppinger and Sheridan (2022) further demonstrated that concerns about non-native accents can constitute a specific source of speaking anxiety, suggesting that anxiety may arise from highly specific features of oral communication.

The relationship between language anxiety and academic achievement has also received considerable empirical attention. Horwitz (2001) reviewed the literature and identified a generally negative relationship between language anxiety and achievement, while Teimouri et al. (2019), through a meta-analysis of 105 independent samples involving 19,933 participants, reported an overall negative relationship between second language anxiety and language achievement. Similar concerns have been reported in individual empirical studies, including Tóth (2021), who examined anxiety and foreign language academic achievement, and Rofida (2021), who investigated the relationship between foreign language anxiety and speaking performance. However, the existence of a negative relationship at the aggregate level does not necessarily mean that every high-achieving learner experiences low anxiety.

Indeed, evidence from the Indonesian context suggests that anxiety may also be experienced by students who demonstrate relatively strong academic or speaking performance. Idrus (2022), for instance, specifically examined EFL learners who were hesitant to speak despite obtaining good scores in speaking assessments. This finding is

particularly relevant because it challenges the assumption that speaking anxiety is primarily a characteristic of low-performing learners. Similarly, Hakim (2022) investigated the relationship between foreign language anxiety and speaking performance among Indonesian university students, further demonstrating the importance of examining anxiety and performance as related but distinct constructs. Such findings suggest that academic achievement may not fully capture students' psychological experiences during English communication.

Role-play provides another relevant context for examining this phenomenon because it requires learners to use English interactively and, in some cases, spontaneously. Subekti and Gaman Goram (2022) specifically examined role-play and speaking anxiety in an Indonesian university English-speaking class and highlighted the need to consider how role-play activities relate to learners' anxiety experiences. This issue becomes particularly relevant in an English for Survival course, in which students are expected to use English in practical and authentic communicative situations. Nevertheless, limited attention has been given to whether students who demonstrate good academic performance in such communicative courses can simultaneously experience high levels of language anxiety.

Therefore, the present study addresses this gap by examining English speaking anxiety among EFL students enrolled in an English for Survival course, with particular attention to the coexistence of anxiety and academic performance. Rather than assuming that high anxiety necessarily corresponds to poor achievement, this study investigates whether students with good course performance may also experience substantial levels of anxiety. By examining both the overall level and dimensions of anxiety as well as its statistical relationship with students' final course grades, the study seeks to provide a more nuanced understanding of foreign language anxiety in higher education.

Research Methods

This research uses a quantitative approach with a correlational design to analyze the relationship between the level of language anxiety (*foreign language anxiety*) and students' academic performance in the *English for Survival* course. A correlational design was chosen because this research aims to identify the direction and strength of the relationship between two variables without providing treatment to the participants. A quantitative approach allows researchers to obtain an objective picture of students' level of language anxiety as well as test the statistical relationship between anxiety scores and course grades obtained by students (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The research was carried out at one of the universities in Indonesia whose identity was disguised to maintain institutional confidentiality. The research participants were 38 undergraduate students who were taking the *English for Survival* course. All participants are English as a foreign language learners (*English as a Foreign Language*). The selection of participants used a *purposive sampling* technique, namely a sampling technique based on certain characteristics that were in accordance with the research objectives (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Students were selected because they had participated in most of the learning process and thus had sufficient experience in using English in various communication activities during lectures. Thus, they are considered capable of providing responses that reflect the experience of language anxiety in the context of the course.

1. Data Collection Techniques

The main research instrument was the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) questionnaire developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). Considering the characteristics of the course and the research context, the instrument was modified to better suit the communication activities carried out in the *English for Survival* course. Modifications were made to the editing of several items without changing the main constructs measured, namely *communication apprehension*, *fear of negative evaluation*, and *test anxiety* as stated by Horwitz et al. (1986). The instrument modification steps refer to the recommendations of Beaton et al. (2000), namely maintaining conceptual equality between the original instrument and the adapted instrument so that it still represents the same construct.

The questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The use of a five-point scale was chosen because it is able to provide adequate response variations and is widely used in psychological and educational research to measure respondents' attitudes and perceptions (Joshi et al., 2015). The higher the score obtained by students indicates the higher level of language anxiety. Conversely, lower scores indicate lower levels of anxiety.

Student academic performance is measured using the final grade for the *English for Survival* course which is obtained from the lecturer after the entire learning process is completed. This value is used as an indicator of learning achievement because it represents the results of evaluation of various aspects of student competence, including participation, assignments, communication performance, as well as the final assessment in accordance with the learning policy in the course. The use of academic grades as a performance indicator has been widely used in research on the relationship between foreign language anxiety and language learning achievement (Horwitz, 2001; Teimouri, Goetze, & Plonsky, 2019).

Data collection is carried out at the end of the semester after students have completed the entire learning series. Questionnaires were distributed to all participants directly after the researcher explained the purpose of the research, guaranteed the confidentiality of respondents' identities, and obtained their consent to participate voluntarily. All responses are collected and checked to ensure data completeness before the analysis process is carried out.

2. Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics software. The initial stage of analysis was carried out with descriptive statistics to obtain an overview of students' level of language anxiety which included the average value (*mean*), standard deviation (*standard deviation*), minimum value and maximum value. Next, the relationship between FLCAS scores and course grades was analyzed using the Pearson correlation test because both variables are in the form of numerical data and the aim is to determine the direction and strength of the linear relationship between variables (Field, 2018). Interpretation of the correlation coefficient refers to Cohen (1988), namely 0.10 indicates a weak relationship, 0.30 a moderate relationship, and 0.50 or more indicates a strong relationship. All statistical tests were carried out at a significance level of 0.05.

This research pays attention to the principles of research ethics which include partitioning voluntary participation, approval after obtaining an explanation (*informed consent*), confidentiality of the respondent's identity, and use of data only for academic

purposes. All student personal information is anonymized so that research results cannot be used to identify the individual or institution where the research was carried out.

Results and Discussion

This study involved 38 students who took the English for Survival course. Before the data were analysed, the reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. The result shows that the instrument has a value of 0.9333, which means very high internal consistency. The value indicates that the instrument is highly reliable for measuring students' language anxiety.

1. The level of Students' Speaking Anxiety

The descriptive statistics analysis shows that the mean score of the students' language anxiety is 84,42 with a standard deviation of 15,78. This mean score suggests that students generally had a high level of language anxiety when they took the English for Survival course. The high value of the standard deviation also reveals that the language anxiety varies among the students, although most of the respondents remained in the high category of anxiety.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Language Anxiety

Statistic	Value
Number of respondents	38
Mean	84,42
Standard deviation	15,78
Cronbach's Alpha	0,933

To gain a more detailed overview, the anxiety scores were then classified into four categories: low, moderate, high, and very high. The result of the analysis shows that no students are in the low category of anxiety. There were 9 students (23,7%) in the moderate category, while 24 students (63,2%) were in the high category. In addition, 5 students (13,2%) fell into the very high category.

Table 2. Distribution of Language Anxiety Levels

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Low	0	0,0%
Moderate	9	23,7%
High	24	63,2%
Very high	5	13,2%

The distribution reveals that 76,4% of students were in the high and very high categories of anxiety. In contrast, no respondents fell into the low category. These findings reveal that language anxiety is a common experience faced by the students during the English for Survival course. In other words, the majority of the students faced this psychological pressure when using English in various learning activities.

2. The Dimension of Speaking Anxiety

Besides analysing the total score of anxiety, this study also identifies five main dimensions constituting anxiety among the students. The results of the analysis show that all dimensions have relatively high mean scores, even though the level of anxiety in each dimension varies.

Table 3. Mean Scores for Each Dimension

Dimension	Mean
Test Anxiety	18,29
Fear of Negative Evaluation	17,84
Lack of Confidence	17,03
Communication Apprehension	16,16
Physical Symptoms	15,11

Table 3 shows that the mean score for the Test Anxiety dimension is the highest ($M = 18,29$). This suggests that the situations related to the learning evaluation, such as a spoken test or speaking performance assessment, become a dominant source of anxiety for the students. The other dimension is Fear of Negative Evaluation ($M = 17,84$), which shows that students remain worried about judgement by lecturers or classmates when using English.

Furthermore, the Lack of Confidence dimension records the mean score of 17,03, showing that some students felt less confident in their Speaking ability. Besides, the Communication Apprehension dimension has a mean score of 16,16, indicating that students still felt nervous when interacting in English. Meanwhile, the Physical Symptoms dimension has the lowest mean score ($M = 15,11$). Even so, this result still shows that some students experienced particular physiological responses, such as trembling or nervousness, when using English.

Thus, the diversity of the mean scores among the dimensions is relatively low. This shows that anxiety is not only caused by one particular aspect, but is also experienced by the students in multiple forms—from the fear of evaluation, fear of judgement, lack of confidence, struggling to communicate spontaneously, to the feeling of physical symptoms when using English.

3. The Correlation between Students' Speaking Anxiety and the Final Grade

This study also analyses the correlation between the level of language anxiety and students' final grade in the English for Survival course using the Pearson correlation test. The analysis reveals a correlation coefficient of $r = -0.272$ with a significance value of $p = 0.099$.

Table 4. Pearson Correlation Test Results

Variable	r	p
Language anxiety × Course grade	-0,272	0,099

The negative correlation coefficient shows there is a tendency that the higher the language anxiety, the lower the students' final grade. However, based on the significance value ($p > 0,05$), the correlation is considered not statistically significant. Thus, the data

of this study show that the level of language anxiety does not have a meaningful correlation to the students' academic performance in the English for Survival course.

These findings also suggest that a high level of language anxiety is not always followed by low academic achievement. Although more than three-quarters of the respondents fell into the high to very high anxiety categories, the majority of students still managed to secure good final grades in the course. Consequently, the results indicate that language anxiety can affect students across various levels of academic performance, including those who demonstrate high learning achievement.

Discussion

1. Dominant Dimensions of Speaking Anxiety Experienced by Students

This study shows that students taking the English for Survival course generally experience high levels of language anxiety. As many as 76.4% of respondents fell into the high and very high anxiety categories, while no students were categorized as having low anxiety. These findings indicate that using English in a higher education context remains a psychological challenge for many students, even when they have had previous experience learning English formally. This finding is consistent with the concept of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety proposed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), which describes language anxiety as a situation-specific affective response that emerges when learners are required to use a foreign language in academic settings. Previous studies have similarly demonstrated that Indonesian EFL learners may experience considerable anxiety when participating in English communication activities (Erdiana et al., 2020; Hidayati, 2018; Ayuningtyas, 2020).

Among the five dimensions analyzed, Test Anxiety recorded the highest mean score ($M = 18.29$). This finding indicates that assessment-related situations, such as oral examinations, presentations, speaking practices, and communication performance assessments, constitute a major source of anxiety for the students. This result is noteworthy because some previous studies have identified Fear of Negative Evaluation rather than Test Anxiety as the most prominent source of foreign language anxiety. Hidayati (2018), for example, reported that fear of negative evaluation was particularly prominent among Indonesian non-English major students, while Alfiani et al. (2022) identified Fear of Negative Evaluation as the primary factor influencing speaking anxiety, followed by Test Anxiety and Communication Apprehension. The relatively higher position of Test Anxiety in the present study may therefore reflect the particular characteristics of the English for Survival course, in which students are expected to demonstrate their communicative competence through assessed performances. In such a context, students are not only required to understand English but also to demonstrate their ability to use it directly in various communication situations. The possibility that linguistic errors may influence assessment results can increase psychological pressure, particularly when students perceive the evaluation as a direct judgment of their English ability. Horwitz (2001) similarly emphasized that language anxiety may be shaped by the particular demands of language learning and evaluation contexts.

The second-highest dimension was Fear of Negative Evaluation ($M = 17.84$). This result indicates that students remained concerned about how lecturers and classmates might judge their English performance. Such concerns may involve fear of making mistakes, being laughed at, being corrected publicly, or being perceived as having poor English ability. Horwitz et al. (1986) identified fear of negative evaluation as an important component of foreign language anxiety because language learning involves social interaction and public performance. The present finding is also consistent with Hidayati

(2018) and Alfiani et al. (2022), who found that concerns about negative evaluation were important sources of anxiety among Indonesian EFL learners. In communicative classrooms, students' language production becomes publicly observable, which can make linguistic errors more salient and increase their concern about how others perceive their performance. Coppinger and Sheridan (2022) further demonstrated that concerns about non-native accents can also constitute a specific source of speaking anxiety. These findings suggest that students' anxiety may be influenced not only by their actual linguistic competence but also by their perceptions of how their English performance will be evaluated by others.

The Lack of Confidence dimension also showed a relatively high mean score ($M = 17.03$). This finding indicates that some students continued to doubt their English-speaking ability despite having studied English for several years. Low confidence may be associated with difficulties in retrieving vocabulary, constructing sentences spontaneously, or concerns about grammatical and pronunciation errors. Qurnia and Marlina (2020) highlighted the relevance of self-efficacy in understanding speaking anxiety among Indonesian EFL students, while Özer and İspınar Akçayoğlu (2021) demonstrated that self-efficacy, self-regulated learning, foreign language anxiety, and academic achievement may operate simultaneously in tertiary EFL learning. Thus, students' perceptions of their own abilities may not always correspond directly to their observable academic performance. A student may possess sufficient competence to obtain a good course grade while still perceiving oral English communication as threatening or difficult. This interpretation is particularly important in the present study because several students with relatively high final grades also reported high anxiety scores.

Meanwhile, Communication Apprehension ($M = 16.16$) and Physical Symptoms ($M = 15.11$) obtained somewhat lower mean scores than the other dimensions. Nevertheless, their relatively lower positions do not indicate an absence of anxiety. The results suggest that students' anxiety manifests not only as cognitive concerns about evaluation or confidence but also as nervousness during interaction and physiological responses when using English. Communication apprehension may become particularly relevant when students are required to respond spontaneously, interact directly with others, or perform without sufficient preparation. Erdiana et al. (2020) similarly reported that spontaneous speaking situations could become an important source of anxiety for Indonesian EFL learners. Therefore, language anxiety in the present study can be understood as a multidimensional phenomenon involving cognitive, affective, social, communicative, and physiological aspects.

Taken together, the relatively small differences among the five dimensions suggest that students' anxiety cannot be attributed to a single source. Although Test Anxiety emerged as the dominant dimension, Fear of Negative Evaluation, Lack of Confidence, Communication Apprehension, and Physical Symptoms also contributed to students' overall anxiety. The findings therefore support the view that foreign language anxiety is a complex construct shaped by the interaction between evaluation demands, social judgment, perceived competence, communication requirements, and students' emotional responses. In the context of English for Survival, this multidimensional nature of anxiety is particularly relevant because students are expected to use English actively in practical and communicative situations.

2. Relationship between Speaking Anxiety and Student Grades

The results of the Pearson correlation test indicate that the relationship between students' language anxiety and their final grades in the English for Survival course was negative but weak and statistically non-significant ($r = -0.272$, $p = 0.099$). The negative coefficient indicates a tendency for students with higher levels of anxiety to obtain lower grades; however, the magnitude of the relationship is weak, and the significance value exceeds the 0.05 threshold. Therefore, the present study does not provide sufficient statistical evidence to conclude that language anxiety is significantly associated with students' academic performance in this course.

This finding provides an important perspective when compared with previous research. The broader literature generally reports a negative association between foreign language anxiety and language achievement. Horwitz (2001), for example, reviewed evidence showing a generally negative relationship between language anxiety and achievement. More recently, Teimouri et al. (2019), through a meta-analysis involving 105 independent samples and 19,933 participants, reported an overall negative relationship between second language anxiety and language achievement. Tóth (2021) also examined the relationship between anxiety and foreign language academic achievement. Rofida (2021) similarly investigated the correlation between foreign language anxiety and students' speaking performance. Compared with these findings, the weaker and statistically non-significant correlation observed in the present study suggests that the relationship between anxiety and academic achievement may vary according to instructional context, assessment practices, learner characteristics, and the particular type of academic performance being measured.

More importantly, the present findings demonstrate that high academic achievement and high language anxiety can coexist. This pattern is visible in the individual data. One student obtained a final grade of 91 while recording an anxiety score of 78. Another student obtained a grade of 89 with an anxiety score of 92, while another student achieved a grade of 87 with an anxiety score of 98. These cases are important because they demonstrate that high academic achievement cannot automatically be interpreted as evidence of low language anxiety. Students may be capable of fulfilling academic requirements and obtaining good grades while simultaneously experiencing considerable psychological pressure when using English. This pattern is particularly relevant to the research gap addressed in the present study, namely the limited attention given to students who demonstrate good academic performance while still experiencing substantial language anxiety.

This finding is also consistent with the observation that anxiety and performance should not necessarily be treated as opposite conditions. Idrus (2022), for example, examined EFL learners who were hesitant to speak despite obtaining good speaking scores, suggesting that students' observable performance may not always correspond to their psychological experiences during communication. The present study extends this perspective by demonstrating that the coexistence of high academic performance and high anxiety can also be observed when anxiety is examined through a structured FLCAS-based questionnaire and academic performance is represented by final course grades. Thus, academic grades alone may not provide sufficient information about students' emotional comfort or confidence when using English.

The variation among students with high grades further helps explain the weak correlation found in this study. While some students with high grades reported relatively low anxiety, others with similarly high grades reported considerably higher anxiety. For example, another student obtained a grade of 88 with an anxiety score of 55, whereas a

student who obtained a grade of 91 recorded an anxiety score of only 56. These differences indicate that students with comparable academic achievement may experience substantially different levels of anxiety. Some students may be able to manage anxiety effectively, while others may maintain their academic performance despite experiencing significant psychological pressure. Özer and İspınar Akçayoğlu (2021) demonstrated that factors such as self-efficacy, self-regulated learning, attendance, and foreign language anxiety may operate simultaneously in relation to academic achievement. Consequently, course grades should not be interpreted as a direct proxy for students' emotional comfort or communicative confidence.

The weak correlation also suggests that language anxiety is only one of several factors potentially influencing students' academic performance. Students' prior linguistic competence, learning motivation, self-efficacy, study strategies, frequency of English use outside the classroom, communication experience, and learning environment may contribute to their ability to maintain good academic performance despite experiencing anxiety. The findings therefore do not contradict the broader literature showing a negative association between anxiety and achievement; rather, they indicate that the strength of this association may differ across contexts. A student may possess sufficient linguistic knowledge, effective learning strategies, or strong academic motivation to compensate for the negative effects of anxiety in assessed academic tasks.

The communicative characteristics of the English for Survival course may also be relevant to interpreting the findings. The course requires students to engage in practical English communication, including activities that may involve presentations, simulations, discussions, and role-play. Such activities can provide meaningful opportunities to use English, but they can simultaneously expose students to social evaluation and spontaneous language production. Subekti and Gaman Goram (2022), for instance, examined the relationship between role-play and speaking anxiety in an Indonesian university English-speaking class. In situations that require spontaneous communication, students may need to formulate responses while simultaneously monitoring their vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and the reactions of their interlocutors. Consequently, students may successfully complete the task and receive a good academic grade while still experiencing substantial anxiety during the process.

The coexistence of good academic performance and high anxiety has an important pedagogical implication. If lecturers rely solely on grades to evaluate students' learning experiences, anxiety among high-performing students may remain unnoticed. A student who consistently receives high grades may nevertheless feel nervous during presentations, fear negative evaluation, or experience anxiety during oral assessments. Therefore, academic achievement should be considered together with students' affective experiences. Identifying anxiety through questionnaires, self-reflection, classroom observation, or informal communication may provide lecturers with information that cannot be obtained from academic grades alone.

Overall, the findings suggest that foreign language anxiety should be regarded as an affective construct that does not map perfectly onto academic achievement. The present study does not reject the established negative association between anxiety and achievement reported in previous research. Instead, it demonstrates that this relationship may be weak and statistically non-significant in a particular higher education context and that high-performing students may still experience substantial anxiety. The central contribution of the present study is therefore the recognition that language anxiety is not synonymous with low academic achievement. Students who perform well academically should not automatically be assumed to feel confident or comfortable when using

English. Attention to affective factors is consequently important not only for students with low achievement but also for students who demonstrate strong academic performance.

3. Implication and Recommendations

The findings of this study have several important implications for English language learning in higher education, particularly in the context of the *English for Survival* course. The high levels of language anxiety found among students indicate that academic success does not always reflect students' emotional states. As many as 76.4% of students fell into the high to very high anxiety category, although the relationship between language anxiety and final course grades was not statistically significant. Therefore, lecturers should not assume that students who achieve high grades are free from anxiety when using English. Academic assessment and students' emotional states should be viewed as two distinct but interrelated aspects of the language learning process.

The dominance of the Test Anxiety dimension also has important implications for learning design and assessment systems. Evaluation situations, such as presentations, oral tests, communication practice, or performance assessments, can be a source of stress for students. Therefore, lecturers can consider using formative evaluations gradually before summative assessments so that students have the opportunity to build positive experiences using English before facing formal evaluation. Providing constructive, developmentally oriented feedback can also help reduce the perception that language errors are failures to be avoided.

High scores on "Fear of Negative Evaluation" and "Lack of Confidence" also demonstrate the importance of creating a psychologically safe classroom environment. Speaking instruction should not only provide students with opportunities to produce language, but also provide space for them to make mistakes and correct them without feeling embarrassed or negatively evaluated. Pair or small group activities can be used as a preliminary step before students perform in front of the whole class. This gradual approach allows students to build confidence before facing more demanding communication situations.

The finding that anxiety was not significantly related to course grades suggests that anxiety is not the sole factor determining student academic performance. Students may employ various strategies to maintain their performance despite experiencing anxiety. Therefore, learning interventions should not be directed solely at students with low grades. High-performing students also deserve attention, as they may experience anxiety that is not reflected in academic assessment results. Identifying students' affective states through questionnaires, self-reflection, or informal communication can complement the information obtained through academic grades.

In the context of *English for Survival*, learning can be designed to gradually increase authentic communication activities. Students can be given opportunities to simulate real-life situations, role-play, and spontaneous communication activities in a supportive environment. These activities need to be accompanied by adequate preparation and constructive feedback so that communication demands do not exacerbate student anxiety. This approach can also help students develop the ability to cope with the unpredictable communication situations of real life.

Nevertheless, this study has room for further development. First, future research could involve a larger number of participants and students from multiple universities to allow for broader generalizability. This study only involved 38 students from a single institution, so interpretation of the results needs to be made in the context of the

characteristics of the participants and the institution studied. Involving students from various institutions, study programs, and English proficiency levels could provide a more comprehensive picture of EFL students' language anxiety.

Second, future research could use a longitudinal design to observe changes in student anxiety throughout the learning process. Measurements at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester could provide information on whether student anxiety increases, decreases, or remains relatively stable after gaining various communication experiences in English. This design can also help identify specific learning activities that have the potential to increase or decrease student anxiety.

Third, future research can combine quantitative and qualitative approaches through a mixed methods design. The results of this study indicate that the relationship between anxiety and academic grades was not significant; however, quantitative data did not fully explain why high-achieving students still experienced anxiety. Interviews, reflective journals, or classroom observations could be employed to identify the situations that most frequently trigger anxiety, students' experiences communicating in English, and the strategies they use to manage that anxiety.

Fourth, future research could pay special attention to the Test Anxiety dimension, as it yielded the highest mean score in this study. Experimental research could test the effectiveness of specific strategies—such as formative evaluation, low-stakes assessments, scaffolded presentation practice, or pre-test simulations—in reducing student anxiety. Consequently, future studies would not merely describe anxiety levels but also test effective instructional interventions to help students manage their anxiety.

Fifth, future research could explore factors other than language anxiety that might explain students' academic performance. The weak, non-significant correlation found in this study suggests that course grades are likely influenced by various other factors, such as prior language competence, motivation, self-efficacy, the frequency of English usage outside the classroom, study strategies, and communication experience. Incorporating these variables into future research could lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing student performance in English language learning.

Sixth, future research could distinguish between anxiety arising in spontaneous communication situations and anxiety in prepared communication situations. This distinction is important because students may feel more anxious when required to respond spontaneously compared to when they have time to prepare the language they intend to use. Research on spontaneous role-play—if implemented as a learning activity—could provide specific insights into the relationships among the demands of spontaneity, Fear of Negative Evaluation, Lack of Confidence, and students' speaking performance.

Finally, future research could develop and re-validate the FLCAS instrument, modified specifically for the *English for Survival* context. Future research utilizing larger samples could conduct a more comprehensive construct analysis to ensure that the dimensional structure of anxiety employed aligns with the characteristics of EFL students within the context of practical communication learning. Analyses such as exploratory factor analysis or confirmatory factor analysis could be considered to examine the instrument's construct structure in greater depth.

Overall, this study demonstrates that language anxiety warrants attention, even when students exhibit strong academic performance. The finding that the majority of students experience high to very high levels of anxiety—while the correlation between anxiety and academic grades remains relatively weak and statistically insignificant—indicates that language anxiety is not necessarily synonymous with poor academic

performance. Consequently, research and instructional practices in higher education need to shift from approaches solely focused on academic achievement toward those that also take students' affective states into account. Future studies could further explore why high-performing students still experience anxiety and investigate how instructional design, teaching strategies, and the classroom environment can assist them in managing that anxiety.

Conclusion

This study aims to analyze the level of English language anxiety of EFL students in the *English for Survival* course and identify the relationship between language anxiety and students' academic performance. Based on the results of research on 38 students, it can be concluded that language anxiety is a phenomenon that is quite prominent in the English language learning process in higher education. As many as 76.4% of students were in the high to very high anxiety category, while there were no students in the low anxiety category. These findings show that students' ability to achieve good academic results does not necessarily indicate that they feel comfortable and free from anxiety when using English.

Of the five dimensions of anxiety analyzed, "Test Anxiety" is the most dominant dimension with an average value of 18.29, followed by "Fear of Negative Evaluation" (17.84), "Lack of Confidence" (17.03), "Communication Apprehension" (16.16), and "Physical Symptoms" (15.11). The dominance of "Test Anxiety" shows that situations related to evaluation and assessment are the most prominent source of anxiety for students. These findings also show that language anxiety is not only related to communication skills, but also to students' perceptions of performance and evaluation demands in learning English.

Analysis of the relationship between language anxiety and course grades produced a weak negative correlation ($r = -0.272$) and was not statistically significant ($p = 0.099$). Thus, this study did not find sufficient evidence that the level of language anxiety was significantly related to students' academic performance in the *English for Survival* course. Although there was a tendency that students with higher anxiety obtained lower grades, the relationship was not strong enough to make anxiety the main explainer of variation in student grades.

The main findings of this research show that language anxiety is not only experienced by students with low academic performance. Students who obtain high academic scores can also show high levels of anxiety when using English. Thus, this research expands the understanding of foreign language anxiety by showing that good academic performance is not always synonymous with low language anxiety. These findings emphasize the importance of paying attention to affective aspects in learning English in higher education, especially in courses that require students to use English actively and communicatively.

Practically, the research results show the need for a learning environment that is not only oriented towards academic achievement, but also supports students' psychological comfort in using English. Special attention needs to be given to the evaluation situation, fear of negative evaluation, and student self-confidence. Thus, English language learning can be directed not only to improving linguistic competence and academic performance, but also to helping students develop courage and readiness in using English in real communication situations.

References

- Alfiani, W., Asib, M. A., & Supriyadi, S. (2022). Factors influencing speaking anxiety of FLSP freshmen. *Pedagogy: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 10(2), 123–136. <https://doi.org/10.32332/joelt.v10i2.5254>
- Ayuningtyas, P. (2020). An exploration of anxiety towards English for Specific Purposes (ESP). *Tell: Teaching of English Language and Literature Journal*, 8(1), 7–18. <https://doi.org/10.30651/tell.v8i1.4327>
- Beaton, D. E., Bombardier, C., Guillemin, F., & Ferraz, M. B. (2000). Guidelines for the process of cross-cultural adaptation of self-report measures. *Spine*, 25(24), 3186–3191. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00007632-200012150-00014>
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Coppinger, L., & Sheridan, S. (2022). Accent anxiety: An exploration of non-native accent as a source of speaking anxiety among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. *Journal for the Psychology of Language Learning*, 4(2), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.52598/jpll/4/2/6>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Erdiana, N., Daud, B., Sari, D. F., & Dwitami, S. K. (2020). A study of anxiety experienced by EFL students in speaking performance. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 7(2), 334–346. <https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v7i2.16768>
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of convenience sampling and purposive sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>
- Field, A. (2018). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Ghelichli, Y. (2022). Foreign language anxiety and willingness to communicate: High level vs. low level Iranian EFL learners. *Journal of Applied Linguistics Studies*, 1(1), 1–9. <https://oiccpres.com/jals/article/view/5557>
- Hidayati, T. (2018). Student language anxiety in learning English: Examining non-English major students in rural area. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 2(2), 95–113. <https://doi.org/10.21093/ijeltal.v2i2.55>
- Horwitz, E. K. (2001). Language anxiety and achievement. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 21, 112–126. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190501000071>
- Horwitz, E. K. (2016). Factor structure of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale: Comment on Park (2014). *Psychological Reports*, 119(1), 71–76. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294116653368>
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125–132. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1986.tb05256.x>

- Idrus, M. (2022). External factors triggering speaking anxiety in the academic setting. *Interference: Journal of Language, Literature, and Linguistics*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.26858/interference.v3i2.45346>
- Joshi, A., Kale, S., Chandel, S., & Pal, D. K. (2015). Likert scale: Explored and explained. *Current Journal of Applied Science and Technology*, 7(4), 396–403. <https://doi.org/10.9734/BJAST/2015/14975>
- Mustamir, M. (2024). Indonesian EFL learners and speaking anxiety: Insights from a meta-synthetic analysis. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 12(2), 509–518. <https://doi.org/10.25134/erjee.v12i2.9950>
- Özer, Ö., & İşpınar Akçayoğlu, D. (2021). Examining the roles of self-efficacy beliefs, self-regulated learning and foreign language anxiety in the academic achievement of tertiary EFL learners. *Participatory Educational Research*, 8(2), 357–372. <https://doi.org/10.17275/per.21.43.8.2>
- Qurnia, A., & Marlina, L. (2020). Correlation between EFL students' speaking anxiety and self-efficacy in public speaking class at English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 9(3). <https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v9i3.109351>
- Rofida, A. (2021). The correlation between foreign language anxiety and students' speaking performance. *RETAIN: Journal of Research in English Language Teaching*, 9(2), 66–74. <https://doi.org/10.26740/rt.v9i2.39902>
- Subekti, A. S., & Gaman Goram, S. (2022). Role-play and speaking anxiety: A case study in an online English speaking class. *JLA (Jurnal Lingua Applicata)*, 6(1), 33–43. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jla.75103>
- Teimouri, Y., Goetze, J., & Plonsky, L. (2019). Second language anxiety and achievement: A meta-analysis. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 41(2), 363–387. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263118000311>
- Tóth, A. (2021). The effect of anxiety on foreign language academic achievement. *Hungarian Educational Research Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1556/063.2021.00098>