



## **Language Anxiety of ESL Learners: A Phenomenological Inquiry**

Russel J. Aporbo<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>UM Tagum College, Davao del Norte, Philippines  
Email: russel\_aporbo@umindanao.edu.ph

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### **Abstract**

This phenomenological study aimed to investigate the challenges encountered by ESL learners as well as their coping mechanisms in addressing the identified challenges. Using convenience sampling method, the researcher conducted focus group discussion and in depth interview to delve more on the challenges encountered as well as their ways of addressing these difficulties in learning English as a second language. Themes emerged on students difficulties are improper pronunciation, grammatical error, lack of reading comprehension and lack of self-confidence. Participants also revealed that their coping mechanisms are improve English vocabulary, develop reading comprehension skills, practice on speaking English language, and assistance for English language development. Most of the students encounter grammatical errors and improper pronunciation. With these, it is advised that language teachers should provide learning environment that filter anxiety level and promotes learning among ESL students.

Keywords: Language Anxiety, ESL Learners, Phenomenological Inquiry

### **Introduction**

Language is a powerful instrument that every human being uses for communication objectives such as expressing and comprehending one another. When attempting to express and be understood by others, it is critical to be familiar with a well known and used language - English. English is not only used as an official language in many nations, but also influences many different cultures in a large number of countries; it is the central language of communication world-wide (Susanna, 2007). It is clearly present when a lot of people in a country speak English as the first language such as in the United States of America, Canada, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and others (Braine, 2005; Crystal, 2006). The expansion of the English language has rapidly increased the needs to gain better communication in English throughout the world because the aptitude to use English is very much needed for further studies, journeys in other countries as well as for social and professional global contacts of different kinds (Hashemi, 2011; Susanna, 2007).

In recent decades, many studies on language anxiety in a foreign language and

second language learning have been undertaken (Scovel 1986) and in foreign language speaking skills in particular (Woodrow, 2006). English was the dominant global language at the start of the twenty-first century because it has supplied people all around the world with feasibility and practicability. This global linguistic aspect of English creates a 'demand' for English (Tsan, 2008), which is used in communication all across the world and has made it a must-learn and understand language.

The worldwide appeal and exponential expansion of English as an international language has made learning it all the more necessary and unavoidable. English is often used as the medium of instruction in higher education (Murray & Christison, 2010). On the other hand, obviously the fact of the day-to-day process of teaching and learning of the English language also has many interrelated with social and political uses (Ronald & David, 2001). People's demands toward English in many countries in the world make the English language a key factor and become the international language that spreads quickly (Carlo, 2012). However, English learners regularly experience and describe feelings such as fear, worry, nervousness, and anxiety on their path to achieving their desired competency and communicative skills in the language. In some severe cases, fear prevents learners from even attempting to speak English (what is sometimes referred to as a "mental block" against learning a language).

Language anxiety can impede all types of learning processes, but it is known as "second/foreign language anxiety" when it is specifically related to learning a second or foreign language. According to Tanveer (2007), analyzing learners' anxious behaviors is critical because it allows the teacher to assist them attain the required performance goals in the target language. Foreign language anxiety is a negative side of emotion specifically related to second/foreign language learning (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994) and has received considerable attention from researchers in the field (MacIntyre, 2017). As a specific type of foreign language anxiety, foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) has been widely researched and proved to be predominantly negatively associated with second/foreign language learning processes or outcomes (e.g., Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986).

Moreover, it is defined as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Anxiety has been observed among language learners in such symptoms as "freezing" in class, "going blank" before exams, and feeling reticent about entering the classroom (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). In an international setting, English language students, as well as those learners studying a foreign language, experience anxiety when it comes to such classroom situations that involve speaking in front of a group of their fellow students or taking a test in a language other than their first language. With language anxiety, these learners tend to develop apprehension, worry, or even fear which lead them to have difficulty concentrating, becoming forgetful, sweating, and having palpitations.

In this regard, it becomes significant to explore the issue of anxiety as experienced by learners in the language classroom (De Costa, 2015), and in this particular study, in the context of the Philippine classroom. Most studies on affect in the EFL and ESL contexts feature learners from across the globe such as Malaysian, Taiwanese, Turkish, Japanese, Spanish, Iranian, Greek, Hungarian, Korean students learning English (Aziz & Hashima, 2007), and it may also be relevant to explore the case of Filipino learners as the findings may add to the literature on the diverse characteristics of learners and how these may relate to addressing the challenge of language anxiety in the classrooms. It is important to note how some of their characteristics and background are associated with the level of their anxiety because learners are so diverse. Students are recommended to work on their problems related to English language skills and make ways to improve such as through practicing, listening open-mindedly to constructive criticism, and building self-esteem. In a local setting, learning a new language can lead to anxiety especially if an individual is not diverse in the language he is learning. Na (2007) stated that one of the major emotional components that can enormously influence second language learning is anxiety. Anxiety in the field of foreign/second language learning has been studied extensively due to its adverse influence in the language acquisition process (Lucas, Miraflores, & Go, 2011).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The study aimed to find out the challenges and ways of the English as a second language learners, specifically, this sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the difficulties faced by ESL learners in learning English language?
2. How do ESL learners cope with the encountered challenges?

### **Review of Related Literature**

Language experts believe that learning a foreign language is more closely related to situation-specific anxiety than trait anxiety because the former is a stable trait that causes anxiety feelings to arise in all circumstances, whereas the latter is associated with particular situations (Oxford & Ehrman, 1992). English dominates as a world language, attracting attention in everyday discourse. Linguists are highly interested in studying its structure and usage as the primary language for international communication. They use various methods to develop theories about language's nature. Additionally, Howitz et al. (1986) noted that learners may face a variety of difficulties and problems when studying English. When employing the grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation of the English language, they are capable of making a wide range of mistakes. The difficulties a learner faces when learning and using English, as well as the kind of mistakes they regularly make when using English

vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, are all related to their native tongue.

In an international setting, a lot of Taiwanese students admit that mastering the English language causes them anxiety or fear. Others have even admitted to detesting English. Negative language learning experiences that many Taiwanese students had in elementary school are to blame for their dread and hatred of learning the English language. According to the literature, students' anxiety in language learning may also be brought on by unpleasant experiences during the early stages of language learning (Macintyre, 1999). According to Tuan (1995), the unpleasant memorization of language and vocabulary by rote, corporal punishment by teachers, rude remarks from peers or friends as a result of subpar exam results, and parental expectations and pressure are among the usual negative experiences of pupils. According to Ganschow (1994), students who experience this anxiety frequently do not perform well in English language tests and lose enthusiasm and self-confidence.

Unpleasant experiences had a substantial correlation with anxiety in Taiwanese learners. According to Su (2004), for pupils to continue to be motivated to learn, English study should be pleasurable. A study conducted by Wang (2003) shows that it is not surprising that students' enthusiasm in learning English is impacted if they frequently have unpleasant learning experiences. According to Cheng (1997), many students claimed that peers who speak English well or who are native speakers of the language easily intimidate them, adding to their fear. Fear of making mistakes and looking foolish greatly affects Taiwanese participation of pupils in oral English-language instruction.

A study conducted by Cheng (1997) discovered that Taiwanese students fear failing their English classes, feel overburdened by having to memorize grammar rules and vocabulary, and are terrified of being teased by their peers and chastised by teachers. They prefer to avoid speaking in front of the class and find it difficult to converse in English with native speakers. Students become concerned when teachers emphasize the necessity of perfect pronunciation, memorization of vocabulary and grammar standards, and prompt error correction. Taiwanese students have discovered that their worries or beliefs, such as low self-confidence, high standards or perfectionism, concern for maintaining a positive reputation or fear of being judged negatively, and competitiveness, are the root causes of their language anxiety. The scenarios that include evaluation, novelty, and ambiguity are the ones that cause anxiety the most (Cheng, 1998). A study conducted by Tuan (1995), found a negative correlation between English language anxiety and performance.

In the national setting, the demand for mastery of academic English, both oral and written, in secondary and higher education is becoming more crucial and relevant in the 21st century, claims a study by Kirkpatrick (2008). Aside from being the language that is taught in schools and the preferred language in communities, English currently predominates in a variety of professions. The English language is thought to be the most important one right now. It serves as the organization's working and only official language

in ASEAN. Jugo (2020), aimed on identifying the degree, source and causes of foreign language anxiety among student enrolled in teacher education program in the Philippines, as well as how language anxiety impacts respondents' English language ability and language learning. Go, Miraflores and Lucas (2011) studied the major causes of anxiety in English language learning among tertiary foreign students, especially at institutions within Manila. Findings suggest that these types of students have used the jargon method to effectively familiarize themselves with the English language and to respond to their English class anxieties. Moreover, According to Spielberg (1966) the Philippines, a developing ASEAN country, has been promoting the English language proficiency among its human resources to compete globally. However, despite this, research shows that students struggle with fluency, spelling, and punctuation, leading to feelings of apprehension and uneasiness.

With these, the researcher aimed to investigate the English language anxiety of First-year Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education students from the UM Tagum College. The researcher believes that in exploring students' English anxiety, a relevant idea may prevail, which would possibly explain why English is an anxiety-provoking subject among learners. There is a need to associate their profile in terms of college programs to their anxieties in English. It is the prime objective of the researcher to find out the challenges of English language anxiety affecting the performance in the English classes of first-year college students in UM Tagum College located at Tagum City. Acquiring skills in learning the English language is affected by many factors. Physical, social, and emotional influences may substantially affect the success of obtaining a second language. The purpose of this study is to investigate the anxiety experienced by students learning English as a second language and identify ways to improve learners' communication skills.

### **Theoretical Lens**

According to the study of Horwitz et al. (1986) research identifies it as a unique construct of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to language learning. They argue that anxiety related to learning a foreign language is situation-specific and requires higher self-concept and self-expression than other academic anxieties, distinguishing it from other academic anxieties (Oteir, 2019).

Numerous studies adopted this theory and provided a piece of evidence to validate it. For example, nine anxiety scales were used by MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) to test anxiety dimensions in relation with various measures of learning. They found that foreign language anxiety is notably associated with foreign language proficiency while the general anxiety does not relate to foreign language proficiency. This theory was embraced by many investigations, and each one offered some supporting data. For instance, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) tested the relationships between anxiety dimensions and several learning measures using nine anxiety scales. They discovered that, in contrast to general anxiety,

foreign language anxiety is significantly correlated with foreign language proficiency.

The theoretical lens described above was chosen to underpin this study, which offers multiple pieces of evidence of anxiety towards learning the English language. As mentioned, these situations mainly happen due to learning a foreign language, and language learners usually express anxiety, apprehension, and nervousness when learning a new language. Therefore, it is vastly necessary to examine the challenges faced by the Grade 11 students.

### **Methodology**

This part of the study discusses the research design, research locale, participants of the study, research instrument, data analysis, data gathering procedure, and ethical consideration.

### **Research Design**

The researchers used a qualitative phenomenological method to identify and examine the challenges and experiences of the First-year Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education students in UM Tagum College learning the English language. A phenomenological method that seeks to explain the nature of things through the way people experience them (Good, 2023).

### **Research Locale**

This research was conducted at UM Tagum College, located at Arellano St., Magugpo South, Tagum City. UM Tagum College offers both senior high school and college programs. The Bachelor of Secondary Education at UM Tagum Colleges offers majors in mathematics, science, social studies, Filipino, and English. This study involves the first-year Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education students of UM Tagum College who are currently enrolled in the first semester of the school year 2023-2024.

### **Participants of the Study**

Fifteen BSED students are the participants of this study. These were identified through convenience sampling as this is deemed essential to gather the data needed. Convenience sampling is a qualitative research sampling strategy that involves selecting participants based on their accessibility and availability to the researcher. Rather than being drawn at random from a larger population, participants in this strategy are picked because they are easily available to the researcher. Participants in the study were informed about the purpose of the study, and their consent will be sought accordingly.

### **Research Instrument**

The researcher created an interview questionnaire for the data gathering process to get qualitative data. It was structured in such a way that the participants would be able to answer it easily. The primary aim of the survey interview is to determine the struggles of the students at UM Tagum College. The interview survey questionnaire includes open ended questions to know the difficulties of the students in learning the English language.

### **Data Analysis**

In this study, the researcher utilizes thematic analysis, a qualitative data analysis method to identify common themes and patterns of meaning. This approach distinguishes, organizes, and provides insights into patterns across a data set, allowing researchers to envision collective or shared meanings and experiences. Thematic analysis is versatile, allowing researchers to target information in various ways, such as examining the entire dataset or examining specific aspects of a development comprehensive. It also allows for the reporting of apparent or linguistic meanings within the information (Caulfield, 2019).

### **Results And Discussion**

This section presents the analysis of the interviews and the obtained results from the interviews of each respondent.

Table 1: Challenges experienced by ESL learners

Main Themes	Core Ideas
1.) Improper Pronunciation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students with English language anxiety experience difficulties in terms of proper pronunciation.</li> <li>● Most of the students struggle and are anxious about their accents.</li> <li>● The students are afraid to speak in English because of the mispronunciation of words and the judgment of others.</li> </ul>
2.) Grammatical Error	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The respondents frequently encounter grammatical errors in writing and speaking English.</li> <li>● It is a common challenge that students with English language anxiety find difficult because they are doubtful about constructing sentences properly.</li> <li>● Most of the students are confused about the proper tenses to be used in a phrase or sentence.</li> </ul>
3.) Lack of Reading Comprehension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Most of the students with English language anxiety experienced a lack of reading comprehension.</li> <li>● The students frequently struggle with the unfamiliar words that result in them misunderstanding what they are reading.</li> <li>● Due to lack of vocabulary and practice since English is not the student's native language, they experience difficulties in understanding some of English terms.</li> </ul>
4.) Lack of Self-Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The learners have no self-confidence in writing and speaking English.</li> <li>● They are conscious of their grammar, vocabulary, accent, and pronunciation.</li> <li>● Moreover, the students are worried by other people's opinions about their English skills, which causes them to lack self-confidence.</li> </ul>

Emergent Theme 1 is identified as challenges encountered with English language anxiety. Main themes that were mentioned by the subjects were improper pronunciation, grammatical error, lack of reading comprehension and lack of self-confidence.



### Improper Pronunciation

Based on our survey, improper pronunciation is one of the frequent difficulties that the students experience. R3 stated that *"proper pronunciation and accent make me anxious in terms of speaking"*. Additionally, R4 also stated that *"speaking was one of the things that I have found challenging because of my self-consciousness. I frequently feel embarrassed by my accent or pronunciation. I sometimes worry about what people may think when I speak"*. According to Toci (2020) English is an easy language for intermediate levels, but advanced learners face complex morphology, syntax, and pronunciation difficulties. Mispronunciation often occurs among non-native English speakers due to lack of vocabulary, practice, bad teaching experiences, lack of direct contact, and self-confidence. Moreover, Gilakjani (2011) stated that the difficulty of learning to pronounce a foreign language is cognitive rather than physical, and it may have to do with how 'raw sound' is classified or comprehended when speaking. Even after years of studying the language, many ESL students still experience "major difficulties" with English pronunciation. Additionally, according to Nadeem and Rahman (2013), the speech of non-native English speakers may exhibit pronunciation inefficiency as a result of such speakers imperfectly learning the pronunciation of English, either by incorporating strategies similar to those used in primary language acquisition or by transferring the phonological rules from their mother tongue into their English speech (referred to as "interference").

### Grammatical Error

Grammatical error is one of the common challenges that the students encountered. According to R5, *"In grammar, I am conscious if the construction of my sentence doesn't go well"*. R6 also stated that *"maybe it's the hesitation to speak using the English language because I might mispronounce or have the wrong grammar"*. Additionally, R15 stated that *"it affects my grammar on how to write properly"*. According to Abdulkareem (2013) study, practically all non-native students' writing contains grammar mistakes. Less skilled ESL students frequently make grammatical mistakes in their writing because their native tongue "interferes" with the production of proper English. When using verbs, non-native speakers frequently use the wrong tense or employ the wrong tense form. Based on the findings of Kumala's (2018) research, grammar mistakes were caused by carelessness, first-language barriers, translation, teacher explanations, and a lack of understanding of grammar. In addition, Alfaqiri (2018) conducted a study to examine the writing problems and difficulties Saudi Arabian English language learners have at various competency levels. The findings indicated that because the participants lacked prior writing experience in English, they made grammar mistakes.

### **Lack of Reading Comprehension**

Lack of reading comprehension affects the learning of the students. As mentioned by R4, *"it overanalyzes comprehension in a negative way. I carefully consider each phrase and element in an effort to ensure that I fully comprehend it. My reading comprehension is slowed by this, which is frustrating."* R11 additionally stated that *"I have difficulties understanding the words that are written in the book or what my professor discussed with us."* According to Ade (2012), there are a number of common issues or challenges that students face, such as the fact that they still struggle to analyze the text's content, that they don't set aside time for studying, and that they struggle to understand the meaning of sentences. Moreover, the structure of the English language presents another challenge for ESL (English as a Second Language) students. For nations where English is spoken as a second language, some of the terminology can be confusing and have strange vocabulary. Additionally, especially when around natives, these learners have a limited amount of time to cognitively digest texts that are presented to them and output the necessary responses. Other causes include learning new words, not comprehending their meanings, bad reading habits, and incorrect word pronunciation caused by ethnicity (Mohammed & Rashid, 2017). Additionally, according to Phantharakphong and Pothitha (2014) learners are struggling to comprehend written text because they have not yet mastered reading comprehension. Reading comprehension is therefore challenging for learners to acquire despite receiving reading instruction early in their education because of the language's complexity, which includes vocabulary, grammar, and lexical form.

### **Lack of Self-Confidence**

According to R2 *"It gives me worry when writing because I don't feel right about what I write; I have trust issues with my usage of words"*. R5 also stated that *"it affects my writing to the point that every organized idea in my mind cannot deliver well to my writing because of doubt and fear of being judged"*. Moreover, as stated by R8, *"the anxiety and fear of failure in language can significantly hinder my coping experiences. I become demotivated by language practice and social interaction"*. Based on the study of Fitriani (2015) many students struggle greatly when they lack the ability to communicate in a foreign language. For a student to properly understand the material and regularly advance in language proficiency, communication with other students and the instructor in the language being studied is essential. However, students who find it difficult to communicate in English and have a tendency to withdraw from conversations may show a decline in their learning progress as well as a lack of the necessary interpersonal contact. Nadila (2020) added that besides the students' lack of vocabulary, their less confidence to speak and judgments of English as a difficult subject make speaking as a difficult language skill. Moreover, based on the study of Ibrahim (2016) it was found that there is a significant

correlation between self-confidence and speaking skill.

Table 2: Coping mechanisms of ESL learners

Main Themes	Coping Mechanism of ESL Learners
1.) Improve English Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students deal with English language anxiety by improving their vocabulary.</li> <li>● The students would read books and familiarize themselves with new words.</li> <li>● They would also look on the internet to search for definitions and gain knowledge about improving their English vocabulary.</li> </ul>
2.) Develop Reading Comprehension Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Most of the students develop reading comprehension skills by constantly reading to learn and understand more.</li> <li>● Reading with a dictionary and searching online help them understand the text they are reading.</li> <li>● Students frequently practice to improve their comprehension skills.</li> </ul>
3.) Practice Speaking the English Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students constantly practice their English-speaking skills through listening to and watching English videos.</li> <li>● The students would try to mimic the English accents and learn to talk comfortably in English.</li> <li>● Also, they frequently practice on their own by talking to themselves.</li> </ul>
4.) Assistance for English Language Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Most of the students with English language anxiety seek help from a more knowledgeable person whenever they encounter difficulties teaching them English properly.</li> <li>● Students also look on the internet for more information to develop their English skills.</li> <li>● More knowledgeable other and digital assistance are needed by the students to improve their English.</li> </ul>

### Emergent Theme 2: Ways to Cope with the Challenges

Emergent Theme 2 is identified as ways to cope with the challenges. Main themes that were mentioned by the subjects were to improve English vocabulary, develop reading comprehension skills, practice on speaking English language, and assistance for English

language development.

### **Improve English Vocabulary**

In dealing with English language anxiety, R3 stated that *"reading to widen my vocabulary can help."* Moreover, according to R8, *coping with English language anxiety through "understanding a wide range of vocabulary words and English sentence structure with its use of word order and tenses can be different from some other language"*. Also, R14 mentioned that *"I search for the definition of the word and look for examples of how it's used in the sentence"*. Wessels (2011) identified five key aspects for vocabulary learning: background assessment, vocabulary connection, meaningful use, multiple exposures, and higher level focus. She introduced the Vocabulary Quilt strategy, activating prior knowledge, discussing new vocabulary in context, and strengthening understanding after reading. Moreover, According to Sibold (2011), repetition is essential. Students are more likely to learn and recall vocabulary words if they interact with them frequently. It has been demonstrated that effective participation in language and vocabulary learning improves student learning. The study came to the conclusion that students must form groups and practice the use of new words to avoid keeping them isolated and to enable them to notice new words on their own and assume the meaning of the new words. Additionally, Ahmadi, Hairul and Muhammad (2012) claim that the lack of English vocabularies owned by students is accountable for the phenomenon of insufficient English mastery. This is especially true when it comes to academic subject matter, as many students struggle to understand oral or written English text when interacting.

### **Develop Reading Comprehension Skills**

In developing reading comprehension skills, R2 stated that, *"I dealt with it by reading more to discover more; there is nothing wrong when you are trying to learn about it."* Additionally, R4 mentioned that *"by frequently practicing, I get better in reading and comprehension with regular practice. I start with easier readings and progress progressively to harder material"*. R5 also stated that *"by reading more books and asking for consultation if my pronunciation is right or if my comprehension in reading is right"*. According to Ford (2002) parents could be encouraged to become more involved in their children's reading at home. Moreover, Yang, Dai, and Gao (2012) expressed that intensive reading is useful to develop reading comprehension. In addition, Odwan (2012) claims that the findings of his study indicate that students' growth in reading comprehension may be related to their increasing capacity to read the text utilizing directed reading thinking activities. It is because during the lessons students establish goals, make predictions, read silently, and verify predictions.

### **Practice Speaking the English Language**

Generally, practicing speaking English is the way for students to cope with their English language anxiety. As mentioned by R1, *“I deal with it by practicing my speaking skills. For example, speaking in front of a mirror, it can help me to have confidence. Moreover, according to R12, “I watch videos that use English as its medium and mimic the accent of native English speakers.” Also, R13 mentioned that, “I watch videos, read stories and poetrises, and listen to English speakers to practice and improve my speaking”.* According to Printin (2022), students can learn information by watching English movies that provide entertaining plots. Consequently, a movie can be used to help learners become better speakers. Students can directly see how native English speakers (the actors and actresses) speak by viewing English-language movies. According to Burn's (2016) research, linguistic knowledge can be classified into four categories: phonological, grammatical, lexical, and discourse. Moreover, Rahayu (2015) stated that speaking exercises can instill great confidence and satisfaction in learners and, when carefully guided by teachers, can inspire them to pursue further study. As a result, effective communication may and should be immensely stimulating. In order to give learners speaking practice, the study recommended encouraging group discussions among students and holding speaking events like public speaking competitions and debates (Chand, 2021).

### **Assistance for English Language Development**

As stated by R14, "when I encounter a word that is difficult to understand, I open Google and ask for its definition". In addition, according to R12, "ask a more knowledgeable person and learn from them". Moreover, based on R13, “finding help with other people that have more knowledge”. In connection, Rahayu (2015) A language guide is a beginner's language learning exercise. The opportunity to practice a variety of skills in an environment more similar to real life is provided for the students. It can support learners' intellectual growth, excellent organizing abilities, and enhanced creativity. English teacher guidance maintains a formal institution called language lesson. According to George and Talal (2016), mobile phones were helpful to learners in terms of vocabulary retention. A greater attention to the features of a new word and its text environment will facilitate its memorization. Takahashi (2017) opines that, ‘different types of dictionaries have helped language learners find the meaning of unknown words, guided them to form accurate sentences, and provide[sic] them with tips on word usage in the appropriate context’. The use of teacher modeling, the teacher think-aloud process, and student practice of the reading comprehension strategies which included predicting, making connections, visualizing, inferring, questioning, and summarizing had a positive impact on student comprehension. The results of the study showed an increase in student knowledge of reading strategies (Kucukoglu, 2012).

### Summary and Conclusion

In summary, the respondents with English language anxiety indeed experienced difficulties in using and learning the language. Based on the results of our study, most of the first-year Bachelor of Secondary Education students at UM Tagum College lack self-confidence in terms of writing and speaking in the English language. The majority of them used dictionaries or would look up the definition of unfamiliar words online. They would also ask for assistance to comprehend and correct their grammar and pronunciation from a more knowledgeable person. Specifically, this endeavor is to answer the following questions: (1) What are the difficulties faced by the students with English language anxiety? (2) How do learners cope (if any) with the challenges of English language anxiety?

### Findings

The following are the findings of the study.

1. Most of the students encounter grammatical errors and improper pronunciation.
2. The majority of the students lack reading comprehension and use dictionaries to understand uncommon words.
3. Majority of the students have a lack of self-confidence in terms of writing and speaking English.
4. Most of the students read books, listen, and watch videos in English to improve their reading comprehension, writing, and speaking skills.
5. A number of students ask for assistance from more knowledgeable people to help and learn from them.

### Recommendations

1. Teachers should make activities that can help boost the confidence of English language learners.
2. Parents must pay high attention to their children who are having anxiety in learning English.
3. Stakeholders and the community should support the programs of the school related to the improvement of the students in learning the English language.

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