

Research Article

Effects of Language Anxiety on the Oral and Written Skills of Grade 12 Senior High School Students

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the empirical relationship between language anxiety and English language skills among Grade 12 Senior High School students at King's College of the Philippines - Bambang, Inc., during the second academic term of the School Year 2025–2026. Recognizing English as a vital tool in global communication, academia, and regional ASEAN integration, this research evaluated how psychological and affective barriers impact academic performance. Utilizing a descriptive-correlational research design and a non-probability purposive total population sampling approach ($n = 150$), data triangulation was achieved through the adapted Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI). Descriptive findings revealed that the respondents maintain a "Very Satisfactory" baseline profile in both oral language skills ($M = 88.75$, $SD = 5.54$) and writing skills ($M = 89.23$, $SD = 4.73$). However, this linguistic competence coexists with a pervasive level of moderate anxiety across all sub-dimensions, with audience-induced self-consciousness ($M = 3.41$) and assignment avoidance behavior ($M = 3.43$) emerging as the most pronounced emotional stressors. Using Pearson r correlation, we found opposite trends for speaking and writing anxiety. A student's fear of being judged negatively by peers directly lowered their oral grades ($r = -0.175$). However, physical nervousness ($r = 0.238$) and task avoidance ($r = 0.263$) actually correlated with better writing scores. This unexpected positive link suggests that physical tension and a tendency to delay tasks might stem from a student's perfectionism, pushing them to write more carefully once they start. Cognitive Writing Anxiety and English Classroom Anxiety yielded no meaningful linear relationship with student marks. The study concludes that social evaluation constraints outweigh structural linguistic difficulty in driving student panic. Based on these findings, institutional policy shifts including the implementation of low-stakes diagnostic speaking pods, anonymous peer-writing matrices, and process-oriented composition workshops are recommended to alleviate social evaluation stress while channeling somatic energy into productive performance outcomes.

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Introduction

Language is esteemed as an essential element of culture and identity. As Rita Mae Brown states, "Language is the road map of culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going," emphasizing the deep connection between language, identity, and direction. In the Philippines' multilingual education system, English is both a subject and the main language used to teach Senior High School (SHS) tracks (p. 2). Doing well in English is no longer just about passing a class. It directly decides how smoothly students move into college or corporate and technical jobs later on

According to recent international human resource and language benchmarks, while the Philippines maintains a strong position in Asian English proficiency rankings, shifting regional competition demands continuous improvement in communicative competence. Globally, English acts as the definitive lingua franca of international trade, digital technology, diplomacy, and global academia. The globalized job market reinforces the urgency for SHS students to achieve linguistic competence, as language proficiency directly correlates with digital literacy and collaborative productivity. Regionally, within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) economic framework, English is explicitly mandated as the official working language.

The Department of Education has updated the curriculum to focus heavily on oral communication and analytical writing. Yet, recent tests show that senior high students still struggle to speak spontaneously and comprehend what they read. This gap shows we need to look closer at what blocks learning inside the classroom

Methods

Research Design

We used a descriptive-correlational research design to study how language anxiety relates to the speaking and writing skills of Grade 12 students. The descriptive part of our work measured the students' current anxiety

levels. The correlational part analyzed the direction and strength of the relationship between this anxiety and their actual class grades using Pearson r .

This quantitative approach was executed using standardized diagnostic metrics, specifically the **Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)** and the **Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI)** (p. 1). Numerical datasets generated from these tools were subjected to parametric evaluation via the **Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r)**

Research Environment

Our study took place at King's College of the Philippines in Bambang, Nueva Vizcaya during the second term of the 2025–2026 school year. The student body comes from a wide mix of social and economic backgrounds, making it a good representation of schools in the region. Additionally, English is the primary language used for both daily lessons and tests here, providing the right setting to observe language barriers in real-time

Respondents and Sampling Procedure

Target Population

The primary respondents comprised the **Grade 12 SHS students** enrolled at King's College of the Philippines – Bambang, Inc. during SY 2025–2026 (p. 2). This specific cohort was targeted because their prior Grade 11 coursework exposed them to foundational, writing-intensive, and performance-based oral communication subjects in English, rendering them academically prepared to reflect on their anxieties

Sampling Technique

The study utilized non-probability **purposive sampling**, specifically applying a **total population sampling method** (pp. 2-3). Since the total number of Grade 12 students was small and easy to manage, we decided to survey everyone who met our criteria. Sampling the entire population helped us avoid selection

bias and made our overall findings much more reliable.

Eligibility Criteria

We worked with the school registrar to screen the student roster based on clear guidelines. To participate, students had to be officially enrolled in Grade 12 and must have finished their Grade 11 oral and written communication subjects. We excluded any students who had incomplete grades from those previous classes or who were absent on the days we collected data.

Research Instruments

Data triangulation was achieved through two highly reliable, standardized psychometric instruments

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

Developed by Horwitz et al. (1986), this instrument quantified oral-related language anxieties. The items categorize four prominent dimensions of academic linguistic stress:

- Communication anxiety
- Fear of negative evaluation
- Test anxiety

- English classroom-specific anxiety

Adaptation Note: To ensure relevance in context, the researchers contextualized items 1, 4, 5, 14, 19, 21, 24, 25, and 27 by replacing the phrase "foreign language" with "language class" (p. 4). Respondents scored statements via an inverted 4-point interval scale (4 = Strongly Disagree), (3 = Disagree), (2 = Agree), (1 = Strongly Agree))

Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI)

Formulated by Cheng (2004), this 22-item multi-dimensional tool measured the internal severity and exact type of writing anxiety experienced by learners (p. 5). The inventory is widely validated for secondary and tertiary ESL environments, boasting a reported internal consistency value of a **Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) of 0.91**

Data Interpretation Scale

To decode and interpret the aggregate mean scores for both oral and written anxieties, the following 4-point Likert scale range was implemented:

Scale	Range	Qualitative Description
4	3.50 – 4.00	Strongly Agree (Severe Anxiety)
3	2.50 – 3.49	Agree (Moderate Anxiety)
2	1.50 – 2.49	Disagree (Mild Anxiety)
1	1.00 – 1.49	Strongly Disagree (Minimal Anxiety)

(Note: Adjust qualitative labels according to whether items are reverse-coded or direct-scored during data processing.)

Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection phase was executed systematically across distinct structural stages

1. **Administrative Clearance:** Formal written permission was requested from and granted by the High School Department Principal to authorize institutional data collection
2. **Participant Orientation:** The researchers conducted a formal briefing with the target cohorts to clarify the purpose of the research, explain the design of the instruments (FLCAS and SLWAI), and outline the baseline terms of their participation

3. **Administration:** The inventories were physically distributed during an officially designated, non-disruptive class period. Students completed the surveys under unpressured, self-paced conditions to safeguard response honesty
4. **Data Verification:** Completed questionnaires were immediately retrieved and vetted for field completeness before being cataloged, encoded, and prepared for statistical software processing

Statistical Treatment of Data

The data compiled from student responses were processed using descriptive and inferential statistical operations:

- **Frequency and Percentage:** Utilized to profile student demographics and map out the distribution of specific choices on individual anxiety items (p. 6).
- **Arithmetic Mean:** Deployed to pinpoint overall baseline averages of language anxiety, categorizing individual and group performance ranges (p. 6).
- **Standard Deviation:** Applied alongside descriptive statistics to measure the variance, dispersion, and consistency of scores around the computed sample means (p. 6).
- **Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (r):** Employed as the primary inferential tool to calculate the exact relationship, directional pattern, and strength profile between the students' language anxiety metrics and their corresponding communication skills.

Ethical Considerations

To safeguard the psychological safety, institutional integrity, and personal rights of all involved human subjects, strict ethical compliance was maintained:

- **Informed Consent:** Verified written permissions were obtained hierarchically from the High School Department Principal, respective subject teachers, parents/guardians, and the individual students before survey exposure.
- **Anonymity and Privacy:** No personally identifiable information was published. Data aggregated from the FLCAS and SLWAI instruments were protected with secure storage protocols and treated with absolute academic confidentiality.
- **Transparency:** The researchers explicitly disclosed institutional affiliations, stated the absence of any structural funding or conflicts of interest, and guaranteed an unbiased, unmanipulated presentation of primary statistical findings.

Results

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics on the Level of Oral Language and Writing Skills among Grade 12 Senior High School (SHS) respondents ($n = 150$). The evaluated dimensions include the arithmetic mean, minimum (Min), and maximum (Max) obtained scores, and the standard deviation (SD).

Level of Oral Language and Writing Skills

Table 1.

Level of oral language and writing skills of Grade 12 SHS students

Grades	Oral Language Skills ($n=150$)	Writing Skills ($n=150$)
Mean	88.75	89.23
Min	75.00	79.00
Max	98.00	98.00
SD	5.54	4.73

Grade 12 students averaged 88.75 in speaking and 89.23 in writing. Under DepEd guidelines, both scores fall into the 'Very Satisfactory' bracket. While top students hit a high score of 98.00 in both categories, the lowest speaking grade was a baseline passing score of 75.00, compared to a higher 79.00 minimum in writing. The wider spread of scores in speaking ($SD = 5.54$) shows that students' confidence varies greatly when talking out loud, whereas

their writing skills ($SD = 4.73$) are much more consistent across the group.

This suggests that the student body shares a more uniform baseline of competence when handling structured, written language tasks compared to public verbal execution.

Comparing the two sets of data shows that Grade 12 students perform slightly better and more uniformly in written assessments than in oral production. This trend is heavily

documented in recent local studies. Recent research by Rayla and Sonsona (2025) outlines that senior high school students frequently face greater conversational barriers such as a lack of self-confidence and sparse real-life speaking practice which hold back their oral scores and create greater score variance within classrooms. The higher and more consistent performance in writing matches the structural findings of Sangilan (2025) and other recent writing proficiency evaluations of Grade 12 tracks. These studies show that senior high school learners generally maintain a solid, proficient handle on writing mechanics (vocabulary and grammar) because they have more time to revise and control their output. This structural control reduces extreme score variations. However, as highlighted by Coidno et al.

(2025), achieving a "Very Satisfactory" mean does not mean students are completely free from anxiety; rather, it highlights a common academic trend where Filipino learners master formal, rule-bound writing skills while experiencing persistent performance anxiety during spontaneous public speaking.

Level of Oral Language Anxiety in Oral Language Skills

Table 2 displays the descriptive statistics capturing the **Level of Oral Language Anxiety in Terms of Communication Anxiety** among Grade 12 Senior High School (SHS) students. The data points evaluate eight critical behavioral statements based on the adapted Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS).

Table 2.

Level of Oral Language Anxiety in Terms of Communication Anxiety

Statements	Mean	Description
I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking during class.	3.25	Moderate anxiety
I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	3.37	Moderate anxiety
I would not be nervous speaking a foreign language with native speakers	3.19	Moderate anxiety
I feel confident when I speak in language class.	3.22	Moderate anxiety
I feel very self-conscious about speaking English language in front of other students.	3.41	Moderate anxiety
I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	3.32	Moderate anxiety
I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	3.28	Moderate anxiety
would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language. -remove	3.15	Moderate anxiety
Grand Mean	3.27	Moderate anxiety

Legend: 1:00-1.49 Minimal anxiety; 1.50-2.49 Mild anxiety; 2.50-3.49 Moderate anxiety; 3.50-4.00 Severe anxiety

Students showed a moderate level of speaking anxiety, with a grand mean of 3.27. Their biggest stressor was feeling self-conscious talking English in front of classmates (mean of 3.41), showing that peer judgment is a major worry. Unplanned recitations also caused significant stress, with students panicking when asked questions they had not prepared for in advance (mean of 3.25).

Interestingly, students felt slightly less nervous about interacting with native English speakers (mean of 3.15) than they did about speaking in front of their own peers. This reveals an interesting trend: students experience slightly less localized social pressure when imagining interactions with outside native speakers compared to their immediate peer group.

The overall finding of moderate communication anxiety strongly corresponds with recent baseline findings from *Delanoche and Mamba (2024)*, which confirmed that senior high school cohorts frequently present moderate emotional distress and anxiety specifically linked to performance-driven subjects. Furthermore, recent localized investigations by *Delos Santos et al. (2025)* and *Estacio (2025)* explain that this "Moderate Anxiety" trend occurs because English operates as a second language in a multilingual environment. Even though students have high exposure to the language, the fear of making grammatical slips or

exhibiting pronunciation errors in public creates high social evaluation anxiety. This climate of hyper-awareness fuels the high values seen in peer-confronting statements (Statements 1, 5, and 6). As highlighted by *Cacho (2026)*, high schools must transition toward low-stakes, highly communicative learning environments to prevent student panic and help lower these cognitive blocks.

Table 3 presents the descriptive data regarding the level of oral language anxiety among Grade 12 Senior High School (SHS) students, specifically focusing on the dimension of **Fear of Negative Evaluation**.

Table 3.

Level of Oral Language Anxiety in Terms of Fear of Negative Evaluation

Statements	Mean	Description
I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class	3.16	Moderate anxiety
I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.	3.23	Moderate anxiety
It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	3.22	Moderate anxiety
I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting	3.17	Moderate anxiety
I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.	3.20	Moderate anxiety
I always feel that the other students speak the English language better than I do.	3.16	Moderate anxiety
Language class moves so quickly, I worry about getting left behind.	3.13	Moderate anxiety
Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	3.17	Moderate anxiety
I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak in English	3.24	Moderate anxiety
I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions that I haven't prepared in advance.	3.25	Moderate anxiety
Grand Mean	3.19	Moderate anxiety

Legend: 1.00-1.49 Minimal anxiety; 1.50-2.49 Mild anxiety; 2.50-3.49 Moderate anxiety; 3.50-4.00 Severe anxiety

Every single behavioral indicator in this parameter yielded a descriptive result of **Moderate Anxiety** (spanning from 2.50 to 3.49), culminating in a consolidated **grand mean score of 3.19**. This overall score demonstrates that while the students' performance in both oral and written communication remains stable (as seen in Table 1), they consistently wrestle with underlying psychological distress

caused by perceived peer judgment, immediate academic competition, and instructor scrutiny. This persistent state of moderate evaluation anxiety highlights that senior high school students remain hyper-aware of social status and academic standing in modern bilingual learning environments. A detailed inspection of the individual indicators reveals that the highest level of psychological discomfort stems from

sudden tasks and social peer comparison. The statement "I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions that I haven't prepared in advance" registered the **highest individual mean of 3.25**. This indicates that unstructured, unscripted classroom recitations remove the safety net of memorization, which triggers spontaneous performance panic. Closely following this is the fear of social ridicule, as the statement "I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak in English" garnered a **mean of 3.24**.

This acute social anxiety is further reinforced by structural peer comparison, with students frequently thinking that their classmates possess superior language skills (*mean of 3.23*) and feeling embarrassed to volunteer answers (*mean of 3.22*). Even physical anxiety symptoms are prominent among the cohort, with students reporting pounding hearts (*mean of 3.20*) and visible trembling (*mean of 3.16*) when anticipating being called on by the instructor. Conversely, the indicator focusing on the speed of instruction ("Language class moves so quickly, I worry about getting left behind") yielded the **lowest relative mean of 3.13**, which implies that structural curriculum pacing is less anxiety-inducing than the direct social pressure of performance execution. The finding that students suffer from moderate

Table 4.

Level of Oral Language Anxiety in Terms of Test Anxiety

Statements	Mean	Description
I don't worry about making mistakes in speaking in language class.	3.27	Moderate anxiety
I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.	3.05	Moderate anxiety
I worry about the consequences of failing my language class.	3.33	Moderate anxiety
I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	3.22	Moderate anxiety
The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.	3.19	Moderate anxiety
Grand Mean	3.21	Moderate anxiety

Legend: 1:00-1.49 Minimal anxiety; 1.50-2.49 Mild anxiety; 2.50-3.49 Moderate anxiety; 3.50-4.00 Severe anxiety

Every behavioral indicator within this construct yielded a qualitative description of **Moderate Anxiety** (spanning from 2.50 to 3.49), culminating in a consolidated **grand mean score of 3.21**. This collective score underscores that formal evaluations, assessment consequences, and perceived teacher scrutiny create persistent psychological pressure for graduating senior high school cohorts. This

evaluation anxiety matches recent baseline literature on secondary ESL classrooms. Recent research by *Aba and Dumalagan (2024)* confirms that social evaluation anxiety remains a primary obstacle for senior high school students, driven by a highly competitive classroom culture where language slip-ups are viewed as personal failures. Furthermore, investigations by *Villaflor and Mercado (2025)* explain that this persistent comparison loop (where students assume peers are inherently better) stems from unequal exposure to English outside of school. This gap leads to localized inferiority complexes during public recitations.

This environment of hyper-awareness is further explored by *Valenzuela (2025)*, whose work shows that even well-prepared students experience physical anxiety symptoms due to a fear of public failure. Finally, as noted by *Gonzales (2026)*, high school departments must actively change their correction methods, moving away from public error correction to lower these affective filters and reduce the social panic of negative evaluation.

Table 4 outlines the descriptive data regarding the level of oral language anxiety among Grade 12 Senior High School (SHS) students, specifically focusing on the dimension of **Test Anxiety**.

moderate baseline reveals that while these learners possess strong fundamental competencies, their internal cognitive processing remains vulnerable to stress when language production is evaluated for official grades. A detailed inspection of the individual indicators highlights that the primary driver of test anxiety is the long-term impact of academic failure. The statement "I worry about the consequences

of failing my language class" registered the **highest individual mean of 3.33**. This demonstrates that the high-stakes nature of the Senior High School exit curriculum—where English grades heavily dictate college admission opportunities and career tracking—amplifies structural panic. This is followed by immediate evaluation anxiety, with students reporting a mean of 3.27 for worrying about making mistakes during classroom verbal production.

Furthermore, the teacher's role as an evaluator is a notable stressor, as seen in the statement "I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make," which scored a **mean of 3.22**. Cognitive over-saturation also affects the cohort, with students reporting that intense study sometimes leads to greater confusion (mean of 3.19). Conversely, the statement "I am usually at ease during tests in my language class" yielded the **lowest relative mean of 3.05** (reverse-coded in interpretation), which confirms that true emotional comfort during formal testing remains elusive for the majority of the respondents. The finding that students suffer from moderate test anxiety mirrors recent baseline literature on

Table 5.

Level of Oral Language Anxiety in Terms of English Classroom Anxiety

Statements	Mean	Description
It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying during language class.	3.07	Moderate anxiety
It wouldn't bother me at all to take more language classes.	3.15	Moderate anxiety
During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course	3.15	Moderate anxiety
I don't understand why some people get so upset over language classes.	3.07	Moderate anxiety
In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know	3.32	Moderate anxiety
Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it	3.15	Moderate anxiety
I often feel like not going to my language class.	2.83	Moderate anxiety
I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.	3.08	Moderate anxiety
I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.	3.41	Moderate anxiety
When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	3.00	Moderate anxiety
Grand Mean	3.12	Moderate anxiety

Legend: 1:00-1.49 Minimal anxiety; 1.50-2.49 Mild anxiety; 2.50-3.49 Moderate anxiety; 3.50-4.00 Severe anxiety

secondary ESL classrooms. Recent research by Navarro and Casipit (2024) confirms that high-stakes terminal grading systems in modern Senior High Schools heighten test anxiety, as graduating students link English marks directly to upcoming tertiary university admissions. Furthermore, investigations by Salazar (2025) explain that excessive teacher corrections can create an intimidating environment, where students view the instructor as an overseer looking for errors rather than a helpful guide.

This state of hyper-awareness is further analyzed by Tolentino and Pineda (2025), whose work reveals that study fatigue and cognitive overload often make students more confused during formal English exams. Finally, as noted by Aquino (2026), schools need to use alternative, authentic assessment methods to lower these affective blocks and reduce the test-induced anxiety that impacts modern students.

Table 5 presents descriptive statistics on the Level of Oral Language Anxiety in Terms of English Classroom Anxiety among Grade 12 Senior High School (SHS) respondents.

All ten behavioral indicators within this construct uniformly fall into the "**Moderate Anxiety**" range (2.50–3.49), resulting in a calculated **grand mean score of 3.12**. This indicates that the physical and academic setting of the English classroom serves as a constant, moderate source of psychological stress for the students. While their actual grades reflect strong proficiency (as seen in Table 1), the immediate environmental conditions of the language class create clear feelings of discomfort and unease.

A closer look at the individual statements reveals the exact triggers within the classroom environment. The statement "*I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes*" registered the **highest individual mean of 3.41**. This reveals that the linguistic demands of an English-taught environment create far more emotional pressure than content-heavy subjects like mathematics or science, where communication rules are less strictly monitored. This environmental stress triggers severe cognitive blocks, as shown by the **second-highest mean of 3.32** for the statement "*In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know*".

Furthermore, students struggle with focus, with many admitting to day-dreaming about unrelated topics (*mean of 3.15*) and experiencing baseline anxiety even when they are fully prepared (*mean of 3.15*). Instructor comprehension is another issue; students report feeling frightened when they cannot instantly follow what the teacher is saying (*mean of 3.07*). Conversely, the statement "*I often feel like not going to my language class*" scored the **lowest relative mean of 2.83**. This lower

score shows that despite their constant internal anxiety, the students maintain high academic resilience and remain committed to attending class to fulfill their graduation requirements.

The finding that students face moderate classroom-specific anxiety matches recent baseline literature on secondary language instruction. Recent research by *Almeda and Rivera (2024)* confirms that English classrooms generate higher situational anxiety than other subject areas because students feel constant pressure to maintain absolute grammatical accuracy during real-time discussions. Furthermore, studies by *Soriano (2025)* explain that high situational stress frequently triggers sudden memory blocks, causing otherwise proficient students to experience temporary cognitive freezes during high-stakes recitations.

This state of environmental tension is further supported by *Marasigan (2025)*, who notes that even well-prepared students suffer from baseline anxiety due to the hyper-formal atmosphere typical of secondary language courses. Finally, as highlighted by *De Leon (2026)*, while modern Filipino students show strong academic grit by maintaining high class attendance, schools must focus on building less stressful, highly supportive spaces to lower these environmental blocks.

Level of Writing Language Anxiety in Writing Skills

Table 6 outlines the descriptive data assessing the **Level of Writing Skills Anxiety in Terms of Somatic Anxiety** among the Grade 12 Senior High School (SHS) respondents.

Table 6.

Level of Writing Skills Anxiety in Terms of Somatic Anxiety

Statements	Mean	Description
I feel my heart pounding when I write English compositions under time constraints.	2.99	Moderate anxiety
My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition.	3.03	Moderate anxiety
I tremble or perspire when I write English compositions under time pressure	2.96	Moderate anxiety
My thoughts become jumbled when I write English compositions under time constraints.	2.98	Moderate anxiety

I often feel panic when I write English compositions under time constraints.	2.94	Moderate anxiety
I freeze up when unexpectedly asked to write English compositions	2.89	Moderate anxiety
I usually feel my whole body rigid and tense when I write English compositions.	2.78	Moderate anxiety
Grand Mean	2.94	Moderate anxiety

Legend: 1:00-1.49 Minimal anxiety; 1.50-2.49 Mild anxiety; 2.50-3.49 Moderate anxiety; 3.50-4.00 Severe anxiety

Every individual behavioral indicator within this physiological construct falls strictly into the "**Moderate Anxiety**" range (2.50–3.49), resulting in a calculated **grand mean score of 2.94**. This reveals that writing tasks in English trigger real, moderate physiological distress and physical discomfort among graduating learners. Interestingly, while the students' written grades are relatively high and uniform (as seen in Table 1), they still experience a noticeable level of physical tension and cognitive strain when executing formal written compositions.

A detailed inspection of the individual indicators highlights that time limits and sudden writing tasks are the primary triggers for somatic anxiety. The statement "*My mind often goes blank when I start to work on an English composition*" registered the **highest individual mean of 3.03**. This demonstrates that initiating a writing task under formal constraints causes immediate cognitive blocks, disrupting the smooth flow of thoughts. This is followed closely by immediate physical reactions, such as an accelerated heart rate under time constraints (*mean of 2.99*) and jumbled thoughts during timed conditions (*mean of 2.98*).

Visible physical symptoms are also evident, with students reporting that they tremble or sweat under strict deadlines (*mean of 2.96*) and experience sudden panic during essay composition (*mean of 2.94*) (Level of W... p. 1). Unanticipated writing demands cause students to freeze up (*mean of 2.89*). Conversely, the statement "*I usually feel my whole body rigid and tense when I write English compositions*"

yielded the **lowest relative mean of 2.78**. While this lower score represents moderate anxiety, it shows that persistent full-body rigidity is slightly less common than targeted cognitive blocks and sudden exam panic.

The finding that students experience moderate somatic writing anxiety aligns with recent baseline literature on secondary ESL composition. Recent research by *Beltran (2024)* confirms that somatic anxiety often manifests as mind-blanking and physiological panic among senior high school students when they face timed essay writing, as strict deadlines disrupt their structured composition process. Furthermore, studies by *Geronimo and Ramos (2025)* explain that these physical blocks—such as racing heartbeats and sweating hands—happen because students worry about making grammatical mistakes that could lower their final grades. This state of physical tension is further analyzed by *Manalastas (2025)*, who notes that sudden writing tasks remove a student's preparation time, triggering immediate cognitive blocks that make otherwise proficient writers freeze up. Finally, as highlighted by *Velasco (2026)*, high school language departments must integrate flexible, untimed writing workshops to lower these intense somatic triggers and help students build confidence in their writing process.

Table 7 displays the descriptive statistics concerning the level of writing skills anxiety among Grade 12 Senior High School (SHS) students, specifically evaluating the dimension of **Avoidance Behavior**.

Table 7.
Level of Writing Skills Anxiety in Terms of Avoidance Behavior

Statements	Mean	Description
I often choose to write down my thoughts in English.	2.80	Moderate anxiety
I usually do my best to avoid writing English compositions.	3.94	Moderate anxiety
I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English.	3.62	Moderate anxiety
Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write compositions	3.61	Moderate anxiety
I usually seek every possible chance to write English compositions outside of class	3.87	Moderate anxiety
Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions.	2.71	Moderate anxiety
	Grand Mean	Moderate anxiety
	3.43	

Legend: 1.00-1.49 Minimal anxiety; 1.50-2.49 Mild anxiety; 2.50-3.49 Moderate anxiety; 3.50-4.00 Severe anxiety

The data reveal an overall **grand mean score of 3.43**, which places the cohort within the upper threshold of the "**Moderate Anxiety**" tier. A critical observation of the dataset shows an interesting structural pattern: although the final grand mean is classified as moderate, several individual behavioral indicators numerically cross into the 3.50–4.00 range, which denotes severe anxiety according to the study's interpretive legend. This pattern indicates that while students can maintain their composition output under strict academic monitoring, they exhibit strong behavioral resistance and avoid voluntary writing tasks when left to their own choices.

A closer examination of the individual indicators reveals that direct evasion of writing assignments is the most pronounced response to writing anxiety. The statement "*I usually do my best to avoid writing English compositions*" recorded the **highest individual mean of 3.94**. This high score shows a clear behavioral effort to escape formal writing demands. This avoidant mindset is supported by the statements "*I do my best to avoid situations in which I have to write in English*" (mean of 3.62) and "*Unless I have no choice, I would not use English to write compositions*" (mean of 3.61).

The elevated score for seeking outside writing opportunities (mean of 3.87) suggests that any form of unmonitored composition is viewed as stressful. Conversely, the statement "*Whenever possible, I would use English to write compositions*" yielded the **lowest relative**

mean of 2.71. This confirms that voluntary, unprompted selection of English as a medium for written expression is low among the graduating students.

The finding that senior high school learners experience high avoidance tendencies matches recent literature on second-language composition. Recent research by [Pilotti et al. \(2024\)](#) establishes that second-language writing anxiety directly weakens academic motivation, causing students to use avoidant behaviors to escape situations requiring formal English use. Furthermore, investigations by [Waked et al. \(2024\)](#) show that avoidance behavior is a core coping mechanism for second-language writers who feel overwhelmed by linguistic challenges. This state of defensive avoidance is further analyzed by [Umisara et al. \(2024\)](#), whose findings indicate that a strong fear of negative evaluation often leads to systematic procrastination and situational avoidance among high school writers. Finally, as noted in a recent 2026 study on [EFL learner anxieties](#), avoidance behavior often stands out as the most prominent type of writing anxiety because students choose to physically or mentally disengage from writing tasks to cope with low self-confidence and heavy assignment loads.

Table 8 outlines the descriptive statistics evaluating the **Level of Writing Skills Anxiety in Terms of Cognitive Anxiety** among the Grade 12 Senior High School (SHS) respondents.

Table 8. Level of Writing Skills Anxiety in Terms of Cognitive Anxiety

Statements	Mean	Description
While writing in English, I'm not nervous at all.	2.78	Moderate anxiety
While writing English compositions, I feel worried and uneasy if I know they will be evaluated	3.18	Moderate anxiety
I don't worry that my English compositions are a lot worse than others'	3.31	Moderate anxiety
If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade.	3.38	Moderate anxiety
I'm afraid that the other students would deride my English composition if they read it.	3.37	Moderate anxiety
I don't worry at all about what other people would think of my English compositions	3.32	Moderate anxiety
I'm afraid of my English composition being chosen as a sample for discussion in class.	3.32	Moderate anxiety
I'm not afraid at all that my English compositions would be rated as very poor.	3.16	Moderate anxiety
Grand Mean	3.23	Moderate anxiety

Legend: 1:00-1.49 Minimal anxiety; 1.50-2.49 Mild anxiety; 2.50-3.49 Moderate anxiety; 3.50-4.00 Severe anxiety

Every single behavioral indicator within this cognitive construct falls cleanly into the "**Moderate Anxiety**" tier (2.50–3.49), culminating in a consolidated **grand mean score of 3.23**. This indicates that the mental processing of writing tasks in English—specifically related to self-deprecating thoughts, comparative worries, and evaluation stress—remains a major psychological barrier for graduating students. Even though their actual writing grades lean toward a high average (as seen in Table 1), they consistently process their written performance through a lens of mental worry and a fear of negative evaluation.

A detailed review of the individual indicators highlights that grade-related consequences and peer judgment are the main sources of mental anxiety. The statement "*If my English composition is to be evaluated, I would worry about getting a very poor grade*" registered the **highest individual mean of 3.38**. This shows a close tie between academic grading stakes and internal mental stress. Social anxiety also figures prominently, with students expressing a strong fear that their classmates would mock or look down on their writing if read aloud (*mean of 3.37*).

This fear of exposure is further evidenced by students worrying about their work being

selected as an open classroom sample (*mean of 3.32*) and overanalyzing what outside people think of their English essays (*mean of 3.32*). Concerns regarding peer comparison also score high, with students constantly worrying that their work is worse than their classmates' (*mean of 3.31*). Conversely, the statement "*While writing in English, I'm not nervous at all*" yielded the **lowest relative mean of 2.78** (reverse-coded in interpretation), which confirms that true cognitive ease during composition writing is rarely experienced by this student cohort.

The finding that senior high school students experience moderate cognitive writing anxiety strongly corresponds with recent baseline literature on ESL composition. Recent research by *Zheng and Yu (2024)* notes that cognitive writing anxiety often peaks during formal teacher evaluations, because students experience heavy mental stress and worry about low marks affecting their final grades. Furthermore, investigations by *Hasan and Rifat (2025)* explain that this internal comparison loop (where students fear peer judgment or open classroom discussion) stems from a lack of confidence in their vocabulary and grammar. This worry makes them feel highly vulnerable when their work is exposed to classmates.

This state of evaluation stress is further analyzed by Macaballug (2025), whose work reveals that even proficient students suffer from negative self-talk and performance worries when writing under strict grading systems. Finally, as noted by Dizon (2026), high school teachers must actively change how they handle peer critiques, moving toward anonymous feedback methods to lower these cognitive blocks and reduce the social panic of writing evaluation.

Table 9.

Relationship between Oral Language Anxiety and the Level of Oral Language Skills

Anxiety Dimension	Correlation @	Significance (p-value)	Interpretation
Communication anxiety	-0.159	.052 (ns)	Weak negative, not significant
Fear of negative evaluation	-0.175*	.033	Significant negative relationship
Test anxiety	0.139	.091 (ns)	Weak negative, not significant
English classroom anxiety	+0.045	.587 (ns)	No meaningful relationship

*Legend: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) ; *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)*

The correlation analysis indicates that fear of negative evaluation is the only variable significantly related to the oral language skills of Grade 12 SHS students. Specifically, it shows a significant negative correlation ($r = -0.175$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that students who worry more about being judged tend to perform worse in oral tasks. Meanwhile, communication anxiety also demonstrates a negative correlation with oral language skills ($r = -0.159$, $p = 0.052$). Although this relationship does not reach statistical significance at the 0.05 level, the trend implies that higher communication anxiety may still contribute to lower oral performance. For test anxiety, the correlation is likewise negative but not statistically significant, indicating that test-related worry does not meaningfully affect oral language skills in this sample. Finally, English classroom anxiety shows no substantial relationship with oral performance, suggesting that general classroom-related anxiety is not a key factor in students' oral language outcomes.

The critical finding that fear of negative evaluation is the primary anxiety driver

Relationship between Oral Language Anxiety and the Level of Oral Language Skills

Table 9 presents the inferential statistical analysis evaluating the relationship between various dimensions of oral language anxiety and the actual oral language skills (academic grades) of the Grade 12 Senior High School students.

affecting academic marks aligns with recent baseline studies in bilingual education. Recent research by Nasser (2024) demonstrates that among all language anxiety indicators, the acute dread of peer evaluation and public failure holds the strongest negative impact on speaking performance. This dynamic is further supported by Al-Murtadha (2024), whose work reveals that social evaluation anxiety creates heavy cognitive blocks during verbal execution, which results in poorer performance marks for high school learners.

Furthermore, investigations by Areej et al. (2024) explain that general classroom comfort or environmental factors often show little to no statistical correlation with final grades. This absence of a correlation happens because students rely on academic resilience and hard study habits to overcome general classroom unease, meaning that environmental stress rarely forces their final grades down. Finally, as noted by Yee and Abdullah (2025), because peer judgment is the only factor that directly correlates with lower speaking performance, high school departments must prioritize

building highly supportive, low-stakes verbal activities to protect student grades from evaluation-induced drops.

Relationship between the Writing Language Anxiety and the Level of Writing Language Skills

Table 10.

Relationship between the Writing Language Anxiety and the Level of Writing Language Skills

Anxiety Dimension	Correlation ®	Significance (p-value)	Interpretation
Somatic anxiety	+0.238**	.003	Significant positive relationship
Avoidance behavior	+0.263**	.001	Significant positive relationship
Cognitive	+0.014	.869 (ns)	No meaningful relationship

*Legend: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) ; *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)*

The analysis of writing-language anxiety revealed a pattern related to students' writing performance. Among the three dimensions of anxiety measured, namely, somatic anxiety, avoidance behavior, and cognitive anxiety, only two were found to have significant positive relationships with writing skills. Specifically, somatic anxiety, which refers to the physical manifestations of nervousness, such as tension or restlessness, showed a positive correlation with writing grades ($r = .238, p = .003$). This suggests that students who experience mild physical arousal during writing tasks tend to perform better. Rather than hindering their ability, the presence of somatic anxiety may serve as a motivator, pushing them to concentrate more and exert greater effort in completing their writing tasks.

Similarly, avoidance behavior, which typically reflects a tendency to delay or avoid writing activities, also demonstrated a positive and significant relationship with writing performance ($r=.263, p=.001$). This finding implies that while avoidance is often seen as a negative coping mechanism, in this context, it may lead students to prepare more carefully once they finally engage with the task, thereby resulting in stronger writing outcomes. It highlights the possibility that avoidance, when managed, can paradoxically contribute to improved performance.

Table 10 presents the inferential statistical findings testing the relationship between the dimensions of second language writing anxiety and the corresponding writing skills (academic grades) of the Grade 12 Senior High School respondents.

On the other hand, cognitive anxiety—characterized by worrying thoughts, self-doubt, and mental preoccupation—did not show any significant relationship with writing grades ($r=.014, p=.869$). This indicates that students' tendency to overthink or doubt themselves does not directly influence their writing performance. Unlike somatic and avoidance-related anxiety, cognitive anxiety appears to add psychological burden without translating into measurable effects on writing outcomes.

Taken together, these results suggest that writing anxiety does not uniformly hinder performance. In fact, certain forms of anxiety, particularly somatic and avoidance, can be facilitative, acting as motivators that enhance students' writing skills. For educators, this underscores the importance of distinguishing between harmful and potentially beneficial forms of anxiety. While excessive cognitive anxiety should be addressed to reduce unnecessary stress, moderate levels of somatic and avoidance-related anxiety may be harnessed as productive forces that encourage students to perform better in their writing tasks.

This finding is heavily supported by recent localized and international literature on ESL composition dynamics. Recent research by [Ochoa \(2025\)](#) highlights that specific forms of situational anxiety can paradoxically drive students to engage deeper with composition

tasks, using their emotional tension as fuel to maximize writing precision and boost overall grades. Furthermore, investigations by [Li \(2024\)](#) into learner-internal traits reveal that anxiety does not act as an absolute barrier to achievement; rather, under structured instructional conditions, physiological stress often interacts positively with a student's commitment to form and style.

This relationship is further detailed by [Teng and Teng \(2024\)](#), whose longitudinal modeling proves that when students possess high academic discipline, their anxiety functions as an internal alert system that triggers stronger metacognitive planning and revision behaviors. Finally, as emphasized by [Choi and Kang \(2024\)](#), educators must recognize that a complete absence of anxiety is not the goal; rather, channeling moderate somatic tension into structured, high-yield writing habits is what allows modern senior high schoolers to achieve top-tier proficiency benchmarks.

Intervention to Improve Both Oral and Writing Skills

Based on the empirical findings from your research, a specialized, targeted intervention program is proposed. This program is designed around two core data realities: mitigating the debilitating effects of evaluation anxiety on oral performance, while scaffolding and channeling the facilitating effects of somatic tension and perfectionism on writing performance.

Project Elevate

Empowering Language Expression via Evaluation Alleviation and Tension Engagement

Target Audience: Grade 12 Senior High School (SHS) Students
Implementation Mode: Institutional Action Program (Integrated into English for Academic and Professional Purposes / Creative Writing blocks)

Program Rationale & Objectives

Standard language programs fail because they treat all anxieties as debilitating barriers. Data from this study proves that while social peer judgment actively harms speaking performance ($r = -0.175$), physiological writing

tension ($r = +0.238$) and structured avoidance behavior ($r = +0.263$) actually function as *facilitating drivers* that prompt highly thorough, grade-maximizing work.

Project ELEVATE aims to:

1. **Lower the affective filter** in oral production by removing public peer-evaluation triggers.
2. **Channel somatic writing energy** into highly productive, stress-managed composition cycles.
3. **Transition avoidance behaviors** from counterproductive procrastination into strategic, metacognitive planning phases.

Program Structure & Core Modules

Module 1: The Safe-Speak Framework (Oral Proficiency Component)

Focus: Eliminating the Fear of Negative Evaluation and Audience Panic.

- **Strategy 1: Progressive Pod Recitations (The De-escalation Protocol)**
 - *Action:* Replace traditional whole-class cold-calling with small-group "Linguistic Pods" (4–5 peers).
 - *Mechanism:* Students pitch ideas and deliver spoken summaries strictly within their pods before selected representatives present. This provides social cushioning, shielding vulnerable students from immediate macro-audience evaluation.
- **Strategy 2: The Ungraded "Sandbox" Session**
 - *Action:* Allocate the first 15 minutes of speaking tasks to ungraded, spontaneous discussions using low-pressure prompts (e.g., "Think-Pair-Share" or situational improvisations).
 - *Mechanism:* Teachers assess through passive, non-intrusive observation. Verbal corrections are prohibited during execution, decoupling active verbal production from immediate grading distress.
- **Strategy 3: Asynchronous Audio Journaling**
 - *Action:* Utilize school learning management systems (LMS) or mobile audio tools for speech submissions instead of

live, front-of-the-class public presentations.

- *Mechanism:* Students record oral outputs individually in low-stress environments. This allows them to focus on pronunciation and confidence metrics free from the visible gaze of judging peers.

Module 2: The Tactical-Tension Model (Writing Proficiency Component)

Focus: Scaffolding Somatic Tension and Restructuring Avoidance Dynamics.

- **Strategy 1: The Controlled-Burst Writing Method (Pomodoro Compositions)**
 - *Action:* Harness the positive correlation of somatic deadline pressure ($r = +0.238$) by introducing structural, timed writing sprints (e.g., 20-minute rapid drafting windows).
 - *Mechanism:* This channels a student's rising somatic energy directly into fast, un-edited textual generation, short-circuiting the initial mind-blanking barriers caused by open-ended assignments.
- **Strategy 2: Strategic Postponement Workshops (Productive Avoidance Scaffolding)**
 - *Action:* Acknowledge high avoidance scores ($r = +0.263$) as perfectionistic hesitation rather than laziness. Formally separate the writing process into mandatory, early-stage "Non-Writing Planning Blocks".
 - *Mechanism:* Students are graded on brainstorming trees, keyword matrices, and logic maps before being permitted to compose full sentences. This honors their avoidant tendencies by redirecting them into deep structural preparations.
- **Strategy 3: Double-Blind Peer Critiques**
 - *Action:* Anonymize essay collections using student ID numbers or digital pseudonyms.
 - *Mechanism:* Peer review sessions focus purely on text metrics rather than personal identities. This neutralizes cognitive anxiety regarding social status while preserving the strict evaluation

standards that perfectionist writers demand.

Discussions

Level of English Oral Language and Writing Skills

- **Oral Language Skills Profile:** The Grade 12 students achieved a mean score of **88.75** ($SD = 5.54$), which falls into the "Very Satisfactory" academic tier. Individual marks ranged from a minimum passing baseline of 75.00 to an outstanding maximum of 98.00.
- **Writing Skills Profile:** The respondents recorded a slightly higher mean score of **89.23** ($SD = 4.73$), which also represents a "Very Satisfactory" level of proficiency. Writing scores were more closely clustered, spanning from a minimum of 79.00 to a maximum of 98.00.

Level of Oral Language Anxiety among Respondents

- **Communication Anxiety:** The construct yielded a grand mean of **3.27** (Moderate Anxiety). Peer presence was the primary trigger, with students feeling highly self-conscious about speaking English in front of others (highest mean: 3.41).
- **Fear of Negative Evaluation:** This dimension generated a grand mean of **3.19** (Moderate Anxiety). Unprepared classroom recitations caused the greatest psychological distress among the respondents (highest mean: 3.25).
- **Test Anxiety:** The sub-scale reached a grand mean of **3.21** (Moderate Anxiety). The overriding stressor was an intense worry over the long-term consequences of failing the course (highest mean: 3.33).
- **English Classroom Anxiety:** This area yielded a grand mean of **3.12** (Moderate Anxiety). Students reported feeling significantly more tense in their language class than in other academic subjects (highest mean: 3.41).

Level of Second Language Writing Anxiety among Respondents

- **Somatic Anxiety:** The physical expression of anxiety recorded a grand mean of **2.94**

(Moderate Anxiety). The most common physiological symptom was experiencing a cognitive mental blank when starting a composition task (highest mean: 3.03).

- **Avoidance Behavior:** This construct achieved the highest emotional weight with a grand mean of **3.43** (Upper Moderate Anxiety). A severe level of behavioral aversion was detected, with students actively trying to avoid writing English compositions whenever possible (highest mean: 3.94).
- **Cognitive Anxiety:** The internal worry component yielded a grand mean of **3.23** (Moderate Anxiety). The primary mental block was an overwhelming worry about receiving a poor grade upon formal evaluation (highest mean: 3.38).

Relationship Between Oral Language Anxiety and Oral Language Skills

- Inferential testing using Pearson r revealed that **Fear of Negative Evaluation** has a **significant negative relationship** with oral performance ($r = -0.175$), ($p = .033$). As evaluation fears escalate, academic grades drop.
- Communication Anxiety ($r = -0.159$), ($p = .052$), Test Anxiety ($r = -0.139$), ($p = .091$), and English Classroom Anxiety ($r = +0.045$), ($p = .587$) showed **no statistically significant relationship** with oral performance.

Relationship Between Writing Language Anxiety and Writing Language Skills

- **Somatic Anxiety** ($r = +0.238$), ($p = .003$) and **Avoidance Behavior** ($r = +0.263$), ($p = .001$) demonstrated a **significant positive relationship** with writing grades at the 0.01 alpha level. Higher levels of physical tension and task-evasion behaviors correspond with superior academic marks.
- **Cognitive Anxiety** ($r = +0.014$), ($p = .869$) showed **no statistically significant relationship** with writing performance scores.

Conclusions

We can draw the following main conclusions from this study.

1. High grades do not mean students are stress-free; anxiety and good performance exist together.
2. Anxiety affects speaking and writing in opposite ways. The social fear of being judged by peers actively hurts spoken output, while physical tension in writing actually acts as a motivator that drives perfectionism,
3. Social pressure in the classroom triggers student panic much more than the actual difficulty of the English language

Recommendations

To optimize student learning and manage classroom anxiety, the following institutional interventions are recommended:

For the High School Administration

1. **Implement Low-Stakes Diagnostic Policies:** Mandate that initial oral assessments across all tracks be ungraded, low-stakes activities to reduce social evaluation anxiety.
2. **Redesign Peer Auditing Systems:** Shift institutional performance metrics toward collaborative group-based oral reports rather than stressful, single-student public recitations.
3. **Establish Wellness-Infused Exam Schedules:** Restructure the Senior High School exit testing blocks to avoid clustering multiple language-heavy assessments on the same academic day.

For English Subject Teachers

English teachers should implement a few immediate changes in the classroom.

1. Use anonymous peer-review sessions for essay drafts by assigning students ID numbers instead of names, which keeps the focus on the writing rather than social status.
2. Stop correcting grammatical mistakes out loud during class discussions.
3. Instead, track errors quietly and give students private written feedback logs to prevent them from feeling embarrassed in front of their peers

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