



AN EXPLANATORY INVESTIGATION ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY AMONG ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS AT STKIP PGRI LAMPUNG

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Abstract: In the context of globalized English education, university students frequently encounter emotional and psychological barriers that hinder their mastery of English as a foreign language. One such barrier is Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), which has been shown to significantly affect learners' confidence, performance, and overall language acquisition. This study investigates the existence and sources of FLA among English Department students at STKIP PGRI Lampung, employing a quantitative descriptive design. Data were collected using Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which measures four domains of anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and general classroom anxiety. Findings revealed that the majority of students reported moderate levels of anxiety, with test anxiety and general classroom anxiety identified as the most influential contributors to heightened stress in English learning contexts. The study concludes with pedagogical implications and recommendations for reducing FLA in Indonesian higher education settings.

Keywords: *foreign language anxiety; test anxiety; classroom anxiety; foreign language classroom anxiety scale*

INTRODUCTION

Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) has long been recognized as a crucial psychological factor influencing the success of second and foreign language learning. Unlike general anxiety, which can be triggered by diverse life events and broad psychological conditions, FLA is situation-specific and emerges particularly within language learning environments where communication performance becomes highly visible and frequently evaluated, (Chen, 2023; Sun et al., 2025; Wu & Kabilan, 2019). It is generally associated with feelings of fear, apprehension, nervousness, tension, and self-doubt when learners are required to use a target language in academic or social settings. Scholars have emphasized that FLA is not merely an emotional response but a multidimensional construct closely related to classroom interaction, learner identity, and language performance, (Fisher et al., 2020; Namaziandost et al., 2024; Sulis,

2022). Because language learning requires active participation, spontaneous communication, and public demonstration of competence, anxiety often becomes deeply embedded in the learning process itself.

In the context of Indonesian higher education, Foreign Language Anxiety remains particularly significant. English functions not only as a compulsory subject but also increasingly as a medium of academic communication, professional preparation, and access to global knowledge. In teacher education institutions, these expectations become even more demanding. Institutions such as STKIP PGRI Lampung expect pre-service English teachers to demonstrate both linguistic competence and pedagogical readiness. Students are required to develop proficiency across speaking, listening, reading, and writing while simultaneously learning how to teach English effectively to future learners, (Karakuş, 2025; Yang & Chano, 2025). However,

despite years of formal English instruction throughout primary, secondary, and tertiary education, many students continue to struggle with persistent anxiety when engaging with English in classroom contexts. This challenge often persists regardless of learners' prior exposure to English and remains a substantial barrier to language achievement and classroom participation, (Carter et al., 2023; Othman, 2025; Youn & Bong, 2025).

The situation at STKIP PGRI Lampung reflects broader challenges found across Indonesian universities. Students are expected to meet increasingly high academic and professional standards in English, yet many remain hesitant to participate fully in language learning activities. This hesitation can be observed even among students who have studied English for many years, (Seçkin, 2025; Williams, 2024). In practice, many students report discomfort when speaking spontaneously in class, listening to complex English input, responding to questions, or producing written academic texts, (Hall & Montgomery, 2023; Monib, 2025; Rahmadani & Etfita, 2022). Such discomfort frequently manifests in observable behaviors such as avoiding classroom discussion, refusing to volunteer answers, remaining silent during group interaction, postponing oral presentations, or even being absent during examinations or evaluative classroom activities. These behaviors strongly reflect the presence of FLA, which undermines self-confidence, reduces willingness to communicate, discourages participation, and ultimately affects academic performance negatively, (Iqbal & Zahoor, 2024; Juma et al., 2022).

Theoretically, FLA has been conceptualized as a multidimensional phenomenon consisting of several interconnected domains. Communication apprehension refers to fear or anxiety associated with speaking and interacting in a foreign language, especially in spontaneous oral communication, (Jalleh, 2021; Kan & Demi, 2025). This form of anxiety often emerges when students are required to speak in front of others, answer questions unexpectedly, or engage in discussion without preparation. Test anxiety relates to emotional tension experienced during evaluative situations such as written examinations, oral tests, classroom assessments, or graded presentations, (Alshareef et al., 2025; Fulton, 2016). Fear of negative evaluation reflects learners' concern about being judged negatively by teachers, classmates, or others in academic settings, (Downing et al., 2020; St et al., 2025). More recently, scholars have included general

classroom anxiety as a broader category describing persistent unease associated with classroom participation, fear of making mistakes, uncertainty in following lessons, and discomfort with the overall learning environment, (England et al., 2019; Gannoun & Deris, 2023). Together, these four domains provide a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding how anxiety operates in language learning contexts and how it affects learners cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally.

A substantial body of international research consistently confirms the negative impact of FLA on language learning outcomes. Studies demonstrate that anxiety reduces learners' self-confidence, interferes with concentration, limits language production, lowers test performance, and contributes to negative attitudes toward English learning overall, (Shang & Ma, 2024; Toyama & Yamazaki, 2021). Learners with high levels of FLA often perceive the classroom as a threatening rather than supportive environment. This perception becomes especially strong in classrooms where instruction relies heavily on oral performance, immediate response, public correction, spontaneous questioning, or peer comparison, (Attia & Algazo, 2023; Ebadi et al., 2025). Under such circumstances, students may focus more on avoiding mistakes than on communicating meaning, which further restricts learning opportunities. Additionally, physiological symptoms such as trembling hands, rapid heartbeat, sweating, dry mouth, or shaking voice during oral presentations can intensify emotional discomfort and reinforce avoidance behaviors. Over time, this creates a cycle in which anxiety leads to avoidance, avoidance limits practice, limited practice reduces confidence, and reduced confidence strengthens anxiety further, (Hofmann et al., 2018; Topel et al., 2024).

Within Indonesia, research on Foreign Language Anxiety continues to expand; however, the existing literature remains uneven in focus and coverage. Many studies have concentrated on secondary school students, general undergraduate populations, or isolated speaking anxiety, while research involving pre-service teachers remains comparatively limited. Existing studies frequently highlight speaking anxiety, fear of peer judgment, limited vocabulary confidence, and the influence of teacher feedback, classroom atmosphere, and high-stakes testing on learners' anxiety experiences, (Bozkurt & Aydin, 2023; Sari, 2020). Yet pre-service English teachers occupy a distinctive position. They are not simply language

learners; they are future educators expected to become linguistic models for their own students. This dual role creates an additional layer of psychological pressure because they must simultaneously master English and embody competence publicly as future teachers. Anxiety in this context therefore has broader implications not only for academic achievement but also for professional identity formation and future teaching practice, (Mccurdy et al., 2022; Xu et al, 2025).

Cultural and systemic factors further intensify these challenges in the Indonesian context. Indonesia's collectivist social orientation often prioritizes social harmony, respect, and group cohesion over individual expression, (Maeda, 2017). As a result, students may avoid speaking in class even when they know the answer because they fear embarrassment, losing face, or creating discomfort within the group, (Zhang et al., 2025). This cultural tendency intersects with educational traditions that often remain teacher-centered, with strong emphasis on correctness, formal evaluation, and teacher authority. Classroom practices involving mandatory presentations, public speaking tasks, direct correction, and frequent testing can therefore amplify anxiety rather than reduce it. In addition, many students enter university having experienced English instruction in earlier schooling that focused predominantly on grammar, memorization, and translation. Consequently, they may possess theoretical knowledge of English but feel underprepared for communicative tasks that demand active oral interaction, critical response, and spontaneous language use at the university level (Li & Hu, 2024; Riyadi et al., 2024). For pre-service teachers, this gap becomes particularly problematic because they are expected not only to communicate effectively but also to model confident English use for future learners.

This study addresses three important research gaps in current scholarship. First, although FLA has been extensively studied internationally, localized empirical investigations within Indonesian teacher education institutions remain relatively scarce. Second, only a limited number of studies have examined anxiety comprehensively across all four FLCAS domains, leaving uncertainty regarding which dimensions are most dominant in specific local contexts. Third, insufficient scholarly attention has been given to the pedagogical and institutional implications of FLA in pre-service teacher education, despite the strategic importance of preparing future teachers

who are emotionally resilient and communicatively competent.

Accordingly, this research contributes in three significant ways. First, it offers a detailed and context-specific analysis of Foreign Language Anxiety among English Department students at STKIP PGRI Lampung by applying the FLCAS framework to identify multidimensional patterns of anxiety. Second, it extends Indonesian scholarship by focusing specifically on pre-service English teachers whose anxiety experiences carry implications beyond their own academic outcomes and may influence their future teaching beliefs and classroom practices. Third, the study provides practical pedagogical and institutional insights regarding strategies to reduce anxiety, foster supportive classroom environments, strengthen learner confidence, and improve English language teaching preparation in teacher education settings.

In conclusion, this study investigates the extent and nature of Foreign Language Anxiety among English Department students at STKIP PGRI Lampung by examining how anxiety manifests across communication apprehension, test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and general classroom anxiety. By situating the investigation within the Indonesian cultural and educational context, the study contributes to filling an important gap in higher education language learning research while aligning with broader global efforts to better understand and address affective variables in foreign language education. The findings are expected to provide both theoretical enrichment and practical recommendations for improving English language learning experiences among pre-service teachers in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional survey design, (Creswell, J. W., & Poth, 2018; Slater & Hasson, 2025; Wang & Cheng, 2020) to examine the extent and domains of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) among undergraduate students in the English Department at STKIP PGRI Lampung. This design was appropriate because it allowed the researchers to generate numerical data describing levels of anxiety across multiple dimensions and to compare findings with previous empirical studies.

The participants in this study consisted of 60 undergraduate students enrolled in the third and fourth semesters of the English Department during the 2024-2025 academic year. These students were selected because they represent learners who are in the intermediate stage of their academic and

linguistic development, having already experienced foundational English instruction while still actively developing their communicative competence. Their academic position makes them particularly relevant for investigating foreign language anxiety, as students at this level are commonly required to engage more intensively in oral communication, academic discussion, presentations, and language-based classroom interaction.

To ensure that all participants had sufficient exposure to English learning in higher education, specific inclusion criteria were applied. Only students who had successfully completed at least two core English modules Speaking and Grammar were included in the study. These courses were considered essential because they provide students with both communicative and structural foundations in English. The Speaking course requires active verbal participation, oral practice, and classroom interaction, while Grammar emphasizes linguistic accuracy and formal language knowledge. Together, these two courses represent key components of English language learning and provide students with relevant academic experience that may shape their anxiety toward using English. Selecting students who had completed both modules ensured that participants had already encountered classroom situations involving language performance, evaluation, and communication in English, making them suitable respondents for exploring the dimensions of Foreign Language Anxiety.

In terms of gender distribution, the sample comprised 24 male students (40%) and 36 female students (60%). This proportion reflects the general demographic composition commonly found in language and teacher education programs in Indonesia, where female students often represent a larger percentage of enrolment. The inclusion of both male and female participants allowed the study to capture a broader range of experiences and perceptions related to anxiety in language learning across different student backgrounds.

The participants ranged in age from 19 to 23 years, with a mean age of 20.8 years ($SD = 1.2$). This age range is typical of undergraduate students in Indonesian higher education and represents a developmental stage in which learners are navigating both academic demands and identity formation. At this stage, students are not only strengthening their English proficiency but are also beginning to construct their academic confidence, professional identity, and readiness for future teaching responsibilities. These developmental

characteristics make them particularly relevant for examining emotional and psychological factors such as anxiety in foreign language learning.

All participants identified Bahasa Indonesia as their first language. English was learned primarily through formal schooling, beginning in earlier levels of education and continuing into university. For most participants, exposure to English occurred predominantly in classroom settings rather than through daily communication outside the classroom. This learning background is important because it suggests that English functions primarily as a foreign language within their educational experience, which may influence confidence, fluency, willingness to communicate, and anxiety during classroom interaction.

Academic records further showed variation in students' prior English achievement. Of the 60 participants, 42 students (70%) had achieved a GPA of B or above in previous English courses, while 18 students (30%) had a GPA below B. This variation in academic performance provided an important basis for examining possible differences in foreign language anxiety across learners with different achievement levels. Students with stronger academic performance may experience anxiety differently from those with lower achievement, particularly in relation to speaking tasks, classroom participation, or evaluative situations. The diversity in academic background therefore contributed meaningful depth to the sample and strengthened the potential of the study to explore variations in anxiety levels among English Department students from multiple perspectives.

Table 1. *Demographic characteristics of respondents (N = 60)*

Characteristic	Frequency (n = 60)	Percentage (%)
Gender: Male	24	40.0
Gender: Female	36	60.0
Age: 19–20	33	55.0
Age: 21–23	27	45.0
Prior English GPA $\geq$ B	42	70.0
Prior English GPA < B	18	30.0

This demographic spread highlights that the respondents constituted a relatively balanced sample in terms of gender and age distribution, while variations in academic proficiency were also evident. Such diversity provided a meaningful basis for exploring potential differences in the reported levels of foreign language anxiety (FLA) across the sample, thereby enhancing the robustness of the analysis. The principal research

instrument employed in this study was the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). The FLCAS has been widely recognized as the most frequently applied tool in measuring language anxiety, owing to its strong theoretical foundation and psychometric validity across diverse educational contexts. The instrument comprises 33 items rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. This format enables the quantification of individual differences in language learning anxiety and allows researchers to capture both overall levels and specific dimensions of FLA.

For the purpose of this study, the FLCAS was adapted into a bilingual version (English–Bahasa Indonesia) to ensure clarity and accessibility for all participants. This adaptation was essential, as the use of a bilingual instrument minimized the risk of misinterpretation, particularly in cases where respondents might struggle to fully comprehend nuanced statements expressed solely in English. The bilingual approach thereby strengthened the validity of the responses by ensuring that students' reported anxiety levels accurately reflected their experiences rather than linguistic misunderstandings.

The 33 items of the FLCAS are categorized into four distinct subscales, each representing a different dimension of foreign language anxiety. The first dimension, Communication Apprehension, reflects the anxiety students experience during speaking tasks or oral interactions, and it is represented by Items 1, 9, 14, 18, 24, 27, 29, and 32. The second dimension, Fear of Negative Evaluation, captures learners' concerns about being judged or negatively assessed by teachers and peers; this is measured through Items 3, 7, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25, 31, and 33. The third dimension, Test Anxiety, refers to apprehension related to evaluation in formal testing situations, as reflected in Items 2, 8, 10, 19, and 21. Finally, the fourth dimension, General Anxiety, encompasses a broader sense of unease and tension associated with learning a foreign language, and it is represented by Items 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 16, 17, 22, 26, 28, and 30. Together, these subscales provided a comprehensive framework for examining multiple aspects of foreign language anxiety among the participants.

These subscales provided a multi-dimensional framework for the analysis, enabling the study not only to identify the overall degree of anxiety but also to highlight which specific domains were most problematic for learners. By employing the FLCAS in this structured way, the study ensured a

comprehensive assessment of FLA within the targeted population.

Data were collected using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS; Horwitz et al., 1986), a widely validated instrument for measuring language anxiety. The 33 items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) and cover four domains:

Table 2. *Domains and item distribution of the FLCAS*

Domain	Item Numbers	Number of Items
Communication Apprehension	1, 9, 14, 18, 24, 27, 29, 32	8
Fear of Negative Evaluation	3, 7, 13, 15, 20, 23, 25, 31, 33	9
Test Anxiety	2, 8, 10, 19, 21	5
General Anxiety	4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 16, 17, 22, 26, 28, 30	11
Total	-	33

This categorization enabled the study to capture not only the overall level of foreign language anxiety but also the patterns specific to each domain. Data collection was carried out during the fourth week of the semester. At this stage, the researcher distributed printed bilingual questionnaires in class after clearly explaining the objectives of the study. Participants were allotted approximately thirty minutes to complete the survey, and the researcher remained present throughout the session to address any questions or clarifications. Ethical protocols were strictly observed by securing informed consent, assuring participants of anonymity, and emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation.

To establish the reliability of the instrument, internal consistency was examined using Cronbach's alpha coefficients for each subscale. The results demonstrated strong reliability across all dimensions: Communication Apprehension ($\alpha = 0.84$), Fear of Negative Evaluation ($\alpha = 0.81$), Test Anxiety ($\alpha = 0.74$), and General Anxiety ($\alpha = 0.78$). These coefficients confirm that the instrument was sufficiently robust and reliable for use within the Indonesian university context.

For data analysis, responses were processed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions, were employed to determine both overall anxiety levels and the distribution of anxiety across domains. To facilitate interpretation, the study adopted Krinis's

(2007) in (Al Mamun, 2021) classification of anxiety levels, as summarized in Table 3.

The survey was conducted during the fourth week of the academic semester, a period considered appropriate because students had already participated in several English classes and had become sufficiently familiar with the classroom environment, course expectations, and patterns of interaction established by the lecturer. At this stage of the semester, students had begun engaging with regular learning activities, including discussions, speaking exercises, grammar-based tasks, and classroom participation. This timing was therefore considered methodologically suitable because participants had already accumulated initial experiences related to English learning in the university setting, while those experiences remained recent enough to be recalled clearly. Conducting the survey during this period enabled students to reflect meaningfully on their emotional responses to English learning without relying on distant memory or retrospective interpretation.

Data collection was carried out during regular class sessions to ensure accessibility and to maximize student participation. Administering the survey during scheduled classroom time also provided a familiar and structured setting for respondents, which helped facilitate the completion of the questionnaire in an efficient and organized manner. By collecting the data within the classroom environment, the researcher was able to reach participants directly and ensure that all respondents completed the questionnaire under similar conditions. This approach contributed to consistency in the administration process and minimized disruption to students' academic routines.

Prior to distributing the questionnaire, the researcher gave a brief explanation regarding the purpose and scope of the study. Students were informed that the research aimed to examine their experiences related to Foreign Language Anxiety in English learning contexts, particularly how they felt when participating in classroom activities involving English communication and performance. The researcher clarified that the questionnaire was not intended to assess language ability or academic achievement, but rather to understand students' perceptions, feelings, and emotional experiences while learning English. This explanation was considered important to ensure that participants understood the purpose of the study and felt comfortable providing honest responses.

Participants were also informed about the format and nature of the questionnaire, including the estimated time needed to complete it. The importance of responding honestly and based on their own personal experience was emphasized before the survey began. Students were encouraged to answer each item independently and thoughtfully without discussing their responses with peers. Printed questionnaires were then distributed directly to participants in the classroom. Each student completed the instrument individually, and the average completion time was approximately 30 minutes. The use of printed questionnaires allowed respondents to complete the survey in a straightforward and uninterrupted manner while enabling the researcher to monitor the process directly.

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Students were clearly informed that they had the right to participate or decline without any academic consequences or effect on their grades, classroom standing, or relationship with lecturers. No pressure or obligation was placed on students to complete the questionnaire. This voluntary approach was adopted to ensure that participation was based on willingness and genuine consent rather than external influence.

Ethical considerations were carefully maintained throughout the data collection process. Participant anonymity was fully guaranteed, and no identifying personal information such as names, student numbers, or other personal identifiers was collected through the questionnaire. This was intended to create a safe environment in which students could express their feelings openly without concern about being identified or evaluated individually. Informed consent was obtained prior to participation, ensuring that all respondents understood the objectives of the study, the procedures involved, and their rights as participants. Through this process, all students who completed the questionnaire agreed to participate willingly and with full awareness of the purpose of the research.

The questionnaire demonstrated strong internal reliability across all four dimensions of Foreign Language Anxiety. The Communication Apprehension subscale showed a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of $\alpha = .84$, Fear of Negative Evaluation $\alpha = .81$, Test Anxiety $\alpha = .74$, and General Anxiety $\alpha = .78$. These values indicate acceptable to strong reliability, suggesting that the instrument was consistent in measuring students' anxiety across different dimensions.

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistical techniques were employed, including mean scores, standard deviations, and frequency distributions to identify overall patterns of anxiety among participants. To determine the level of anxiety experienced by students, the classification thresholds established by Horwitz et al. (1986) in (Syarifuddyn, 2022) were adopted:

Table 3. *Classification of total FLCAS scores*

Range of Scores	Category
33–82	Very Low Anxiety
83–89	Moderately Low Anxiety
90–98	Moderate Anxiety
99–108	Moderately High Anxiety
109–165	High Anxiety

Through this procedure, each respondent's score on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was systematically classified according to predetermined score ranges. This classification process enabled the researchers to interpret participants' responses in a structured and consistent manner, ensuring that the level of anxiety experienced by each student could be identified accurately. By applying these thresholds, the analysis moved beyond numerical scores alone and allowed the data to be interpreted in terms of meaningful anxiety categories.

This categorization was particularly valuable because it allowed the researchers to identify not only the overall prevalence of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) within the student cohort, but also the relative intensity of anxiety experienced across different dimensions of language learning. As a result, the study was able to distinguish whether anxiety was more strongly associated with communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, test anxiety, or general classroom anxiety.

Consequently, the analytical process provided both a broad overview and a more detailed interpretation of students' anxiety experiences. It offered a holistic picture of the overall level of anxiety among English Department students while also revealing domain-specific patterns that may not be visible through general scores alone. This multidimensional interpretation provides a stronger and more comprehensive basis for understanding students' emotional experiences in foreign language learning contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The total FLCAS scores ranged from 65 to 137, with a mean of 96.4 (SD = 17.2). According to Pan

et al. (2025), this places most participants in the moderate anxiety category. Table 4 shows the overall distribution of anxiety levels among the 60 students.

Table 4. *Distribution of general foreign language anxiety levels (N = 60)*

FLCAS Level	Score Range	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Very Low Anxiety	33–82	8	13.3
Moderately Low Anxiety	83–89	10	16.7
Moderate Anxiety	90–98	22	36.7
Moderately High Anxiety	99–108	12	20.0
High Anxiety	109–165	8	13.3

As shown, the distribution of responses indicates that the most common level of Foreign Language Anxiety among participants falls within the moderate anxiety range (36.7%). This finding suggests that, overall, most students did not report severe or debilitating levels of anxiety in English learning contexts. Nevertheless, the results also demonstrate that foreign language anxiety remains a meaningful psychological concern within the cohort. A considerable proportion of students (33.3%) reported moderately high to high levels of anxiety, indicating that although severe anxiety may not be experienced universally, a substantial number of learners continue to face emotional challenges when engaging with English in academic settings. This distribution suggests that foreign language anxiety exists along a continuum and may affect students in different degrees depending on classroom situations, communicative demands, and individual learner characteristics. Similar findings have been widely reported in the literature, where moderate anxiety frequently emerges as the dominant category among university-level foreign language learners while still exerting measurable effects on participation, achievement, and classroom engagement, (Aguila & Harjanto, 2016; Haider, 2022).

The presence of moderate-to-high anxiety is particularly important in teacher education contexts, where students are expected not only to learn English successfully but also to develop confidence in using the language as future educators. Even when anxiety does not reach extreme levels, it may still interfere with classroom participation, willingness to communicate, concentration, and academic performance. In this sense, moderate anxiety should not be interpreted

as insignificant. Rather, it may represent a persistent emotional condition that shapes how students interact with language tasks and perceive themselves as English users.

A closer examination of individual questionnaire items provides further insight into the specific situations that trigger anxiety most strongly. One of the highest mean scores was associated with the statement, “I feel nervous when I know I’ll be called on in English class” (M = 4.28; 72% agreement). This result indicates that spontaneous oral participation remains one of the most anxiety-provoking experiences for students. Being called upon unexpectedly requires learners to respond immediately, often without sufficient preparation time, while simultaneously managing vocabulary retrieval, grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, and the fear of making mistakes in front of others, (Rasouli et al., 2024). These communicative demands often intensify emotional pressure, especially in contexts where language performance is visible to teachers and peers. Previous studies similarly identify spontaneous speaking tasks and oral performance as among the strongest predictors of foreign language classroom anxiety, (Y. Xu & Xie, 2024).

This interpretation is further reinforced by qualitative classroom observations. During classroom interaction, students frequently avoided eye contact when lecturers asked questions, remained silent despite apparent understanding, or hesitated before volunteering responses, (Muhayyang et al., 2023). Some students appeared reluctant to participate unless specifically invited, while others relied on peers to answer first before speaking. These behaviors reflect classic manifestations of communication apprehension and avoidance strategies commonly associated with FLA, (Rahmi, 2024). Such patterns suggest that anxiety is not only experienced internally but is also observable in learners’ classroom behavior and participation choices.

In contrast, the lowest mean score was found for the item, “I feel more confident in English class than in other classes” (M = 2.02; 18% agreement). The low level of agreement with this statement indicates that many students do not perceive English classrooms as spaces where they feel confident or academically secure. Rather than being associated with confidence or mastery, English appears to be linked with uncertainty, self-doubt, and emotional vulnerability compared with other subjects. This finding suggests that foreign language anxiety may extend beyond linguistic performance itself and may influence students’

broader academic confidence, self-perception, and willingness to engage in classroom learning. Previous research similarly indicates that anxiety in foreign language learning is closely related to lower self-esteem, reduced self-efficacy, and negative perceptions of one’s academic competence, particularly when students fear making mistakes or being negatively evaluated by others, (Liu et al., 2025; Yiğit Salihoğlu, 2024). Overall, these findings highlight the complex and multidimensional nature of foreign language anxiety and reinforce the importance of creating supportive classroom environments that foster confidence, reduce fear of judgment, and encourage active participation in English learning.

To identify which domains most affected students, responses were analyzed across the four FLCAS subscales (Table 5).

Table 5. *Mean scores and notable items by anxiety domain*

Domain	Mean Score	Proportion Score > 3 (%)	Notable Item (Mean / % Agreement)
Test Anxiety (TA)	3.68	64.0	“I feel nervous during English tests.” (M = 4.20 / 78%)
General Classroom Anxiety (GA)	3.44	52.7	“I often feel like skipping English class.” (M = 4.05 / 70%)
Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE)	3.22	38.5	“I worry about being laughed at for my English.” (M = 3.80 / 62%)
Communication Apprehension (CA)	3.10	35.2	“I get anxious speaking English in front of peers.” (M = 3.66 / 58%)

Test Anxiety emerged as the most dominant domain, with nearly two-thirds of students reporting nervousness in exam and oral performance contexts. This highlights the evaluative nature of assessments particularly

speaking tests and surprise quizzes as major triggers of anxiety. General Classroom Anxiety also scored relatively high, as students frequently expressed tendencies to avoid participation or considered skipping class. This pattern may reflect limited confidence or insufficient exposure to communicative learning environments during prior schooling.

Although Fear of Negative Evaluation and Communication Apprehension were less prominent, over one-third of students nonetheless reported discomfort related to peer judgment and public speaking. These findings demonstrate that while test-related stress is most acute, social dynamics and communication pressures continue to play a meaningful role in shaping students' anxiety experiences.

The prominence of Test Anxiety and General Classroom Anxiety underscores systemic and pedagogical challenges. English instruction at STKIP PGRI Lampung emphasizes formal examinations, presentations, and performance-based assessments, which may be daunting for students whose high school experiences were largely grammar-oriented and focused on receptive skills. Furthermore, the predominance of Bahasa Indonesia as the medium of instruction and the scarcity of real-world English exposure intensify students' anxiety in high-stakes contexts, (Rahmawati & Eva, 2026). These findings are consistent with prior research, which emphasizes the role of institutional expectations and prior learning backgrounds in shaping FLA.

Finally, the anxiety linked to peer evaluation reflects collectivist cultural norms, where maintaining harmony and avoiding embarrassment are prioritized over individual expression. Similar trends have been observed across Southeast Asian contexts, where classroom anxiety often stems from sensitivity to peer judgment.

CONCLUSION

This study confirmed that Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) is a prevalent challenge among English Department students at STKIP PGRI Lampung. The findings indicate that anxiety remains a meaningful part of students' English learning experiences, influencing not only how they participate in the classroom but also how they perceive their own competence as language learners. Most participants reported moderate levels of anxiety, while a considerable proportion experienced moderately high to high anxiety. Although severe anxiety was not dominant across the cohort, the presence of moderate and elevated

anxiety levels among many students demonstrates that FLA continues to be a significant psychological factor within English language learning in higher education. This suggests that anxiety is not an isolated experience affecting only a few individuals, but rather a broader educational issue that shapes students' engagement with English in multiple ways.

Among the four domains measured by the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), test anxiety and general classroom anxiety emerged as the strongest contributors. These findings reflect the strong emphasis placed on examinations, classroom performance, and academic evaluation in Indonesian higher education. Students frequently encounter learning environments where achievement is measured through formal assessments, oral presentations, classroom participation, and performance-based tasks. Such conditions may increase pressure to perform well, particularly when English proficiency becomes publicly visible and subject to evaluation. The prominence of test anxiety in this study suggests that students often associate English learning with pressure, fear of failure, and concern about academic judgment. Similarly, high levels of general classroom anxiety indicate that discomfort extends beyond tests and may be embedded within everyday classroom interaction and participation.

Although less dominant, fear of negative evaluation and communication apprehension were also evident among many students. These dimensions highlight the continuing influence of peer judgment, teacher feedback, and public speaking expectations in shaping students' emotional responses to English learning. Speaking in front of others, responding spontaneously, and making mistakes in public remain anxiety-provoking experiences for many learners. These findings suggest that students are not only concerned about linguistic accuracy but also about how their performance is perceived by teachers and classmates. For pre-service teachers, this concern may be particularly significant, as they are expected to become future language models while still navigating their own insecurities as learners.

The results point to broader systemic and pedagogical challenges within English language education. Teacher-centered instruction, exam-driven assessment systems, and limited opportunities for communicative practice appear to intensify students' anxiety rather than reduce it. When classroom interaction focuses heavily on correctness, evaluation, and performance outcomes, students may become more concerned

with avoiding mistakes than with developing communicative confidence. Cultural factors further deepen this challenge. In the Indonesian context, collectivist social norms that prioritize harmony, modesty, and avoiding public embarrassment may reduce students' willingness to speak actively in class, even when they understand the material. Together, these structural and cultural dynamics create learning environments in which anxiety can undermine both linguistic performance and broader academic confidence.

Addressing Foreign Language Anxiety therefore requires multi-level intervention. At the pedagogical level, instructors should adopt more student-centered and emotionally supportive teaching strategies that reduce evaluative pressure while encouraging participation. These may include low-stakes speaking activities, collaborative discussion, gradual exposure to oral communication tasks, transparent assessment criteria, clear rubrics, and constructive feedback practices that emphasize progress rather than error alone. Such strategies can help students feel safer when using English and support the development of communicative competence more effectively.

At the institutional level, curriculum design should also be reconsidered to provide more gradual and scaffolded exposure to communicative tasks. Learning experiences should support students not only linguistically but also emotionally by helping them build resilience, confidence, and willingness to communicate in high-stakes academic settings. By situating its findings within both local educational realities and broader cultural contexts, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of FLA in Indonesian teacher education. More importantly, it highlights the urgency of creating emotionally supportive and pedagogically responsive classrooms that prepare pre-service teachers not only to master English successfully, but also to guide future learners with confidence, empathy, and professional readiness.

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