



**Mahidol University**  
Institute for Innovative Learning

# The International Conference on Innovation in Education

**Proceedings**

**Volume 3**



**Building Professional Learning Community in  
Improving Science and Technology Education**



Institute for  
Innovative Learning,  
Mahidol University,  
Thailand



Southeast Asian  
Ministers of Education  
Organization (SEAMEO)  
Secretariat, Thailand



Kenan Institute Asia



Chevron Enjoy Science



National Science  
Museum, Thailand



Rajamangala University  
of Technology  
Phra Nakhon, Thailand



Graduate Institute of Digital  
Learning and Education,  
National Taiwan University  
of Science and Technology,  
Taiwan



Faculty of Education,  
Khon Kaen University,  
Thailand

**November 24-25, 2017**

**Mahidol Adulyadej-Prasrinakarin Building  
Mahidol University, Salaya Campus  
Nakhon Pathom, Thailand**

Hosted by

Institute for Innovative Learning,  
Mahidol University, Thailand  
[www.il.mahidol.ac.th](http://www.il.mahidol.ac.th)

ISSN 2586-8071

# Anxiety among Engineering Students in a Graduate EFL Classroom

**Valeriia SAMOILOVA, Vo Duy THANH and Jeffrey Dawala WILANG**  
*School of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Thailand*  
valeriia.sam@kmutt.ac.th, jeffrey.wil@mail.kmutt.ac.th

**Abstract:** This article reports the descriptive results of foreign language anxiety experiences of engineering students in a top-ranked research university in Thailand. Although numerous studies have been conducted in the past years about English language anxiety, few studies have reported anxiety situations specific to Thai engineering graduate students in learning English as a foreign language (EFL). The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) modified by Mak [18] was distributed to two groups of graduate students – Chemical Engineering and Food Engineering to identify highly anxiety provoking situations and/or situations indicating language anxiety specific to engineering students. Descriptive analysis of FLCAS revealed that sixty percent of the students ( $n=35$ ) have *negative self-perceptions about their English ability*. Nevertheless, more than seventy percent showed that they are *'not frightened'* when they do not understand their teacher and they *'look forward'* to attending their English lessons, especially in the class of Chemical engineering students. Meanwhile, Food Science engineering students indicated that they are *focused* as they expect to *learn grammatical rules* in their English class. Further results have shown that Chemical engineering students tend to *'understand their peers'* when they get nervous while Food Science engineering students usually *'compare their performances'* with other students. In sum, both groups share 13 anxiety provoking situations, five anxiety provoking situations specific to Chemical engineering students, and two specific anxiety provoking situations for the Food science group. The study generated pedagogical implications for teaching English language to engineering graduate students.

**Keywords:** Foreign language anxiety, graduate engineering students, Thai EFL classroom

## Introduction

When asked questions, many students would give the teacher a *silent treatment*. Often times, very limited teacher-student or student-student interactions occur during English lessons. For those who managed to speak, they seemed embarrassed and showed actual signs of worries such as blushing, shaking hands and trembling voice. Most of them would also turn to their peers for help, as they were clearly afraid to communicate with the teacher one on one. When giving feedback to their written assignments, many students would rather look at each other when they struggle to find the words to say. During speaking tests, many would hold on their scripts and walk around before their presentation time. As a result, very few students actually listen to their peers. Similar *worrying* behaviour was also noted before the examinations. Are teachers *monstrous tyrants*? How could teachers help students become more relaxed during English lessons?

In attempt to understand the observed scenarios above and help students feel *more relaxed*, the teachers conducted action research in their respective language classrooms using the framework of foreign language anxiety (herein referred to as *fla*).

## 1. Background of the study

Productive and receptive performances in a foreign language classroom have been established as anxiety provoking situations for many students (Alsowat [3]). Foreign language anxiety, known as worries related to communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope [12]) has been extensively used to understand the specific experiences observed in the language classroom. In order to identify the distinct variables in foreign language learning and interpret them based on the background of both current theoretical and empirical studies on specific anxiety situations, Horwitz et al. [12-13] developed a construct of foreign language anxiety - the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). This unique construct has been used as an instrument to measure levels of language learners' anxiety in a considerable amount of research studies (Aida [1], Phillips [24], Saito et al. [26], Cheng et al. [8], Kitano [15], Cheng [7], Wang and Ding [30], Von Worde [29], Liu [16], Marcos-Llinas and Garau [19], Mak [18], Wilang and Singhasiri [32]).

**Table 1** Highly anxiety provoking situations in the language classroom

Author	Year	Participants/Setting	Mean score	Highest anxiety provoking situation
Kimura, Harumi	2008	Freshmen social sciences and maths majors in English Communication class, Japan	4.27	I get nervous and confused when I'm speaking in my language class.
Machida, Tomohisa	2010	Undergraduate students, Japan	3.70	*I would be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers
Mak, Barley	2011	First year students in English for Academic Purposes, Hong Kong	2.81	I worry about the consequences of failing my English class
Wilang, Jeffrey	2015	Undergraduate students in Mass Communication, Thailand	3.83	* I dislike participating in group discussions
Chinpakdee, Muthita	2015	Second to fourth years students from different faculties in the Reading and Writing course, Thailand	4.36	I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class

Table 1 summarizes the findings from previous studies done on *fla* in university students. All the researchers besides Mak (4-point scale) used 5-point Likert scale when conducting FLCAS questionnaires. The highest mean scores are represented in table. The most anxiety provoking situation is item 10 (I worry about the consequences of failing my English class). In fact, it is the cause of *fla* anxiety for university EFL students in Thailand as well as in Hong Kong. Item 27 (I get nervous and confused when I'm speaking in my language class) also raises anxiety in EFL Japanese students. Another anxious setting for Thai students is participating in group discussions. The students at an American University

had said that they would not feel anxious when speaking to native speaker of the language they're learning (Japanese).

With regards to Thai engineering students' classroom, which is the focus of this research, it appears that only test anxiety and its correlation with test performance has been investigated (Premjit [25]). However, little to none is yet known about Thai engineering students' *fla* in the EFL classroom setting. It is, nevertheless, assumed based on the reviewed literature that graduate students do get anxious when it comes to foreign language learning. Such case was one of the reasons for this study: to find out the reasons behind students' *fla*, to understand it better and by analyzing the results to be able to provide the novice material for teachers to use in order to lower students' anxiety levels in their class by perhaps adjusting their teaching styles.

## **2. The study**

The present study aims to know specific anxiety situations during in-class oral presentation and group discussion among engineering graduate EFL students. During the summer of 2017, two groups of students were enrolled in LNG 601, a writing preparatory course for graduate students enrolled in international programs at KMUTT.

### *2.1 Participants*

The participants in the study were 46 students; 33 students from Chemical engineering and 13 students from Food Science engineering. However, only 36 students consented to use their responses for analysis. Also, one student was excluded in the final data analysis due to missing responses.

### *2.2 Questionnaire*

The questionnaire in this study was a modified version of Horwitz and colleagues' [12-13] Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Mak [18] as it used a four-point Likert scale to 'force respondents to commit themselves' (p. 205). The questionnaire consists of 33 items. It has been proven to be a reliable survey with high levels of internal reliability. For example, Alrabai [2] when conducting research with EFL university students in Saudi Arabia has proven FLCAS to be of  $\alpha.93$  internal reliability. Similarly, Baharum and Ariffin [5] in their research in Malaysian context have proven FLCAS reliability to be  $\alpha.85$  and Thompson and Khawaja [28] in Turkish context at  $\alpha.90$ .

### *2.3 Procedure*

Upon the approval of the Research Ethics Committee, consent forms about the students' participation were sought. In class, the research was explained to the students and they were explicitly told that their participation is voluntary. The anxiety survey forms together with consent forms were distributed to the students.

### *2.4 Data analysis*

SPSS was used to compute the descriptive findings. Specifically, the means of scores and percentages were reported and discussed accordingly. This paper reports the descriptive findings of the students' anxiety in English language learning.

### 3. Results

This paper reports only the descriptive results of anxiety experiences of engineering graduate students at King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi.

#### 3.1 Descriptive analysis of FLCAS

Based on the participants' responses (see Table 2), sixty percent and above implied that item 7 '*I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am*', item 5 '*It would bother me to take more English classes*', and item 14 '*I would be nervous speaking with native speakers*' are anxiety provoking situations.

**Table 2** Descriptive analysis of FLCAS

Item	(n=33)				
	SD %	D %	A %	SA %	M, SD
11* I don't understand why some people get so upset over English classes.	0.0	28.6	54.3	17.1	2.88, .67
7 I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.	2.9	25.7	60.0	11.4	2.80, .67
9 I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.	2.9	31.4	57.1	8.6	2.71, .66
23 I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	2.9	40.0	42.9	14.3	2.68, .75
18* I feel confident when I speak English in English class.	2.9	37.1	57.1	2.9	2.60, .60
10 I worry about the consequences of failing my English class.	2.9	45.7	48.6	2.9	2.51, .61
20 I can feel my heart beating when I'm going to be called on in English class.	5.7	42.9	48.6	2.9	2.48, .65
2* I don't worry about making mistakes in English class.	2.9	48.6	45.7	2.9	2.48, .61
8* I am usually at ease during tests in my English class.	0.0	57.1	42.9	0.0	2.42, .50
22* I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for English class.	5.7	48.6	42.9	2.9	2.42, .65
24 I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	2.9	54.3	40.0	2.9	2.42, .60
33 I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	2.9	51.4	45.7	0.0	2.42, .55
29 I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says.	11.4	40.0	45.7	2.9	2.40, .73
16 Even if I am well prepared for English class, I feel anxious about it.	8.6	42.9	48.6	0.0	2.40, .65
12 In English class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	0.0	62.9	34.3	2.9	2.40, .55
1 I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English class.	5.7	51.4	40.0	2.9	2.40, .65
32* I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English.	8.6	48.6	40.0	2.9	2.37, .68
13 It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class.	8.6	48.5	42.9	0.0	2.34, .63
28* When I'm on my way to English class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	11.4	51.4	28.6	8.6	2.34, .80
27 I get nervous and confused when I am speaking English in my English class.	2.9	68.6	28.6	0.0	2.25, .50
4 It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	2.9	71.4	25.7	0.0	2.22, .49
14* I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers.	8.6	62.9	25.7	2.9	2.22, .64
25 English class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	14.3	54.3	31.4	0.0	2.17, .66
15 I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	14.3	54.3	31.4	0.0	2.17, .66
21 The more I study for an English test, the more confused I get.	20.0	45.7	34.3	0.0	2.14, .73
19 I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	14.3	57.1	28.6	0.0	2.14, .64

Item	SD %	D %	A %	SA %	M, SD
3 I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.	11.4	62.9	25.7	0.0	2.14, .60
26 I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes.	17.1	57.1	22.9	2.9	2.11, .71
30 I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn in order to speak English.	11.4	65.7	22.9	0.0	2.11, .58
6 During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	8.6	74.3	14.3	2.9	2.11, .58
5* It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English classes.	14.3	62.9	22.9	0.0	2.08, .61
31 I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	22.9	57.1	11.4	8.6	2.05, .83
17 I often feel like not going to my English class.	20.0	71.4	8.6	0.0	1.88, .59

\*Items are reverse coded

SD – Strongly Disagree  
A – Agree

SA – Strongly Agree  
D – Disagree

M, SD – Mean, Standard deviation  
n – number of participants

Despite their moderate levels of anxiety, over 60 percent of the students have also indicated non-anxiety situations such as 'they don't tremble when they know they are called on in English class' (Item 3), 'they are not frightened when they don't understand what their English teacher is saying' (Item 4), 'not forgetting things they know when nervous' (Item 12), 'feel like going to English class' (Item 17), 'not nervous and confused when speaking English in class' (Item 27), and 'being not overwhelmed by the number of rules to learn in English' (Item 30).

### 3.2 Descriptive results of FLCAS based on groups

To have better insights on the students' responses, the table below shows the mean scores and standard deviation based on groups. The reason two groups are being looked at separately is because it is assumed that there would be differences in their anxiety levels, because across the University where the study was conducted it is known that Chemical Engineering students' English proficiency is stronger than that of Food Science students. For Chemical engineering group, the mean of scores is 2.25 indicating 18 anxiety situations. The highest mean score is item 11, 'I understand why some people get so upset over English classes' which means that they can relate to the anxiety experiences of other students in class. Meanwhile, the least mean score is item 17, 'I often feel like not going to my English class' which reveals their approval of English language learning.

**Table 3** Descriptive analysis of FLCAS by groups

Description	Chemical engineering n=33		Food science engineering n=13	
	M	SD	M	SD
1 I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English class.	2.32	0.72	2.54	0.52
2 *I worry about making mistakes in English class.	2.45	0.51	2.54	0.77
3 I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.	2.05	0.57	2.31	0.63
4 It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	2.18	0.5	2.31	0.48
5 *It bothers me to take more English classes.	1.91	0.53	2.38	0.65
6 During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	2.14	0.71	<b>2.08</b>	0.28
7 I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.	<b>2.64</b>	0.78	<b>3.08</b>	0.49
8 *I am usually uneasy during tests in my English class.	2.41	0.5	2.46	0.53
9 I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.	2.55	0.8	<b>3.00</b>	0

Description	Chemical engineering <i>n</i> =33		Food science engineering <i>n</i> =13	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
10 I worry about the consequences of failing my English class.	2.45	0.67	2.62	0.51
11 *I understand why some people get so upset over English classes.	<b>2.82</b>	0.73	<b>3.00</b>	0.77
12 In English class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know	2.27	0.46	2.62	0.65
13 It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class	2.18	0.59	2.62	0.65
14 *I would be nervous speaking English with native speakers.	2.23	0.68	2.23	0.56
15 I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	2.09	0.61	2.31	0.75
16 Even if I am well prepared for English class, I feel anxious about it.	2.36	0.73	2.46	0.52
17 I often feel like not going to my English class.	<b>1.77</b>	0.61	2.08	0.28
18 *I don't feel confident when I speak English in English class.	2.45	0.6	2.85	0.55
19 I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	1.95	0.65	2.46	0.52
20 I can feel my heart beating when I'm going to be called on in English class.	2.36	0.66	2.69	0.63
21 The more I study for an English test, the more confused I get.	1.95	0.72	2.46	0.66
22 *I feel pressure to prepare very well for English class.	2.32	0.72	2.62	0.51
23 I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	2.59	0.8	2.85	0.69
24 I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	2.41	0.59	2.46	0.66
25 English class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	2.09	0.68	2.31	0.63
26 I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes.	2.09	0.81	2.15	0.55
27 I get nervous and confused when I am speaking English in my English class.	2.09	0.43	2.54	0.52
28 *When I'm on my way to English class, I feel unsure and not relaxed.	2.32	0.9	2.38	0.65
29 I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says.	2.27	0.83	2.62	0.51
30 I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn in order to speak English.	2.14	0.64	<b>2.08</b>	0.49
31 I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	1.91	0.81	2.31	0.85
32 *I would probably feel uncomfortable around native speakers of English.	2.36	0.73	2.38	0.65
33 I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	2.36	0.58	2.54	0.52

\*The items are restated to reflect items as indicators of anxiety or anxiety provoking situations.

SD – Strongly Disagree SA – Strongly Agree M, SD – Mean, Standard deviation  
A – Agree D – Disagree n – number of participants

For Food science engineering students, the mean of scores is 2.51, slightly higher than the Chemical engineering group, and indicating 15 anxiety situations. The highest mean score is item 7, 'I keep thinking that other students are better at English than I am'. In contrast, two items had the least mean score of 2.08, item 6 'During English class, I find myself thinking about things that I have nothing to do with the course' which means that they are focused on their lessons, and item 30 'I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn in order to speak English' which means that learning rules are expected to be in English language.

Cross comparisons, however, revealed that five items were specific to Chemical engineering group such as item 8 'unease during test', item 16 'feeling anxious when unprepared', item 24 'being self-conscious when speaking', item 28 'feeling unsure and not relaxed', and item 32 'uncomfortableness around native speakers'. Only two anxiety situations were specific to Food science engineering students including item 13 'being embarrassed to volunteer in class' and item 27 'being nervous and confused when speaking English' in class.

Based on the standard deviation, all Food science students agreed on item 9, 'I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class' (SD=0).

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusions

There are some interesting observations from the two tables above that needed explanation.

It appears that item 27 (I get nervous and confused and nervous in my English class than in my other classes) which is specific to Food science engineering students at KMUTT was reported by Kimura [14] as the highest anxiety situation among freshmen social sciences and math majors in English Communication class in Japan. On the other hand, item 32 (I would probably feel uncomfortable around native speakers of English) which is specific to Chemical engineering students was found similar as the highest anxiety provoking situation in Chinpakdee's [9] study among undergraduate students taking reading and writing courses in Thailand. While it may seem that specificity of the anxiety provoking situations can be revealed between the two groups, the findings are inconclusive due to sampling, classroom environment, and teachers, among others. Related to sampling there was smaller number of Food science students ( $n=13$ ) as compared to the Chemical engineering group ( $n=22$ ). More importantly, the state nature of *fla* where it varies from moment to moment, individual to individual, and context needs more studies (Horwitz [11], Zheng [34]) in order to deduce conclusive findings of such anxiety differences between Chemical and Food science engineering students.

While we cannot conclude the specificity of anxiety situations associated with the particular groups under study, it can be observed based on the range of scores that Food science students tend to get slightly more anxious during their lessons than the Chemical engineering students. The reason for this might be the fact that in the Chemical engineering class the amount of students was more than double than in Food Science class. Such environment would allow the teacher to concentrate on the students a lot more and pay more attention to their work. Teacher can easily single the students out and that might add to their anxiety levels being slightly higher. To provide empirical evidence, future studies may consider a larger population in order to compute statistical differences by using Independent Samples *t* test. Another explanation why Chemical engineering students' anxiety might be lower is because at the University in question they are known to be more proficient in their English skills, than the Food Science group.

Next, it is important to note that above 60 percent of the total participants disagreed on being overwhelmed by the number of rules to learn (see Table 2, item 30). In fact, Food science engineering students indicated it as the least worrying situation in class. Before enrolling for LNG 601, students must have known that the course emphasizes on writing skill. This expectation from the students contradicts reported studies that *fla* steers students away from English language learning, for example, in writing courses (Cheng [7]). To illustrate, both groups have specified that that they are *focused* (Item 6), willing to *take more English classes* (Item 5), have open minded attitude towards teacher corrections and evaluations (Items 19, 27 and 31), becoming *less confused* when they study more (Item 21), among others (refer to Table 3). The graduate students' tolerance of ambiguity, positive attitude towards corrections, open-mindedness, and motivation may be credited to their educational background and their present goals in their graduate studies. Previous studies conveyed that tolerance of ambiguity lowers language anxiety among students (Dewale & Tsui [10], Matsuura [20]) and motivation determines language learning success (Chang [6]). Moreover, the willingness of the engineering graduate students to have corrective feedback is similar to the Zhang and Rahimi [33]. This indicates that both younger and older learners are open to feedback, perhaps because their common goal is language learning. In a separate study, Ay [4] found that younger people felt more anxious than older people. We suggest that more studies involving other variables such as educational background, length of English language learning, exposure to English



language learning and use, individual differences including autonomy, self-esteem, and tolerance of ambiguity, among others would be included to understand *fla* among engineering graduate students in Thailand or elsewhere.

When comparing our results with Mak [18], whose 4-point Likert scale FLCAS questionnaire we used in our study, we look at the mean scores from his students and ours. Mak's mean score is 2.5. Our study has revealed mean scores of 2.25 for Chemical Engineering students, and 2.51 for Food Science. The difference between Mak's and Chemical Engineering groups indicates that the latter had lower levels of anxiety. This might be due to the notion of Chemical Engineering students being a strong group when it comes to English skill, as well as the fact that they are graduate students might be playing a role here. With regards to Food Science students being almost on the same level of anxiety, this can be explained by the fact that they are known to be less proficient in English.

For other general results, it can be perceived that both groups of students get stressed when faced with the possibility of being caught off guard in class and might be afraid that they will not do as well as their peers. What causes such state of affairs for Thai postgraduate engineering groups might be the cultural aspect of Asian people when it comes to "losing face" Based on Munro [21] it is a big deal in Asian societies. For example, the student cannot provide the right answer when being asked a question in class and all the attention is on him/her. Not being able to keep up/save the face could result into a rather awkward and humiliating situation, which could influence the other teacher-student relationship in that class. Another cultural aspect, which is addressed by Schuldberg et al. [27] can possibly be the fact that overall in Thai society people do not like to stand out and draw attention to themselves. That is perhaps why students give "silent treatment" to the teachers in class. Lastly, students can doubt their EFL ability and therefore lack self-confidence when forced to speak English in class.

In spite of the anxiety experiences of English language learning, it is interesting to note that both groups of students look forward to attending their English classes. It could be speculated that the course contents is interesting and is helpful to their graduate studies.

## 5. Pedagogical Implications

FLCAS questionnaire distributed to the students helped to determine the situations in the EFL classroom that provoke the most anxiety. In the two groups of students that have been involved the following settings seemed to cause most problems: item 7 "I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am", item 9 "I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class" and item 11 "don't understand why some people get so upset over English classes".

Item 7 might require teachers to consider the fact that everyone works at their own pace, and perhaps by being given more time the students who lack confidence will be able to do better. It is also important to not single out students who tend to be slower and more anxious in the their foreign language classroom by perhaps asking all students equal amount in class and by praising students who try to do well despite their *fla* to boost their self-esteem.

Helping the students who seemed to be bothered by item 9 will require a lot of teacher patience. By making the students aware that they will be asked a question upon the completion of the activity might encourage them to prepare better and will not catch them off guard when the teacher speaks to them. Giving the students enough time to prepare and allowing them to use different resources to be able to provide correct responses will help them to remain calm when being forced to speak during their EFL lesson.

Judging by item 7 and 11 it is obvious that although students can empathize with their peers as to why they would “get upset” over English class, it is still very likely that students get stressed out when speaking in front of their classmates. They can make mistakes and get nervous and perhaps become the point of jokes and laughter among their friends.

The low anxiety items of the questionnaire (6 - During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course, 17- I often feel like not going to my English class, 30 - I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn in order to speak English) indicate that students are still motivated and interested in learning and coming to class. Even the amount of rules in the English language does not seem to put them off.

All the above mentioned factors show that lessons need to be carefully planned by the teacher in order to make the students feel even more motivated and allow them to be comfortable and calm in their EFL classroom.

### *5.1 Activity one*

One of the activities tried out in Academic Listening and Speaking class was a group work exercise, as apparently collaborative learning can help to reduce anxiety in the classroom. (Pattanapichet et al. [23], Noguera Ruzi, [22]). The students were divided into teams and were given a task to rank the factors necessary for the country to progress (political stability, personal safety, health-care, education etc.) from 1 to 8. They also needed to provide reasons why they chose a certain factor to be in a specific place. The point of the exercise was to encourage students to work together and to make sure everyone was involved in the discussion. When giving their answers, each member of the group was required to speak about at least one factor and the reason their group agreed on having it in a certain place. The task allowed enough time for everyone to prepare their answers as well allowed some fun in the discussion with their peers. None of the students were singled out and everyone had to participate. The students could choose beforehand which answer and reason to speak about, so there was no “caught by surprise” situation. The activity also gave students enough time and opportunity to formulate appropriate responses for their level with the correct use of vocabulary and grammar to boost their English language proficiency. Some students got as confident as to have disagreements in their groups about which factor they think should belong where on the rank. Disagreeing with each other and speaking up their point of view was very much supported by the teacher. Such behaviour would mean the students are interested, focused and are willing to take risks, which inevitably would lead to them feeling confident and comfortable in their EFL classroom.

### *5.2 Activity two*

Another activity that worked well in the Academic Reading and Writing class was with the help of authentic material. Using authentic material rather than the textbook can excite students a lot more, especially if it is something they can relate to. The lesson was based on the sports article about the big football game that took place the weekend before. Manchester City beat Liverpool 5-0 at the early stage of the English Premier League season. As early as just after seeing the title of the text they were going to work with, the students showed signs of excitement for the topic. The students had to work in pairs by reading the texts and then answering some questions as well as do matching vocabulary activity where they had to find definitions of the words from the text based on context. The activity encouraged the students and kept them motivated. They were happy to discuss

the game with each other and see the familiar names of famous football players and share their knowledge about teams they support. Overall, as a teacher I have experienced that finding something you can relate to students with, whether it is football clubs, books, movies or other hobbies, has proven to create a more open relationship. Being friendly with the students and genuinely taking interest in their affairs, lives, studies helps to establish a connection which makes them feel a lot more relaxed.

Playing music just before class, during the break or while they are doing a piece of work in class helps to create a casual atmosphere and makes the students feel like the teacher's or peers' eyes are not entirely on them. Sometimes allowing them to pick songs they enjoy listening to goes a long way and truly feels appreciated.

Coming up with interesting classroom settings, discussions and activities certainly generates a better learning environment than rigidly sticking to the book and not allowing any fun to be had. Having a healthy relationship, showing understanding and prompting a good mood in the classroom creates happier, more motivated and interested students who are eager to learn and succeed.

## References

- [1] Aida, Y. (1994). Examination of Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's construct of foreign language anxiety: The case of students of Japanese. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78(2), 155-168.
- [2] Alrabai, F. (2014). The influence of teachers' anxiety-reducing strategies on learners' foreign language anxiety. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, 9 (2), 163-190.
- [3] Alsowat, H. H. (2016). Foreign Language Anxiety in Higher Education: A Practical Framework for Reducing FLA. *European Scientific Journal*, 12(7).
- [4] Ay, S. (2010). Young adolescent students' foreign language anxiety in relation to language skills at different levels. *Journal of International Social Research*, 3(11).
- [5] Baharum, N.D., & Riffin, K. (2014). Anxiety in learning English among low achievers: The question of gender, language preference and academic performance, In A. Kasim et al., Eds., *Proceedings of the International Conference on Science, Technology and Social Sciences (ICSTSS)*, 2012, 3-36.
- [6] Chang, S.F. (2002). Conceptualizing Taiwanese college students' English learning motivation. *Research Report for the National Science Council*. Taiwan R.O.C.
- [7] Cheng, Y. (2002). Factors Associated with Foreign Language Writing Anxiety. *Foreign Language Annals*, 35(6), 647-656.
- [8] Cheng, Y., Horwitz, E. K., & Schallert, D. L. (1999). Language Anxiety: Differentiating Writing and Speaking Components. *Language Learning*, 49(3), 417-446.
- [9] Chinpakdee, M. (2015). Thai EFL University Students' Perspectives on Foreign Language Anxiety. *Silpakorn University Journal of Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts*, 15(3), 61-90.
- [10] Dewaele, J. M., & Tsui S. I. (2013). The link between Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety, Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity and self-rated English proficiency among Chinese learners. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 3(1), 47-66.
- [11] Horwitz, E.,K. (2001). Language Anxiety and Achievement. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 21, 112-26.
- [12] Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *Modern Language Journal*, 70 (2), 125-32.
- [13] Horwitz, E., Horwitz, M., & Joann, C. (1986). Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal* 70:125-132.
- [14] Kimura, H. (2008). Foreign Language Listening Anxiety: Its Dimensionality and Group Differences. *JALT Journal*, 30(2).
- [15] Kitano, K. (2001). Anxiety in the college Japanese language class. *Modern Language Journal*, 85, 549-566.
- [16] Liu, M. (2006b). Anxiety in Chinese EFL students at different proficiency levels. *System*, 34, 301-316.
- [17] Machida, T. (2010). Foreign Language Anxiety among Intermediate-level University Students of Japanese. *Proceedings of the 22nd Annual Conference of the Central Association of Teachers of Japanese*, 62.
- [18] Mak, B. (2011). An exploration of speaking-in-class anxiety with Chinese ESL learners. *System*, 39, 202-214.
- [19] Marcos-Llinás, M. & Garau, M. J. (2009). Effects of language anxiety on three proficiency-level courses of Spanish as a foreign language. *Foreign Language Annals*. 42, 1, 94-111.

- [20] Matsuura, H. (2007). Intelligibility and individual learner differences in the EIL context. *System*, 35, 293-304.
- [21] Munro, C. (2009). The cultural conundrum of losing face. *The Sydney Morning Herald*. Available: <http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/contributors/the-cultural-conundrum-of-losing-face-20091118-intr.html> 13 Oct, 2017
- [22] Noguera Ruzi, C. F. (2014). The Use Of Group Work Activities To Foster EFL Oral Production And Reduce Anxiety On Intermediate EFL Students. Submitted to the School of Human Sciences in 19. Partial Fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of B.A. in English and French Linguistics and Languages department, English and French Program, University of Narino.
- [23] Pattanapichet, F., & Changpueng P. (2012). Cooperative Learning: An Approach to Reduce Students' Anxiety in learning English. *Executive Journal*, 32(4), 61-66.
- [24] Phillips, E. (1992). The effects of language anxiety on students' oral test performance and attitudes. *The Modern Language Journal*. 76, 1, 14-26.
- [25] Premjit, P. (2015). The Relationship Between Test Anxiety and Test Performance of L2 Learners on The Test of English for Thai Engineers and Technologists (TETET). Special Study Report Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements For the Degree of Master of Arts (Applied Linguistics for English Language Teaching), SoLA, KMUTT.
- [26] Saito, Y., & Samimy, K. K. (1996). Foreign language anxiety and language performance: A study of learner anxiety in beginning, intermediate, and advanced-level college students of Japanese. *Foreign Language Annals*, 29, 239-251.
- [27] Schuldberg, J., Fox, N. S., Jones C. A., Hunter, P., Bechard, M., Dornon, L., Gotler, S., Shouse, H. M., Stratton, M. (2012). Same, Same – But Different: The Development of Cultural Humility through an International Volunteer Experience. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2, 17-30.
- [28] Thompson, A.S., & Khawaja, A. (2015). Foreign language anxiety in turkey: The role of multilingualism. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. 1(1), 1-16.
- [29] Von Worde, R. (2003). Students' Perspectives on Foreign Language Anxiety. *Inquiry*, 8(1).
- [30] Wang, Q., & Ding, X., (2001). Language anxiety among rural middle school students in west China. *Journal of Northwest Normal University*, 38 (5), 68-73.
- [31] Wilang, J. D., & Satitdee, A. (2015). Decreasing Anxiety among Communication Arts EFL Students Through Peer Teaching and Activities. *Catalyst*, 12(2), 68-76.
- [32] Wilang, J. D., & Singhasiri, W. (2017). Out-of-class Anxiety in A Non-English Speaking Context and Its Effects on Intelligibility and Comprehensibility. *Issues in Educational Research (IIER)*, 27(3), 620-638.
- [33] Zhang, L. J. & Rahimi, M. (2014). EFL learners' anxiety and their beliefs about corrective feedback in oral communication classes. *System*, 42, 429-239.
- [34] Zheng, Y. (2008). Anxiety and Second/Foreign Language Learning Revisited. *Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education/Revue canadienne des jeunes chercheurs et chercheurs en education*, 1(1).