

ANXIETY AND DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE AMONG INDIGENOUS PEOPLE LEARNERS

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Abstract

Anxiety remains a significant barrier in the effective acquisition of the English language, particularly among Indigenous People learners in rural educational settings. This study aimed to determine the level of anxiety and difficulties in learning English among Grade 10 Indigenous People (IP) in the school districts of Bukidnon, for the School Year 2024–2025. Specifically, it examined the respondents' level anxiety in terms of communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation, their level of difficulties in learning English language in linguistic challenges, speech processing, academic and conversational English Skill, and access to speaking opportunities. It also examined if there is significant relation between the two variables. A total of 175 Grade 10 Indigenous People from seven public secondary schools were selected using stratified sampling technique. Employing a descriptive-correlational research design, the study utilized modified survey questionnaires as research instruments. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics: mean and standard deviation and Pearson-r correlation, to identify significant relationships between variables.

The findings revealed that respondents generally experienced a High level of anxiety, with Test Anxiety and Fear of Negative Evaluation being the most prominent. Likewise, a level of difficulty in learning English, was Access to Speaking opportunities emerging as the most challenging area. A statistically significant positive correlation was found between anxiety and language learning difficulties, with Test Anxiety having the strongest impact. The study concludes that heightened anxiety negatively affects respondents' ability to acquire English effectively. It is recommended that educators should foster a supportive learning environment, implement anxiety-reducing strategies, and provide targeted language instruction to enhance respondents' confidence and language performance.

Keywords: anxiety; English Language learning difficulties

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

English subject learning difficulties have become more apparent, especially in language learning settings. This is one aspect of a wider field of research on the issues respondents encounter in learning a second language. Terms such as language acquisition barriers, language learning anxiety, and communication skills development are among the most significant in explaining these issues. In the context of Grade 10 Indigenous People (IP) in the rural areas, this matter was addressed since competence in English is generally associated with school performance and future career prospects.

In addition, the effect of anxiety on language learning, especially in English as a Second Language

(ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environment, has been researched widely. Nevertheless, despite all the research, the problem still exists, with studies showing that language anxiety significantly impairs respondents' capacity to process new information effectively, resulting in poor retention and utilization of language skills (Alnuzaili & Uddin, 2020). Anxious respondents tend to avoid classroom activities because they fear making mistakes or being criticized, which worsens their learning problems (Maher & King, 2023). Additionally, respondents who find English difficult are likely to experience fear of negative evaluation and communication apprehension, which deters them from participating in language-learning activities (Faryal et al., 2019). The persistence of these issues points to a significant gap in knowledge regarding how anxiety influences respondents' experiences in particular contexts, such as Sumilao and Impasug-ong Districts.

Moreover, some studies have cited various reasons why students' English learning, especially in multilingual contexts, has not been successful. Existing research clearly shows that language anxiety is a significant hindrance to effective English language acquisition. In all settings, respondents face anxiety based on several factors, such as communication apprehension, fear of negative judgment, and test anxiety (Hakim, 2019; Hajiyeva, 2024). Research conducted in Saudi Arabia has emphasized the existence of English language learning anxiety and the importance of appropriate teaching methods in preventing its occurrence (Alshehri, 2024).

Additionally, studies indicate a correlation between language learning anxiety and academic achievement, with increased anxiety levels tending to be associated with poorer grades in English (Dauba, 2024; Gan, 2022). Studies of reading anxiety indicate a multifaceted relationship with reading strategies, which implies that anxiety may impact the extent to which respondents engage with reading tasks in English as a foreign language (Dang, 2024). Despite these observations, there remains a need for localized research to determine the extent of anxiety and its effects on students in specific contexts, such as the Sumilao and Impasug-ong Districts. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the relationship between the IP respondents' anxiety level in terms of communication apprehension, test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and their learning difficulties in English.

This research aims to offer insights to guide teachers in implementing interventions that address both emotional and academic problems. According to Panayiotou et al. (2019), such integrated strategies are more likely to lead to long-term improvements in respondents' performance than interventions targeting either dimension separately. The researcher was prompted to conduct this study after observing that many Indigenous respondents experience noticeable discomfort and hesitation when communicating in English, especially in classroom settings where English is seldom used outside the school setting.

Although several studies have explored language anxiety and learning difficulties, few have focused on how these issues specifically affect Indigenous respondents whose linguistic and cultural backgrounds differ significantly from those of mainstream groups. This gap highlights the need to examine their experiences more closely, particularly regarding communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation in learning English. Through narrowing the gap between theory and practice, this study will help create more inclusive learning environments and nurture learning spaces to ensure a better future for future generations of IP respondents.

2. Theoretical framework

This study was anchored in Horwitz et al.'s (1986) Theory of Foreign Language Anxiety, as cited in the study by Marnani and Cuocci (2022). Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) theory presents a multi-faceted approach to describing the varieties of anxiety involved in language learning situations. General anxiety is, by contrast, seen as being more of an omnipresent condition than a contextualized one, and Foreign Language Anxiety as a specific situational anxiety. Their theory establishes three related components of Foreign Language Anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension encompasses a fear or anxiety about communicating with others in the target language due to a concern about making mistakes or not being understood. Test anxiety refers to test-taking apprehension for language tests or exams that can interfere with performance by increasing stress and disrupting cognitive processes. Lastly, fear of negative evaluation is the apprehension of being judged poorly by others because of one's language skills, causing self-consciousness and hesitation to engage in language activities.

The strength of Horwitz et al.'s theory is its specificity, which enables targeted interventions to address the distinct features of Foreign Language Anxiety. By identifying the distinct elements of language anxiety, teachers can then adjust their strategies to address the unique needs of their students. This differentiated strategy, informed by Horwitz et al.'s model, allows teachers to develop more effective and supportive language learning environments that minimize anxiety and enhance student achievement.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to investigate the effects of anxiety on difficulties in learning English among Grade 10 IP students in the Sumilao and Impasug-ong Districts, Division of Bukidnon, for the School Year 2024-2025.

The descriptive aspect of the research aimed to describe the respondents' level of anxiety in terms of communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation, as well as their difficulties in learning English, covering linguistic challenges, speech processing difficulties, academic and conversational English skills, and access to speaking opportunities.

The correlational component examined the relationship between respondents' anxiety levels and their difficulties in learning English. By determining the strength and direction of this relationship, the study seeks to understand whether higher levels of anxiety contribute to greater difficulties in language acquisition. The

design is suitable for exploring the potential predictive influence of anxiety on language-learning challenges without manipulating variables, thereby maintaining the natural setting of the educational environment.

3.2. Participants

The respondents of this study were the one hundred seventy-five (175) Grade 10 Indigenous People enrolled in four (4) secondary schools within Sumilao District, and three (3) schools within Impasug-ong District, Division of Bukidnon, for the School Year 2024-2025. These schools include San Vicente National High School, Sumilao National High School, Vista Villa Annex, and Licoan Integrated School in Sumilao District. Guihean Integrated School, Iligan Annex, and Kalabugao National High School participated in this study within the Impasug-ong District. This population was chosen because students at this stage are expected to engage with more complex English language skills, including academic and conversational proficiency, which may heighten anxiety and learning difficulties. Hence, respondents were expected to show greater proficiency in speaking, reading, and writing. This stage is suitable for examining anxiety and English learning challenges. Additionally, respondents in Grade 10 have had sufficient exposure to English from earlier grade levels to respond thoughtfully and intelligently about their learning experiences. Additionally, this grade level is critical as they prepare students for senior high school, where English language competence becomes increasingly essential for academic success. The distribution of respondents is shown in Table A.

Table A
Distribution of Respondents

District/School Code		Population	Respondents
A			
	A1	105	40
	A2	96	35
	A3	75	28
	A4	15	5
B			
	B1	23	8
	B2	73	27
	B3	87	32
Total		474	175

3.3. Data Collection Instrument

This study utilized two patterned and modified research instruments. The questionnaire is divided into two main parts: Classroom Anxiety and Difficulties in Learning English. The questionnaire consisted of two main parts, each crafted to provide data that aligned with the research objectives.

Part I inquired on Classroom Anxiety using a patterned and modified version of Horwitz et al.'s (2019) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale. It measured three dimensions of anxiety: Communication Apprehension, Test Anxiety, and Fear of Negative Evaluation. Initially, each dimension included 13 indicators, each rated on a 4-point Likert scale from 'At all times' to 'Never'. The researcher expanded the number of indicators to 15 for each anxiety. This structure enables the study to capture nuanced levels of anxiety, providing insights into how different types of anxiety affect respondents' English language performance.

Part II examined the Difficulties in Learning the English Language, adapted and modified from Fitri (2019). The items were organized into five areas: Linguistic challenges, Speech Processing, Academic and Conversational English Skills, and Access to Speaking Opportunities. A 4-point frequency scale (Never to Always) is used to gauge how often respondents encounter these difficulties.

3.4. Validity and Reliability of the instrument

To ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments, the researcher sought expert judgment on the questionnaire's accuracy, suitability, and appropriateness. These experts are two Principal 1 of the Division of Bukidnon and a Program Head of Phinma COC SGPS. The instruments were also pilot-tested with 30 respondents in the neighborhood districts on May 11, 2025. The pilot test results were good, with no queries about the instrument. The validators assessed each item on clarity, organization, objectivity, appropriateness, and alignment with the study's constructs—namely, respondents' anxiety and difficulties in learning English.

To assess the test's reliability, Cronbach's Alpha was used, yielding $\alpha = 0.979$ across the individual domains, ranging from $\alpha = 0.904$ to $\alpha = 0.986$, well above the acceptable threshold of 0.85. The results revealed excellent internal consistency across all domains and sub-domains. This confirms that the questionnaires are both statistically reliable and psychometrically sound for use in the main study.

The validation results showed that the instruments were generally valid, with all validators rating the items between "Very Good" and "Excellent." Minor revisions were recommended, such as rewording passive or vague items in the teachers' questionnaire into action-based statements, restructuring sub-domain groupings in the respondents' tool for clarity, and rephrasing negatively worded items to ensure consistent interpretation and scoring. These recommendations were duly incorporated. The purpose of the pilot test was to evaluate item clarity, response flow, and the instruments' internal consistency.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

In conducting this study, the researcher first secured a recommendation and permit letter from the Dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies of PHINMA-Cagayan de Oro City. This served as formal authorization to carry out the research. Subsequently, a letter of permission to conduct the data collection in the Sumilao & Impasug-ong District, Division of Bukidnon, was forwarded to the Schools Division Superintendent. Along with this letter, other necessary documents were submitted, including the validated questionnaire, the approved thesis proposal, and a certification from the Public Schools District Supervisor and School Head. This certification confirmed adherence to DepEd Order No. 9, s. In 2005, the institution instituted measures to increase engaged time-on-task or the "No Disruptions of Classes" policy.

Upon receiving the approved letter from the Schools Division Superintendent, the researcher made a courtesy call to the office of the Sumilao & Impasug-ong District Supervisor before commencing the data-gathering activities. As permission was granted, the researcher submitted a formal request to the School Heads of the selected schools, asking for their approval to involve their teachers and respondents as participants in the study. Additionally, permission from the class advisers was obtained to facilitate the data collection within their respective classrooms.

To ensure the ethical conduct of the study and safeguard the rights and wellbeing of the learner participants, parental consent was sought. A research consent form was distributed to each student involved in the study, clearly outlining the study's objectives, procedures, potential benefits, and possible risks. Parents were requested to sign and return the consent form, indicating their willingness for their child to participate in the study.

The data-gathering process involved administering a survey questionnaire to the selected teachers and respondents. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: the Respondents Anxiety Questionnaire and the English Language Difficulties. The researcher ensured that the participants fully understood the questionnaire items by providing brief instructions and clarifications before they began.

The questionnaires were distributed and collected personally by the researcher to ensure a high response rate. The researcher was also present to address any questions or concerns the respondents had during data collection. All gathered data were treated with the utmost confidentiality, ensuring respondents' anonymity. The researcher organized and secured the collected data for accurate analysis and reporting of the study's findings.

3.6. Data Analysis Procedure

To analyze the data gathered in this study, the researcher uses both descriptive and inferential statistical methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of students' anxiety and difficulties in speaking English. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize and describe their levels of anxiety and language difficulties.

To interpret the levels of respondents' anxiety and difficulties in learning the English language, mean scores were calculated for each category—Communication Apprehension, Test Anxiety, Fear of Negative Evaluation, and the five areas of language difficulties (Linguistic challenges, Speech Processing Difficulties, Academic and Conversational English Skills, and Access to Speaking Opportunities). These mean scores matched against the predefined interpretation scale, allowing the researcher to determine the respondents' overall perceptions and experiences in each area.

Moreover, this study used Pearson's r correlation to test the significant relationship between the respondents' level of anxiety and difficulties in their English classes. The data was processed and analyzed using statistical software to ensure accuracy and efficiency. The interpretation of the results was guided by the study's research questions and hypotheses, enabling the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions and provide recommendations to address students' anxiety and language difficulties.

All statistical analyses were conducted using appropriate software, ensuring accurate computation and interpretation of the results. The findings served as the basis for drawing conclusions and making recommendations relevant to the study's objectives.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical standards to ensure the rights, dignity, and wellbeing of all participants. Before data collection, the researcher secured approval from the Dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies at PHINMA-Cagayan de Oro City and obtained permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Bukidnon.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants, including parental consent for learner-respondents. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by assigning codes rather than names, thereby ensuring that personal information was not disclosed.

The study also complied with DepEd Order No. 9, s. 2005, which mandates no disruption of classes, ensuring that the data collection process does not interfere with regular teaching and learning activities. This study also adhered to ethical standards for the proper application of AI. The researcher completed and filed an AI Declaration Form outlining the use of AI tools to support this study. To guarantee correctness and academic integrity, every output produced with AI aid was thoroughly examined and revised. Furthermore,

the research study was evaluated in accordance with the PHINMA Cagayan de Oro College Research Ethics Guidelines, and ethical clearance was obtained prior to conducting the study to ensure that all research procedures adhered to established ethical standards. The research then passed by the Institutional Ethics Review Board, and the right to study was granted.

4. Results and Discussion

This part presents the results and discussion of the data gathered to determine the level of anxiety and the difficulties experienced by Grade 10 Indigenous respondents in learning English in the Sumilao & Impasug-on District, Bukidnon, for the School Year 2024 to 2025. The data are presented in tabular form, as stated in the problem earlier.

Problem 1: What is the respondents' level of anxiety in terms of communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation?

Table 1
Distribution of Respondents' Level of Anxiety in Terms of
Communication Apprehension

As a learner...	Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
I feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking.		3.17	0.76	Most of the time
I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on.		3.05	0.74	Most of the time
I am afraid when I do not understand what the teacher is saying.		3.11	0.73	Most of the time
I panic when I have to speak impromptu.		3.07	0.69	Most of the time
I get so nervous, I forget things I know.		2.97	0.81	Most of the time
I am embarrass to volunteer answers.		3.01	0.73	Most of the time
I am ready to be corrected everytime I make a mistake.		3.02	0.75	Most of the time
I am afraid to be called and my heart pounds easily.		3.13	0.86	Most of the time
I am self-conscious about speaking the English language in front of other students.		2.99	0.80	Most of the time
I get nervous and confused when I am speaking.		3.06	0.76	Most of the time
I get nervous when I do not understand every word the teacher says.		3.19	0.78	Most of the time
I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the English language.		3.13	0.69	Most of the time
I get nervous when the teacher asks questions which I have not prepared in advance.		3.13	0.80	Most of the time

I ask about the topic but is afraid that this may lead to silly question.	3.07	0.82	Most of the time
I hesitate to start conversations because I am afraid my classmates will not respond positively.	2.97	0.88	Most of the time
Overall	3.07	0.77	Most of the time
Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 At all times/ Very High	1.76 – 2.50 Sometimes/ Low		
2.51 – 3.25 Most of the time/ High	1.00 – 1.75 Never/ Very Low		

Table 1 shows the level of anxiety of respondents in terms of communication apprehension., with an overall mean of 3.07 (SD = 0.77), described as **Most of the time** interpreted as **High**. This means that most of the 175 respondents have a High level of anxiety in terms of Communication Apprehension. It implies that the respondent's degree of nervousness or discomfort when conversing with others is high due to lack of confidence and limited exposure to English speaking situations. As observed, IP respondents sometimes associate English communication with anxiety and self-doubt, resulting from their limited exposure and distinct cultural backgrounds from the language.

Sugue et al. (2024) found that IP respondents feel anxious and lack self-awareness when asked to speak in class, especially when they are unprepared or unsure of the right terminology. Bonifacio et al. (2021) noticed that anxiety prevents respondents from interacting and lowering their confidence in speaking English, particularly in formal or casual conversations.

The highest-rated indicator **As a learner, I get nervous when I do not understand every word the teacher says**, with a mean of 3.19 (SD = 0.78), described as **Most of the time**, interpreted as **High**. This means respondents has the pressure to receive instructions clearly during the class time as the teacher speaks. The respondents tend to get nervous when they could not even pick up a few words in a discussion. This implies that IP respondents are more nervous when they are confused with lessons on English. Most of the respondents cannot comprehend the teacher immediately because they must decode and translate the message first in their mother language which is a problem because it takes time and has difficulty understanding the teacher. The fear stemmed from the notion that omitting a word in discussions respondents fails to respond to the question satisfactorily. As noticed, IP respondent shows that they have problems with the adjustment to

English as a second or third language which is partly caused by poor exposure in their home and community environment. Alnuzaili and Uddin (2020) noted that high levels of anxiety are impeding the process of language acquisition as the respondents had a decreased comprehension capacity of verbal information. Butcher et al. (2020) concluded that anxiety inhibited the performance in verbal exercises, particularly at the beginning stages of learning, which could be the reason why the respondents experienced fear when they could not comprehend.

The lowest-rated indicator is **As a learner, I can get so nervous, I forget things I know** with a mean of 2.97 (SD = 0.81), described as **Most of the time**, interpreted as **High**. This means that respondents experienced a high level of anxiety and tends to forget information they already know. This result implies that respondents have a high degree of apprehension in the communication process as the anxiety gets in the way of clear and confident expression of their ideas. As a result, respondents' nervousness is enough to stop them in expressing what they really know and most of them are not confident to speak out in an assertive manner. As observed, this nervousness prevents the respondents to come out even when they know the answer; learning opportunities are therefore lost since respondents are unable to express their thoughts and discover their potential.

Putwain and von der Embse (2020) noted that anxiety negatively affected memory recall and vocal articulation in learning. Tripathi (2019) highlighted that positive teacher-student relationships reduced anxiety levels and enabled the respondents to express themselves more confidently and engage in information retrieval more efficiently under stressful circumstances.

Similarly, the lowest-rated indicator is **As a learner, I hesitate to start conversations because I am afraid my classmates will not respond positively**, both with a mean of 2.97 (SD = 0.88), described as **Most of the time**, interpreted as **High**. This means that respondents are hesitant to take the initiative and start a conversation as they are afraid that their classmates will have a negative response. This stuttering implies a high degree of communication apprehension since their concern about being judged or dismissed affects their

desire to communicate and talk to others. As observed, IP respondents continue to feel awkward and doubtful of speaking English to peers as a means of communication, since social approval plays a critical role in terms of their comfort in communication. It is sense of belongingness which is a crucial factor among IP respondents particularly when dealing with peers. Zhang (2020) remarked that failing to have many opportunities to communicate in English might lead to anxiety in the respondents, which would prompt them not to initiate conversations. This may be since they lack confidence and fear to error is a reason not to meet with others extensively. Sugue et al. (2024) similarly observed that Indigenous respondents often avoid speaking because of the fear of a potentially negative reaction of other people, which means marked stigma of communication fear caused by cultural sensitivity and fear of negative feedback.

Table 2

Distribution of Respondents' Level of Anxiety in Terms of Test Anxiety

As a learner...	Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
	I am uncomfortable during tests.	3.10	0.84	Most of the time
	I worry about the consequences of failing the subject.	3.25	0.71	Most of the time
	I get anxious seeing others finish their tests faster than me.	3.17	0.75	Most of the time
	I have trouble sleeping the night before a test.	3.00	0.83	Most of the time
	I find it hard to concentrate while studying for a test.	2.93	0.87	Most of the time
	I worry that I will forget everything I studied during the test.	3.17	0.75	Most of the time
	I have a difficulties managing my time during a test.	3.15	0.81	Most of the time
	I feel a sense of dread when I think about upcoming tests.	3.10	0.72	Most of the time
	I feel like I perform worst on tests than I do on regular classwork.	3.10	0.80	Most of the time
	I am stress and panic during test time.	3.10	0.79	Most of the time
	Overall	3.10	0.78	Most of the time

Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 At all times/ Very High 1.76 – 2.50 Sometimes/ Low

2.51 – 3.25 Most of the time/ High 1.00 – 1.75 Never/ Very Low

Table 2 shows the level of anxiety of respondents in terms of test anxiety, with an overall mean of

3.10 (SD = 0.78), described as **Most of the time**, interpreted as **High**. This means that respondents frequently experienced nervousness and are afraid of taking English language tests or quizzes. The test anxiety has been high, which demonstrates that most respondents experience stress and discomfort during the assessment which may inhibit their memory level and capacity to think well and give their best during an assessment. This implies that the high levels of test anxiety among IP Grade 10 respondents postpone their academic performance and general learning performance. As observed, IP respondents tend to experience more test anxiety in the evaluation context which may be cultural, in connection with language difference.

Silaj et al. (2021), noted that high-test anxiety had a disruptive effect on attention and memory capabilities, therefore, impairing the responsiveness of respondents to repeat and apply learning in tests. Ansah and Leow (2020) also emphasized the fact that exam anxiety damaged the academic performance of respondents as they were too afraid of being judged.

The highest-rated indicator is **As a learner, I worry about the consequences of failing the subject**, with a mean of 3.25 (SD = 0.71), described as **Most of the time**, interpreted as **High**. This means that most of the respondents fear the consequences of being unable to pass the subject. The reason behind high rating is that learners are very mindful of the effects of poor performance. This implies that anxiety in respondents, interfere with their grades and general education experience in the English language. As noticed, IP respondents experience a high amount of stress caused by tests due to lack of understanding the language. Teachers tend to discuss classes using the first language and when there is an exam, respondents cannot comprehend the written text in English and get poor marks.

The study by Chuang et al. (2022) shows that fear of failure among the respondents had a negative impact on their career flexibility. Roick (2019) also noted that test anxiety comprises the fears of failure as well as poor academic performance. It demonstrates how worrying about grades reduce the interest and certainty of the respondents.

The lowest-rated indicator is **As a learner, I find it hard to concentrate while studying for a test**,

with a mean of 2.93 (SD = 0.87), described as **Most of the time**, interpreted as **High**. The means most of the respondents unable to concentrate on academic activities due to external factors or cognitive burnout. These problems are brought about by increased anxiety, which brings about mental restlessness and hence interferes with the memory focus as well as understanding. Most of the respondents experiences a problem concentrating on study sessions because of the presence of anxiety, distraction, or stress regarding the upcoming assessment. This implies that the capacity of the respondents to concentrate in the English lesson is highly influenced by the concern they are having with exams. As seen, IP Grade 10 respondents lack proper test taking skills to deal with preparing for tests, and they have trouble managing multiple subjects. The results show that distractions, mental fatigue, and fear of failing have a big impact on how well respondents learn and study English.

Oclarit et al. (2023) stated that Indigenous People in the Philippines has lack of access to educational materials and are physically socially isolated, which may further complicate their ability to focus on learning. Aydin et al. (2020) found that English Foreign Language respondents often unable to concentrate because they feared tests and did not know how to cope with it.

Table 3
Distribution of Respondents' Level of Anxiety in Terms of
Fear of Negative Evaluation

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
As a learner...			
I worry about making mistakes.	3.10	0.80	Most of the time
I am bothered to take more classes.	3.01	0.85	Most of the time
I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	3.11	0.76	Most of the time
I keep thinking that the other students are better at speaking English than I am.	3.23	0.79	Most of the time
I do not understand why some people get so upset.	3.02	0.82	Most of the time
I feel more tense and nervous in this class than in my other class.	2.99	0.83	Most of the time

I get upset when I do not understand what the teacher is correcting.	2.87	0.81	Most of the time
I am well-prepared, I feel anxious about it.	3.03	0.74	Most of the time
I worry that others will think I don't know enough English vocabulary.	3.13	0.68	Most of the time
I worry that others will compare my English skills unfavorably to theirs.	3.14	0.78	Most of the time
I feel pressured to prepare very well for the class.	3.21	0.81	Most of the time
I always feel that the other students speak the English language better than I do.	3.14	0.76	Most of the time
I feel that time is not enough, so I worry about getting left behind.	3.18	0.85	Most of the time
I get nervous when peers review my work because I fear their criticism.	3.17	0.71	Most of the time
I dread presenting in front of the class because I fear being judged.	3.26	0.72	At all times
Overall	3.11	0.78	Most of the time
Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 At all times/ Very High	1.76 – 2.50 Sometimes/ Low		
2.51 – 3.25 Most of the time/ High	1.00 – 1.75 Never/ Very Low		

Table 3 shows the level of anxiety of respondents in terms of fear of negative evaluation, with an overall mean of 3.11 (SD = 0.78), described as **Most of the time**, interpreted as **High**. This means that most of the respondents worry that they will be criticized or judged by their teachers and peers whenever speaking or doing any tasks on English. Fear of negative evaluation is high means that most of the respondents were frightened by the possibility of not doing a good job which can in turn inhibit their confidence and readiness to engage in any type of activity in the classroom or even at the risk of getting it wrong in using English language. It was observed that IP respondents were sensitive to social comparisons and evaluations when performing English activities. This anxiety has often appeared in classroom during oral recitations, presentation, or peer engagement causing them to feel anxious about their ability whenever their English skill is tested among others.

Marnani and Cuocci (2022) found that learners who were very afraid of getting bad grades were more likely to not participate in class. Zhang (2024) also pointed out that Fear of Negative Evaluation led to avoidance behaviors because people were afraid of being made fun of or turned down, which is similar to

what this study found.

The highest-rated indicator is **As a learner, I dread presenting in front of the class because I fear being judged**, with a mean of 3.26 (SD = 0.72), described as **Most of the time**, interpreted as **Very High**. This means that respondents develop anxiety to present before the class due to the fear of being noticed. The very high rating points emphasized that respondents are conscious about how their teachers and classmates see them, which makes them highly nervous during oral presentation and other similar activities. This implies that speaking before an audience could easily put the respondents in a very stressful position as they feared that someone would easily notice grammatical, pronunciation or vocabulary mistakes, respondents feared that their classmates or teacher would notice their mistakes and silently judge their skills. As it was observed, IP Grade 10 respondents are extremely anxious when addressing their classmates because of cultural and linguistic sensitiveness. As noticed, IP respondents tend to discredit themselves because of their unfamiliarity in using English language and are more likely to compare themselves with respondents who are English Speaking.

A study by Lungay (2023), revealed that anxiety of speaking in public was noted prevalent among the respondents of the high school population and specifically high when it comes to speaking at the English classes during the presentations. Another aspect mentioned by Trinidad Lagarto et al. (2024) is that this fear also pointed out by cultural and community factors, which then causes Indigenous respondents to experience feelings of self-consciousness in new locations.

The lowest-rated indicator was **As a learner, I get upset when I do not understand what the teacher is correcting**, with a mean of 2.87 (SD = 0.81), described as **Most of the time**, interpreted as **High**. This means that respondents are still troubled when they do not comprehend the corrections of the teacher. Respondents got used to being corrected and stopped interpreting these corrections personally. This suggested a possible disconnect between the changes made and how they were understood. This result implies that respondents show low levels of adaptability to corrective feedback and can be helped using instructional

methods that systematically introduce feedback as a regular part of learning. As observed, IP respondents do not allow emotion to interfere with the schoolwork which means that they are able to cope with learning English practically. This pattern can be related to a possible cultural norm of acceptance and respect to teachers and practical attitude towards learning, focusing on understanding and progress rather than emotional reactions.

Melisa (2025) found that Indigenous People are more anxious when they worry about being judged for not understanding corrections. Downing et al. (2020) also found that the fear of negative grades among learners also increases anxiety levels among them especially in cases where they do not understand the comments made by the teacher. These results highlight the role of negative feedback in classroom activities of a learner.

Table 4

Summary of the Respondents Level of Anxiety

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Communication Apprehension	3.07	0.77	High
Test Anxiety	3.10	0.78	High
Fear of Negative Evaluation	3.11	0.78	High
Overall	3.09	0.77	High
Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 At all times/ Very High 1.76 – 2.50 Sometimes/ Low			
2.51 – 3.25 Most of the time/ High 1.00 – 1.75 Never/ Very Low			

Table 4 shows the summary of the respondents' level of anxiety, with an overall, mean of 3.09 (SD = 0.77), described as **Most of the time**, interpreted as **High**. This means that most of the respondents are usually characterized by worry, nervousness or fear in various learning situations. Fear of negative evaluation cause respondents to have high level of anxiety during tests, discussions, presentations in classes and when interacting with peers. This implies that respondents who are highly anxious have problems in actively learning and using English. As it can be seen, most IP respondents are afraid to use the English language since they are afraid of committing errors and being criticized by their peers. This fear in classes causes them to feel

even more nervous and uncertain about themselves when dealing with formal situations. This may hold them back to participate and to be confident in using English.

Butcher et al. (2020) stated that anxiety impaired learning to speak and particularly during initial language tasks. Dewaele, et al. (2022), noted that anxiety and improved learning outcomes can be addressed through cognitive behavioral techniques, which demonstrates the significant impact of the support measures used in reducing anxiety in classrooms.

The highest-rated variable was **Fear of Negative Evaluation** with a mean of 3.11 (SD = 0.78) described as **Most of the time, interpreted as High**. This means respondents fear of being criticized or judged by their teachers and classmates whenever talking or doing their activities in English. The high rating implies that respondents are highly aware of how others perceive their abilities thus becoming more anxious during class activities like presentations, or oral work. The fear of being negatively judged may turn them into reserved individuals who feel unwilling to actively participate in class. As noticed, this anxiety was evident at the final stage of the quarter when the respondents will have to complete performance tasks in English. Cultural influences, such as the high value placed on respect for teachers and fear of losing face in front of peers, may intensify their worry about being judged or criticized.

Marnani and Cuocci (2022), which states that fear of negative evaluation triggers the social anxiety and avoidance behavior in language respondents, which causes them to fear contributing to discussions in the classroom. Similar findings are made by Zhang (2024) who noted that respondents who are highly afraid of negative evaluation (FNE) are reluctant to engage in any learning activity because of the fear of being criticized, which is clearly why supportive approaches used in classrooms ensures improvement of anxiety and the development of confidence, are necessary.

On the other hand, the lowest-rated variable was **Communication Apprehension** with a mean of 3.07 (SD = 0.77), described as **Most of the time, interpreted as High**. This means that most of the respondents continue to be nervous or uncomfortable when speaking or expressing themselves using the

English language although this may be the least of the three. It implies that due to the tremendous degree of communication anxiety, the respondents are likely to fail to engage in English language activities, which will result in silence or inadequate participation. As observed IP respondents, refuse to take part in talking exercises when they are not ready or fear to make some errors. This fear may result out of the unfamiliarity concerning the topic or even language itself.

Sawyer (2018) noted that classroom participation was a significant obstacle because of the fear of communicating. Similarly, Xue (2023) claimed that CA decreased student engagement, Clinton and Wilson (2019) found that active learning environments alleviated this concern, by allowing respondents to express themselves confidently by engaging in group work.

Problem 2: What is the respondents' level of difficulties in learning English language based on linguistic challenges, speech processing difficulties, academic and conversational English skill, and access to speaking opportunities?

Table 5

Distribution of Respondents Level of difficulties in learning English Language Based on Linguistic Challenges

As a learner...	Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
I make grammatical errors when speaking English.		3.03	0.76	Often
I am not good at using complex structures when speaking English.		3.07	0.80	Often
I get stuck with grammar or vocabulary when speaking English.		2.95	0.82	Often
I encounter pronunciation problem when speaking English.		2.94	0.83	Often
I struggle to find the right words to express myself in English.		2.79	0.89	Often
I get confused about which verb tense to use in different situations.		2.86	0.86	Often
I find it hard to understand idioms and colloquial expressions in English.		3.07	0.84	Often

I have trouble constructing sentences that sound natural in English.	2.85	0.87	Often
I misuse prepositions like 'in', 'on', and 'at' in English.	2.92	0.87	Often
I struggle to use the correct intonation and stress when speaking English.	2.93	0.90	Often
Overall	2.94	0.84	Often
Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 Always / Very Difficult 1.76 – 2.50 Seldom / Slightly Difficult			
2.51 – 3.25 Often / Difficult 1.00 – 1.75 Never/Not Difficult			

Table 5 shows the level of difficulties in learning the English language based on linguistic challenges. Overall, respondents often experienced difficulties, with a mean of 2.94 (SD = 0.84), described as **Often**, interpreted as **Difficult**. This means that respondents often have trouble in learning and application of English grammar vocabulary and pronunciation. It is regarded to be hard as these linguistic difficulties need strong foundational skills which most of the learners struggle to achieve. These results give an implication that anxiety can lead to discouragement to active participation in English-language activities leading to low or poor participation. Such unwillingness can partially be explained by the fear of making phonological and grammatical mistakes. IP respondents struggle with grammar in spontaneous speech, which suggests that they have not been exposed to conversational English in their classroom. This problem resulted from the structured and formal method of teaching English, which gave rules priority over real world applications.

A study by Fitri (2019), pointed out that learners commonly struggled with grammatical constructions like conditional sentences and passive voice, leading to frequent mistakes in both written and spoken communication. Clear instruction and visual aids greatly improved learners' understanding of complex systems, according to Zheng et al. (2022).

The highest-rated indicator was **As a learner, I am not good at using complex structures when speaking English** with a mean of 3.07 (SD = 0.80), described as **Often**, interpreted as **Difficult**. This means that respondents can hardly speak in complex structures of English. It is said to be difficult since longer or more complex sentences make it impossible without good understanding of grammar, vocabulary and

sentence structures which some learners have not attained fully. This implies that most respondents are likely to avoid conveying more specific or significant concepts since they have a problem with complex sentences. As noticed, the respondents were inclined heavily in their native language and use simple English words so that they are not confused or challenged. They tend to be afraid to use new vocabulary words as they are afraid of being judged or to use the words wrongly. This narrows their chances of building up on their language proficiency and get comfortable in English.

A study conducted by Fitri (2019) and Li et al. (2023), states the impact of linguistic difficulties, which include the inability to comprehend the complex grammatical patterns and the difference between the native and English languages, have a major impact on the possibility to construct sentences in the respondents. Dalilis and Rey (2025) also emphasized, that Indigenous respondents in the Philippines endure other issues since English is the academic language, and it might make them feel that they are no longer in touch with their language and culture.

Similarly, the highest-rated indicator was **As a learner, I found it hard to understand idioms and colloquial expressions in English**, with a mean of 3.07 (SD = 0.84), also described as **Often**, interpreted as **Difficult**. It means that idioms and colloquial phrases are usually difficult to comprehend among the respondents. These are challenging terms and are hard to grasp as their meaning cannot be taken literally and respondents cannot use simplified vocabulary or grammatical rules to comprehend them. This implies that most of the respondents have little exposure to the usage of English in real life and so the figurative language is difficult to understand. As it is observed, the respondents face confusion or hesitation in using or understanding these words when the situations involve interaction or speech. IP respondents have problems with formal and culturally specific language.

This is in line with the findings by Fitri (2019) and MacIntyre and Gregersen (2019) who discovered that language barriers such as inability to comprehend complex grammatical form and new vocabulary highly influence the overall English skills of the respondents, with idiomatic and colloquial

expressions being the most difficult to master. According to Li et al. (2023), the variation between native language and English of a respondents poses a challenge in the interpretation of slang words.

The lowest-rated indicator was **As a learner, I struggled to find the right words to express myself in English** with a mean of 2.79 (SD = 0.89), described as **Often**, interpreted as **Difficult**. This means that respondents had the tendency to struggle mostly due to an insufficient range of vocabulary and practice in speaking. The respondents have been aware of what they intended to say but they were unable to do so in the appropriate English language. This finding implies that English language training to IP respondents should be based on vocabulary application in real life scenarios and instead of memorization. As observed, IP Grade 10 respondents have understood English concepts; however, they have a problem locating and using the right words to describe the concepts. This finding indicates that there is a disconnection between cognitive understanding and successful linguistic communication hence the need to introduce language education both culturally sensitive and practice based.

According to Wang and Derakhshan (2021), respondents with limited experience in reading and writing often face challenges related to the growth of vocabulary and expression of ideas. According to Tripura (2024), there are other obstacles facing Indigenous people, where a previously acquired first or national language often leads to diminished fluency and a decreased lexical vocabulary.

Table 6

Distribution of Respondents Level of difficulties in learning English Language Based on Speech Processing

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
As a learner...			
I mentally translate in mother tongue when Speaking English.	2.81	0.94	Often
I avoid using difficult words and structures when speaking English.	3.08	0.77	Often
I struggle to communicate effectively when speaking English.	2.89	0.87	Often
I find it difficult to attend to both fluency and accuracy when speaking English.	2.88	0.80	Often

I need verbal directions to be repeated multiple times to understand them.	2.88	0.83	Often
I take longer to answer questions because I need time to process what was said.	2.81	0.80	Often
I struggle to keep up when conversations in English move quickly.	2.86	0.84	Often
I find it hard to understand English speakers with different accents.	2.90	0.82	Often
I miss the main ideas when listening to someone speak in English.	2.77	0.87	Often
I forget details of what I just heard in English, even if I understood it initially.	2.83	0.90	Often
Overall	2.87	0.84	Often
Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 Always / Very Difficult 1.76 – 2.50 Seldom / Slightly Difficult 2.51 – 3.25 Often / Difficult 1.00 – 1.75 Never/Not Difficult			

Table 6 shows the level of difficulties in learning the English language based on speech processing. Overall, respondents often experienced difficulties, with a mean of 2.87 (SD = 0.84), described as **Often**, interpreted as **Difficult**. This means most of the respondents were prone to avoid complex words and structures thus limiting their chances to express themselves effectively. This experience might be largely related to the fact that the learners were not exposed to authentic communication in English. This also implies that the problem of speech processing continues to affect the respondents and require more deeper and relevant exposure to English. As noticed, Grade 10 respondents often use their native language as a bridge to English, which makes it harder for them to communicate and limits their ability to express themselves. These challenges were common in educational settings where English was used formally but not in casual conversations.

It has been recently established that issues related to speech processing are frequently attributed to variations in phonological systems of the English language with the mother tongues of the participants (Fitri, 2019; Zhang, 2020). As it has been shown, intervention measures such as minimal pairs exercises and phonetic training prove useful and lead to improvements in auditory discrimination and fluency of respondents (Li et al., 2023; Wang and Derakhshan, 2021).

The highest-rated indicator was **As a learner, I avoid using difficult words and structures when speaking English**, with a mean of 3.08 (SD = 0.77), described as **Often**, interpreted as **Difficult**. This means that when speaking English; the respondents tend to ignore using complicated words and sentence construction. This is viewed as difficult as it shows limitation to express their ideas in a comprehensive and correct manner even when they are familiar with the concepts. This implies that respondents are hesitant to use difficult English words because they do not know enough words and are not sure of themselves. IP Grade 10 respondents often shorten their English to avoid making mistakes or feeling embarrassed. This is an action that is shaped by language barriers and classroom pressures.

According to Leñaño et al. (2019), the restrictions in speech processing, such as the inability to perceive and articulate English words, make the respondents reluctant to use complex words and sentence structures. Abellana et al. (2025) emphasized that Indigenous respondents might encounter multiple problems because the differences in the phonology of the native language and English language may complicate the need to comprehend and speak it fluently, so respondents have to use more complicated concepts.

The lowest-rated indicator was **As a learner, I often miss the main ideas when listening to someone speak in English**, with a mean of 2.77 (SD = 0.87), described as **Often**, interpreted as **Difficult**. This means that most of respondents had problem concentrating on main points while attempting to understand single words. The strange accents, background noise and fast speech made it hard to understand. It implies that difficulty to follow the main ideas when listening to English, reveals the significance of listening support enhancement to be an aspect of the curriculum. As observed, main ideas are hard to pick out by the IP respondents in spoken English, and it shows that they are not accustomed to various types of speech and real-life practices when conversing. The trend indicates that although the respondents can grasp single words, they cannot manage context.

According to Fitri (2019), variations in the phonological systems of a native language spoken by a learner and English may make the latter more difficult to listen and comprehend the verbal messages.

Abellana et al. (2025) emphasized that Indigenous respondents frequently have additional problems as the native language influences the process in which they interpret English phonics and make it hard for them to understand important ideas during listening tasks.

Table 7

Distribution of Respondents Level of Difficulties in Learning English Language Based on Academic and Conversational English Skills				
As a learner...	Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
I find it difficult leading class discussions in English.		2.88	0.83	Often
I find it difficult giving speeches in English in front of the whole class.		2.98	0.84	Often
I find it difficult participating in whole English class.		2.91	0.88	Often
I keep silent in class because of lack of confidence in speaking English.		2.83	0.86	Often
I find it difficult participating in small group discussions during English class.		2.71	0.92	Often
I am not good at joking and chatting in English.		2.79	0.87	Often
I struggle to organize my thoughts and write coherent essays in English.		2.88	0.87	Often
I feel unsure about how to express my thoughts casually in English during conversations.		2.81	0.80	Often
I lack the right words to carry out everyday conversations in English.		2.88	0.81	Often
I find it difficult to summarize academic content in English effectively.		2.77	0.86	Often
Overall		2.85	0.85	Often
Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 Always / Very Difficult 1.76 – 2.50 Seldom / Slightly Difficult 2.51 – 3.25 Often / Difficult 1.00 – 1.75 Never/Not Difficult				

Table 7 shows the level of difficulties in learning English language based on academic and conversational English skills. Overall, respondents often experienced difficulties, with a mean of 2.85 (SD = 0.85), described as **Often**, interpreted as **Difficult**. This means that the 175 respondents find it hard to use English in both formal and informal ways, such as in an essay and examination test, and in an informal

interaction. It is difficult since proper use of English in various contexts cannot be done only through the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. This implies that absence of exposure to English speaking settings both in and out of classroom affects language learning. Most of the respondents feel more at ease with their local languages, and thus they find it difficult to switch their languages and use English. As it can be observed, IP respondents tend to use their native language, which influence their confidence and interest in English classes. This shows the significance of culturally responsive strategies which over a period need to reflect the inclusion of English and at the same time respects and honors their language.

This is backed up by Fitri (2019) and Zhang (2020) who find out that academic English and conversational English are dissimilar that they cause difficulty to the respondents. According to Wang and Derakhshan, (2021), there should be a combination of authentic speaking opportunities with explicit instruction in academic vocabulary to enhance the fluency and understanding of respondents simultaneously.

The highest-rated indicator was **As a learner, I feel difficulty giving speeches in English in front of the whole class** with a mean of 2.98 (SD = 0.84), described as **Often**, interpreted as **Difficult**. This means that to speak in front of others more particularly when speaking a second language was a major fear. Respondents fear being judged or mocked in committing an error. This implies that respondents find it difficult to make speeches in English and require specific assistance to enhance their confidence and speaking abilities. As observed, Grade 10 respondents lack appropriate chances to gain more confidence in speaking English publicly because they constantly resort to their native language.

According to Fitri (2019), the lack of word skills in academic English causes Indigenous People have difficulties with oral presentations since it involves the use of complex sentences and abstract concepts that may be difficult to comprehend. As Zhang (2020) noted, respondents fail to master conversational English might not succeed in academic events, since switching between informal and formal language influences the fluency and self-confidence.

The lowest-rated indicator was **As a learner, I feel difficulty participating in small group**

discussions during English class with a mean of 2.71 (SD = 0.92), described as **Often**, interpreted as **Difficult**. This means that respondents often find it challenging to participate in small group discussions in English. It is regarded as difficult since it does not only involve familiarizing oneself with the subject matter, but also the ability to speak up easily, use right words, and respond quickly when one is called upon to contribute to group discussions. It implies that most respondents might not express their ideas and participate in the discussion that can hamper their learning and socialization among peers. As observed, IP respondents usually find support in confident peers and are reluctant to speak out and this demonstrates that respondents are concerned and doubt that they know English. Other respondents fear to make wrong choices and have others correct them.

According to Baracheta (2024), noted that many Indigenous people are sure in the context of familiarity but fail to cope with school assignments, including debates and in-class tasks. Permangil (2024) observed that having little exposure to English outside the classroom reduces the ability to converse fluent, making the process of engaging in group discussions appear difficult among IP respondents.

Table 8

Distribution of Respondents Level of Difficulties in Learning English Language Based on Access to Speaking Opportunities

As a learner...	Indicators	Mean	SD	Description
I lack opportunities to speak English outside class.		3.05	0.82	Often
I lack opportunities to speak English in class.		3.00	0.85	Often
I lack things to say when speaking English in class or outside class.		3.00	0.88	Often
I do not have the ability to speak with native English.		3.05	0.80	Often
I do not get to practice speaking English at home.		2.60	0.90	Often
I do not have access to English language in clubs or groups where I can practice speaking.		3.00	0.84	Often

I do not get a chance to interact with peers who speak English fluently.	3.10	0.86	Often
I do not have the chance to give presentations in English.	3.00	0.83	Often
I do not get a chance to use English when participating in community activities.	2.95	0.91	Often
I do not get a chance to participate in group discussions in English.	3.03	0.87	Often
Overall	2.98	0.87	Often
Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 Always / Very Difficult 1.76 – 2.50 Seldom / Slightly Difficult			
2.51 – 3.25 Often / Difficult 1.00 – 1.75 Never/Not Difficult			

Table 8 shows the level of difficulties in learning the English language based on access to speaking opportunities. Overall, respondents often experienced difficulties, with a mean of 2.98 (SD = 0.87), described as **Often**, interpreted as **Difficult**. This means that most of the 175 respondents struggles to speak English as they have little time to use the language in school, in their homes, and within their communities. It is difficult since if respondents are not given constant opportunities to apply English in practical contexts, respondents will fail to achieve fluency, confidence, and successful communicational skills. It means that the lack of access to talk in English is a barrier to the linguistic growth of respondents and their level of confidence. As noticed IP respondents were dependent on their mother tongue which limits them to actively participate in English. Lack of access to speaking opportunities at home, in the community, or a classroom implies that they have little time real English conversation.

According to a study by Zhang (2020) and MacIntyre and Gregersen (2019), the lack of speaking opportunity results from the insufficient time in the practice time, fear of error, or a small amount of interaction that greatly reduced the growth in the fluency of the English language. Wang and Derakhshan (2021) highlighted the significance of the structured speaking activities, such as role playing and peer discussions, in boosting oral language use and enhancing the learning outcomes of learners.

The highest-rated indicator was **As a learner, I do not get a chance to interact with peers who speak English fluently**, with a mean of 3.10 (SD = 0.86), described as **Often**, interpreted as **Difficult**. It

means that respondents do not have enough time to interact with their peers that speak English. This implies that the respondents do not get to learn with English-speaking peers due to avoidance and self-doubt, this may be unfavorable in respondents' learning to acquire proper pronunciation, vocabularies, and natural expressions. As seen, IP respondents would easily interact with peers who speak their local language as compared to speaking English-speaking peers. This is to avoid misunderstanding and embarrassment because they have poor mastering the English language and thus, respondents fear the use of the English language during conversations.

According to Zhang (2020), English speaking respondents struggles to develop English proficiency due to lack of adequate opportunities to interact with those English-speaking classmates. According to Tripura (2024), Indigenous respondents experience an even higher challenge since getting a chance to speak with people naturally is preconditioned by such social and cultural factors as a need to use their native language and insufficient exposure to English.

The lowest-rated indicator was **As a learner, I did not often get to practice speaking English at home**, with a mean of 2.60 (SD = 0.90) described as **Often**, interpreted as **Difficult**. This means that most of the respondents' home environments prioritized native languages, making English use feel unnatural or unnecessary. Respondents may have been eager to exercise, however, this could have made them feel awkward or not receive enough support among fellow learners. This reduced the possibility of the reinforcement of educational lessons. The family environment that was informal and emotionally safe would have been a wonderful practice environment, but was not used very much. These results implies that lack of opportunities to exercise English at home can slow the language development of the respondents, and the need to emphasize that the schools and programs should practice it. The interventions that may assist the respondents to learn English outside of the classroom include organized activities at home, language programs in the community or family engagement initiatives.

As it has been noted, IP respondents usually tend to have an environment at home where they can

practice this language but, the mastery of native languages denies them this chance. This demonstrates that the cultural and family language practices influence the level of comfort and fluency of the respondents in English.

According to MacIntyre and Gregersen (2019), respondents’ absence of speaking English at home frequently struggles with becoming fluent and confident. As Tripura (2024) noted, Indigenous respondents encounter difficulties since most of their families speak their language, meaning that they can hardly speak English.

Table 9

Summary of the respondents Level of Difficulties in Learning English Language

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Linguistic Challenges	2.94	0.84	Difficult
Speech Processing	2.87	0.84	Difficult
Academic and Conversational English Skills	2.85	0.85	Difficult
Access to Speaking Opportunities	2.98	0.87	Difficult
Overall	2.91	0.85	Difficult
Legend: 3.26 – 4.00 Always / Very Difficult 1.76 – 2.50 Seldom / Slightly Difficult			
2.51 – 3.25 Often / Difficult 1.00 – 1.75 Never/Not Difficult			

Table 9 shows the summary of the respondents’ level of difficulties in learning the English language. Overall, respondents often experienced difficulties, with a mean of 2.91 (SD = 0.85), described as **Often**, interpreted as **Difficult**. This mean that limited exposure to English outside the classroom was a major factor. Another factor that made things worse was the lack of stable English-speaking environments at home and in the community. Most of the respondents spoke their native language in everyday conversations, which made it harder for them to practice and improve their English skills. The respondents consider native language as the main language of their daily conversation, which complicated the matters of using and mastering the English language. This implies that emphasis is accorded to writing than speaking or interacting in English classes. As noticed, the respondents were not noticeably confident when they used English in real life situations since this was accompanied by anxiety. The reason is that IP respondents use their mother language

to engage in their daily interactions hence restricting their English usage and application. This demonstrates that culture and context may have an influence on how individuals learn a language, and that these respondents must be exposed to the language and engage in it in order to get fluent.

Wang and Derakhshan (2021) have highlighted that limited exposure, as well as linguistic, academic, and verbal barrier, has been a major setback to the development of English language acquisition, especially among respondents whose home language is not English. Li et al. (2024) noted that problems are presented to the respondents by the cultural and context differences between academic and their daily language, and this aspect contributes to their confidence and general competence.

The highest-rated variable was **Access to Speaking Opportunities** with a mean of 2.98 (SD = 0.87), described as **Often**, interpreted as **Difficult**. This means that respondents cannot easily switch textbook and English spoken every day. There was little opportunity to talk casually as formal training was based on academic language. Due to this, speaking English in social life was awkward and uncomfortable. This implies that a lack of exposure to conversational English by the respondents creates a distance between their academic knowledge and their real-life communication. IP respondents as observed, have the knowledge of academic teaching, but they cannot apply English in social life. Respondents often have limited opportunities to practice English in the classroom due to teacher-centered instruction that benefits proficient speaker's Indigenous households and communities values mother tongue for cultural preservation, English is rarely spoken in the community, which further limits exposure and practice.

According to a study conducted by Baracheta (2024) & Permangil (2024), Indigenous respondents might be successful in informal communication but fail to cope with essays, classroom discussions or formal presentations. It is more difficult to distinguish academic and conversational English as well. This is because academic English uses formal structure and prominent level of vocabulary, whereas conversational English is characterized by informality and fluency (Fitri, 2019; Zhang, 2020).

The lowest-rated variable was **Academic & Conversational English Skills** with a mean of 2.85 (SD

= 0.85), described as **Often**, interpreted as **Difficult**. This means that the respondents often struggle to use the English language properly both in their formal exercises which include writing essays and taking exams and informal occasions like having a minimal chat or participating in a group discussion. It interpreted as difficult since speaking English different environment does not only presuppose the possession of rules in grammar and vocabulary but also the understanding of how to convey the ideas accurately and surely in a real-time interaction. It implies that difficulties were not only in their academic achievements but also in social interactions because of the inability to use the English language efficiently. Problem with respondents' communication in class, tests, or even in ordinary discussions may cause them to contribute less, be afraid to voice their opinion, and use simple or simple language. As observed, IP respondents have problems on language proficiency since they were not exposed to enough prior exposure to English. This complicates their attendance of classes and quality writing. The respondents did not have enough time in the classroom to exercise their language skills to their full extent.

A study by Baracheta (2024) & Permangil (2024) found that Indigenous learners may struggle with essays, class discussions, or formal presentations and do well in informal conversations. It is difficult to know the difference between academic and conversational English. Academic English demands formal structures and complex vocabulary, while conversational English is demonstrated by informality and fluency (Fitri, 2019; Zhang, 2020).

Problem 3. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' level of anxiety and their difficulties in learning English language?

Table 10

Result of Test on Relationship between the respondents Level of Anxiety and their Difficulties in Learning English Language

Anxiety	Difficulties in Learning English Language				Overall
	Linguistic Challenges	Speech Processing	Academic and Conversational English Skill	Access to Speaking Opportunities	
	<i>Parson r p-value Interpretation</i>	<i>Parson r p-value Interpretation</i>	<i>Parson r p-value Interpretation</i>	<i>Parson r p-value Interpretation</i>	
Communication Apprehension	0.398	0.297	0.452	0.399	0.451
	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
	S	S	S	s	S
Test Anxiety	0.459	0.314	0.405	0.439	0.471
	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
	S	S	S	s	S
Fear of Negative Evaluation	0.357	0.293	0.420	0.375	0.422
	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
	S	S	S	s	S

Legend: if p-value < 0.05* and p-value < 0.01* S – significant NS – not significant

Table 10 presented the results of the test on the significant relationship between the respondents' level of anxiety and their difficulties in learning the English language. The findings revealed that all three anxiety variables such as Communication Apprehension, Test Anxiety, and Fear of Negative Evaluation, showed significant positive correlations with overall difficulties in learning English, on linguistic challenges, speech processing, academic and conversational English skills, and access to speaking opportunities ($p < 0.001$). This means that the null hypothesis, which states that there is no significant relationship between the respondents' level of English learning anxiety and their level of English learning difficulties, is rejected. Specifically, **Communication Apprehension** showed a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.451$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that respondents with higher communication apprehension tended to face greater challenges in learning English. This means that, several of the respondents were tense and feel nervous when they were called to speak in English. They feared committing errors or being laughed at by others. This implies that in cases whereby respondents feared speaking they were deprived of opportunities to enhance their ability. As

observed, in intercultural communication, the less comfortable or the more uncomfortable the respondents are with communicating in about English or any other language that is not native, then the less confident they are in their skills on communicating effectively. Respondents do not engage in discussions or verbal activities thus restricting their involvement in both and slowing them down in terms of developing their communication skills.

Sawyer (2018), put forward that communication apprehension is an enormous obstacle to successful communication; especially amid Indigenous respondents who gain English as a second language. Sague et al. (2024) noted that participating in speaking exercises regularly can improve the level of confidence of speakers, however, Indigenous people still experience difficulties in the classroom because of language anxiety.

Test anxiety also had a strong significant relationship ($r = 0.471$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that anxiety during evaluations contributed to learning difficulties. This means that respondents felt extreme pressure to perform well in English exams. The fear of failure made them unable to remember vocabulary and grammar rules. This implies that respondents who are worried may have trouble understanding questions on tests, even though they have studied. The stress made them perform poorly, even though they knew what they were doing. As observed, respondents who were anxious all the time during tests had less confidence and were less able to show what they knew. respondents with high levels of test anxiety had inconsistent performance and were unsure of how well they spoke English. Silaj et al. (2021) confirmed this finding, showing that test anxiety made it harder to remember things and focus during tests. Ansah and Leow (2020) also found that test anxiety negatively affects respondents' focus, memory, and academic performance, particularly in English tests.

Lastly, **Fear of Negative Evaluation** was significantly correlated with difficulties as well ($r = 0.422$, $p < 0.001$), revealing that respondents concerned about judgment from others struggled more with English language acquisition. This means that respondents were always afraid of being criticized or humiliated before

others. Respondents did not pay attention to questions or say whatever they like in English as they feel scared that their incorrectness would result in negative review. This implies that shyness was common among the respondents who feared to be judged at school, hence isolating themselves. Respondents were afraid of making the risk they had to make to move forward because they were so concerned about what other people thought of them. As has been noted, IP respondents are not confident in using English, particularly when addressing the teacher and classmates because of poor fluency in the language. This reluctance usually makes them hesitate to engage in class discussions which rejects their chances to practice and master their art of speaking even further.

This is in accordance with Zhang (2024), who also discovered that respondents did not attend the classes, as they were too scared of being judged negatively. Marnani and Cuocci (2022) emphasized the fact that the respondents are not willing to engage in class debates as they fear being judged and this constrains their language practice.

5. Conclusion

The study successfully achieved its objective to determine the level of anxiety and difficulties experienced by Grade 10 Indigenous people in learning English in Sumilao and Impasug-ong Districts. Anxiety emerged as a significant concern among the respondents, with fear of negative evaluation contributing significantly to their emotional discomfort in the context of English learning. Respondents also encountered significant difficulties learning English due to limited opportunities to speak and inadequate English-language resources in schools, homes, and communities. These challenges hindered their ability to confidently use English and comprehend learning materials, which may affect their motivation and engagement in the learning process. Lastly, the study established a strong relationship between respondents' anxiety levels and their English learning difficulties, with grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation being the most closely associated. Moreover, the study emphasizes the critical role of teachers in addressing learners' anxiety and in the effective implementation of instructional strategies, with a focus on learning and well-being.

6. Recommendations

From the findings of the study, the following are recommended:

1. Teachers should develop classroom exercises where they squarely focus on the communication apprehension through creating a safe and conducive environment so that the respondents can express themselves in English without being put to shame. Oral exercises, such as paired or group discussions, role-plays, and guided dialogues, should be conducted regularly to build respondents' confidence when they speak.
2. Teachers should integrate the academic and conversational use of English language through the inclusion of formal and informal use of observation in the lessons. Academic writing, presentations, and

casual conversation skills can be observed in this way. Teachers should use simple worksheets, pictures, and real-life situations to help respondents easily change their formal and informal registers.

3. Teachers and the school administrators should engage in planning and putting up professional development programs that would help teachers know how to address the anxiety of learners in the classroom. These programs should include workshops on supportive feedback methods, culturally sensitive communication, and positive classroom management. Similarly, teachers and administrators must work together to clarify their instructional approach, reflect on how they interact with respondents, and employ strategies that foster self-confidence, respect, and emotional stability in the learning environment

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