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ENGLISH LANGUAGE ANXIETY, COPING STRATEGIES, AND SPEAKING PERFORMANCE OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS: A BASIS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

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Abstract

The study examined the interrelationship between English language anxiety (ELA), coping strategies, and impromptu speaking performance of Grade 8 learners that served as a basis in developing an instructional plan that helps reduce anxiety and improve learners' speaking performance. Using a quantitative-correlational research design, data were gathered from 105 randomly selected learners using a five-part structured questionnaire and an impromptu speaking task. Descriptive statistics and inferential analyses were used to analyze the data. The study revealed that learners generally experience a moderate level of English language anxiety according to Horwitz' et al (1986) Foreign Language Anxiety Classroom Scale (FLCAS). Additionally, despite the frequent use of coping mechanisms, particularly affective and teacher-driven, did not show a significant relationship with speaking performance while communication apprehension was found to have significant negative relationship with the latter. Furthermore, majority of the learners fall under "needs improvement" level of impromptu speaking, suggesting a limited proficiency in spontaneous communication. Moreover, profile variables particularly parents' monthly income showed significant influence with learners' ELA. These results imply that improving the learners' speaking performance requires more than managing anxiety, but rather, experiential kind of interventions that provide sustained opportunities for meaningful use of the English language. From these findings, a proposed instructional plan was developed that addresses the research problems.

Keywords: English language anxiety, communication apprehension, coping mechanisms, impromptu speaking, instructional plan

INTRODUCTION

The increasing use of English in classroom settings often triggers hesitation, fear, and avoidance among learners, as reflected in common student expressions such as requests to use Tagalog or Ilocano or concerns about grammatical errors. These reactions

indicate English Language Anxiety (ELA), a psychological condition defined by Elaine K. Horwitz et al. (1986) as a distinct form of anxiety experienced in foreign language learning contexts. Studies such as Botes et al. (2020) confirm that ELA significantly

affects engagement and performance, while MacIntyre & Gregersen (2022) emphasize its negative impact on motivation and communication. Likewise, Oxford (2020) explains that anxiety disrupts input, processing, and output, limiting language development.

Despite extensive research, most studies focus on the level and causes of anxiety rather than learners' coping mechanisms or intervention design, particularly among Grade 8 students. Local studies also remain limited, especially in examining coping strategies in relation to anxiety and developing classroom-based instructional interventions. This gap highlights the need for a study that integrates ELA levels, coping mechanisms, and instructional planning for junior high school learners.

The conceptual framework of the study posits that learner profile variables (age, sex, socioeconomic status), factors influencing ELA (teacher, parental, social, financial, and cultural influences), English proficiency, and past experiences function as independent variables. These influence the mediating variables—ELA and coping mechanisms—which in turn affect the dependent variable, impromptu speaking performance. The output is an instructional plan designed to reduce anxiety and improve speaking performance.

The study is anchored on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Theory of Elaine K. Horwitz et al. (1986), the Affective Filter Hypothesis of Stephen Krashen, and the Self-Efficacy Theory of Albert Bandura. These theories collectively explain how emotional factors such as anxiety and self-confidence influence language acquisition and performance, ultimately guiding the development of an instructional intervention.

Statement of the Problem

This study generally aimed to examine the relationship between English language anxiety (ELA) and its relationship to the factors affecting learners' ELA, coping mechanisms, past experiences, and English proficiency skill through an impromptu speaking performance. The results served as a basis for developing an instructional plan that reduces ELA and improve the speaking skills of the learners. Thus, this study specifically sought to answer the following:

1. What is the demographic profile the respondents according to:
 - a. Demographic:
 - i. Age; and
 - ii. Sex?
 - b. Socio-economic:
 - i. Parents' monthly income?
2. What are the underlying factors that affect the English language anxiety among grade 8 learners in terms of:
 - a. Teacher factor;
 - b. Parental factor;
 - c. Social factor;
 - d. Financial factor; and
 - e. Cultural factor?

3. What is the level of English language anxiety according to Horwitz' et al Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) in terms of:
 - a. Communication apprehension;
 - b. Fear of negative evaluation; and
 - c. Test anxiety?
4. What are the coping strategies or mechanisms that the respondents use to reduce their anxiety along the following:
 - a. Cognitive;
 - b. Behavioral;
 - c. Affective; and
 - d. Teacher-driven approaches?
5. How do the respondents be described in terms of:
 - a. Proficiency level in English; and
 - b. Past experiences?
6. What is the respondents' level of impromptu speaking skills?
7. Is there a significant difference in students' ELA when grouped according to profile variables?
8. Is there a significant difference in students' coping mechanisms when grouped according to profile variables?
9. Is there a significant relationship between ELA and the selected variables:
 - a. Factors Influencing ELA;
 - b. Coping strategies/mechanisms;
 - c. Proficiency level; and
 - d. Past experiences?
10. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents' impromptu speaking performance and the selected variables:
 - a. Level of English language anxiety according to Horwitz' FLCAS; and
 - b. Coping mechanisms?
11. What instructional plan can be proposed to reduce students' ELA and improve their speaking performance?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized a quantitative descriptive-correlational design. The descriptive component was used to determine the respondents' profile, levels of English language anxiety in terms of communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation, distribution of their impromptu speaking performance, with the use of frequency, percentage, and mean. Meanwhile, the correlational component was employed to examine the relationship between ELA and respondents' speaking performance, the relationship between ELA components and the learners' speaking performance, and the influence of profile variables to ELA and

coping mechanisms. This design was appropriate because it aims to describe existing conditions and determine the level of association between the selected variables without manipulating them.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Dr. Tomas L. Nolasco Sr. National High School formerly known as Calaoagan Dackel National High School-Capissayan Annex before its official separation from Calagaoan Dackel National High School and its renaming last September 2024. The said institution is situated at Capissayan Sur, Gattaran, Cagayan which is a rural remote and geographically distant area in Gattaran where residents are primarily characterized by agricultural activities and small rural communities. It has 574 junior high school students and 125 senior high school students according to its Learner Information System (LIS).

Respondents and Sampling Technique

The respondents of the study were Grade 8 learners of Dr. Tomas L. Nolasco National High School. From a total population of 142 students, 105 were selected using the Lynch formula with a 5% margin of error. Simple random sampling was employed to ensure equal representation of learners regardless of academic performance, capturing diverse levels of English Language Anxiety and coping strategies. Participation was voluntary and required signed assent and parental consent, ensuring ethical compliance. This sampling approach allowed for a balanced and unbiased representation of early adolescent learners in examining anxiety and speaking performance.

Research Instruments

The study used a structured questionnaire and an impromptu speaking rubric to gather data on English language anxiety, coping strategies, proficiency, past experiences, and speaking performance. The questionnaire included five parts: demographic profile; factors influencing anxiety (teacher, parental, financial, social, cultural) using a Likert scale; the Elaine K. Horwitz FLCAS (1986) for measuring anxiety; coping mechanisms; and perceived proficiency and past experiences. The rubric assessed speaking through ten criteria, rated 1–4, evaluated by two raters. Instruments were validated, reliability-tested, and adapted from established studies to ensure accuracy, consistency, and suitability for statistical analysis.

Data Gathering Procedure

The study followed ethical procedures to ensure reliable and valid data collection. Consent forms were obtained from parents/guardians, and assent forms were secured from Grade 8 learners, emphasizing voluntary participation and the right to withdraw. Approval from the research ethics committee was obtained prior to data gathering. A five-part questionnaire was administered with researcher guidance for clarity, followed by an impromptu speaking task where students delivered three-minute responses to random prompts. Performances were rated by two language teachers using a rubric. All collected data were organized and prepared for statistical analysis to ensure accurate and meaningful interpretation of results.

Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in data analysis. Frequency and percentage described respondents' profiles in terms of age, sex, and parents' income. Weighted mean measured English language anxiety (ELA), coping mechanisms, proficiency, and past experiences based on the Elaine K. Horwitz FLCAS. Frequency, percentage, and mean described speaking performance.

Independent samples t-test and ANOVA determined differences across profile variables. Pearson product-moment correlation (r) examined relationships among ELA, coping strategies, proficiency, past experiences, and speaking performance. All tests were set at a 0.05 significance level to ensure statistical validity and reliability of results.

Ethical Consideration

The study strictly adhered to the ethical standards of Cagayan State University Research Ethics Committee to protect respondents' rights, dignity, and welfare. Informed consent from parents/guardians and assent from Grade 8 learners were secured, ensuring voluntary participation and the right to withdraw without penalty. Confidentiality was maintained through anonymized data stored in password-protected files and secure storage, accessible only to the researcher and adviser. Although minimal risks such as discomfort during speaking tasks were anticipated, participants were informed of their rights and provided a safe environment. No financial compensation was given, and results were communicated respectfully and privately.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Student's Profile Variables

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Students in Terms of Their Profile Variables

Profile Variables	Frequency (n=105)	Percentage
Age		
13	36	34.29
14	69	65.71
Weighted Mean	13.66	
S.D.	0.48	
Sex		
Male	37	35.24
Female	68	64.76
Parents' Monthly Income		
50,000 and above	1	0.95
40,000 – 49,999	5	4.76
30,000 – 39,999	16	15.24
20,000 – 29,999	14	13.33
10,000 – 10,999	32	30.48
9,000 and below	37	35.24
Weighted Mean	16,071.43	
S.D.	13,140.89	

The results in Table 1 show that the respondents are mostly are 14 years old and female, with predominantly belong to the lower income socioeconomic background. The data suggests that the respondents are in the crucial stage of early adolescence where the self-consciousness and sensitivity to assessments or evaluations are often increased. The wide standard deviation of their parents' monthly income further reflects variability in the economic

background of the respondents which suggests that most respondents may have limited learning resources which are important in the development of language proficiency.

Student's perception on underlying factors that affect the English Language Anxiety

Teacher Factor

Table 2. Students' Perception on Factors That Affect ELA in terms of Teacher Factor

Teacher Factor	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
My English teacher explains lessons clearly and makes learning easier.	3.80	Agree
My teacher provides enough opportunities for me to practice speaking English.	3.62	Agree
The teaching strategies used in my English class match my learning style.	3.40	Neutral
My teacher encourages me to use English outside the classroom.	3.30	Neutral
I feel motivated to learn English because of my teacher's support and guidance.	3.72	Agree
Category Mean	3.57	Agree

Table 2 shows that Indicator 1 received the highest rating ($M = 3.80$), indicating that teachers provide clear explanations that reduce confusion and support easier learning. This aligns with Mercer and Dörnyei (2020), who emphasized that instructional clarity reduces learner anxiety and promotes a positive classroom environment. In contrast, the lowest-rated indicator ($M = 3.30$) shows limited encouragement to use English outside the classroom, which may sustain anxiety in real-life communication contexts. This is supported by Zhang (2024), who noted that out-of-class exposure significantly affects language anxiety. Overall, teachers play a crucial role in extending language use beyond classroom instruction.

Parental Factor

Table 3. Students' Perception on Factors that Affect Their English Language Anxiety in Terms of Parental Factor

Parental Factor	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
My parents encourage me to improve my English skills.	3.50	Agree
My parents provide me with English learning materials such as books and online resources.	3.40	Neutral
My parents communicate with me in English at home.	2.39	Disagree
My parents monitor and support my English language studies.	3.12	Neutral

My family values learning English as an important skill for my future.	3.68	Agree
Category Mean	3.22	Neutral

Table 3 shows that the highest-rated indicator ($M = 3.68$) is families recognizing the importance of learning English for learners' future. This suggests strong parental influence on motivation, consistent with Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), who emphasized that learner motivation is shaped by family beliefs and expectations. However, the lowest-rated indicator ($M = 2.39$) shows limited use of English at home, indicating minimal linguistic support. This aligns with Gonzales (2020), who noted that parental involvement strongly affects language outcomes. Overall, findings reveal a gap between motivational encouragement and actual language practice at home.

Social Factor

Table 4. Students' Perception on Factors that Affect Their English Language Anxiety in Terms of Social Factor

Social Factor	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
I feel comfortable speaking English with my classmates and friends.	2.73	Neutral
My friends and peers influence my attitude toward learning English.	3.09	Neutral
I have enough opportunities to practice English in social settings (e.g., school clubs, online forums).	3.42	Neutral
I enjoy participating in group activities that involve using English.	3.51	Agree
Social interactions help improve my confidence in speaking English.	3.55	Agree
Category Mean	3.26	Neutral

Table 4 shows that the highest-rated indicator ($M = 3.55$) is that social interactions improve English-speaking confidence, aligning with Oxford (2017), who emphasized that social strategies enhance willingness to communicate and reduce anxiety. In contrast, the lowest-rated indicator ($M = 2.73$) shows learners feel less comfortable speaking English with peers due to fear of negative evaluation. This supports Okyar (2023), who found that peer judgment increases speaking anxiety. Overall, findings suggest that while social interaction supports language development, it must occur in a supportive and emotionally safe environment.

Financial Factor

Table 5. Students' Perception on Factors that Affect Their English Language Anxiety in Terms of Financial Factor

Financial Factor	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
I have access to English learning materials (e.g., books, internet, tutoring) due to my family's financial situation.	3.30	Neutral
My family can afford extra English	2.75	Neutral

lessons or tutoring if needed.		
Financial constraints limit my ability to attend English enrichment programs.	2.77	Neutral
I have access to technology (e.g., computers, internet) to support my English learning.	3.80	Agree
I can afford to participate in school activities that enhance my English skills.	3.16	Neutral
Category Mean	3.16	Neutral

Table 5 shows that the highest-rated indicator is learners' access to technology, suggesting that digital tools serve as the primary support for English language learning. This aligns with Saito and Samimy (2020), who found that access to supplementary resources enhances proficiency and reduces anxiety through increased exposure and practice. In contrast, respondents were uncertain about their families' ability to afford tutoring, indicating limited financial support for structured learning. This supports Dao et al. (2025), who emphasized that socioeconomic status influences access to language enrichment opportunities. Overall, technology access alone is insufficient without financial support.

Cultural Factor

Table 6. Students' Perception on Factors that Affect Their English Language Anxiety in Terms of Cultural Factor

Cultural Factor	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
My cultural background influences my attitude toward learning English.	3.38	Neutral
I believe learning English is important for communicating with people from different cultures.	4.10	Agree
English is widely used in my community and daily life.	2.10	Disagree
I find it challenging to balance learning English with my native language and cultural identity.	3.66	Agree
My culture values the importance of learning English for personal and professional growth.	3.49	Neutral
Category Mean	3.34	Neutral

Table 6 shows that the highest-rated indicator reflects learners' perception of English as valuable for cross-cultural communication, indicating strong awareness of its global relevance. This aligns with Saleh (2022), who noted that learners recognize English as a global communication tool. In contrast, the lowest-rated indicator shows limited use of English in the local community, suggesting minimal real-life exposure. This supports Yashima (2018), who emphasized that lack of authentic exposure reduces willingness to communicate. Overall, findings reveal a gap

between learners' positive perceptions of English and their limited opportunities for practical use.**Summary**

Table 7. Students' Perception on Factors that Affect Their English Language Anxiety (Summary)

Factors that Affect English Language Anxiety	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
Teacher Factor	3.57	Influential
Parental Factor	3.22	Moderately Influential
Social Factor	3.26	Moderately Influential
Financial Factor	3.16	Moderately Influential
Cultural Factor	3.34	Moderately Influential
Composite Mean	3.31	Moderately Influential

In summary, the findings in Table 7 indicate that the respondents experience a learning environment where multiple factors collectively influence their English language anxiety, reflected in a moderately influential composite mean of 3.31. Among these, the teacher factor emerged as the most influential, emphasizing the critical role of instructional practices and classroom support in shaping learners' emotional experiences in English. Other factors, including parental, social, financial, and cultural influences, were rated as moderately influential, suggesting more indirect and variable effects. This implies the need for a holistic intervention approach. This result is consistent with Mercer and Dörnyei (2020).

Level of foreign/English language anxiety of the learners according to Horwitz, et. al.'s Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

Communication Apprehension

Table 8. Students' Level of Foreign/English Language Anxiety in terms of Communication Apprehension

Statement	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.	3.00	Neutral
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.	3.31	Neutral
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	3.59	Agree
14. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.	2.58	Neutral
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	3.30	Neutral
18. I feel confident when I speak in	2.61	Neutral

foreign language class.		
24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.	3.27	Neutral
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	3.49	Neutral
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	3.44	Neutral
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak a foreign language.	3.25	Neutral
32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.	2.95	Neutral
Category Mean	3.16	Neutral/ Moderate Level of English Language Anxiety

The results in table 8 shows an overall neutral or moderate level of English Language anxiety among the respondents in terms of communication apprehension. Among these statements, statement 9 received the highest rating with a weighted mean of 3.59 which reveals that the learners tend to panic when they are unprepared for speaking tasks. This may trigger anxiety due to fear of making mistakes. This finding aligns with the recent study of Rois (2025) which found out that speaking anxiety is strongly influenced by lack of preparation, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes, particularly during unprepared speaking tasks.

On the other hand, the lowest rated indicator, statement 14, reveals that the respondents moderately feel confident speaking in English when they are around native speakers. This indicates that even in a less formal environment, they still have not fully developed a strong sense of confidence in using the English language. This result aligns with the finding of Lou (2024) that learners who compare themselves with native speakers often experience reduced confidence because of increase self-awareness and their perceived variation of proficiency.

Altogether, the results imply that the learners' ELA is situational in nature because it becomes more evident only during specific communicative situations such as unprepared speaking tasks and when interacting with more proficient native speakers.

Test Anxiety

Table 9. Students' Level of Foreign/English Language Anxiety in terms of Test Anxiety

Statement	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.	3.29	Neutral
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more foreign language	2.89	Neutral

classes.		
6. During language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	3.20	Neutral
8. I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.	3.14	Neutral
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my foreign language class.	3.63	Agree
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.	3.31	Neutral
12. In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	3.60	Agree
16. Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	3.63	Agree
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.	3.58	Agree
21. The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.	3.19	Neutral
22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.	2.72	Neutral
25. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	3.33	Neutral
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.	3.30	Neutral
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	3.49	Neutral
28. When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	2.70	Neutral
Category Mean	3.27	Neutral/ Moderate Level of English Language Anxiety

Table 9 shows an overall neutral or moderate level of English Language Anxiety among the respondents in terms of test anxiety. Among these statements, statements 10 and 16 received the highest rating with both having a weighted mean of 3.63. This finding reveals that the fear of failing their language class and performance pressure creates psychological pressure among the respondents which also implies that their test anxiety is primarily outcome-oriented. This finding aligns with the recent finding of Nguyen (2025) that learners who experience test anxiety worry about the

consequences of failure consistently, which they view as “overwhelming” and beyond their control. This reveals that anxiety is not only about the test itself, rather, it is the consequences such as failure of the subject or getting poor grades.

Meanwhile, statement 28, which received a 2.70 weighted mean and a neutral stance from the respondents, show that they do not always feel sure and relaxed when going to their language class suggesting that there is a presence of “anticipatory anxiety”. This finding aligns with the study B rk nyi and Brash (2025) which found that learners experience anxiety even before participating in their communicative tasks which is often triggered by anticipation of difficulty, performance demands, and uncertainty. This emphasizes that anxiety is not limited during the test, but can arise even before the actual engagement in a language task.

In summary, the findings imply that the learners’ anxiety is experienced before, during, and after the evaluation, where learners are triggered not only by the task or test itself but by the meaning they associate to its possible consequences.

Fear of Negative Evaluation

Table 10. Students' Level of Foreign/English Language Anxiety in terms of Negative Evaluation

Statement	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.	2.56	Neutral
7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.	3.54	Agree
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	3.13	Neutral
17. I often feel like not going to my language class.	2.70	Neutral
19. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	3.18	Neutral
23. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	3.63	Agree
31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.	3.50	Agree
33. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	3.65	Agree
Category Mean	3.24	Neutral/ Moderate Level of English Language Anxiety

In Table 10, the overall level of English language anxiety in terms of fear of negative evaluation is neutral, with a category mean of 3.24. The highest-rated indicator (WM = 3.65) shows that anxiety is most evident during spontaneous questioning, reflecting concern over immediate judgment from teachers and peers, consistent with Okyar (2023). Meanwhile, the lowest-rated indicator (WM = 2.56) suggests partial acceptance of mistakes, though still inconsistent, aligning with Dewaele and MacIntyre (2019) and Lee (2022).

Summary of Students' English Language Anxiety

Table 11. Students' English Language Anxiety

Factors that Affect English Language Anxiety	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
Communication Apprehension	3.16	Moderate Level
Fear of Negative Evaluation	3.27	Moderate Level
Test Anxiety	3.24	Moderate Level
Composite Mean	3.22	Moderate Level of English Language Anxiety

The respondents’ overall FLCAS score across the three categories is moderate level with a composite mean of 3.22. This result implies that the respondents experience a state of manageable but sustained feelings of anxiety. They can still perform or participate in language tasks despite the tension. This form of anxiety is significant because it may not be immediately visible however, it can gradually reduce learners’ willingness of risk-taking, participation in spontaneous communication, and may hinder deeper language development.

Student’s coping strategies or mechanisms

Cognitive Strategies

Table 12. Students' Coping Strategies or Mechanisms in Terms of Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive Strategies	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
I practice speaking English regularly to become more confident.	3.16	Neutral
I prepare for English class by reviewing lessons in advance to reduce anxiety.	3.78	Agree
I seek help from classmates or friends when I feel anxious about English tasks.	3.25	Neutral
I participate in English-related activities (e.g., debates, storytelling) to improve my confidence.	3.23	Neutral
I avoid situations where I have to speak English because it makes me anxious.	3.34	Neutral
Category Mean	3.35	Neutral

In Table 12, the highest-rated indicator (WM = 3.78) shows that respondents prepare by reviewing lessons in advance, reflecting proactive coping consistent with Dewaele (2017). The lowest-rated indicator (WM = 3.16) indicates limited speaking practice, aligning

with MacIntyre et al. (2019). Overall, learners prefer preparation over actual speaking practice.

Behavioral Strategies

Table 13. Students' Coping Strategies or Mechanisms in Terms of Behavioral Strategies

Behavioral Strategies	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
I practice speaking English regularly to become more confident.	3.50	Agree
I prepare for English class by reviewing lessons in advance to reduce anxiety.	3.34	Neutral
I seek help from classmates or friends when I feel anxious about English tasks.	3.66	Agree
I participate in English-related activities (e.g., debates, storytelling) to improve my confidence.	3.17	Neutral
I avoid situations where I have to speak English because it makes me anxious.	3.15	Neutral
Category Mean	3.36	Neutral

In Table 13, the highest-rated indicator (WM = 3.66) shows that respondents seek help from classmates or friends, reflecting reliance on social coping strategies consistent with Oxford (2017). The lowest-rated indicator (WM = 3.15) indicates neutral avoidance of English speaking, aligning with MacIntyre et al. (2019). Overall, learners balance peer support and cautious engagement.

Affective Strategies

Table 14. Students' Coping Strategies or Mechanisms in Terms of Affective Strategies

Affective Strategies	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
I use deep breathing or relaxation techniques when I feel nervous in our English class.	3.52	Agree
I tell myself positive statements when I feel stressed about English tasks.	3.64	Agree
I am aware of my feelings when learning or using English.	3.40	Neutral
I try to stay motivated even when English tasks are challenging.	3.49	Neutral
I practice English more comfortably using English.	3.37	Neutral
Category Mean	3.48	Neutral

In Table 14, the highest-rated indicator (WM = 3.64) shows that respondents use positive self-talk to manage anxiety, reflecting emotional regulation consistent with Dewaele and Li (2021). The lowest-rated indicator (WM = 3.37) indicates inconsistent comfort in English use, aligning with Botes et al. (2020) and Zhang (2021).

Overall, affective strategies support engagement but are insufficient without practice.

Teacher-Driven Approaches

Table 15. Students' Coping Strategies or Mechanisms in Terms of Teacher-Driven Approaches

Teacher-Driven Approaches	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
My teacher provides a supportive environment that helps reduce my anxiety in English class.	3.62	Agree
My teacher encourages me to speak English without fear of making mistakes.	3.59	Agree
My teacher uses activities that help me feel more comfortable using English.	3.54	Agree
My teacher gives constructive feedback in a way that reduces my anxiety.	3.46	Neutral
I feel less anxious about speaking English when my teacher uses group or pair activities.	3.51	Agree
Category Mean	3.54	Agree

In Table 15, the highest-rated indicator (WM = 3.62) shows that respondents perceive their teacher as supportive, helping reduce anxiety in English class, consistent with Mercer and Dörnyei (2020). The lowest-rated indicator (WM = 3.46) indicates that feedback is not consistently perceived as anxiety-reducing, aligning with Hu (2025) and Luken (2024). Overall, while teacher support is strong, the effectiveness of feedback varies and can either reduce or heighten learners' anxiety depending on its delivery.

Summary of Students' Coping Strategies or Mechanisms

Table 16. Summary of Students' Coping Strategies or Mechanisms

Category	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
Cognitive	3.35	Moderately Practiced
Behavioral	3.36	Moderately Practiced
Affective	3.48	Frequently Practiced
Teacher-driven Approaches	3.54	Frequently Practiced
Composite Mean	3.44	Frequently Practiced

The overall data in Table 16 shows a composite mean of 3.44, with cognitive and behavioral strategies as both moderately practiced while affective and teacher-driven approaches as frequently practiced. These results suggests that the respondents are not passive in managing their anxiety, rather, they actively use various coping strategies particularly those that are emotionally-focused and externally supported. This finding suggests that there is still a

need to reinforce their strategies through a more independent, action-based strategies that promote sustained confidence and language use.

Proficiency level in English

Table 17. Students' Proficiency Level in English

Proficiency level in English	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
I have a good understanding of English grammar and vocabulary.	2.91	Neutral
I can comprehend spoken English with ease.	2.72	Neutral
I can write English essays or reports without difficulty.	2.71	Neutral
I can communicate fluently in English in different situations.	2.91	Neutral
My English proficiency level affects my willingness to participate in conversations.	3.34	Neutral
Category Mean	2.92	Moderate English Proficiency

The overall category mean in Table 17 indicates a moderate level of English proficiency among the respondents. The highest-rated indicator suggests that learners recognize the role of proficiency in shaping communicative confidence, consistent with Liu (2025) and Saez-Zevallos et al. (2025), highlighting the link between self-efficacy, engagement, and anxiety. Meanwhile, the lowest-rated indicators (WM = 2.72; 2.71) reveal difficulties in both productive and receptive skills, aligning with Zhang (2021). Overall, participation depends on perceived competence but remains limited by actual language ability.

Past Experiences

Table 18. Students' Past Experiences in English Learning

Past Experiences	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Value
My previous experiences with English learning have been mostly positive.	3.13	Neutral
I had teachers who encouraged me to improve my English skills.	3.64	Agree
I have faced challenges in learning English that affected my confidence.	3.62	Agree
Positive feedback from teachers and peers has motivated me to improve my English skills.	3.65	Agree
Category Mean	3.51	Have Moderately positive experiences

Table 18 shows an overall moderately positive English learning experience among respondents. The highest-rated indicators (WM = 3.64; 3.65) highlight that teacher encouragement and positive feedback enhance motivation and engagement, consistent with Cañete (2025). The lowest-rated indicator shows neutral past experiences, suggesting inconsistent or discouraging encounters, aligning with Dewaele (2019). Overall, findings imply that current instructional support should both motivate and help offset negative past learning experiences.

Students' Impromptu Speaking Skills

Table 19. Students' Impromptu Speaking Skills

Score Range	Frequency (n=105)	Percentage
Excellent Performance	0	0.00
Good Performance	10	9.52
Fair Performance	19	18.10
Needs Improvement	76	72.38
Category Mean	16.61	Needs Improvement

Table 19 shows the students' impromptu speaking performance where majority of them falls under needs improvement category (72.38%), with only 18.10% of fair performances, and 9.52% of good performance and none of them achieved an excellent performance. This reveals that majority of the respondents experience a considerable difficulty in their impromptu speaking performance. According to Skehan (2018), impromptu speaking tasks require high cognitive demands on learners in real time. He also noted that when learners have not yet developed sufficient automaticity, their performance tends to break down supports the present finding that the respondents' impromptu speaking ability remains at a developing stage and that linguistic competence and confidence are not yet fully established.

Comparison between the respondents' level of English language anxiety, coping mechanisms, and speaking performance when they are grouped according to profile

Table 20. Comparison between the respondents' level of English language anxiety when they are grouped according to profile

Variable	t/f-value	p-value	Statistical Inference
Age	0.1124	0.911	Not Significant
Sex	1.3028	0.196	Not Significant
Parents' Monthly Income	4.5475	0.002*	Significant

Table 20 shows that age and sex have no significant influence on learners' ELA, indicating that anxiety is largely shaped by classroom and psychological factors rather than demographics, consistent with Dewaele and MacIntyre (2014). However, parents' monthly income significantly affects ELA, aligning with Khan et al. (2024), suggesting socioeconomic influence on access to resources. Contrasting studies (Alamer, 2021; Camacho et al., 2021) emphasize motivational and classroom factors as stronger mediators of anxiety.

Comparison between respondent's coping mechanisms when they are grouped according to profile

Table 21. Comparison between the respondents' coping mechanisms when they are grouped according to profile

Variable	t/f-value	p-value	Statistical Inference
Age	1.0116	0.314	Not Significant
Sex	1.8011	0.075	Not Significant
Parents' Monthly Income	0.9179	0.457	Not Significant

Table 21 shows that coping mechanisms do not significantly differ across profile variables, indicating shared strategies shaped by common classroom experiences, consistent with Zheng & Cheng (2022) and Oxford (2017). However, this contrasts with Pawlak (2021) and Oxford (2011), who found that proficiency, motivation, and context influence strategy use. Overall, coping appears similar but may be limited by self-report measurement.

Correlation Between Students' English Language Anxiety and Selected Variables

Table 22. Correlation Between Students' English Language Anxiety and Selected Variables

Variable	r-value	p-value	Statistical Inference
Factors Influencing ELA			
Teacher Factor	0.100	0.309	Not Significant
Parental Factor	0.267	0.006	Significant
Social Factor	0.151	0.125	Not Significant
Financial Factor	0.111	0.259	Not Significant
Cultural Factor	0.075	0.447	Not Significant
Coping Mechanisms			
Cognitive	-0.041	0.678	Not Significant
Behavioral	0.449	0.000	Significant
Affective	-0.024	0.811	Not Significant
Teacher-driven Approaches	0.087	0.376	Not Significant
Proficiency Level	0.036	0.715	Not Significant
Past Experiences	-0.038	0.702	Not Significant

Table 22 shows that parental factors and behavioral coping mechanisms have significant relationships with English language anxiety (ELA), while other variables and speaking performance are not significantly related. Parental influence suggests that home support, expectations, or pressure shape learners' anxiety, consistent with Gonzales (2020), Yamamoto and Holloway (2010), and Luo (2013). Behavioral coping mechanisms are also significantly related, indicating reactive rather than preventive strategies, aligning with Botes et al. (2020). Overall, ELA is complex and context-dependent.

Correlation Between Students' Speaking Performance and Selected Variables

Table 23. Correlation Between Students' Speaking Performance and Selected Variables

Variable	r-value	p-value	Statistical Inference
Level of English language anxiety according to Horwitz' FLCAS			
Communication Apprehension	-0.3325	0.0419*	Significant
Fear of Negative Evaluation	-0.1294	0.1883	Not Significant
Test Anxiety	-0.0069	0.9445	Not Significant
Coping Mechanisms			
Cognitive	0.0437	0.6581	Not Significant
Behavioral	-0.0259	0.7929	Not Significant
Affective	0.1068	0.2782	Not Significant
Teacher-driven Approaches	0.0704	0.4756	Not Significant

Table 23 reveals that only communication apprehension has a significant negative relationship with speaking performance, indicating that higher apprehension leads to lower impromptu speaking performance. This suggests that learners' difficulty lies primarily in real-time communication rather than fear of evaluation or test anxiety, consistent with McCroskey (2015) and MacIntyre (2017). Meanwhile, coping strategies show no significant relationship with speaking performance, implying that while they may reduce anxiety, they do not improve actual speaking outcomes, as noted by Warna (2024). Overall, findings highlight the need to strengthen communicative competence through sustained speaking practice.

Proposed Instructional Plan

Title: From Fear to Fluency: An Instructional Plan to Reduce English Language Anxiety and Improve Speaking Performance

I. Rationale

The study revealed that learners generally experience a moderate level of English language anxiety, with communication apprehension as the primary source of anxiety in their oral performance

as reflected in their impromptu speaking performance which revealed that majority of them fell under the “needs improvement” category. Despite their frequent use of coping mechanisms, this finding does not necessarily translate into improved speaking performance. In addition, it was also found that teachers’ feedback is not consistently perceived as anxiety-reducing by the learners, which may contribute to their confidence in language use.

Given these findings, a need for instructional plan, that extends beyond coping with anxiety and focuses on developing the learners’ communicative competence through guided, repeated, and meaningful speaking opportunities in an environment that is emotionally-safe, instructionally supportive, and responsive to learners’ need environment.

II. Objectives

At the end of the proposed instructional plan, the learners are expected to:

1. Demonstrate reduced communication apprehension during speaking tasks;
2. Participate more actively in speaking activities;
3. Apply basic speaking strategies under time demands; and
4. Show improvement in impromptu speaking performance.

III. Persons Involved

1. Grade 8 Learners
2. English Teachers
3. English Coordinator
4. School head

IV. Program and Timeline of Activities

PHASE	WEEK	ACTIVITIES	PURPOSE
0: Pre-implementation	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-test in Impromptu Speaking • anxiety self-rating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish baseline speaking performance • To measure the level of ELA
0: Diagnostic Phase	1	Analysis of results and grouping of learners into Frustrational, Instructional, and Independent	To ensure intervention is responsive to learners’ needs
1: Creating a Safe Speaking Environment	1-2	Paired self-introductions, guided sharing, sentence completion drills, vocabulary support with differentiated tasks applied	To reduce anxiety through creating a safe classroom environment ideal for building initial confidence among learners
2: Guided Speaking Practice	3-4	Think-Pair-Share, guided Question and Answer, Short opinion sharing with differentiated tasks applied	To develop structured responses among learners in a low-stake communicative setting
3: Controlled Impromptu Speaking	5-6	1-minute speaking, role playing, topic cards with differentiated scaffolds provided	To build the speaking ability with minimal preparation
4: Independent Speaking Performance	7-8	2-3 minute impromptu speaking, facilitated peer-feedbacking, reflection activities with minimal scaffolding	To demonstrate improved speaking performance.
Post-implementation	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-impromptu speaking task • Anxiety self-rating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To measure improvement • To track emotional progress

V. Evaluation Mechanisms:

1. **Pre-test and post-test** for Impromptu speaking task for measuring improvement in speaking performance before and after undergoing the intervention using a **speaking**

performance rubric which includes fluency, organization, confidence, and clarity as criteria.

2. **Weekly Observation Checklist** for monitoring learners’ participation, confidence, and engagement.

3. **Anxiety self-rating scale** in impromptu speaking to track learners' emotional progress.
4. **Reflection journal** uses as a descriptive support in monitoring learners' speaking experiences to be done weekly after every phase.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the Grade 8 learners show a generally moderate level of English language anxiety and frequently use different coping mechanisms however, majority of them falls under "need improvement" category from their impromptu speaking task. The findings also reveal that communicative apprehension has a significant negative relationship with their speaking performance. This finding indicates that the learners' speaking difficulty stems primarily from engaging in real-time communication rather than evaluative situations such as fear of negative evaluations or test anxiety. In addition, it is also revealed that among the profile variable, parents' monthly income significantly influences learners' language anxiety, emphasizing the role of socio-economic factor on the learners' English language experiences. In summary, the results imply in order to improve learners' speaking performance, intervention should switch from coping with anxiety to building communicative competence by consistently providing opportunities for a structured, supportive, and practice-based instructional interventions for a meaningful language use.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several interventions are recommended. English teachers should prioritize structured, low-pressure speaking activities such as think-pair-share, role playing, and guided impromptu tasks, while shifting focus from preparation to actual language use. Teachers may also model effective speaking and coping strategies and, together with school administrators, conduct regular LAC sessions to strengthen feedback practices and create a psychologically safe classroom. The proposed instructional plan should be adopted to reduce communication apprehension and improve speaking performance. Parents are encouraged to support English use at home, while future researchers may explore additional variables and intervention-based studies.

Declaration of no Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares no conflict of interest and this article is her original work.

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