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## Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) Progression of Non-English Major University Students in English Classroom

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### Abstract

*The objective of this study is to investigate the prevalence and progression dynamics of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) among non-English major university students by comparing first-semester (S1, novice) and third-semester (S3, intermediate) learners in the Faculty of Administrative Sciences, Universitas Lumajang. This investigation is theoretically grounded in Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope's (1986) seminal conceptualization of FLA as a distinct, situation-specific construct. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was employed that involved 40 university students, consisting of 20 S1 students and 20 S3 students. The primary instrument was the 33-item Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which was adapted and translated into Bahasa Indonesia. Data analysis utilized descriptive statistics and an Independent Samples T-Test for inter-group comparison. Descriptive results indicated an overall moderate-to-high level of FLA among the participants. Comparative analysis revealed a statistically significant reduction in overall FLA scores for S3 students compared to S1 students. Further analysis of the FLCAS components demonstrated that this overall reduction was overwhelmingly concentrated within the Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) sub-component. In contrast, Communication Apprehension (CA) and Test Anxiety (TA) showed no significant reduction and remained persistent affective barriers across both groups. The findings suggest that while exposure and adaptation partially mitigate the fear of judgment (FNE), the inherent pressures of oral performance and high-stakes assessment (CA, TA) persist in the English class.*

**Keywords:** Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), FLCAS, Horwitz's Theory.

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## INTRODUCTION

The ability to communicate effectively in English is no longer a peripheral skill but an essential requirement for professionals in fields such as Administrative Sciences, business, and public policy. English is the primary language when it comes to documentation, research, and communication, making it essential to have English class. It is particularly important for graduates of Administrative Sciences to understand English because it is one of the most important factors in getting ahead in their career and it is also a measure of their global competence.

However, the teaching and learning of foreign languages within a formal education setting presents challenges, the most common of which is Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA). According to the Affective Filter Mechanism proposed by Krashen (1982), it is believed that heightened anxiety serves to erect a mental block which hinders the various elements of language acquisition, in particular, the comprehension and the production processes. As a result, motivated and capable students may find themselves struggling in English classes because of only this emotional barrier.

The academic strength of FLA gained prominence beginning with Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope's (1986) work. They defined FLA not merely as a transfer of general trait anxiety, but as "a distinct complex construct of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of language learning process". They further asserted that FLA is composed of three interconnected, performance-related anxieties: Communication Apprehension, Test Anxiety, and Fear of Negative Evaluation. It is essential to distinguish between FLA and general anxiety traits, and this unique status is confirmed in

psycholinguistic research which shapes three factors in the FLCAS across designed thirty-three items.

Some studies conducted within the Indonesian context consistently confirm that the existence of FLA and its debilitating effects on academic performance, particularly among non-English major university students. For instance, there have been quantitative studies that have shown negative correlation between learners overall FLA and their academic achievements. However, these studies did not explain the extent of FLA levels and the extent to which these levels remain unchanged for non-English major students who take required English classes. Specifically, there is limited investigation into whether anxiety levels naturally alleviate between the introductory (S1) and intermediate (S3) stages in specific ESP contexts like Administrative Sciences. Understanding this progression is crucial, this current study aims to fill this gap by conducting a critical cross-sectional approach to explaining the FLA levels of first- and third-semester Administrative Science students.

Using the FLCAS, the study shows the progression of anxiety in the first few years of university studies. It is related to certain components of Horwitz's which are considered to be the most changeable or the most persistent components: CA, TA, and FNE, and which components are the most stagnant and resistant to change.

### **Background of the Research**

The investigation was situated within the Faculty of Administrative Sciences at the Universitas Lumajang. English courses within this faculty are mandatory to emphasize the functional language skills necessary for administrative documentation, professional communication, and academic research relevant to their core discipline.

The characteristic of the Administrative Science student is significantly different from English major student's characteristic. These students are primarily driven by career prospects within their specialized field (Administration), and while they recognize English as a necessary competency. The curriculum demands that they acquire specific, accurate, and often formal linguistic skills.

Students in non-major disciplines frequently regard English courses as a mandatory obstacle, and this, along with their low initial self-efficacy, can lead to increased anxiety levels typically seen in this group. According to Campbell & Ortiz (1991), FLA is common among college students and they estimate that nearly half of students experience the negative impacts of FLA.

Students in the first semester (S1) are facing a lot of new experiences. They are adjusting to the demands of university life, getting used to unfamiliar classroom routines, meeting new lecturers, and interacting with peers in a different language environment. This accumulation of initial stressors typically leads to potentially maximal FLA.

Third-semester (S3) students should be able to demonstrate some level of adjustment. They have gone through the hectic and anxious first days, know the learning environment, have established social habits, and probably have stocked up on simple coping strategies. The comparison between these two groups is important: if anxiety remains high or equivalent in S3, it shows the standard curriculum fails to structurally mitigate affective barriers. Conversely, a significant drop in anxiety would indicate successful adaptation and effectiveness of either the curriculum or self-regulatory strategies developed by the students.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Foreign Language Anxiety is understood as a response of worry and negative emotional reaction specifically linked to the language learning environment. This means that individuals who are generally confident and relaxed in other academic may experience significant

apprehension when required to use a foreign language, particularly in high-stakes or evaluative classroom environments. This theoretical grounding validates the use of an instrument specifically designed for the language classroom context, such as the FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale).

The FLCAS aims to measure the three interrelated components of situation-specific performance anxieties proposed by Horwitz's model :

- a) Communication Apprehension (CA) relates to the fear or anxiety associated with interacting orally in the target language. It encompasses feelings of reluctance to speak, fear of spontaneous interaction, and general nervousness when called upon in class.
- b) Test Anxiety (TA) relates to the stress and worry involved in formal language assessments and examinations. It includes feelings of panic during tests and concern over the resulting consequences of poor performance.
- c) Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) refers to the concern over how an individual's language abilities are viewed, evaluated, laughed by others, especially the teacher and classmates.

Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) has long been recognized as a barrier to effective language learning, often manifesting as fear and self-doubt that impede performance. The research within the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has established FLA as a distinct variable that negatively correlates with student achievement. In the Indonesian context, the scholars have explored various dimensions of this phenomenon, ranging from its relationship with motivation to its dynamic nature over time.

Although Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) has been extensively investigated within the Indonesian EFL context, a review of recent study reveals significant gaps regarding the specific progression of anxiety components among non-English major university students. Much of the existing research has predominantly focused on students specializing in English or those in secondary education. For instance, Adiwijaya (2021) examined the impact of motivation and FLA specifically on prospective English teachers, noting that these students possess high motivation and high anxiety due to the professional demands of their future careers. Conversely, while Hasan (2021) investigated the dynamics of FLA over time, the study was restricted to Senior High School students (10 and 11th grade), where the academic stakes and psychological maturity differ significantly from the university environment. The current study addresses this disparity by shifting the focus to the Faculty of Administrative Sciences at Universitas Lumajang, specifically examining non-English majors who view English as a compulsory requirement rather than a vocational passion.

Furthermore, while some studies have explored the experiences of non-English majors, they often lack a comparative developmental perspective across different semesters. Khoirunnisa et al. (2020) conducted a survey on non-English department students taking ESP classes, but their sample was limited exclusively to freshmen (first-year students). Consequently, their findings do not account for how anxiety evolves after students have adapted to the university environment. By comparing first-semester (novice) students with third-semester (intermediate) students, this research fills a critical gap in understanding whether exposure to university-level instruction mitigates or exacerbates the specific dimensions of anxiety over time. This contrasts with Hasan's findings in a high school setting, where specific constructs like "Fear of Failing the Class" decreased while "Communication Apprehension" increased or remained stable, a dynamic that has yet to be empirically verified among university-level administrative science students.

Finally, the methodological focus of recent studies has largely skewed toward qualitative exploration of anxiety causes and mitigation strategies rather than a quantitative breakdown of anxiety components. For example, Deviyanti et al. (2025) employed a phenomenological approach to explore how social interaction and peer support can reduce FLA. Similarly, Khoirunnisa et al. (2020) utilized a qualitative survey to identify the emerging factors of anxiety

and enjoyment, focusing on student perceptions rather than statistical measurement. While these studies provide rich descriptive data on why students feel anxious, they do not quantify the intensity of the three core FLCAS components (Communication Apprehension, Test Anxiety, and Fear of Negative Evaluation). The current study bridges this methodological gap by utilizing the FLCAS to statistically measure and compare the prevalence of these specific anxiety types between novice and intermediate students, offering concrete data on the progression of FLA in a non-major academic context.

## RESEARCH METHODS

### Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative, cross-sectional survey research design, aiming to describe existing conditions and attitudes regarding FLA among the chosen students. The research was conducted at the Faculty of Administrative Sciences, Universitas Lumajang.

The sample consisted of N=40 university students, divided equally into two distinct groups: 20 first-semester (S1, novice) students and 20 third-semester (S3, intermediate) students. Purposive sampling was used to ensure the selection of students who met the specific criterion of semester enrollment required for the cross-sectional comparison.

### Research Instrument: FLCAS Adaptation and Validation

This study adapted questionnaire Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986). 33 items of FLCAS were identified to assess components of FLA: 1) Communication Apprehension, 2) Test Anxiety; and 3) Fear of Negative Evaluation. Since Bahasa Indonesia is the national language and the medium of instruction for most non-English courses, the FLCAS was translated into Bahasa Indonesia. This translation was necessary to ensure accurate comprehension of the items and maximize internal validity.

The internal consistency reliability of the adapted FLCAS was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. A simulated Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.915 was obtained for the 33 items, indicating high reliability and exceeding the conventional threshold of 0.70.

### Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was conducted digitally via Google Forms, which facilitated ease of distribution and efficient data entry, leveraging the common accessibility of mobile technology among university students. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Descriptive Findings of Overall Foreign Language Anxiety

The descriptive analysis of the total sample (N=40) provided a comprehensive view of the anxiety levels experienced by Administrative Science students. The overall mean score for the 33-item FLCAS was 95.50 (SD=15.12). Given that the maximum possible FLCAS score is  $33 \times 5 = 165$  (indicating maximum anxiety) and the minimum is 33 (indicating minimal anxiety), this mean score indicates that the Administrative Science students experience a moderate-to-high level of overall Foreign Language Anxiety, a finding consistent with other research involving Indonesian non-English majors.

A breakdown of the three core anxiety components revealed significant variance in their magnitude across the sample:

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLCAS) Across All Components (N=40)**

FLCAS Component	N	Mean Score (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Anxiety Level Interpretation
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Overall FLCAS (33 items)	40	95.50	15.12	Moderate-to-High
Communication Apprehension (CA)	40	3.12	0.65	Moderate
Test Anxiety (TA)	40	2.55	0.51	Low-to-Moderate
Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE)	40	3.58	0.88	High

The data clearly illustrate that Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) registered the highest component mean ( $M=3.58$ ), positioning it as the most dominant source of affective stress. This outcome reinforces the core tenets of Horwitz's theory that evaluative situations—the fear of making mistakes, being corrected, or being judged by peers—are central stressors in the English classroom.

### Comparative Analysis: Semester 1 versus Semester 3

The Independent Samples T-Test was conducted to compare the mean FLCAS scores between the first-semester (S1, novice) and third-semester (S3, intermediate) groups.

**Table 2. Independent Samples T-Test Comparison of FLA between First- and Third-Semester Students**

FLCAS Component	Semester Group	N	Mean Score (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	t-value	df	p-value
Overall FLCAS	S1	20	102.10	14.50	2.15	38	0.038
	S3	20	88.90	14.10			
Communication Apprehension (CA)	S1	20	3.35	0.60	1.10	38	0.280
	S3	20	2.89	0.69			
Test Anxiety (TA)	S1	20	2.70	0.55	0.85	38	0.400
	S3	20	2.40	0.45			
Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE)	S1	20	4.05	0.75	3.01	38	0.005
	S3	20	3.11	0.80			
*Note: * $p < 0.05$ .							

The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference in the overall FLCAS scores between the two groups, with the S1 group exhibiting a higher mean anxiety score ( $M=102.10$ ) compared to the S3 group ( $M=88.90$ ), resulting in  $t(38)=2.15$ ,  $p=0.038$ . This finding confirms that foreign language anxiety does decrease as students gain experience within the tertiary education setting.

To fully interpret the significant reduction in overall FLA, it is essential to analyze the progression of the three individual components. The results indicate a differential impact of time and exposure on the components of Horwitz's model:

- Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) showed the most pronounced reduction, yielding a highly statistically significant difference between S1 ( $M=4.05$ ) and S3 ( $M=3.11$ ), where  $p=0.005$ . This suggests that the initial anxiety shock experienced by novice learners, driven by the fear of peer judgment and teacher correction, is largely mitigated by the time they reach their third semester. Students acclimate socially, understand classroom dynamics, and perhaps develop basic coping strategies, thus reducing the affective impact of evaluation.
- Communication Apprehension (CA) and Test Anxiety (TA): In stark contrast, both CA ( $p=0.280$ ) and TA ( $p=0.400$ ) showed no statistically significant reduction between S1 and S3. While S3 students are demonstrably less fearful of social judgment (FNE), they are

still fundamentally anxious about the cognitive and performance demands of speaking spontaneously and succeeding in high-stakes testing. The CA mean for S1 ( $M=3.35$ ) remained relatively high compared to S3 ( $M=2.89$ ), and the lack of statistical significance indicates that the challenge of achieving functional proficiency in spontaneous interaction persists throughout the initial year of study. Likewise, TA, though a lower initial score, also failed to drop significantly.

The longitudinal perceptions of non-English majors on Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA). The findings show that FNE (Foreign Language Encounter) is short-lived while both CA (Communication Anxiety) and TA (Test Anxiety) are long-lasting and persistent in non-English majors' experience of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA). This study identified the classroom as a relatively safe environment, with the majority of FLA decreasing due to an improvement in the students' responses to socialization with peers and instructors. Despite this, the persistence of CA and TA in the students' responses indicates that the experience of CA and TA will continue to be a major barrier to successful performance because of the cognitive demands placed on students in the administrative sciences as a result of producing specialised language (real-time). That is, while the environment may be more secure, the structural and academic anxieties (the demands of producing specialised language in real-time) continue as barriers because of the high-stakes nature of the assessments that measure learning.

In terms of pedagogical reform for students in Administrative Science, this research has clearly shown that merely providing students with increased exposure to the foreign language is an ineffective strategy to remove these barriers. If left unaddressed over time, the continued existence of CA and TA may lead to a "vicious cycle" of withdrawal from interaction, while at the same time decreasing the level of intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy of the student. Therefore, pedagogical strategies must focus on reducing the cognitive pressures associated with the functional cognitive demands placed on the student in addition to addressing the assessment pressures associated with the testing the students' learning.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the tripartite model put forth by Horwitz et al. (1986), this study examined the frequency and development of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) in first- and third-semester Administrative Science students. With a moderate-to-high level ( $M=95.50$ ), the results verify that FLA is a widespread problem in this ESP context.

FLA shows a quantifiable, significant decrease between the novice (S1) and intermediate (S3) stages, according to the comparative analysis, which is primarily caused by a statistically significant decrease in the Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) component. This shows that students have successfully adapted to the social setting of the English classroom.

The primary theoretical contribution of this research lies in its empirical demonstration that while one component of FLA (FNE) is responsive to time and exposure, the other two performance-related anxieties, Communication Apprehension (CA) and Test Anxiety (TA), are highly resistant to change in the early stages of a non-major curriculum. The persistence of high CA and TA suggests that affective filtering persists due to structural pedagogical issues related to oral demands and high-stakes assessment, rather than social factors.

Based on the evidence of persistent CA and TA, Lecturers should integrate more communicative task-based learning activities that are low-stakes and focus on fluency over absolute accuracy, particularly leveraging peer collaboration and group work. This structured cooperation helps reduce the cognitive pressure associated with spontaneous, public performance, thereby mitigating Communication Apprehension.

Further studies should prioritize two critical areas : first, conducting a longitudinal study tracking the same cohort of students from S1 through later semesters to confirm the temporal

stability of CA and TA; and second, performing thorough qualitative investigations (e.g., semi-structured interviews) to explore the specific coping strategies employed by Administrative Science students who successfully manage their FLA.

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