

PROFILING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING ANXIETY AMONG SELECTED RURAL AREA SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT: *Malaysians' English proficiency is on a decline, and this phenomenon is extensively debated on its possible causes. With this come renewed interest towards English language anxiety as it is an internal factor of the learners which sometimes can be overlooked. An investigation was conducted on rural area secondary school students in Selangor, where the schools are already impeded by facility and resource deprivations. A total of 311 non-examination students from three different schools in Kuala Selangor, one of the rural areas in the state, were administered a questionnaire which adopted a composite of Foreign language anxiety surveys, measuring their level of anxiety towards the English language classroom according to the four language skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing). Results indicated students in the rural area secondary schools experience moderate to high levels of anxiety inside the English language classroom, in tandem with Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) definition and classification of Foreign Language Anxiety along with other pioneering works in the field. The result demonstrated the commonality of language anxiety across different demographic settings. By gauging the level of anxiety among rural area secondary school learners, targeted interventions can be implemented in order to reduce its effect on the students who already face limitations on learning resource and infrastructure.*

KEYWORDS: English Language Anxiety, second language learning, rural area, English as a second language, issues in second language learning, profile

INTRODUCTION

Education in Malaysia regards the English language as an important language for the nation (Thirusanku & Yunus, 2012; Hashim, 2004) as it corresponds to the status of the English language as the L2 or the second language for Malaysians, as Malaysia is one of the countries in Asia that practices bilingual education (Darmi & Albion, 2013; Ali, 2000). Despite this status, a growing concern is present about the decline in English proficiency especially among employers and parents. The education system has tried to address this problem through initiatives; a famous example would be PPSMI (English for Teaching Science and Mathematics), which was perceived as ineffective by reports that examined its implementation (Yunus & Sukri, 2017).

Second language acquisition comes with issues that require attention, and a renewed interest is being converged on language learning anxiety as it might be a substantial factor in determining the effectiveness of English language learning, especially in the classrooms where formal and frequent engagement with the English language occurs in the Malaysian setting (Ratnawati, 2004; Pandian, 2008). Mastering a new language can be an unsettling psychological experience (Dewale & Thirtle, 2009) thus anxiety could manifest as an inhibitor to the English language lesson (Krashen, 1982). Studies by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1989), McIntyre and Gardner (1991) and Krashen (1982) posited that anxiety in the form of intrusive thoughts or negative emotions disrupts students' cognitive functions and this has been reverberated in other studies which confirmed the presence of anxiety in English language learning and its impeding effect on the language acquisition (Landstrom, 2016; Cheng, 2015; Kimura, 2008; Woodrow 2012; Mak, 2011). Therefore English language anxiety is one of the issues in second language acquisition that has gained interest in recent years, and compelled this study to explore the issue in Malaysian secondary school settings, specifically the rural area.

The students in the rural area of Malaysia experience less exposure towards the English language compared to their urban counterparts, in terms of communication (Ali, 2000; Thien & Ong, 2015) or language materials and resources (Wreikat, Kabilan & Abdullah, 2014) in which both exposures only occur through their English teacher (Musa, Khoo & Azman, 2012; Pandian, 2008). This prompted an investigation of whether English language anxiety also occurs in rural area students who do not use the language as much as their urban counterparts. Therefore, the study seeks to identify the level of students' anxiety of selected secondary schools in rural area Selangor.

LITERATURE REVIEW

English in Malaysian Education

English is the nation's second language post-independence, after the colonisation of the British ceased in 1957. Educational policies such as the Rahman Talib Report, cemented the status of English in Malaysia as it was perceived as an interethnic communication tool. (Subramaniam, 2007; Wong & Thambyrajah, 1991) 11 years of formal English education via the national curriculum was not sufficient to curb the perceived decline of English proficiency among Malaysians as it caused another problem, employability, as good English proficiency was demanded by employers (Hashim, 2004, Pandian, 2008; Ali 2000) and cumulative good grade point average (CGPA) does not secure jobs for graduates anymore (Guan, 2016). Foo and Richards (2004) pointed to the change in policy to use the Malay language, the national language, as the educational language of instruction as the reason for the decline in English proficiency, and Hashim (2004) along with Pandian (2008) supported this point by highlighting key educational policies (National Education Act namely) influenced the decline of the English language status to an insubstantial level hence causing the decline of English proficiency among Malaysians. However, very little attention was given to the learners; their emotions and perceptions they might experience in learning the English language

English Language Anxiety

English as a second language also comes with issues, such as the Second/Foreign Language Anxiety, which is first theorized in 1988 by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope established the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, which becomes a staple in foreign language anxiety research. Anxiety in generally is defined by the subjective feeling of apprehension, tension, nervousness, and worry which causes an arousal to the nervous system (Horwitz, et al., 1986) and Sapp (1993) defined anxiety in terms of harsh emotions that influence the physiology and emotional state of the students. The theory then was further expanded and verified by successive researchers, namely McIntyre and Gardner (1994) who proved the intrusion of anxiety in cognitive processes during English language classroom using Tobias'(1986) cognitive model in that the anxiety disrupts the students learning during language input, as illustrated in figure 1.

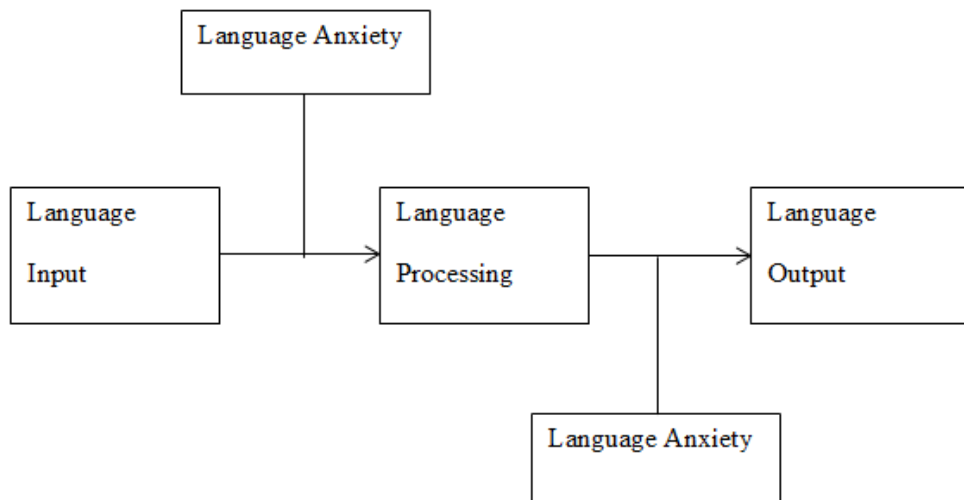


Figure 1: Intrusion of Language Anxiety in the Language Learning Process

They also explained the recursive relationship of anxiety, behavior and cognition as seen in figure 2.

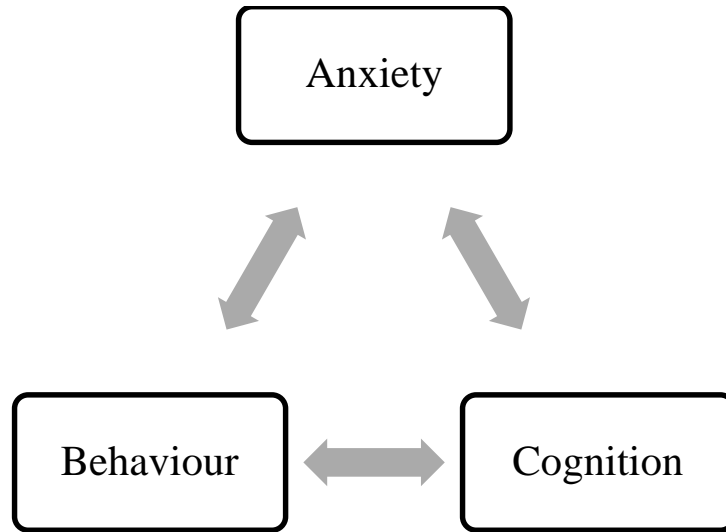


Figure 2: MacIntyre (1995) Recursive Relationships between Anxiety, Behaviour and Cognition

Through their pioneering work, it was proven that anxiety is a substantial factor in language learning, especially for second language learners, and anxiety not only affects emotional state, but also the physiological state of the students. Figure 2.5 demonstrates another influential theory on apprehension in English classroom, which is the Krashen’s Affective Filter theory. The relationship is described in figure 3 below.

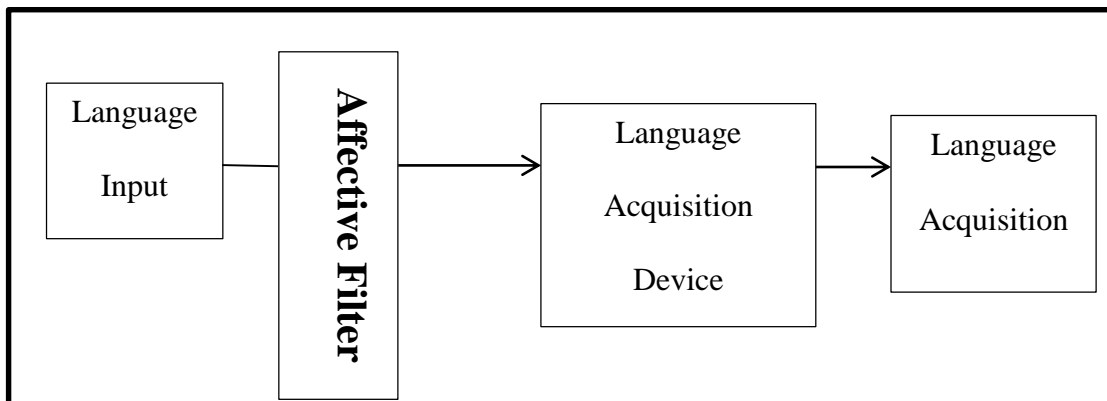


Figure 3: Affective Filter Theory by Krashen (1982)

Krashen (1982) also provided an influential framework in the form of Affective Filter theory, where a learner will raise their affective filter (a hypothetical filter in a student) whenever the students’ emotional state is disrupted.

English Language Anxiety and Language Performance

Studies have proven that anxiety in the English language classroom is present and has debilitating effects on the students. Mak (2011) studied 313 first year students from a Hong Kong university, using a 4-point scale answers (to reduce neutral answers) with 33-item questionnaire regarding English language anxiety inside the classroom and 60.7% of the students reported feeling anxious, with the report stating negative attitudes towards the English language was the common factor for the presence of anxiety inside the students.

Woodrow (2012) investigated anxiety on oral performance of English language learners in Australia. 275 university students participated and the result reported a significant negative relationship between anxiety and oral performance, including communications outside of classroom settings. The main stressor of in-class oral performance was the teacher's presence as the evaluator of the oral task, and the main stressor for oral performance outside of the classroom was communicating with a native speaker. Woodrow distinguished anxiety inside the classroom and outside of it by establishing a non-significant correlation between the two anxieties to further validate Horwitz, et al. (1986) point on the distinction between general anxiety and language classroom anxiety. Landstrom (2016) studied 49 secondary school students in two different towns, with high English proficiency levels. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale was adapted into a 28 item questionnaire with 4-point Lickert item response to remove neutrality. 10 students were interviewed to further probe the thoughts and perceptions of Swedish English language learners in the secondary school. 39% of students scored above the anxiety levels, indicating low-to medium anxiety is present inside the students, which is expected due to their high proficiency in the language. However extreme scores still exist in the response, and was factored by pre-lesson perceptions and negative attitudes along with fear of negative evaluation. Interviews revealed that anxious students were not aware of the idea of language learning anxiety and would be better prepared if they are taught techniques to overcome the anxiety for better lesson experience. The study showed even high proficiency classrooms still experience a significant amount of anxiety during the English lesson.

Rural Area in Malaysia

Schools in the rural area are at a constant disadvantage in terms of infrastructure and resources, in contrast to the urban area; a global phenomenon (UNESCO, 2013). This inadequacy lags the rural area schools' performance in examinations (Azizi & Swanto, 2017) which affected the English language classrooms' efficiency in teaching the language. Complicated by the lack of exposure outside of the classroom, where English are almost a foreign language in these areas (Padian, 2008), a greater challenge was found by teachers and students inside the English language classrooms. Dependent only on the teachers and school material for engagement with the English language, it is feared that English language anxiety, if present, will further impede students' learning of the English language in rural area. Selangor, being one of the more developed states in Malaysia (Hussain, Nabila & Abdullah, 2018), migration from rural to urban areas for employment is common and English proficiency is sought by most employers (Hashim, 2004; Padian, 2008; Ali, 2000). Therefore, profiling the students in selected rural area schools in Selangor for English language learning anxiety can help in overcoming the anxiety and its inhibiting effect inside the classroom which is integral to improve English lesson and complement the students with at least

a basic level of English to progress in post-secondary school endeavours, be it employment or tertiary education.

A gap exists in literatures for secondary school's English language anxiety studies in Malaysian settings, as most studies centres at the tertiary education level. This study hopes to fill that gap and become a stepping stone for further inquiries into English language anxiety in rural area secondary schools, in Selangor and in Malaysia as a whole. The study intends to investigate the levels of English language anxiety of rural area secondary school students in Selangor, where local literatures of this phenomenon seldom reported study on rural area learners, and focuses mostly on tertiary educational learners. Information on the anxiety levels of the rural area students in Selangor will expand the available knowledge on the phenomenon as well as help in formulating targeted intervention in order to reduce the effect of anxiety on the students' English language learning which is already impeded by limited resource and facilities compared to their urban counterparts. In short, the study aims to investigate the following research question:

1. What is the level of English language anxiety among rural area secondary schools students in Selangor?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

This investigation utilised purposive sampling in order to answer the research question. The sample was secondary school students who are not involved in any national exam in their year of study, from three different schools in Kuala Selangor, a rural area in the state of Selangor. 311 students' responses were gathered and analysed. The students consisted of form one, form two and form four students (aged 13, 14 and 16 respectively), which were non-examination students. This ensured the sample is not affected by test anxiety, a different form of anxiety (Sapp, 1992) from Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety.

Research Design

The cross-sectional survey method, a quantitative method which is useful in recognizing trends in a population (Cresswell 2005, as cited in Marwan, 2007) was utilised in this inquiry. This method is common and is efficient in collecting a large amount of data and information, and is widely used in language education for research (Brown & Rodgers, 2002). A total of 311 questionnaires were retrieved after it was distributed to three different schools in three different rural area districts in Selangor, which is a considerable sample size and representative of the population (N=11000) with a 5% margin of error and 92.6% confidence level as calculated by Raosoft.com, an online sample calculator. Therefore this method seemed appropriate to the purpose of the study.

Instrument

The study adapted and adopted the Foreign Language Anxiety Classroom scale from Horwitz, et al. (1986), English Language Listening Anxiety, adapted from Kimura (2008), English Language Speaking Anxiety, adapted from Mak (2011), English Language Reading Anxiety, adapted and adopted from Saito, Horwitz & Garza (1999), and lastly English Language Writing Anxiety,

adapted from Lee (2005). The items were cumulated to 55 items, separated into 4 sections, excluding the demographic section, quantified by a 5-point Lickert item. The table below displays the number of questions per section

Sections	Number of Items
Demographic Data	9
Listening Anxiety	12
Reading Anxiety	10
Speaking Anxiety	18
Writing Anxiety	15

Table 1: The Number of Items per Questionnaire Section

The questionnaire was piloted prior to the research on 144 students from SMK Sungai Pusu as a pilot study to establish validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The Cronbach Alpha value of 0.86 was established, an acceptable value in social sciences research. The instrument was also translated into the Malay language to reduce any comprehension difficulty among the participants. The instrument was sound for use in this study.

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed to three different schools in rural area Selangor to three different teachers in respective schools, which will be known as SAM school, SAMT school and SMK school. The teachers distributed the questionnaire to the students and then it was returned the next day as to not disturb the classroom's lesson. The questionnaires were then re-posted to the researcher. Each questionnaire and its responses were coded and administered into SPSS.

Data Analysis

The data collected was analysed using SPSS, and the sum score for each response was calculated. The scores were calculated according to its respective language skills; reading, listening, speaking and writing skills, and then categorised into three categories; low anxiety, moderate anxiety and high anxiety. The cut-off scores are as shown in the table below:

Language Skill	Anxiety Level Scores		
	Low	Medium	High
Listening	13-28	29-44	45-60
Reading	11-23	24-36	37-49
Speaking	25-46	47-68	69-90
Writing	18-34	35-50	50-67

Table 2: Cut-Off Scores for Each Language Skills

Descriptive statistics were run to determine the mean score and percentages of each section's responses to sort the highest and lowest mean score items for further analysis. The cumulative percentage of score 1-2 and 4-5 was also quantified in order to form a generalized view of the data;

each item was cumulated into disagree, neutral and agree. The results were then tabulated and analysed.

RESULTS

The data was collected and tabulated. The responses were cumulated as below

Language Skill	Anxiety Level Scores		
	Low	Medium	High
Listening	44(14.1%)	215(69.1%)	51(16.4%)
Reading	59(19.0%)	183(58.8%)	68(21.9%)
Speaking	59(19.0%)	211(67.8%)	40(12.9%)
Writing	68(21.9%)	202(65.0%)	40(12.9%)

Table 3: Frequency of Each Language Skill and Its Anxiety Level

Listening section's response mostly cumulated in the moderate to high anxiety scores, and it is the same for every skill except for writing, where only 12.9% of respondents felt high anxiety, while most of the students experience low to moderate levels of anxiety. This demonstrates the existence of anxiety within the selected rural area schools in Selangor as it is present in moderate to high levels in each language skills' classroom except for writing lessons. The following table sorts the highest mean score couples in each section, sorted in descending order.

Section	Item Number	Item	Sum	Mean
Listening	L1	When a person speaks English very fast, I worry I might not understand all of it.	1136	3.65
Speaking	S30	I always feel that the other students speak better English than I do.	1117	3.59
Speaking	S29	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my English class.	1087	3.50
Reading	R20	It bothers me when I feel unable to use a dictionary.	1075	3.47
Reading	R18	It bothers me when many unfamiliar words are used in the reading passage.	1065	3.44
Listening	L7	I get worried when I can't listen to English at my own pace.	1049	3.37
Writing	W52	People seem to enjoy what I write.	989	3.21
Writing	W50	I like to have my friends read what I have written	962	3.09

Table 4: Highest Mean Score Couplets in Each Section

For the writing, section, these two items recorded the highest mean score, even though the section was the only language skill with most of the scores placed in the low to moderate anxiety levels.

The highest scoring item was from the listening section, followed by the speaking section. The lowest scoring items were both from the writing sections. All items scored above 3.0 for the mean, which indicated an above average level of anxiety, although examination by the sections showed different interpretation of the items in each section. This table below classified the scores 1,2 into cumulative disagree, and 4,5 into cumulative agree, and the score 3 as neutral, because the neutral score can sometimes be non-substantive (Blasius & Thiessen, 2012). Therefore it can give a false impression on the state of anxiety students might actually experience inside the classroom. The table sorted the items based on the sections, with the two highest mean score items as its representative. The highest mean score items would have smaller percentage of neutral responses thus giving a better perspective on the levels of anxiety students experience in the English classroom.

Section	Item No.	Item	Cumulative Disagree	Cumulative Agree	Cumulative Neutral
Listening Skill Section	L1	When a person speaks English very fast, I worry I might not understand all of it.	43 /312 (11%)	195/312 (50%)	74/312 (19%)
	L7	I get worried when I can't listen to English at my own pace.	71/312 (18.2%)	154/312 (39.5%)	87/312 (22.3%)
Reading Skill Section	R20	It bothers me when I feel unable to use a dictionary.	64/311 (16.4%)	167/311 (42.8%)	80/311 (20.5%)
	R18	It bothers me when many unfamiliar words are used in the reading passage.	68/311 (17.4%)	178/311 (45.6%)	65/311 (16.7%)
Speaking Skill Section	S30	I always feel that the other students speak better English than I do.	39/311 (15.1%)	180/311 (46.1%)	73/311 (18.7%)
	S29	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my English class.	71/311 (18.2%)	171/311 (43.8%)	70/311 (17.9%)
Writing Skill Section	W52	People seem to enjoy what I write.	103/311 (26.4%)	50/311 (12.8%)	155/311 (39.7%)
	W50	I like to have my friends read what I have written	123/311 (31.5%)	97/311 (24.8%)	91/311 (23.3%)

Table 5: Cumulative Percentages of Disagree, Neutral and Agree Response for the Listening Section

The listening section displayed a 50% agreement to the item, a significant majority over the other two items, indicating a high level of anxiety (scores 4 and 5) recorded for the item. The second highest was the item from the speaking section, where 46.1% of the students agreed with the item (scoring 4 or 5 in the item for most students). The writing sections' item has larger percentages of the neutral responses (scoring 3 in most items) which explain the lower mean scores compared to other sections. After comparing the responses in two different formats, it is clear that the results were consistent for the data.

Therefore, the anxiety inside selected rural area schools in Selangor during English language classroom is moderate to high, and is observed in all language skill section except for the writing section. The discussions for each result along with an analysis for each high mean score items resumes in the next chapter.

DISCUSSION

Each language skill's section scores verified the existence of anxiety even in rural area secondary schools in Selangor. The levels of anxiety inside all three schools are moderate to high, which answers the research question of this study. Each language section was analysed further by the mean score of the items to investigate possible explanations on the high mean scores of each items.

The listening section's highest mean score was from item L1, which states "When a person speaks English very fast, I worry I might not be able to understand all of it". This signalled the problem students faced with fast rate of speech. Fast rate of speech reduces listening time and it worries the students because they perceive listening activities as a one-shot activity, and is not due for repetitions (Pan, 2016). Fang Xu (2011) also stated the false impression second language learners have on speech comprehension; they need to understand each and every word the speaker utters in order to understand its meaning. Therefore any speech rate where the students cannot grasp the words uttered by the speaker will induce anxiety and impede their language learning as they do not have comprehensible input; an integral part to language acquisition (Krashen, 1982).

Item L7, which scored the second highest mean score in the section, states "I get worried when I can't listen to English at my own pace". Similar to item L1, it revolves around speech rate, but on the perspective of the learner's awareness on their listening abilities. They were aware of their own capacity in terms of listening rate, and any speech that exceeds their capacity worries them; it induces anxiety for them. Otair and Aziz (2017) discovered in their studies, students from rural area in Arab Saudi were accustomed to English activities involving writing and reading, as it is more applicable to examinations. Hence they are not exposed to audio materials with varying pace, and this under-exposure is supported by Hashim (2004) and Ali (2000) where rural area were already under-exposed to English. This explains the worry students experience when listening to any English speech/audio material inside the classroom, hence impeding their English language learning.

The reading section recorded moderate to high levels of anxiety among the students from the three different schools, with the highest mean score item stating “it bothers me when I can’t use a dictionary”. This signalled the students’ in the rural area of their dependency towards dictionaries. The dependency might exist due to the low exposure to reading materials (Wreikat, et al., 2018) in which increasing reading exposure has been proven to improve reading performance, self-efficacy and reduce anxiety factors (Wang, et al., 2018). The anxiety then stems from this inability to understand a wide array of vocabularies, in which dictionaries are the quickest solution for the students and a common way for ESL learners to cope with difficult English texts (Heriansyah, 2012; Tati, 2016).

The second highest mean score item is item R17, where it states “It bothers me when many unfamiliar new words are used in the reading passage” The concept of unfamiliarity with word-texts recurs in this item, as it occurred in the previous item. Unfamiliar words can disrupt the meaning formation of a text (Rajim, et al., 2009) which can be frustrating for the students, hence increasing their affective filter (Krashen, 1982), impeding their language learning process. Therefore, it is clear that vocabulary knowledge is crucial in facilitating better English lessons, not only due to its obvious benefits, but also the negative impacts it can deter (in this case, anxiety) to make English language lessons more effective. All three schools reported moderate to high levels of anxiety in the English reading classroom and it is factored by vocabulary knowledge, based on the highest mean score items.

The English speaking anxiety section also recorded moderate to high anxiety levels, and the highest mean score item states “I always feel that the other students speak better English than I do”. This corresponded with one of Horwitz et al., (1986) classification of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety, which is fear of negative evaluation. The students felt inferior towards other language learners and this negative emotion induces anxiety inside the students. Language learners sometimes evaluate their progress in mastery through oral performance (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Any incompetence in this aspect induces anxiety inside the students as it affects involves other people’s perception of them, and sometimes this worry arises when they want to avoid mockery from their peers (Heriansyah, 2012). Lack of practice and contextual speaking activities further contributed in this anxiety by reducing the oral competency of the students (Rusli, et al., 2018) where teachers usually focus on reading and writing activities which is more beneficial for students’ examination performance (Otairi & Aziz, 2017).

The next highest mean score item states “I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my English class”. The nature of speaking transactions occur in real time, where spontaneity is a major part of communication, and this immediacy can be daunting for students, contrary to writing and reading activities which is naturally more time-consuming that allows for preparation time for learners. Lan and Chang (2017) revealed in his study that even low anxiety students felt anxious due to unpreparedness, causing anxiety, and Mak (2011) highlighted the importance of time in between teacher and students interaction inside the classroom as a sort of preparatory phase so that the students do not feel as anxious when learning inside an English speaking classroom. Therefore this immediacy that is not vetted by preparations might cause the students to feel

pressured and anxious in English speaking classroom. The English speaking section displayed moderate to high levels of anxiety due to fear of negative evaluation, and unpreparedness.

The low to moderate anxiety levels experienced in the writing section does not exclude it from having high mean score items. The highest item states “People seem to enjoy what I write” which echoes the fear of negative evaluation classification made by Horwitz, et al. (1986), similar to the ones experienced by the students in the previous section. The next high mean score item also revolves around the same classification, where it states “I like to have my friends read what I have written”. Rahim et al. (2016) studied low proficiency undergraduate students in Sabah and found that students that have high writing anxiety worries about the evaluation of their peers, and the students viewed that unsatisfactory compositions (upon receiving the grade) with the perception of one’s grade is equivalent to one’s effort; the better the grade, the higher the effort put into the composition, and the inverse of that perception induces anxiety inside the students. The writing section was the only section with low to moderate anxiety among the students in all three schools. However, by analysing the high mean score items, the source of anxiety for these students, albeit collectively low, can still be extracted, with reference to previous studies. The study managed to profile the language anxiety levels inside the selected rural area secondary schools in Selangor. Most of the students experienced language learning anxiety during the English language classroom, which confirms the findings of Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) on the phenomenon of Foreign Language Anxiety among language learners.

Therefore, the results clearly indicated that students in selected rural area schools in Selangor, do experience English language anxiety in a moderate to high level in all four skills of the language, except for the writing skill where the students in all three schools only reported low to medium level of anxiety experienced inside the English writing classroom. The items analysed resonated with previous studies where students can experience language anxiety in different skills of the language although some skills might induce less anxiety than others, as was observed in the English writing classroom in all three schools. However, the existence of English language anxiety was confirmed in the selected schools of rural area Selangor.

Implication to Research and Practice

The findings revealed the existence of language classroom anxiety in a setting where English is used minimally in formal or informal occasions. This implies the possibility of its existence in an environment where the English language is more commonly used or consumed e.g. suburban schools; the levels of anxiety might differ inside a suburban secondary school. The findings also discovered the existence of English language anxiety inside rural area classroom (although differing in its levels) in all four language skills which can indicate there are affective factors impacting students’ learning other than infrastructural problems and resource insufficiency. Alleviating the anxiety inside English language classroom can improve the effectiveness of English lessons in rural area classroom and simultaneously improving rural area students’ English proficiency which has always been a cause for concern.

Teachers can proactively conduct less anxiety-inducing classroom session by identifying scenarios that might cause apprehension to the students, or remediating students' unsettling thoughts or expectations by using materials appropriate to the students' level, or using positive reinforcements to reduce the negative feelings a student might experience inside the English classroom. Improving the rural area students' English proficiency will help in improving the overall language proficiency of Malaysians, as they represent a significant portion of the country's population.

CONCLUSIONS

The study intended to profile the level of English language anxiety in rural area Selangor through selected secondary schools. The results confirmed previous researches in this field, where anxiety exists in English language classrooms and it can be referred to Horwitz, et al. (1986) theory and classifications, as well as understood through McIntyre & Gardner (1994) cognitive framework and Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter theory. English language anxiety seemed to exist regardless of the learner's demographic setting and alleviating this emotional obstacle can further assist rural area learners who are impoverished in terms of facilities and resources, to have quality English lessons despite being at a disadvantage. Metacognitive strategies can be applied in these instances so that the students can regulate their thought processes and identify spurs of anxiety in order to manage it better, and these can be taught by the teachers inside the classroom. Managing anxiety, unlike infrastructural problems, can be managed inside the classroom by its members. Therefore they have a direct line of intervention that they can utilize to improve the quality of English lessons.

However, further studies need to be conducted in other rural area in Malaysia, as Selangor is one of the developed states in Malaysia, with better rural-urban connectivity, making it more accessible compared to other states in Malaysia. Rural areas with poorer connectivity might be more obscured from English language exposure. Incidentally, more study on English language anxiety effects on secondary school students should be conducted as it can assist in mapping the phenomenon at an earlier age for school-attending Malaysians, thus any solutions that is formulated can be implemented earlier in the education period, ensuring a more effective improvement in the English proficiency among Malaysians.

Future Research

Subsequent research can focus on interventions relevant to each language skills as it can provide a more specific scope in reducing or alleviating the anxiety experienced by the students inside the English classroom. Increasing listening time during listening classroom can be more effective in allowing students to properly comprehend the audio without pressure of misunderstanding the recordings; use of dictionaries can assist students to understand reading passages, as these particular activities are the ones that allows language acquisition for the students in their input/output domain rather than relying on just general measures of reducing anxiety inside the classroom such as using positive instructions or being using positive reinforcements.

Further profiles of English language anxiety of secondary school students should also be conducted in a different demography in order to affirm the extent of the phenomenon as a common problem

across Malaysian English language classroom. Identifying this can help the formulation of an intervention at a higher level of autonomy i.e. state educational department or the ministry itself in implementing measures to reduce English language anxiety. Consequently, this will improve English language learning for Malaysians, and their English proficiency as well.

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APPENDIX INSTRUMENT

This study intends to profile the anxiety level of secondary school students in rural area Selangor in learning the English language. Please answer the following questions with the appropriate answers as indicated by the instructions. Your cooperation is highly appreciated. Your information will only be confidential and only for use in the research.

Section A: Demographic Data

Age:

Gender:

Race: Malay/Chinese/Indian/Others. If others, please state:

Religion: Islam/Christian/Hindu/Buddhist/Others. If others, please state

School:

Parents' Occupation:

Father's Academic Qualification:

Mother's Academic Qualification:

Number of Siblings:

Section B

Please answer the following statements according to the scale. The scales are as followed. 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for neutral, 4 for agree and 5 for strongly agree. For each statement, tick the box the appropriate box that represents your response.

Listening Section

No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1.	When a person speaks English very fast, I worry I might not understand all of it.					
2.	When I'm listening to English, I am worried when I can't watch the lips or facial expressions of a person who is speaking.					
3.	I feel uncomfortable in class when listening to English without the written text.					
4.	When I am listening to English, I often get so confused I can't remember what I have heard.					
5.	My thoughts become jumbled and confused when listening to important information in English.					
6.	I would rather not to have to listen to people speaking English at all.					
7.	I get worried when I can't listen to English at my own pace.					
8.	I get worried when I have little time to think about what I have heard in English.					
9.	It doesn't frighten me when I cannot catch a keyword of an English listening text.					
10.	I don't feel tense when listening to English as a member of social gathering.					
11.	I keep thinking everyone else except me understand very well what an English speaker saying.					
12.	During English lesson, I don't get nervous and confused when I don't understand every word.					

Reading Section

13.	I become anxious when I have to read English outside of the class for homework.					
14.	I feel afraid when I have to read lengthy texts in English in English classes.					
15.	I feel shy when I read in English in front of an audience.					
16.	Going to English reading class makes me more nervous than going to any other classes.					
17.	I feel anxious when doing reading tasks when there is no teacher to guide me.					
18.	It bothers me when many unfamiliar words are used in the reading passage.					
19.	I become nervous when I find a long sentence with a complex structure that I don't understand.					
20.	It bothers me when I feel unable to use a dictionary.					
21.	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my reading class.					
22.	I get afraid if I fail to understand the content of the text that I may be required to read.					

Speaking Section

23.	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English.					
24.	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English					
25.	Even if I am well prepared for English classes, I feel anxious it.					
26.	I don't worry about making mistakes in English classes.					
27.	I enjoy speaking in English.					
28.	It does not embarrass me to volunteer answers in my English class.					
29.	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my English class.					
30.	I always feel that the other students speak better English than I do.					
31.	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in English language class.					
32.	In English language class, I can get so nervous where I forget what I wanted to say.					
33.	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English in class.					
34.	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English.					
35.	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.					
36.	I feel confident when I speak in English.					
37.	I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers of English.					
38.	I feel confident when speaking English in language class.					
39.	I don't feel pressure when I have to speak English in language classes.					
40.	I don't feel self-conscious when I speak English in front of other students.					

Writing Section

No.	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
41.	I avoid writing.					
42.	I have no fear of my writing being evaluated.					
43.	I look forward to writing down my ideas.					
44.	I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated					
45.	Handing in a composition makes me feel good.					
46.	My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on composition					
47.	Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time.					
48.	I like my ideas writing down.					
49.	I feel confident in my ability to clearly express my ideas in writing.					
50.	I like to have my friends read what I have written					
51.	I'm nervous about writing.					
52.	People seem to enjoy what I write.					
53.	I enjoy writing.					
54.	I never seem to be able to clearly write down my ideas.					
55.	Writing is a lot of fun.					