



Measuring Anxiety Level of Learning English Language among Refugee Teenagers in Malaysia

Mansurni Abadi¹, Ma'aratun Binti Haji Shalihah², Suciati Binti Haji Ramdani³,
Isabelle Emiral Vladoiu⁴

¹Human rights activist, Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM),
Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

^{2,3}Department of Education in Teaching English As A Second Language (Tesol), Faculty of Education,
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam campus, Selangor, Malaysia

⁴Human Rights Activist, U.S Institute of Diplomacy and Human Rights, Connecticut Ave, Washington,
DC 20036, United States of America

p103027@siswa.ukm.edu.my¹, 2020293304@student.uitm.edu.my²,
2020428832@student.uitm.edu.my³, isabelleVladoiu@usidhr.org⁴

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Learning Anxiety;
Refugee Education;
Foreign Language
Anxiety.

Owing to legislative restrictions, Malaysia cannot provide education for refugee children. Instead, the state invites numerous parties, including NGOs, to construct alternative refugee schools. Because education for refugees is an alternative, the goal is directed at practical skills to help refugees work and integrate with Malaysian society or the following country for future resettlement. All of Malaysia's alternative schools for refugees place a strong emphasis on English language acquisition. Even with free education, refugee children struggle to learn English as a Second Language. Psychological phenomena, such as language anxiety, trigger obstacles in learning English. However, learning about language anxiety in the context of alternative education in Malaysia has rarely been studied. Using the mixed-method methodology (MMR) brings about post-positivism and interpretivism. This study had two goals: (1) bridging research gaps on anxiety in learning English as a second language from the viewpoint of alternative school actors and students in refugee communities, and (2) providing solutions for alternative education for refugee communities in Malaysia to understand and address foreign language anxiety. Our study focuses on refugee students from three alternative schools in Klang Valley: the United Learning Center (ULC), Save School Malaysia, and Refugee Academy. The quantitative technique used 92 students to complete the English Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (ELCAS), derived from the Foreign Language Classroom Scale (FLCAS). In addition, we interviewed two persons and one teacher from each school for the qualitative approach. For data analysis, we used SPSS 19 for a quantitative and interpretive approach to the qualitative data. Qualitative results indicate that refugee children from three Klang Valley alternative schools experienced medium foreign language learning anxiety. Most refugee children were anxious about English courses, regardless of gender or stream group, emphasizing the necessity for educators and other stakeholders to understand refugee children's anxiety levels and take action with extensive knowledge of anxiety and compassion. Counselors must also work with teachers to create interventions to assist refugee children in handling their anxiety while studying English. Finally, instructors must use fascinating teaching approaches to minimize refugee children's anxiety, motivate them with empathy and compassion, and avoid overcorrection.



Article History:

Received : 26-09-2022
Revised : 30-09-2022
Accepted : 27-10-2022
Online : 01-12-2022



This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license



<https://doi.org/10.31764/iejca.v5i3.11163>

A. INTRODUCTION

Refugees, as defined by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), are those unable to safely return to their country of origin because of a well-founded fear of persecution, war, violence, or other conditions that have significantly disrupted public order (Prodip, 2021). According to Gil Loescher Donnelly & Whelan, (2020), and Franke, (2012) citing the definition from UNHCR, it is stated that most refugees flee to neighboring countries to their homeland, most of whom struggle to meet the needs of their population. To clarify the UNHCR's definition of a refugee, Carmen Moldovan breaks it down into three parts: (1) they must be located in a country other than their country of origin; (2) psychologically, they are hesitant or unable to return because of fear of persecution; and (3) causative factors race, religion, nationality, membership of a specific social group, or political stance (Moldovan, 2016).

Based on the definition, So there is a significant difference between regular migrants and refugees in terms of displacement; according to Alexander Betts and Paul Collier (2017), that develops the concept of "*survival migration*", *highlights* the crisis in which these people find themselves (Betts & Collier, 2016) emphasize they are not moving for gain but because they have no choice There are three main factors why a group of people become refugees, flee their place of birth led to either internal or international displacement (1) security factors including war that leads to violence or persecution against the ethnic, religious, and racial group (Zetter, 1988); (2). Economic factors that lead to famine, job loss, and the drive to change lives sometimes and always lead to displacement; and (3) Climate change or ecological factors, according to Berchin et al (2017) A climate change refugee is compelled to leave their home or nation owing to extreme climatic events and rebuild their lives elsewhere. In the current context, refugees due to climate change, including natural disasters, have not been categorized as refugees by the UN refugee convention (Osóbka, 2021).

However, when refugees relocate to a new country for safety and economic opportunity, doesn't always run smoothly. They frequently become targets of hostility from the local population and government officials, leading to perpetual social isolation and backwardness. In their host nations, they are often treated as invisible communities, which compounds the social, cultural, and political isolation they already face (Rusli et al., 2021). Qian (2019) observed refugees in Malaysia have different lifestyles, they are trapped in isolation and remain "*invisible*" to the vast majority of Malaysian citizens or other legal migrants. In Malaysia, The migration of refugees is a problematic issue in the public sphere (Hedman, 2009). According to Qian (2019), Malaysia is the largest refugee-hosting country in the region of Southeast Asia.

Since Malaysia gained its independence in 1957 and became a nation in 1963, different groups from other countries have moved to Malaysia for different reasons. Since the early 1970s, Malaysia has played the role of both a host nation and a transit country for all kinds of refugees, especially from Muslim communities. According to Hoffstaedter (2017), Refugees from primarily Muslim nations are welcomed in Malaysia because of a sense of brotherhood with other Muslims. UNHCR Malaysia (2022), recorded 183,430 refugees and asylum-seekers in September 2022. 105,870 Rohingyas, 23,190 Chins, and 28,840 other ethnic groups from conflict-affected or persecuted Myanmar make up 157,910. According to the Cahaya Surya Foundation (2022), most refugees in Malaysia are from Myanmar, notably the Rohingya, a stateless Muslim minority. People fleeing their home countries in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, Sri Lanka, and Sri Lanka are also among the refugees and asylum seekers in Malaysia.

The majority of the refugees entered in illegal ways, and surprisingly many refugees were killed on the treacherous trek. The Malaysian government has done several things to stop refugees from taking dangerous routes and cracking down on them. according to findings from Nordin et al. (2020), There are two supporting factors why Malaysia has become a transit country or permanent residence for refugees in the Southeast Asian region: (1) Malaysia's archipelago geography, comprising many islands, presents virtually unlimited opportunities to enter Malaysia by boat without detection; and (2) there is an international smuggling network which involves not only the perpetrators who are the smugglers but also their Malaysian accomplices. But another factor according to Steffens (2019) because Malaysia provides many job opportunities for them, especially in big cities in Malaysia.

Making Malaysia a refugee destination places refugees in a condition called Khairi et al. (2018) a possibility in limbo because of situational factors that recognize refugees as "Illegal immigrants", without protection or even fulfillment of human rights. Malaysia hasn't signed the UN Convention on Refugees or the Convention on Asylum Seekers, even the Cartagena declaration both groups are considered "*illegal migrants*" by the law (Don & Lee, 2014; Hedman, 2009). Without a legislative and administrative framework to protect their rights, they cannot work legally, receive medical care, or send their children to school. Malaysia continues to evaluate issues regarding migrants and refugees as issues of border management and national security, which must be dealt with in draconian methods such as arrest, imprisonment, and deportation. Ongoing immigration raids and arrests after and before the pandemic COVID-19 further contributed to the vulnerability of the migrant and refugee population.

In an educational context, refugee children in Malaysia are still excluded from public schools, notwithstanding a 2002 revision to the Education Act. Existing government circulars regulating the admission of non-Malaysian children to national schools, such as the Pekeliling Ikhtisas Letter No 1/2009 and the Malaysian Ministry of Education's Broadcast Letter Bil (3) of 2018, do not apply to refugee children and asylum seekers. As a result, the only way to access education for these children is through informal channels, such as through the Center for Alternative Learning (ALC), which has many challenges, with financial and human resource constraints being the most common (Kirjane Ngu, 2022). Marginalization of education for refugee children will provide socioeconomic problems for Malaysia because education itself is very important to fostering integration between refugees and Malaysian society.

According to McBrien (2005) and Taylor & Sidhu (2012) Education for refugees can promote peace, justice, freedom, and equality for everyone. But according to UNHCR Malaysia, now and maybe later (2022), Malaysia is faced with two paradoxes in dealing with refugees: the first, based on humanity, Malaysia needs to accept, but the second, based on security and the current situation, Malaysia is unable to accept more. So the issue of refugees in Malaysia is so complex that there is no right answer. The humanitarian argument is true, but the security argument and the current situation that does not allow it is also true. Giving education to refugee children is still a controversial issue. Educational materials for refugee children include math, social studies, and computers. Malay, the primary language, and English, the lingua franca or the second largest language in Malaysia, must be learned. Refugee schools constantly teach language, especially English, but studies rarely examine their anxiety.

According to Horwitz (2001), anxiety associated with learning a foreign language is called "second/foreign language anxiety" related to negative emotional reactions of learners towards foreign language acquisition. Refugee children's anxiety when learning English is often unheard of and unacknowledged. Learning anxiety is significant because it can help students overcome

burnout, which leads them to be tired, lethargic, dislike learning, consider activities meaningless, and have low learning success (Vu & Bosmans, 2021). According to Naser Oteir & Nijr Al-Otaibi, (2019), research in foreign language learning has shown that foreign language anxiety is a key issue in applied linguistics.

This study examines the anxiety in learning a second language, especially English among refugee children in three alternative schools for refugees around the Klang Valley which includes the Kuala Lumpur area and the area adjacent to it. Anxiety that happens with English learners can be reduced by enhancing their self-efficacy (Zhang, 2020). When they are not eager to learn English, it indirectly hinders the achievement of their well-being. Research from Maistrello & Clare Dalziel (2020) argues when migrants, including refugees, have trouble speaking the language of the country they are living in, it affects their daily lives in many ways, like their ability to get an education, find a job, make friends, and be accepted.

In Malaysia, The demand for a good command of English has increased over the years. English is the *lingua franca* that is currently widely used as an international language. Due to its essential role in the global market, English is viewed as an effective means of oral communication and a socially valued skill. For refugees, competence in English is essential because it brings enormous advantages, especially to refugees. For a refugee who stays in Malaysia, the ability to speak English besides Malay is very important to create a better future. With foreign language like English ability, they can gain self-reliance which helps them to socially integrate, find a job, and gain greater self-confidence. English learning anxiety is greatly regulated by efficacy, deep motivation, and ambiguity tolerance and indirectly influenced by positive attribution and surface motivation (Yoskapela et al., 2022).

B. METHODS

We used mixed-method research (MMR), According to Åkerblad et al. (2021), methods research uses qualitative and quantitative data in a single research project. Our main reason for using mixed-method research is because according to Poth & Munce (2020) To get deep insights into study phenomena not completely grasped by qualitative or quantitative methodologies. A mixed-methods methodology synergizes many data sources to explore complicated issues. Education is one of the most prominent examples of a field in the social sciences research where MMR (mixed-method research) is unavoidable due to the practical context's demand for both generalizability and particularity (Åkerblad et al., 2021; Vors & Bourcier, 2022). The following is the research flow, as shown in Figure 1.

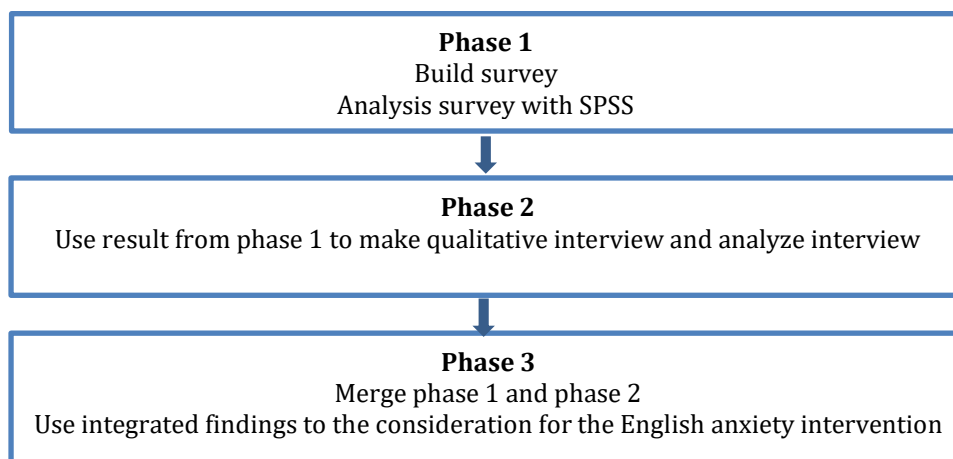


Figure 1. Research flow

Based on our research flow the quantitative data is collected through a survey and then we analyze the quantitative data using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26 Windows, and the qualitative data is collected with the interview. The quantitative sampling procedure used in this study is random sampling, where a questionnaire is distributed to 92 participants of form four pupils in the selected secondary school. For qualitative data, we choose based on their role in refugee education, starting from teachers to know the teaching strategies and obstacles they face, students to know directly the anxiety they experience, and state officials who help refugee education to look how their efforts to opening educational access to a refugee. For qualitative, the information obtained from the sample is the primary source of data. The English Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (ELCAS) questionnaire was used as the instrumentation to measure students' English classroom anxiety (Elas et al., 2020; Hashim & Isa, 2012; Semmar, 2010). First, participants' gender and stream groups were obtained. The second half of the survey used ELCAS, adapted from Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's FLCAS (1986). Next, they created a 33-item scale (FLCAS) to quantify foreign language classroom anxiety. The three dimensions are communication apprehension (11 items), fear of poor evaluation (7 items), and test anxiety (15 items) related to English examinations. The 33 items are divided into three subscales, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Font Size For Articles

No	Name	Function
1.	Communication Apprehension	1, 4, 9, 14, 15, 18, 24, 27, 29, 30, 32
2.	Negative evaluation fear	2, 7, 13, 19, 23, 31, 33, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12,
3.	Test anxiety	16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 28

ELCAS was chosen since this research focuses on ESL. Both questionnaires are required. All items included two extreme poles, a neutral choice, and intermediate options on a 5-point Likert scale. Highly disagree, disagree, unsure, agree, and strongly agree (5). All 33 scores were summed to determine anxiety level. Decreased scores suggested lower English classroom anxiety, whereas higher scores indicated severe anxiety. Low, moderate, and severe anxiety are observed among learners. While students with scores of 33 to 75 have mild anxiety, 76 to 119 have moderate anxiety, and 120 or more have severe anxiety, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Range of anxiety levels

No.	Name of Style	Function
1.	Low	33 - 77
2.	Medium	78-123
3.	High	122-165

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Demography and location study

The respondents of this research for qualitative analysis consisted of 92 students that consist of 41 males and 51 females, from three refugee camps in Malaysia, namely (1) the United Learning Center (ULC) located Imbi off Horley St, Pudu, 55100 Kuala Lumpur, have 25 students from Kachin state, Myanmar; (2) Save School Malaysia, located at Jernai st, Medan Idaman Business Centre,

53100 Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, has 25 students from Ronghinya; and (3) refugee academic, located at Sentosa 41 st, Taman Bunga Melor, 41050 Klang, Selangor who have 42 students from Rohingya, Palestine, and Iraq. Some of the documentation we took from the three schools. Some of the documentation we took from the three schools, is shown in Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4.



Figure 2. Refugee student before class at United Learning Center (ULC)



Figure 3. Refugee student in class in Save School Malaysia



Figure 4. Refugee student at Refugee academic

All alternative school for refugees does not have class divisions; the material taught is only about English, computers, Malaysian culture, religion, and entrepreneurial skills such as sewing and cooking. The majority of the students are between 12-19 years old. Sampling for each school, including their ethnicity, and gender, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Demographic ethnicity and gender

School	Female	Male	Ethnicity
United Learning Center	15	10	Kachin and Afganistan
Save School Malaysia	15	10	Rohingya
Refugee Academic	21	21	Palestine, Iraq, Ronghinya

Meanwhile, for an interview, the information for this research is eleven people consisting of six students with two students each male and female from three boarding schools and three teachers from three boarding schools. We conclude our informants in Table 4.

Table 4. Informant data

Information Name	Position	Institution
Saleem and shoraya	Student	United Learning Center
Abdul and amira	Student	Save School Malaysia
Karim and Amiri	Student	Refugee Academic
Ahmad Sharif	Teacher	Refugee Academic
Gabriel	Teacher	United Learning Center
Hasan bakki	Teacher	Save school Malaysia

We divided the interview method into two groups, For the student group, we followed the procedure from Naser Oteir & Nijr Al-Otaibi (2019) which divides the questions into three main categories (1) to find out specific moments when students feel the most anxious; (2) investigate their coping strategies, and (3) recognize the changes in the strategies used by the students during specific moments in their language learning. For a teacher, we divide the question into three main categories to find out their knowledge or awareness toward learning anxiety in particular related to language and their ways of dealing with learning anxiety among refugee children.

2. English Language Anxiety Level

In accordance with the objectives, an analysis was conducted to measure the level of anxiety of the respondents involved. From the calculation of the respondents' questionnaire responses, the overall level of anxiety in the language learning process was presented at three levels: low, medium, and high. The result is presented in Table 5, which shows the percentage and the total number of respondents for each level of anxiety, and Figure 4 below demonstrates the same result in the form of a bar chart, as shown in Table 5 and Figure 4.

Table 5. Number of Respondents for Each of the Levels of Anxiety

Level of Anxiety	Respondent (F)	Percentage (%).
Low	2	2.2%
Medium	84	91.3%
High	6	6.5 %

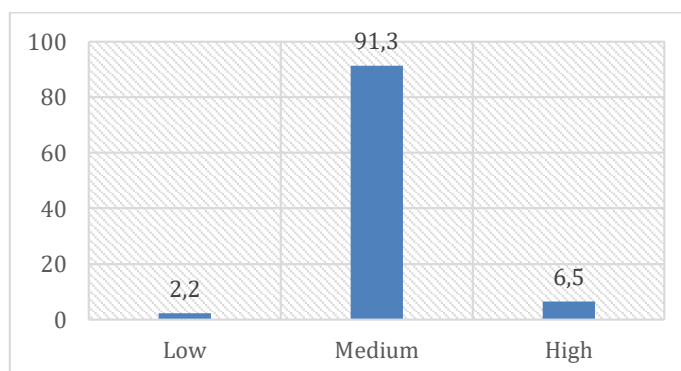


Figure 4. Level of Anxiety (%)

The data analysis revealed that the respondents moderately felt anxious in the English language classroom. From Table 3 and Figure 1, six pupils (6.5%) experienced a high level of anxiety, and only two had a low one. The remaining 84 pupils were found to be at a medium level, accounting for the majority (91.3 %). While moderate anxiety could bring positive effects, such as motivating pupils to work harder and put more effort into achieving success, it does not mean there should be no actions taken. It is encouraged that counselors and teachers take measures to alleviate anxiety levels since anxiety turned out to be one of the most significant influences and negative predictors for pupils.

But we do qualitative method, we realize to need to learn English as a second language among refugee children in Malaysia is indeed an obstacle, not only because of the lack of parental support and the incompetence of teachers in teaching them but also coming from themselves who are still traumatized by events before and after their displacement to a new country (Hart, 2009). The social context of the refugees generally came from conflict areas which kept them away from accessing education so that they never got an understanding of foreign languages. Another factor is that refugees still have experiences of trauma-escaping war, conflict, and violence that embedded then being put them in post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, and other mental health difficulties (Younes, 2020). Torture, brutality, loss of loved ones, starvation, and political and economic persecution are also frequent pre-migratory experiences among refugees.

Based on our interview, All teachers are aware of the anxiety but only Hasan Baki, a teacher from a refugee academic in Meru, Klang who aware of psychological problems; according to them, several factors underlie anxiety in learning English apart from the three main factors, including (1) traumatic experiences that are still attached to them (Hasan Baki, Personal Interview, 2022); (2) their detachment from the world of education for so long, a social environment that does not accept them as a whole (Gabriel, personal interview, 2022); and (3) the lack of support from their parents at home; although, on the one hand, the parents encourage them to have the ability to speak English, it is not balanced to support and learn English so that they can support their children (Ahmad Sharif, personal interview, 2022).

Gabriel, a Teacher from the United Learning Center, argue to deal with learning anxiety among refugee student not only in English but also in all subject, all alternative school must have a teacher who has a counselor ability or all alternative school must recruit counselor in their school. Meanwhile, Ahmad Syarif, a refugee teacher from a refugee academic in Meru, Klang, and Hasan Baki, a refugee teacher from Save School Malaysia suggest that dealing with foreign language anxiety among refugee children Requires more interaction outside the classroom; by learning while playing, the students, according to these two teachers, will be more comfortable with the learning content but so far, according to them both, there are obstacles to playing facilities and the inability of teachers to conceptualize creative games to learn English. "Again the problem is in human resources", said Hasan Baki.

3. English Language Anxiety Level Between Genders

This study also compares the levels of English Language Anxiety between genders. Table 6 shows the cross-tabulation analysis between English language learning anxiety and gender. Interestingly, the result found that female pupils were more anxious about learning the language. Male pupils' representation existed in all three levels of anxiety, whereas none of the female pupils had a low anxiety level. The majority of male pupils or 85.4% moderately felt anxious in the English Language classroom. Only 4.9 % of male pupils had a low level of anxiety, and 9.8% had high anxiety. Just like the male, the majority of female pupils (96.1%) were also moderately

anxious, but there was no record of females at a low level of anxiety. Only 3.9% of female pupils recorded a high level of anxiety, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Cross Tabulation Analysis Between Genders

		Level			Total	
		Low	Medium	High		
Gender	Male	Count	2	35	4	41
		% within Gender	4.9%	85.4%	9.8%	100.0%
		% of Total	2.2%	38.0 %	4.3 %	44.6%
Gender	Female	Count	0	49	2	51
		% within Gender	0.0%	96.1%	3.9%	100.0%
		% of Total	0.0%	53.2%	2.2%	55.4%
Total		Count	2	84	6	92
		%within gender	2.2%	91.3%	6.5%	100.0%
		%of total	2.2%	91.3%	6.5%	100.0%

We also did a T-test analysis that compared anxiety levels between genders. Table 6 on the the t-test results. The t-test found no significant difference between the percentage of nervous female and male students. The overall anxiety level t-test p-value is 0.877, higher than 0.05 (5%). No gender differences in English classroom anxiety were found ($t_{56.521}=0.145$, $p>0.877$), as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. T-test Analysis between Genders

	Gender	n	Mean	SD	T-test	t
Overall anxiety level	Male	41	2.05	0.384	0.155	0.877
	Female	51	2.04	0.196		
Communication apprehension	Male	41	2.34	0.480	1.830	0.071
	Female	51	2.18	0.385		
Fear of Negative Evaluation	Male	41	2.22	0.419	0.273	0.785
	Female	51	2.20	0.401		
Anxiety test	Male	41	2.17	0.381	1.723	0.088
	Female	51	2.06	0.238		

A comparison between genders to each language anxiety subscale studied in this research was also included in this study. Based on Table 6, since all factors obtained p-values that ranged from 0.071 to 0.785, which are higher than the chosen significance level, 0.05, it is concluded that there were no differences in levels of language anxiety subscales between genders. However, based on our interview, female learners told us they have higher levels of anxiety about speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation than males. We summarize excerpts of the interview in the description below

a. Communication Apprehension

All the male students interviewed, except one student, feel comfortable when conversing in one-to-one situations and also in public speaking to practice English or Malay language with friends. They are relaxed and do not feel threatened or apprehensive. Female students are reticent and uncomfortable speaking English to their classmates, despite their teachers' encouragement. Shoraya, the student from United Learning Center, said "*I don't like to practice directly with friends when speaking English because I'm too lazy to be ridiculed. So it's better to be quiet*". Meanwhile, a student named Amira from Save School

Malaysia, said *"I'm embarrassed to speak English or Malaysia because it's still not good"*. The same thing was expressed by Amiri, a student from Refugee Academic who said *"In learning English and Malay, I am most uncomfortable when the teacher tells me to speak in front of the class"*.

b. Fear of Negative Evaluation

Evaluation is a fear of female students more than male students; for female students, if they get bad grades, then they not only feel they do not understand but also feel that they have failed to give their best. All female students we interviewed were more concerned with evaluation than male students because a good evaluation would bring pride to themselves and their families. Amiri, a student from a refugee academic, said to us, *"If I get good grades, usually the family will give me gifts, but if I don't, usually dad will be angry"*. Meanwhile, two other female student informants also said that good grades could prevent them from getting angry with their parents.

c. Anxiety test

The male students said they were not anxious about facing all the tests, especially the written ones, as long as they could see the results of their friends' work. We found that cheating on written exams among male students could help them get good grades and reduce their anxiety about exams. But they are still worried when facing the speaking test; the three refugee schools apply practical exams in the form of speeches and dramas for those aged 15 and over in English. For female students, they consider the test to be done with honesty without cheating. Perfection of grades and honesty in doing tests are a priority for female students compared to boys.

4. Factors of Foreign Language Anxiety and how to deal with it?

There are three factors of foreign language anxiety investigated in this study as shown in Table 8.

Table 8. The overall means and standard deviation of the subscales of ELCAS

Subscale	Means	Standard Deviation
Communication Apprehension	2.25	0.435
Fear of Negative Evaluation	2.21	0.407
Test Anxiety	2.11	0.313

It is found that Communication apprehension is found to be the most impactful factor of anxiety among the three subscales of anxiety listed in this study as perceived by the respondents with a mean value of 2.25. The second most impactful factor is fear of negative evaluation, which has a mean value of 2.21, and the least impactful subscale is test anxiety, with a mean value of 2.11. If we relate the first factor to research from Malik et al. (2021), then it is related to personality traits, low language proficiency, perceived academic issues, scholastic competence, poor pronunciation, and above all lack of lexical knowledge. Other research from Szuber (2008) stated that there is a social isolation factor that surrounds the lives of immigrants, especially refugees.

According to research from Rafieyan (2016), communication apprehension leads to social isolation because intercultural communication apprehension that fear of interaction with people of different cultures, Because of that enhancing cultural understanding and minimizing intercultural communication apprehension is very important (Abayadeera et al., 2018). For Szuber (2007) To learn a new language, you have to speak it, and the best way to do that is to talk to people who speak that language but if learners can't make it, then schools need to present

activities and social interaction that expose students to English. But because refugees also close themselves, this method tends to be ineffective. But Szuber (2008) also suggests educators think differently about how to address the unique sets of challenges and language learning opportunities experienced by adolescents living in social isolation because of systematic marginalization. In addition, teachers also need to act appropriately through responsiveness and assertiveness (Rafieyan, 2016).

Our interviews with the students show that their anxiety is because (1) they feared communicating and meeting others. Students would avoid speaking exercises and be less engaged in English classes. They are nervous, uncomfortable, hesitant, and unwilling. When asked to speak, it will only damage the English language learning progress if something is done to fix it; (2) they are worried about others' evaluations and unfavorable remarks. Students may compare English skills to others. They feel inferior; thus, they're nervous. Students do poorly in language activities and are reticent, and (3) they fear tests because of negative feedback. Even if the test isn't a formal one that precludes them from moving on, it nevertheless makes them apprehensive because the school gives their parents the results. Reprimand from their parents is scary for them, but parents who appreciate their children must know how to appraise their successes. Finally, refugee parents' lack of parenting knowledge renders their children less receptive, nurturing, and learning-friendly. although according to Hart (2009), Test anxiety is a common psychological phenomenon among college students, which may seriously affect their mental and physical health. Testing anxiety is normal, but it becomes unhealthy when students place unrealistic expectations on themselves to achieve a perfect test performance.

Based on our interview, we also asked them about how to deal with English language anxiety in general or special moments in their language learning. Then we found several coping strategies that they used to deal with language anxiety not only in English but also in Malay, such as (1) keep talking even though it's wrong because some students perceive mistakes in language as something that can make themselves and others funny; and; and (2) playing while learning in general situation but for specific situation, they deal with anxiety with (1) not attending class for a certain period; and (2) cheating during the test. Their ways of managing learning anxiety in general and specific conditions can be both negative and positive. Appropriate intervention from teachers in terms of the need for coping strategies to deal with anxiety, not in a negative way keeps them from constantly avoiding learning that can open up opportunities for unwanted things to happen.

There are several ways to overcome student anxiety in learning English based on recommendations from several researchers on three technical aspects of English, namely parts of writing, reading, listening, and speaking. but to carry out recommendations on the three technical aspects of speaking English, a teacher in an immigrant community according to Berhane Gerencheal (2016), Teachers should avoid overcorrection, in the sense that they shouldn't correct every single fault their students make, but instead work on developing approaches and procedures for error correction that reduce negative affect and raise students' poor self-esteem. On the other side, according to Pladevall Ballester (2020) how teachers communicate with students is one of the crucial elements that enhance affective and cognitive learning in a foreign language learning class. Therefore, teachers must be aware of Verbal and nonverbal communication to create physical or psychological closeness with students.

From the writing aspect, according to a study by Musyawir & Hamzah (2018), refugee students need to be exposed to experiential learning by writing short stories in stages through observation of daily events. Other research by Buyun Khulel (2022) suggests the implementation of project-based learning to improve students' ability to write hortatory exposition. Buyun argue

each of the processes in the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) benefited the students and assisted them in improving their writing skills. From the reading aspect, according to a study by Zulia Karini (2019) learning to read here does not imply learning to read English, but how to read a text that not only reads what is written, but what is suggested in a text or sentence. According to her findings, many learners' difficulty in understanding written readers stems from their inability to comprehend the material being read and make the mental connections necessary to do so. Therefore, interactive methods are needed, such as the use of flashcards and spider diagrams.

From the speaking aspect, according to a study by Otan Hidayat and Sigit Apriyanto (2019) suggest using drama to improve speaking skill in English. According to them, learning English speaking through *drama* will be more effective because drama is suitable for different student learning styles. Dramatization is attractive to all types of students. They receive and process information in different ways; the main thing is through our vision, hearing, and physical body. One of these channels tends to be dominant in each of us; and finally for the listening aspect, according to a study by Listiyaningsih (2017) suggest to improve listening can exercise through listening English song because listening English song has the benefit to improve listening skill. Other research from Sinaga (2020) suggest watching English movie also can improve students' listening skill.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The study findings concluded that at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the level of language learning anxiety among teenage refugees from three alternative schools in the Klang Valley area was generally at a medium level. Teenage refugees were found to be moderately anxious about attending English language classes regardless of gender or stream groups. There were no differences in levels of language anxiety either between gender or stream groups. As of now, the pandemic has not shown any signs of improving; in fact, it is expected to get worse sometime later this year, so an elevated concern with COVID-19 and inability to focus on academics may exist and negatively affect alternative education for teenagers refugee in the long run. Hence, it is suggested to conduct another similar educational research on the refugee community during the pandemic to compare the findings to see if there are any differences with the results of the beginning of the pandemic.

From the findings, it is paramount that all teachers or people who care about this issue understand the current situation of refugee teenagers' anxiety levels so that adequate measures can be taken. Having extensive knowledge of foreign or second language anxiety and empathy provides a greater understanding and brings a great advantage to all parties who care about education for refugees or marginalized communities to support the positive changes and observe if these changes in the self-perceived anxiety affect the learners; learning in the classroom setting.

In addition, counselors need to take part with teachers or activists to plan interventions to help refugee teenagers alleviate their anxiety in the English language classroom to the extent it becomes manageable and under control. In teaching, it is recommended that teachers apply suitable and interesting teaching methods in the lessons to lessen the refugee teenagers' feelings of anxiety and thus motivate them to progress further during the language acquisition process. Utilizing fun and creative ways of instruction in the language classroom can instill pupils' interest and grab their attention to be more participators.

The country, in this regard, although it has not yet ratified the convention on refugees, has acted maximally by providing legitimacy for social activists to establish alternative schools. On the

other hand, Malaysia needs a specific curriculum for refugees and proper teaching training. So, teachers in refugee schools who are mostly not from the educational environment can understand teaching techniques well, especially those related to ways to overcome learning anxiety English language. Some limitations to this study should be noted. This quantitative study used a survey questionnaire only in collecting the data; hence the data analysis is limited to what was completed by the respondents in the given survey. The respondents were reminded to be honest in answering the survey for accurate results. However, it is undeniable that there are possibilities of dishonesty in completing the survey, which may compromise the accuracy of the result. Also, our qualitative data is not deep because of time limitations. For future research on similar topics, adopting action or experimental research be better to get better data collection. This kind of research design can include action, evaluation, critical reflection, or pretest-posttest research design.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are grateful to all parties involved, from students and teachers of alternative schools to refugees, parliament members, and NGO representatives, who have strengthened our data. May all our reasonable efforts be sustainable and significant.

REFERENCES

- Abayadeera, N., Mihret, D. G., & Hewa Dulige, J. (2018). Teaching effectiveness of non-native English-speaking teachers in business disciplines: intercultural communication apprehension and ethnocentrism. *Accounting Education*, 27(2). <https://doi.org/10.1080/09639284.2017.1414616>
- Åkerblad, L., Seppänen-Järvelä, R., & Haapakoski, K. (2021). Integrative Strategies in Mixed Methods Research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 15(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689820957125>
- Berchin, I. I., Valduga, I. B., Garcia, J., & de Andrade Guerra, J. B. S. O. (2017). Climate change and forced migrations: An effort towards recognizing climate refugees. In *Geoforum* (Vol. 84). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.06.022>
- Betts, A., & Collier, P. (2016). Jordan's Refugee Experiment: A New Model for Helping the Displaced. *Foreign Affairs*, 27(2).
- Don, Z. M., & Lee, C. (2014). Representing immigrants as illegals, threats and victims in Malaysia: Elite voices in the media. *Discourse and Society*, 25(6). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926514536837>
- Donnelly, J., & Whelan, D. J. (2020). Human Rights in Global Politics. In *International Human Rights*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429266072-1>
- Elas, N. I., Majid, F. A., & Narasuman, S. (2020). Investigating School Climate as a Factor to English Language Anxiety in Malaysia. *International Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, 6(2). <https://doi.org/10.20469/ijhss.6.20005-2>
- Franke, M. F. N. (2012). Refugees in International Relations. Edited by Alexander Betts and Gil Loescher. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 25(4). <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fes044>
- Gerencheal, B. (2016). Gender Differences in Foreign Language Anxiety at an Ethiopian University: Mizan-Tepi University Third Year English Major Students in Focus. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 1, 1-16.
- Hart, R. (2009). Child refugees, trauma and education: interactionist considerations on social and emotional needs and development. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 25(4). <https://doi.org/10.1080/02667360903315172>
- Hashim, H., & Isa, I. S. M. (2012). Students' anxiety level towards speaking in English: Malaysia polytechnic experience. *ISBEIA 2012 - IEEE Symposium on Business, Engineering and Industrial Applications*, 595-599. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ISBEIA.2012.6422957>

- Hedman, E. L. E. (2009). World Refugee Day in one country: Celebrating refugees and UNHCR in Malaysia. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 22(3). <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fep027>
- Hoffstaedter, G. (2017). Refugees, Islam, and the State: The Role of Religion in Providing Sanctuary in Malaysia. *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies*, 15(3). <https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2017.1302033>
- Hidayat, Otan & Apriyanto, Sigit. (2019). Drama Excerpt: Tool in Enhancing Speaking Ability for Junior High School. *IJECA (International Journal of Education and Curriculum Application)*. 2. 1. 10.31764/ijeca.v2i3.2029.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., and Cope, J. (1986). "Foreign language classroom anxiety", in *Modern Language Journal*, 70, 2: 125-132.
- Khairi, A., Askandar, K., & Wahab, A. A. (2018). From Myanmar to Malaysia: Protracted refugee situations of Rohingya people. *International Journal of Engineering and Technology(UAE)*, 7(3). <https://doi.org/10.14419/ijet.v7i3.25.17545>
- Karini, Zulia. (2019). The Design of Learning Methods for Reading Comprehension. *IJECA (International Journal of Education and Curriculum Application)*. 2. 10. 10.31764/ijeca.v2i3.2112.
- Khulel,buyun. (2022). Improving Students' Writing Skills through Project-Based Learning, Process Writing, and Instagram.*IJECA (International Journal of Education and Curriculum Application)*.5.1. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31764/ijeca.v5i1.7601>
- Listiyaningsih, T. (2017). The Influence of Listening to English Songs to Improve Listening Skills in Listening Class. *Academica : Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 1(1).
- Malaysia, UNHCR. (2022, September 19). Figures at a Glance in Malaysia.UNHCR Malaysia. <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance-in-malaysia.html>
- Maistrello, V., & Clare Dalziel, F. (2020). Overcoming Anxiety in Adult Migrants' Language Learning using Process Drama. In *Global Education Review* (Vol. 7, Issue 4).
- Musyawir, Musyawir & Hamzah, Hamzah. (2018). The Ability of Writing Cerpen Procuredly Through Experiential Learning Students of Class IX Junior High School. *IJECA (International Journal of Education and Curriculum Application)*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31764/ijeca.v1i2.2135>
- Malik, S., Qin, H., & Oteir, I. (2021). Perceived psychological, linguistic and socio-cultural obstacles: An investigation of English communication apprehension in EFL learners. *International Journal of Instruction*, 14(4). <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2021.14442a>
- McBrien, J. L. (2005). Educational needs and barriers for refugee students in the United States: A review of the literature. In *Review of Educational Research* (Vol. 75, Issue 3). <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543075003329>
- Moldovan, C. (2016). The Notion of Refugee. Definition And Distinctions. In *CES Working Papers: Vol. VIII* (Issue 4).
- Naser Oteir, I., & Nijr Al-Otaibi, A. (2019). Foreign Language Anxiety: A Systematic Review. *Arab World English Journal*, 10(3). <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol10no3.21>
- Nordin, R., Sahak, S., & Ishak, M. K. (2020). The Plight Of Refugees In Malaysia: Malaysia As A Transit Country In Protecting Refugees' Rights. *Journal of Nusantara Studies (JONUS)*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.24200/jonus.vol5iss1pp378-394>
- Osóbka, P. (2021). Climate Change and the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 28 July 1951. *Polish Review of International and European Law*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.21697/priel.2021.10.1.04>
- Pladevall Ballester, E. (2020). Verbal and Nonverbal Teacher Immediacy and Foreign Language Anxiety in an EFL University Course. *Porta Linguarum Revista Interuniversitaria de Didáctica de Las Lenguas Extranjeras*. <https://doi.org/10.30827/digibug.53759>
- Poth, C., & Munce, S. E. (2020). Commentary—Preparing today's researchers for a yet unknown tomorrow: Promising practices for a synergistic and sustainable mentoring approach to mixed methods research learning. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.29034/ijmra.v12n1commentary>

- Prodip, M. A. (2021). Refugee education as a human right: A South Asian Perspective. In *Refugee Education in South Asia: Policies and Perspectives*.
- Qian, K. W. (2019). Refugee Education in Another Perspective : The Current State in Malaysia and Its Way Forward. *The Bulletin of the Graduate School, Soka University*, 40.
- Rafieyan, V. (2016). Discovering Factors of Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety and Coping Strategies. *Journal for the Study of English Linguistics*, 4(1). <https://doi.org/10.5296/jsel.v4i1.9668>
- Rusli, H., Dremluiga, R., Suhaili, W., & Farisha, N. A. (2021). Securing Malaysia's borders from COVID-19: Legal considerations to the influx of Rohingya migrants. *Journal of East Asia and International Law*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.14330/jeail.2021.14.1.06>
- Semmar, Y. (2010). First-year University students and language anxiety: Insights into the English version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale. *International Journal of Learning*, 17(1). <https://doi.org/10.18848/1447-9494/cgp/v17i01/46805>
- Sinaga, J. B. (2020). The Effect Of Watching English Movies to Improve Students' Listening Skills. *Anglo-saxon Jurnal Ilmiah Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.33373/as.v11i1.2449>
- Steffens, J. (2019). Climate Change Refugees in the Time of Sinking Islands. *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law*, 52(3).
- Szuber, A. (2007). Native Polish-speaking adolescent immigrants' exposure to and use of English. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.2167/beb316.0>
- Szuber, A. (2008). Polish immigrant adolescents learning English in Chicago: Linguistic context and challenges, learning opportunities, and vocabulary skills. In *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses*.
- Taylor, S., & Sidhu, R. K. (2012). Supporting refugee students in schools: What constitutes inclusive education? In *International Journal of Inclusive Education* (Vol. 16, Issue 1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603110903560085>
- Vors, O., & Bourcier, L. A. (2022). Synthesis and literature review of different mixed methods designs in pedagogical research in physical education. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 27(2). <https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2021.1999920>
- Vu, B. T., & Bosmans, G. (2021). The psychological impact of COVID-19 anxiety on learning burnout in Vietnamese students. *School Psychology International*, 42(5). <https://doi.org/10.1177/01430343211013875>
- Yoskapela, Susanty, Bahing, & Ristati. (2022). A Study on Speaking Anxiety of English Education Study Program Students at the University of Palangka Raya. *EBONY: Journal of English Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.37304/ebony.v2i1.4065>
- Younes, M. (2020). Blended Learning and Refugees' Empowerment Through a Capability Approach Lens. *PQDT - Global, February*.
- Zetter, R. (1988). Refugees, repatriation, and root causes. In *Journal of Refugee Studies* (Vol. 1, Issue 2). <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/1.2.99>
- Zhang, L. (2020). Correlations between academic achievement and learning anxiety of English learners. *Revista Argentina de Clinica Psicologica*, 29(2). <https://doi.org/10.24205/03276716.2020.225>