

A Comparative Analysis of Foreign Language Anxiety Among Undergraduates During Classroom Assessments

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Abstract

Foreign language test anxiety among first-year BBA and BCA students in Surat, characterised by distinctive social and academic dynamics. The research aims to quantify anxiety, examine group-level differences, and assess how academic discipline affects language learners' reactions. Information was gathered from 264 undergraduates using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which has been validated and evaluated by utilising descriptive statistical methods using IBM SPSS. Test anxiety is common; however, BBA students report lower levels than BCA students. The complex relationship between the field of study and learner affect was reflected in the identification of academic discipline as a critically important factor of anxiety variable. To encourage fairness and academic resilience in multilingual higher education contexts, this analysis fills a significant gap in geographical comparative research and gives practical insights for building discipline-specific educational strategies with customised anxiety-reduction techniques.

Key Words: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety, Course Differences, Classroom Test Anxiety, Academic Discipline Impact

Introduction

Foreign language anxiety (FLA), particularly in the context of classroom-based English assessments, is a significant affective element that has a negative impact on second language learning and academic performance (Jin et al., 2024; Rahman and Al Kafy, 2020; Naz and Khan, 2022). Classroom test anxiety in English includes numerous factors, such as fear of negative feedback, fear of being judged, and cognitive interference when under pressure to perform, all of which make it harder for students to show what they really know (Rahman & Al Kafy, 2020; Liu & Jackson, 2012). For undergraduate students in disciplines such as Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) and Bachelor of Computer Applications (BCA), linguistic testing anxiety can make the differences in their learning experiences greater because of the specific academic requirements and methods by which they interact with a foreign language (Jin et al., 2024; Maikopvest, 2025).

Research applying standardised instruments, such as the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS; Horwitz et al., 1986), indicates that test anxiety has remained an important variable contributing to overall Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), besides communication apprehension and fear of evaluation (Horwitz et al.,

1986; Ali et al., 2020; Naz & Khan, 2022). The FLCAS serves as a multi-dimensional viewpoint for evaluating the various elements of anxiety in classroom settings, and it has been validated among many educational contexts; thus, it allows for extensive comparisons between groups (Naz & Khan, 2022; Jin et al., 2024). Previous studies have demonstrated how variations in curriculum structures, testing formats, and teaching methods may increase or lower anxiety levels. This points to the need for investigations that take into account multiple fields (Ali et al., 2020; Rahman & Al Kafy, 2020; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). Concerning first-year BBA and BCA graduates from Surat city, an environment characterised by specific socio-cultural and educational influences, there were no more has existed relatively little research comparing their English classroom exam anxiety to general EFL anxiety. The present study fills this research gap by concentrating on these student groups, whose academic journeys and linguistic exposures differ while yet converging in significant ways.

The purpose of this research is to systematically assess and compare the levels of English classroom test anxiety within this population using the FLCAS, with the final objective of guiding targeted educational strategies and institutional policies to facilitate effective language acquisition and reduce anxiety-related obstacles (Jin et al., 2024; Naz & Khan, 2022; Rahman & Al Kafy, 2020).

Review of Literature

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) has been identified as a significant emotional barrier to effective language learning and academic success in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms (Jin et al., 2024; Rahman & Al Kafy, 2020). Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) revolutionary study introduced the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which continues to be a popularly utilised tool for measuring Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), including critical aspects such as communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz et al., 1986; Ali et al., 2020; Naz & Khan, 2022). A wide range of studies have subsequently used FLCAS to investigate the complex role of anxiety in language classrooms, emphasising how elevated stress negatively impacts cognitive functioning, attention, and language performance (Jin et al., 2024; Rahman & Al Kafy, 2020; Liu & Jackson, 2012).

Test anxiety, an essential component of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), has garnered considerable academic attention due to its substantial impact on test performance among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners (Noorashid et al., 2025; Wang & Wang, 2024). Stress related to tests presents actually cognitively through worry and reflection, physically through stress symptoms, and behaviourally through avoidance or withdrawal in testing contexts (Noorashid et al., 2025; Shi & Wen, 2020). For example, Jin et al. (2024) observed that test anxiety was a trustworthy indicator of poorer English test results and less involvement in class. In the same way, Rahman and Al Kafy (2020) showed that high test anxiety makes it harder for students to absorb and recall information that is important for doing excellently in an academic test.

Professional variations also significantly influence the feeling of linguistic anxiety. Research comparing students from different academic streams shows that the language barriers and classroom dynamics specific to each discipline can influence anxiety levels (Ali et al., 2020; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014). For instance, BBA students might experience anxiety associated with oral presentations and the usage of business-specific terminology, whereas BCA students may encounter greater fear connected to technical writing or linguistic difficulties (Maikopvest, 2025; Ali et al., 2020). All of these discipline-specific elements interact with more general socio-cultural and educational frameworks, requiring focused research to comprehensively understand anxiety profiles (Naz & Khan, 2022).

Language anxiety can be influenced by environments beyond the control of the individual, such as the educational setting and methodology. Research indicates that positive teacher attitudes, simple assessment, and anxiety-reducing methods of instruction, including mindfulness and mental training, substantially mitigate

anxiety and improve learning outcomes (Jin et al., 2024; Noorashid et al., 2025; Rahman & Al Kafy, 2020). These findings underscore the essential function of educational and teaching strategies in minimising the negative effects of anxiety.

In spite of the expansion of the FLA literature, there is a distinctive research vacuum in the study of first-year undergraduate students' anxiety during English classroom exams in particular geographic and disciplinary contexts. Numerous studies have been conducted in Indian urban settings, including Surat city, with an emphasis on general EFL populations or isolated language abilities, without conducting comparative analyses between streams such as BBA and BCA (Naz & Khan, 2022; Maikopvest, 2025). This disparity is relevant since the early years of university are important academic transitions, and anxiety can have a big effect on language learning and overall academic success (Rahman & Al Kafy, 2020).

The present study aims to fill this gap by conducting an empirical comparison of English classroom exam anxiety between first-year BBA and BCA students from Surat city, by using the validated FLCAS instrument. In this formative academic stage, the objective is to provide complex, reliable information that will guide targeted teaching methods and policy decisions aimed at reducing anxiety and promoting successful English language learning in discipline-specific contexts (Jin et al., 2024; Naz & Khan, 2022; Rahman & Al Kafy, 2020).

The objective of the research:

RO1: To assess the level of English classroom test anxiety among first-year students in Surat city

RO2: To compare the levels of anxiety associated with English classroom tests between BBA and BCA students

RO3: To examine the influence of academic courses on fear connected to foreign language tests

Hypothesis

H0₁: First-year BBA and BCA students do not experience English classroom test anxiety.

H0₂: There is no difference in test anxiety levels between BBA and BCA students.

H0₃: The academic course (BBA or BCA) has no impact on test anxiety.

Methodological Framework



Participant Profile

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---------|--------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | BBA | 142 | 53.6 | 53.8 | 53.8 |
| | BCA | 122 | 46.0 | 46.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 264 | 99.6 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | System | 1 | .4 | | |
| Total | | 265 | 100.0 | | |

Table 1: Response Rates

A non-probability convenience sampling method was used in this investigation. The research population consisted of first-year undergraduate students enrolled in Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) and Bachelor of Computer Applications (BCA) programs from Surat-based schools. Table 1 shows that the analysis, after filtering for completeness, comprised a total of 264 valid replies, with the BBA group ($n_1=142$) and the BCA group ($n_2=122$) being adequately represented. The purposive sampling frame guaranteed an impartial representation between the two academic streams, and the sample size satisfied the criteria to provide enough statistical power (generally acknowledged at $n>200$ for basic inferential statistics).



Measurement Instrumentation and Data Validation

The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope in 1986, is a revolutionary and widely used tool for measuring anxiety that is primarily related to language learning settings. Using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strongly agree and 5 as strongly disagree, the 15-item allows researchers to measure anxiety levels, with lower scores indicating higher levels of anxiety. For the objective of measuring anxiety related to learning a new language, the FLCAS has become known as the instrument of choice across the globe (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Aida, 1994). Many research have used the FLCAS in many educational and cultural situations, demonstrating its robustness and applicability in capturing the complicated relationship between anxiety and language acquisition. The FLCAS's broad use supports its theoretical and practical contributions to language learning anxiety reduction (Dornyei & Ryan, 2015; Saito et al., 1999).

Foreign language study relies on this dependable and robust scale to compare populations and customise supporting instructional practices (Horwitz et al., 1986; Aida, 1994; Horwitz, 2001).



Data Gathering Procedure

Participants were informed of the study's goals, ethics, anonymity, and voluntary participation after institutional approval. Standardised FLCAS questionnaires were given in class. Independent responses and fast questionnaire submission reduced response biases and increased response rates.



Analytical Framework

According to previous research (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Aida, 1994; López & Hernández, 2024), this study used IBM SPSS version 25, which allows for complete descriptive statistical evaluation, to analyse the data from the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). SPSS guaranteed accurate calculation of scale scores, reliability assessment, and group comparisons, facilitating robust and reproducible results (Zhang et al., 2024; Al-Haq & Alwan, 2024). This study utilised IBM SPSS version 25 to analyse the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) data, facilitating accurate descriptive statistics, reliability evaluation, and group comparisons, corroborated by previous research on foreign language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Aida, 1994; López & Hernández, 2024; Zhang et al., 2024).

Result

Table 2 indicates that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.953 obtained for the 15-item scale indicates excellent internal consistency, signifying that the items are highly correlated and measure a unified construct reliably. Such a high alpha value suggests minimal measurement error, ensuring consistency across items and respondents. This level of reliability implies that the instrument produces stable and repeatable results, supporting the validity of subsequent analyses. However, while a high alpha indicates good homogeneity, it does not guarantee unidimensionality or validity and should be interpreted alongside other psychometric

evidence. Overall, this statistic confirms the scale's robustness as a measurement tool in the current research context.

| Reliability Statistics | |
|------------------------|------------|
| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
| .953 | 15 |

Table 2: Reliability Test

The descriptive statistics for overall anxiety scores among 264 first-year students demonstrate substantial variability in English classroom test anxiety. Table 3 shows that with a standard deviation of 16.46 and a mean anxiety score of 47.15, the group demonstrates low levels of anxiety. Students' anxiety levels are very different, which shows that their experiences are really different. Complying with Objective 1, the statistics accurately demonstrate the frequency and degree of English classroom exam anxiety among the students under investigation.

Concerning the related hypothesis, whether students experience a detectable amount of English classroom test anxiety, the results show that mild anxiety does exist in the population, which supports its acceptance.

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------|-----|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Total | 264 | 15.00 | 75.00 | 47.1515 | 16.45941 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 264 | | | | |

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

| | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
|-------|--------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|---|-------|
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| FLCTA | 46.723 | 264 | .000 | 47.15 | 45.16 | 49.13 |

Table 4: One-Sample Test

Statistical significance is indicated in Table 4 by the t-test value of 46.723 with 264 degrees of freedom and a p-value of .000. This confirms English classroom test anxiety in the community because the mean anxiety score of 47.15 is significantly different from the test value. Furthermore, the 95% confidence interval (45.16 to 49.13) corroborates this conclusion by demonstrating that the true mean is within this range with high confidence, thereby validating the study's findings.

In comparison to BCA students ($N = 122$; $M = 38.38$, $SD = 13.18$), BBA students ($N = 142$) have a substantially higher mean anxiety score ($M = 54.68$, $SD = 15.24$) according to the group statistics, indicated in Table 5. Higher scores are indicative of lower anxiety. This noticeable difference indicates that BBA students have significantly lower levels of English classroom exam anxiety compared to BCA students. Based on these findings and the balanced group sizes, the null hypothesis is rejected. As a result, the alternative hypothesis is accepted, showing that there is a significant difference in anxiety levels between the two academic groups, and completing Objective 2.

| Course | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|--------|-----|-------|----------------|-----------------|
| BBA | 142 | 54.68 | 15.24 | 1.27 |
| BCA | 122 | 38.38 | 13.18 | 1.19 |

Table 5: Analysis of Course

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------------|---|------|-------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|-------|
| | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | | | |
| FLCTA | Equal variances assumed | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| | Equal variances assumed | 2.356 | .126 | 9.212 | 262 | .000 | 16.30 | 1.76 | 12.81 | 19.78 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 9.313 | 261.987 | .000 | 16.30 | 1.74 | 12.85 | 19.74 |

Table 6: Independent Samples Test

The independent samples t-test shows (Table 6) that academic discipline strongly affects foreign language test anxiety. Levene's test confirmed the validity of the t-test by verifying the level of variances ($F = 2.356$, $p = 0.126$). In terms of anxiety levels, the analysis showed that BBA students are significantly less anxious than BCA students ($t (262) = 9.212$, $p < .001$), with a mean anxiety score difference of 16.30 (95% CI: 12.81 to 19.78). The rejection of the null hypotheses (H_0_2 and H_0_3) confirms that the academic course significantly affects anxiety related to the foreign language test. By demonstrating how academic programs significantly impact students' anxiety levels in foreign language situations, these results satisfy Objective 3.

Conclusion

This research emphasises the substantial prevalence of English classroom test anxiety among first-year BBA and BCA students, with BBA students exhibiting significantly lower anxiety levels. Academic excellence is a significant factor affecting anxiety, highlighting the necessity for customised methods. The research covers a research gap by concentrating on comparative anxiety in specific regional and disciplinary contexts. To enhance student well-being and language learning outcomes, future research should investigate the efficacy of innovative anxiety-reduction strategies across academic domains. In order to establish conducive learning environments, these insights provide valuable guidance to educators and authorities.

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