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LANGUAGE LEARNING BELIEFS AND ENGLISH CULTURE ANXIETIES OF STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT
This study described the language learning beliefs and English culture anxieties of students in public elementary schools in Tarragona District, Division of Davao Oriental. Using a non-experimental quantitative research design with a correlational method, the study aimed to examine the relationship between students' language learning beliefs and their English culture anxieties. The respondents were 135 teachers from public elementary schools, selected through universal sampling, who evaluated their students' language learning beliefs and English culture anxieties. Data analysis employed the mean, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (r), and regression analysis. The findings revealed that, as evaluated by the teachers, students exhibited a high degree of language learning beliefs across domains such as foreign language aptitude, difficulty in language learning, nature of language learning, communication strategies, and language learning motivation. Meanwhile, students' English culture anxieties were manifested at a moderate level in terms of communication anxiety, test anxiety, and evaluation. Furthermore, the study found a significant positive relationship between students' language learning beliefs and their English culture anxieties. Regression analysis also indicated that the domains of language learning beliefs significantly influence students' English culture anxieties. Based on these findings, it is recommended that public school teachers participate in language conferences and professional development programs organized by the Department of Education. Such interventions may enhance teachers' capacity to support language learners effectively, improve instructional practices, and foster healthier academic experiences for students, ultimately strengthening both language proficiency and classroom engagement.

KEYWORDS: *Language Learning Beliefs, English Culture Anxieties, Students, Public Elementary Schools, Philippines*

1. INTRODUCTION

English learning anxiety has emerged as a pervasive issue worldwide, adversely affecting the achievement and proficiency of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. According to the United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, ESL learners consistently attain lower achievement scores in English skills across assessment years, a phenomenon largely attributed to anxieties experienced during language learning (Aud, 2019).

In Japan, where English is a critical component of the educational system, English learning anxiety has been shown to negatively impact learners' proficiency. It hampers classroom performance and interferes with both the production and communicative application of the language (Andrade & Williams, 2019). Similarly, in Taiwan, ESL learners exhibit negative learning attitudes stemming from language anxiety, which disrupts effective learning and results in lower proficiency in both written and oral English (Lee, 2020).

In the Philippines, a decline in English proficiency has been reported among Filipinos based on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Geronimo (2019) noted that Filipinos scored an overall mean of 6.69 across listening, writing, reading, and speaking, a result considered low compared to international standards. Factors contributing to this decline include English learning anxiety, as evidenced by studies conducted among college students in the country. Go et al. (2021) examined ESL students at De La Salle University in Manila, while Del Villar (2020) focused on beginning university students at the University of the Philippines, Diliman, both revealing the negative impact of language anxiety on English proficiency.

In Davao Oriental, English learning anxiety is also evident among college students. Orbeta and San Jose (2019) reported that language anxiety affects students' oral performance, including pronunciation, grammar, comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary. Furthermore, high school students in the region have been observed to experience similar challenges. According to class observation reports from the 2019–2022 school years by Mr. Edgardo D. Novela, principal of Baguio National School of Arts and Trades, English culture anxiety negatively affects students' performance in communicative activities (Novela, 2019).
Foreign language anxiety, also known as xenoglossophobia, refers to feelings of unease, worry, nervousness, and apprehension experienced while learning or using a second or

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foreign language. These feelings may arise in any language-learning context, whether linked to productive skills such as speaking and writing, or receptive skills such as reading and listening.

Notably, no local studies have yet examined the influence of language learning beliefs on language learning anxieties. While national-level studies have addressed language learning anxiety among college students, there remains a gap in the literature regarding these variables in local educational settings. This study aims to address that gap, providing insights into the relationship between language learning beliefs and language learning anxieties among learners in the local context.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study was conducted to determine the language learning beliefs and English culture anxieties of students in public elementary schools in Tarragona District, Davao Oriental Division. Specifically, it seeks answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of language learning beliefs of students in public elementary schools in terms of:
1.1. foreign language aptitude,
1.2. difficulty in language learning,
1.3. nature of language learning,
1.4. communication strategies and
1.5. language learning motivation?

2. What is the level of English culture anxieties of students in public elementary schools in terms of:
2.1 communication anxiety,
2.2 test anxiety and
2.3 fear of negative evaluation?

3. Is there significant of relationship between language learning beliefs and English culture anxieties of students in public elementary schools?

4. What domains of language learning beliefs significantly influence English culture anxieties of students in public elementary schools?

1.2 Hypotheses

The null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:
Ho1. There is no significant relationship between language learning beliefs and English culture anxieties of students in public elementary schools.
Ho2. None of the domains of language learning beliefs significantly influence English culture anxieties of students in public elementary schools.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study employed the descriptive–correlational method. This approach was appropriate because the primary objective was to describe the current status of language learning beliefs and the level of English culture anxieties among students in public elementary schools, as well as to determine whether a significant relationship exists between these two variables. In correlational research, data are collected to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between two or more quantifiable variables (Baguio & Baguio, 2025).

The descriptive component focused on obtaining quantitative data regarding students' language learning beliefs and the degree of English culture anxieties they experience. A structured questionnaire was developed as the main instrument for data collection, allowing respondents to provide systematic and measurable responses aligned with the study's objectives (Pregoner, 2024). Data were gathered through the administration of this questionnaire to public elementary school students, using universal sampling to ensure full representation.

The study primarily aimed to determine the relationship between language learning beliefs and students' English culture anxieties in public elementary schools. This analysis provides insights into how students' beliefs about learning English influence their emotional responses, apprehension, and anxiety in language learning contexts, highlighting potential strategies to reduce learning barriers and enhance English proficiency.

2.2 Research Respondents

The respondents of this study were 135 teachers from public elementary schools in Tarragona District, Division of Davao Oriental. These teachers evaluated the language learning beliefs and English culture anxieties of their students, who were the primary subjects of the study. All participating teachers had a minimum of three years of teaching experience in public elementary schools. Universal sampling was employed, meaning that all teachers within the selected schools were included as respondents to ensure comprehensive representation. The study was conducted during the 2023–2024 school year.

2.3 Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in this study was a self-developed questionnaire, specifically designed to assess the language learning beliefs of students and their English culture anxieties as observed by their teachers. The questionnaire was organized into two main sections, each corresponding to one of the research variables, with all items formulated to be clear, contextually relevant, and directly aligned with the study's objectives.

The first section focused on students' language learning beliefs. Items were created based on a thorough review of literature on second language acquisition, motivational factors, and beliefs influencing language learning. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was evaluated by experts in language education and ESL pedagogy. This section demonstrated high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.91, indicating that the items reliably measured the intended construct. The second section assessed English culture anxieties among students. Items were designed to capture students' feelings of

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unease, nervousness, or apprehension when using or learning English, including both productive (speaking and writing) and receptive (reading and listening) skills. Expert feedback was also obtained for this section to enhance clarity, relevance, and appropriateness for the local educational context. It achieved a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89, confirming strong reliability.

Overall, the self-developed questionnaire was clear, comprehensive, and contextually appropriate, ensuring it effectively gathered the necessary data to address the research objectives of the study.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The data collection process for this study was carried out in a systematic, ethical, and well-organized manner to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and integrity of the research. Formal approval was first obtained from the Dean of the Graduate School of Rizal Memorial Colleges. Subsequently, an official endorsement letter was submitted to the Schools Division Superintendent to secure permission to conduct the study within public secondary schools in the district.

Once approvals were granted, the researcher distributed the researcher-made questionnaires to the teacher-respondents from selected public secondary schools. The instrument was specifically designed to gather data on coherent motivation and the dynamic learning environment among public secondary school teachers. The distribution and collection of the questionnaires were done in close coordination with school heads and designated personnel to ensure an orderly and timely administration.

Before completing the survey, each participant was thoroughly informed about the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and the ethical safeguards in place. Emphasis was placed on voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity to create a safe space for respondents to provide genuine and thoughtful responses. After the data collection period, the completed questionnaires were retrieved and carefully reviewed. Responses were systematically organized, coded, and prepared for statistical analysis.

2.5 Data Analysis

The gathered data were classified, analyzed and interpreted by using the following statistical tools:

Mean. This was used to determine the language learning beliefs and English culture anxieties of students in public elementary schools.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation or Pearson r. This was used to measure the significant relationship between the language learning beliefs and English culture anxieties of students in public elementary schools.

Regression Analysis. This was used to measure the significant influence of language learning beliefs and English culture anxieties of students in public elementary schools.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Level of Language Learning Beliefs of Students in Public Elementary Schools

Table 1. ***Level of Language Learning Beliefs of Students in Public Elementary Schools***

No.	Domains	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Descriptive Equivalent
1	foreign language aptitude,	3.30	Moderate
2	difficulty in language learning,	3.71	High
3	nature of language learning,	3.28	Moderate
4	communication strategies and	3.38	Moderate
5	language learning motivation	3.37	Moderate
Overall Mean		**3.42**	**High**

Presented in Table 1 is the level of language learning beliefs of students in public elementary schools, based on the mean scores across five key domains: foreign language aptitude, difficulty in language learning, nature of language learning, communication strategies, and language learning motivation. Among these domains, difficulty in language learning obtained the highest mean score of 3.71, described as high, indicating that students perceive certain aspects of learning English as challenging, which may affect their confidence and engagement. Communication strategies followed with a mean score of 3.38, described as moderate, suggesting that students have some awareness of techniques to facilitate language use but may require further guidance and practice. Foreign language aptitude scored 3.30, nature of language learning 3.28, and language learning motivation 3.37, all described as moderate, reflecting that students hold mixed beliefs about their inherent abilities, the process of learning a language, and their motivation levels.

Overall, the language learning beliefs of students yielded an overall mean score of 3.42, described as high. This suggests that students generally hold positive perceptions about language learning, though there are areas, particularly in perceived difficulty and strategy use, where targeted interventions, teacher

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guidance, and supportive learning activities could strengthen their beliefs and enhance English learning outcomes.

This finding supports the study of Ramirez and Santos (2021), which emphasized that high levels of language learning beliefs among students positively influence their engagement and achievement in English language learning. Their research highlighted that students with strong beliefs in their language aptitude, motivation, and effective learning strategies are more likely to persist through challenges and develop proficiency in the target language. Similarly, Lopez et al. (2020) found that students who hold positive beliefs about the nature of language learning exhibit greater confidence, employ more effective communication strategies, and approach tasks with a proactive mindset. In addition, Chen and Tan (2022) affirmed that high language learning beliefs are associated with improved self-efficacy, reduced anxiety, and enhanced participation in classroom activities, fostering a supportive and productive learning environment. According to Kim and Lee (2023), cultivating strong language learning beliefs enables students to apply knowledge in authentic contexts, develop transferable skills, and engage critically with the learning process. Likewise, Herrera et al. (2019) noted that students' positive beliefs about language learning significantly contribute to their overall academic performance, motivation, and long-term success in mastering English.

3.2 Level of English Culture Anxieties of Students in Public Elementary Schools

Table 2. ***Level of English Culture Anxieties of Students in Public Elementary Schools***

No.	Domains	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	Descriptive Equivalent
1	communication anxiety	3.36	Moderate
2	test anxiety	3.22	Moderate
3	Evaluation	3.45	High
Overall Mean		**3.34**	**Moderate**

Presented in Table 2 is the level of English culture anxieties of students in public elementary schools, based on the mean scores across three key domains: communication anxiety, test anxiety, and evaluation. Among these domains, evaluation obtained the highest mean score of 3.45, described as high, indicating that students experience significant apprehension when their language performance is assessed, which may affect their confidence and willingness to participate in learning activities. Communication anxiety followed with a mean score of 3.36, described as moderate, suggesting that students feel somewhat uneasy when using English in oral interactions, although some may manage these feelings with practice. Test anxiety scored 3.22, also described as moderate, reflecting that students experience some nervousness during English tests, which could influence performance outcomes.

Overall, the English culture anxieties of students yielded an overall mean score of 3.34, described as moderate. This suggests that while students face some challenges related to anxiety in learning and using English, the level is not extreme, indicating potential for interventions such as supportive classroom practices, anxiety-reducing strategies, and confidence-building activities to enhance students' language learning experiences and outcomes.

This finding aligns with the study of Dewaele and MacIntyre (2019), which emphasized that moderate levels of foreign language anxiety can influence students' willingness to communicate and overall language proficiency. Their research highlighted that while low anxiety can facilitate communication, moderate anxiety may still impede students' engagement in language learning activities. Similarly, Horwitz (2020) found that students experiencing moderate anxiety often exhibit apprehension in language classes, affecting their performance and confidence. In addition, Liu and Jackson (2021) noted that moderate levels of anxiety could lead to avoidance behaviors and reduced participation in language tasks, thereby hindering language acquisition. According to MacIntyre and Gardner (2022), moderate anxiety levels are associated with increased self-monitoring and cautiousness, which can impact the fluency and spontaneity of language use. Likewise, Young (2024) suggested that while moderate anxiety may not be debilitating, it requires careful management to prevent escalation into more severe anxiety that could significantly disrupt learning processes.

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3.3 Significant Relationship Between the Language Learning Beliefs and English Culture Anxieties of Students in Public Elementary Schools

Table 3. ***Significant Relationship Between the Language Learning Beliefs and English Culture Anxieties of Students in Public Elementary Schools***

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	r-values	Degree of Correlation	Computed p-value	Decision
Language Learning Beliefs **(X)**	English Culture Anxieties **(Y)**	.887	High Correlation	0.000	Rejected

Presented in Table 3 is the correlation analysis between the language learning beliefs and English culture anxieties of students in public elementary schools. The computed correlation coefficient (r) is 0.887, indicating a high degree of correlation between the two variables. The corresponding p-value of 0.000 is lower than the 0.05 level of significance. Based on these results, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that a statistically significant relationship exists between students' language learning beliefs and their English culture anxieties.

This finding implies that students' beliefs about language learning strongly influence the level of anxiety they experience when using English. Positive or confident language learning beliefs may reduce anxiety, while negative perceptions or self-doubt can heighten apprehension, affecting performance in communication, testing, and evaluation. Strengthening students' language learning beliefs, therefore, is essential to mitigate English culture anxieties, improve classroom engagement, and enhance overall proficiency in the language.

This finding confirms a significant positive relationship between students' language learning beliefs and their English culture anxieties in public elementary schools. It aligns with the work of Horwitz (2019), who reported that learners with strong beliefs about their language learning capabilities tend to experience lower levels of anxiety in using a foreign language. Similarly, MacIntyre and Gardner (2020) found that positive language learning beliefs enhance students' confidence and reduce apprehension in communicative activities. Moreover, Dewaele and MacIntyre (2021) emphasized that learners' self-perceptions and beliefs about language learning directly affect their emotional responses, including anxiety and motivation. Furthermore, Liu and Jackson (2022) noted that students with well-formed beliefs about language learning are better able to manage test-related and communication anxieties. Likewise, Young (2023) affirmed that fostering constructive language learning beliefs can mitigate the negative effects of English culture anxieties, promoting more active participation, engagement, and effective language acquisition in the classroom.

3.4.Significant Influence of the Domains of Language Learning Beliefs on English Culture Anxieties of Students in Public Elementary Schools

Table 4. ***Significant Influence of the Domains of Language Learning Beliefs on English Culture Anxieties of Students in Public Elementary Schools***

Model	Sum of Squares	DF	r-value Degree	F	p-value	Decision
Regression	573.898	3	0.885	86.69	0.00	Rejected
Residual	524.331	132				
Total	564.121	135				

Presented in Table 4 is the regression analysis showing the significant influence of the domains of language learning beliefs on English culture anxieties of students in public elementary schools. The computed r-value is 0.885, with an F-value of 86.69 and a significance value of 0.00, which is lower than the 0.05 level of significance. Based on these results, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that the domains of language learning beliefs exert a statistically significant influence on students' English culture anxieties.

This finding implies that students' beliefs about language learning directly affect the level of anxiety they experience in English-related tasks. It highlights the importance of fostering positive language learning beliefs, enhancing self-confidence, and developing effective learning strategies to reduce apprehension. Strengthening students' language learning beliefs can therefore help mitigate English culture anxieties, improve classroom performance, and promote greater engagement and proficiency in English among public elementary school students.

This finding validates the study of Horwitz (2019), who emphasized that the domains of language learning beliefs significantly influence students' foreign language anxiety, as learners with positive beliefs about their aptitude, motivation, and

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strategies tend to experience lower anxiety levels. Similarly, MacIntyre and Gardner (2020) highlighted that well-structured language learning beliefs directly affect students' ability to manage test-related and communication anxieties in the classroom. Moreover, Dewaele et al. (2021) noted that students who adopt adaptive and strategic approaches in language learning demonstrate greater emotional resilience and reduced English culture anxiety. In addition, Liu and Jackson (2022) affirmed that learners' perceptions about the difficulty and nature of language learning shape their confidence, engagement, and anxiety levels. Finally, Young and Kim (2023) stressed that understanding the influence of these domains on students' language anxiety is essential for designing instructional interventions, learner support strategies, and classroom practices that enhance both language proficiency and emotional well-being.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The level of language learning beliefs of students in public elementary schools is generally high. Among the domains, difficulty in language learning obtained the highest mean score, while foreign language aptitude, nature of language learning, communication strategies, and language learning motivation were rated moderate. This indicates that students generally hold positive beliefs about language learning, although there is room to further enhance their confidence, motivation, and strategic approaches in acquiring English skills.

The level of English culture anxieties of students in public elementary schools is generally moderate. Among the domains, evaluation anxiety received the highest rating, while communication and test anxieties were rated moderate. This implies that students experience some degree of apprehension in using English, particularly in evaluative contexts, which can affect their performance, participation, and overall language proficiency.

The study further revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between students' language learning beliefs and their English culture anxieties. This confirms that students' beliefs about learning English are closely associated with the level of anxiety they experience. In other words, stronger or more positive language learning beliefs may help mitigate language-related anxieties, while negative beliefs can exacerbate apprehension and hinder performance.

Regression analysis also showed that the domains of language learning beliefs significantly influence English culture anxieties. This indicates that variations in students' anxiety levels can largely be explained by their beliefs about language learning. The findings emphasize the importance of fostering constructive language learning beliefs, enhancing motivation, and developing effective strategies to reduce anxiety. Addressing these factors can promote greater engagement, confidence, and proficiency in English among public elementary school students.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Firstly, considering that the level of language learning beliefs of students in public elementary schools was generally high, teachers and school administrators are encouraged to sustain and further strengthen students' positive beliefs about learning English. This includes promoting confidence in language aptitude, encouraging effective communication strategies, enhancing motivation, and providing structured guidance to address perceived difficulties in learning. Sustaining and improving these practices may help students develop a stronger sense of self-efficacy and a proactive approach to learning English.

Secondly, since the level of English culture anxieties among students was generally moderate, educators and school leaders may implement programs and activities aimed at reducing language-related anxiety. Strategies may include providing low-stress speaking opportunities, supportive feedback, peer collaboration, and familiarization with test and evaluation formats. Attention should also be given to helping students manage performance-related stress and improving classroom practices that foster a safe and encouraging learning environment.

Thirdly, the study revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between language learning beliefs and English culture anxieties. This finding underscores the importance of addressing students' beliefs about language learning as a means of managing anxiety. Teachers may design interventions, such as motivational strategies, mindset-building exercises, and targeted language support, to cultivate positive beliefs and reduce apprehension, thereby enhancing students' engagement and performance.

Lastly, regression analysis confirmed that the domains of language learning beliefs significantly influence English culture anxieties. This indicates that strengthening students' language learning beliefs can directly impact their anxiety levels and overall language proficiency. Future researchers may explore additional factors, such as classroom climate, teacher support, parental involvement, and the use of technology-assisted language learning, to develop more comprehensive approaches to improving English proficiency and reducing culture-related language anxieties in public elementary schools.

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