Check for updates

Research Paper

Affective Filters as Predictors of English Language Proficiency

John Francis C. Cruz[1*] (iD)

[1] Laguna State Polytechnic University, Philippines

Abstract

This study investigated the predictive role of affective filters in second language acquisition on English language proficiency among 285 Grade 9 learners at Biñan Integrated National High School, Philippines, during the third quarter of the academic year 2024-2025. The sample was determined using stratified sampling with proportional allocation. The study employed a quantitative approach, analyzing the descriptive levels of affective filters and English proficiency using mean scores and the correlation among these variables using multiple regression analysis. English language proficiency was assessed through a standardized test. The results revealed a significant positive correlation between motivation and various aspects of English proficiency, highlighting its crucial role in language learning success. Conversely, anxiety demonstrated a significant negative correlation, indicating that higher anxiety levels are associated with lower proficiency. Self-efficacy showed a positive relationship with specific skills, particularly correct usage and grammar, suggesting its importance in targeted skill development. Regression analysis further confirmed the significant predictive power of motivation and anxiety on overall English language proficiency. Based on these findings, the study concludes that motivation and anxiety are key determinants of English language proficiency, while self-efficacy plays a more nuanced role. This study recommends that educational interventions prioritize fostering motivation through engaging and relevant learning experiences, alleviating anxiety by cultivating a supportive and non-threatening classroom environment, and enhancing self-efficacy through targeted instruction and opportunities for success. Further research is suggested to explore other potential factors influencing English language proficiency.

Keywords: *Affective Filters, English Language Proficiency, Motivation, Self-efficacy, Anxiety*

INTRODUCTION

English language proficiency remains a critical issue within the Philippine educational landscape. Despite its status as a second language integral to governance, commerce, and academia, proficiency levels among Filipino learners are declining, falling short of desired standards. This concern has prompted significant educational reforms, such as the MATATAG curriculum, which emphasizes foundational English skills to address these persistent challenges. However, student performance continues to be hampered by factors like disparate access to quality instruction and varied language exposure, highlighting the urgency of understanding the underlying factors that impede language acquisition.

A substantial body of research supports the pivotal role of emotional factors, or "affective filters," in second language acquisition. Stephen Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis provides the foundational framework, positing that emotional variables like motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety can either facilitate or obstruct a learner's ability to process language input. Studies consistently affirm this, showing that lower anxiety correlates with better performance, while high motivation enhances language acquisition (Jiang et al., 2024; Li & Zhou, 2023; Wang, 2024). This emotional dimension is a key determinant of success, underscoring the need for supportive learning environments that cater to learners' affective needs (Rivera, 2023).

Within the Filipino context, these affective filters are recognized as key predictors of English proficiency (Gonzales, 2010; Gonzales, 2011). Local studies have explored how motivation is driven by integrative and instrumental goals (Kuciel, 2013; Shih, 2019) and how language anxiety negatively correlates with self-confidence (Salayo & Amarles, 2020). Critically, a recurring finding in local literature is the significant gap between students' self-perceived competence and their objectively measured proficiency, suggesting systemic weaknesses in language acquisition that demand deeper investigation (Manalastas & Batang, 2024).

Despite this body of work, a clear research gap persists. While individual affective variables have been studied, there is a lack of comprehensive, integrated frameworks to assess their collective predictive power on language performance, particularly among Filipino junior high school students. Much of the existing research focuses on a single affective factor or a narrow aspect of language skill, thereby overlooking the complex interplay between motivation, self-efficacy, and anxiety. This fragmentation represents a significant knowledge gap, as it prevents a holistic understanding of how these emotional factors jointly influence a broad range of English proficiency indicators, from foundational vocabulary and grammar to higher-order reading comprehension and verbal ability.

To address this limitation, the present study aims to investigate which affective filters, motivation, self-efficacy, and anxiety, significantly predict the English language proficiency of Grade 9 Filipino learners. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the descriptive level of the respondents' affective filters in terms of motivation, self-efficacy, and anxiety?
2. What is the English language proficiency level of the respondents across the eight indicators of vocabulary, correct usage, sentence improvement, verbal ability, analogy, grammar, reading comprehension, and spelling?
3. To what extent do motivation, self-efficacy, and anxiety predict the overall English language proficiency of the respondents?

This study contributes to the field both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it offers a more holistic, integrated model that tests the collective influence of multiple affective filters, extending the application of the Affective Filter Hypothesis within the specific sociolinguistic context of the Philippines. Practically, the findings can inform the development of targeted educational interventions and pedagogical strategies for teachers and curriculum designers, providing a nuanced evidence base for creating more effective and emotionally supportive English language learning environments. This paper also describes the respondents' perceived level of affective filters using a survey design and English language proficiency through a standardized test.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical core of this study is anchored in Stephen Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis, which serves as the primary lens for understanding the psychological dimensions of second language acquisition. This hypothesis posits that a learner's emotional state acts as an invisible "filter" that can either facilitate or impede the processing of comprehensible language input. When the affective filter is high, characterized by anxiety, low motivation, or a lack of self-confidence, it can block language input, thus hindering learning. Conversely, a low affective filter allows the learner to be more receptive, promoting successful acquisition. This framework is further supported by complementary motivational theories like Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and Expectancy-Value Theory (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002), which collectively highlight the importance of intrinsic motivation and a learner's expectation of success.

The landscape of English proficiency in the Philippines is complex, marked by a persistent gap between its widespread use and declining learner outcomes (Santos et al., 2022). While English

is considered vital linguistic capital for academic and professional success (Goswami & Rahman, 2023; Ramalingam & Islam, 2024), research consistently reveals that Filipino learners struggle with productive skills, particularly in oral communication and written grammar, including common errors in verb tenses and subject-verb agreement (Fulgarinas & Canoy, 2020; Gabriel, 2018; Munder, 2024; Labicane & Oliva, 2022). Compounding this issue is a notable disparity between students' self-perceived abilities and their actual, objectively measured skills, particularly in vocabulary and grammar (Manalastas & Batang, 2024). These documented deficiencies, highlighted further by the nation's performance in the 2022 PISA, underscore the need to investigate the underlying emotional and psychological variables that contribute to these learning gaps.

The role of affective factors in second language acquisition is well-documented, lending strong empirical support to the study's theoretical framework. Research consistently demonstrates that emotional barriers can significantly impact learning outcomes (Jiang et al., 2024). Motivation, in particular, emerges as a powerful predictor of success. It is often categorized as instrumental (learning for practical goals) and integrative (learning to connect with a culture), with both types playing a crucial role in sustaining a learner's effort (Cocca & Cocca, 2019). Conversely, language anxiety is shown to have a debilitating effect, creating a mental block that impairs performance and raises the affective filter (Horwitz et al., 1986; Wang, 2024). Self-efficacy, or a learner's belief in their own capabilities, is also critical, as it influences persistence and goal-setting (Kuciel, 2013). Within the Filipino context, these affective dimensions are particularly salient. Studies have shown that motivation among Filipino learners can vary by age and gender (Gonzales, 2010; Gonzales, 2011), while language anxiety is negatively correlated with both motivation and self-confidence (Salayo & Amarles, 2020). This interplay is complex; for instance, strong motivation and high self-efficacy can potentially mitigate the negative effects of anxiety (Sandeman, 2022). This body of work confirms that affective filters are not isolated variables but are interconnected factors that collectively shape a learner's language acquisition journey.

While numerous studies have investigated English proficiency in the Philippines and others have explored the impact of individual affective filters, there is a scarcity of research that provides a comprehensive, integrated framework to examine how these factors—motivation, self-efficacy, and anxiety, collectively predict a wide range of English proficiency indicators. Much of the local research tends to focus on a single affective variable or a narrow set of language skills, overlooking the complex interplay between these emotional dimensions and their combined influence on overall linguistic competence. This study aims to address this gap by quantitatively assessing the predictive power of multiple affective filters on eight distinct indicators of English language proficiency among Filipino learners. Based on the theoretical framework and the existing literature, this study hypothesizes that motivation and self-efficacy will be significant positive predictors of English language proficiency, while anxiety will be a significant negative predictor.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach utilizing a descriptive-correlational research design. This methodological choice was deemed most appropriate for addressing the study's research questions. The descriptive component was essential for providing a detailed statistical snapshot of the variables, directly answering research questions one and two by establishing the current levels of affective filters (motivation, self-efficacy, anxiety) and English language proficiency among the Grade 9 learners. The correlational component was used to investigate the strength and direction of the relationships between the affective filter variables and English proficiency. Furthermore, a predictive framework was established using multiple regression analysis to address the third research question and test the study's hypotheses, thereby determining which affective filters significantly predict language learning outcomes. This non-

experimental design allows for the examination of variables in their natural setting without manipulation, providing an authentic picture of the interplay between learners' emotional states and their academic performance.

The research was conducted at Biñan Integrated National High School, a large public high school in the highly urbanized City of Biñan, Laguna, Philippines. This setting provides a diverse student population, enhancing the potential generalizability of the findings. The study's participants were Grade 9 learners from this institution. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure a representative sample and enhance data validity. The total population of 991 Grade 9 students was divided into 25 strata, with each class section serving as a distinct stratum. This strategy guarantees that students from every section were included, preventing potential sampling bias and ensuring the sample accurately reflects the diversity of the entire Grade 9 cohort. The sample size of 285 was calculated using Slovin's formula with a 0.05 margin of error, a standard method for determining a statistically robust sample size for a finite population. Proportional allocation was then used to determine the number of participants drawn from each stratum, ensuring that the sample from each class section was proportional to its size relative to the total population. Final participant selection within each stratum was conducted randomly, and the sample was refined based on inclusion criteria such as consistent attendance records.

To gather data, four primary instruments were utilized. All instruments underwent rigorous content validation by a panel of experts (including an English master teacher, a registered psychometrician, a university professor, and a registered social worker) and demonstrated high internal consistency in their original sources. The English Language Motivation Scale (Clement & Kruidenier, 1983; Clement et al., 1994), assessed motivational drivers (α = .902). The English Language Self-Efficacy Scale from the same authors measured self-belief (α = .951). The English Language Anxiety Scale (Jugo, 2020) captured multifaceted anxiety (α = .780). Finally, the English Language Proficiency Test (Cruz, 2018), an 80-item standardized test, served as the dependent measure (α = .950).

The collected data were analyzed using specific statistical techniques chosen to align with the research questions. To answer the first two research questions, mean scores and standard deviations were calculated to provide a clear quantitative summary of the central tendencies and variability for each affective filter and English proficiency indicator, with interpretation guided by the descriptive scales presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3. To answer the third research question and test the study's hypotheses, a multiple regression analysis was employed. This statistical technique was selected because it is the most appropriate method for determining the collective and individual predictive power of the independent variables (motivation, self-efficacy, and anxiety) on the single dependent variable (overall English language proficiency), allowing the study to identify which affective filters were statistically significant predictors of language learning success.

Table 1. Affective Filter Response Interpretation

Scale	Mean Scores	English Language Anxiety and Motivation	Language Self-Efficacy
		Verbal Equivalent	
5	4.22 – 5.00	Very High	Highly Confident
4	3.42 - 4.21	High	Confident
3	2.62 - 3.41	Average	Moderately Confident
2	1.80 – 2.61	Low	Not Confident
1	1.00 - 1.79	Very Low	Strongly Not Confident

Table 2. Categorical English Language Proficiency level interpretation

Index of Performance	Range of Score	Level of Proficiency
89% - 100%	8.90 – 10.00	Advanced (A)
67% - 88%	6.70 – 8.89	Proficient (P)
45% - 66%	4.50 – 6.69	Approaching Proficiency (AP)
26% - 44%	2.60 – 4.49	Developing (D)
1% - 25%	1.00 – 2.59	Beginning (B)

Table 3. Overall English Language Proficiency level interpretation

Index of Performance	Range of Score	Level of Proficiency
89% - 100%	71.20 – 80.00	Advanced (A)
67% - 88%	53.60 – 71.19	Proficient (P)
45% - 66%	36.00 – 53.59	Approaching Proficiency (AP)
26% - 44%	20.80 – 35.99	Developing (D)
1% - 25%	1.00 – 20.79	Beginning (B)

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. Permission was formally obtained from all relevant educational authorities before the study commenced. Informed consent was secured from both the student participants and their parents or guardians, ensuring they were fully aware of the study's purpose and procedures. The confidentiality of the participants was protected by securely storing all data and ensuring that no personally identifiable information was disclosed in the findings. To ensure the study is reproducible, this methodology provides a transparent and detailed account of the research design, participant selection, sampling techniques, validated instruments, and statistical analyses used. By systematically describing each step, future researchers are provided with a clear framework to replicate the study in different contexts or build upon its findings, thereby contributing to the reliability and validity of the research in the broader academic community.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis, beginning with the demographic profile of the participants, followed by a detailed examination of the descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings are systematically analyzed and discussed in relation to the research questions and existing literature.

Table 4. Demographic Profile of Participants (n=285)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	151	53.0%
	Male	134	47.0%

To contextualize the findings, the demographic profile of the 285 Grade 9 student participants was analyzed. In terms of gender, the distribution was relatively balanced, with 151 participants (53%) identifying as female and 134 (47%) identifying as male. This demographic information provides a general background for interpreting the variations in affective filters and proficiency levels observed in the study.

Table 5. Perceived mean level of motivation influencing English language proficiency

Statement	Mean	Std Dev	Verbal Equivalent
1. English will be helpful for my future career.	4.67	.626	Very High

2.	I may need English to be admitted to colleges or universities.	4.47	.620	Very High
3.	I want to understand English films/videos, pop music, or books/magazines.	4.23	.682	Very High
4.	Knowledge of English will be helpful when I take examinations.	4.56	.617	Very High
5.	Knowledge of English helps me to perform well in other subjects.	4.37	.657	Very High
6.	I can get pleasure from learning English.	4.01	.727	High
7.	I gain recognition when I have a good command of English.	3.68	.887	High
8.	Knowledge of English helps me to become a better person.	4.01	.900	High
9.	Skills in the use of English help me to improve my life in the future.	4.15	.810	High
10.	It pays to learn and master English because of the many benefits that come along with learning it.	4.34	.755	Very High
11.	English helps me to accomplish school requirements	4.08	.796	High
12.	English will be useful when I transact business in government, economics, and school.	4.28	.795	Very High
13.	English helps me to understand English-speaking people and their way of life.	4.38	.730	Very High
14.	I am interested in English culture, history, and literature.	3.94	.809	High
15.	I feel English is an important language in the world.	4.25	.763	Very High
16.	Knowledge of English helps me to perform well in other subjects	4.20	.726	High
17.	I feel English is mentally challenging.	3.51	.999	High
18.	I am interested in increasing my English vocabulary	4.54	.647	Very High
19.	I gain confidence when I know I use the English language	4.30	.814	Very High
20.	Learning and mastering the English language is very fulfilling.	4.28	.691	Very High
	Overall Mean Level	4.21		High

Based on the data, respondents exhibit a "high" level of motivation for learning English, with a grand mean of 4.21, driven by both practical and personal interests. A deeper analysis reveals that instrumental motivation is a particularly dominant force, as evidenced by very high mean scores for statements linking English to future careers ($\bar{x}$ = 4.67) and academic examinations ($\bar{x}$ = 4.56). This finding aligns with existing literature emphasizing that learners are often motivated by the tangible benefits of language proficiency, such as career advancement and academic success (Amorati & Quaglieri, 2023; Nurbaiti et al., 2023; Saragih & Subekti, 2024; Siahaan et al., 2022). While also high, integrative motivation, related to cultural interest, showed slightly lower mean values, such as for the statement "I am interested in English culture, history, and literature" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.94). This suggests that while cultural connection is valued, as supported by research (Chung & Long, 2024; Dankova, 2019), it is a secondary driver compared to practical goals.

A noteworthy finding is the lowest mean value (3.51) for the statement "I feel English is mentally challenging," which suggests that respondents may not fully perceive the cognitive demands of mastering the language. This observation is consistent with research highlighting a potential disconnect between Filipino students' self-perceived competence and their actual performance, as well as misconceptions about the effort required for effective language learning (Manalastas & Batang, 2024; Quinto & Cacanindin, 2024). However, this view is contrasted by studies indicating that students do recognize specific linguistic challenges, particularly in areas like word usage and pronunciation in different English varieties (Castro, 2023). This points to a complex self-perception where the general difficulty of the language is underestimated, even while specific grammatical or lexical obstacles are acknowledged.

The strong instrumental motivation indicates that learners are highly receptive to instruction that explicitly connects English skills to tangible life goals. At the same time, the high

integrative motivation suggests that incorporating cultural elements such as films, music, and literature would further enhance student engagement. Therefore, an effective pedagogical approach would involve a balanced strategy that leverages students' career-oriented goals while fostering intrinsic interest through creative and culturally rich activities.

Table 6. Perceived mean level of self-efficacy influencing English language proficiency

Statement	Mean	Std Dev	Verbal Equivalent
1. Listen to and understand the main ideas of a televised public service announcement in English.	3.93	.706	Confident
2. Listen to and understand the details of short conversations in English.	4.22	.635	Highly Confident
3. Listen to and understand the main ideas of a short, televised news report in English.	4.03	.769	Confident
4. Listen to and comprehend the details of conversations in English documentaries, films, songs, and television programs.	4.04	.775	Confident
5. Listen to and comprehend the idea given in a lecture delivered by an English speaker.	4.03	.782	Confident
6. Recite in English class fluently.	3.35	.966	Moderately Confident
7. Deliver reports using English as the medium.	3.39	.864	Moderately Confident
8. Deliver solo performances like oration, declamation, and some modes of public speaking.	3.28	1.034	Moderately Confident
9. Read and understand the main ideas of print ads in English	3.79	.867	Confident
10. Read and understand the main ideas of a short English article.	4.01	.755	Confident
11. Read and understand the news articles and features in an English newspaper.	3.87	.771	Confident
12. Read and understand instructions in manuals of gadgets or appliances.	4.02	.835	Confident
13. Read and understand the details of a poem, essay, short story, and novel in English.	3.95	.829	Confident
14. Write a business letter in English.	3.21	.917	Moderately Confident
15. Write a short narrative in correct English.	3.45	.958	Confident
16. Write a long narrative with correct English.	3.18	1.004	Moderately Confident
17. Engage in an informal conversation using English.	3.55	1.018	Confident
18. Communicate ideas in English clearly and correctly.	3.55	.939	Confident
19. Engage in academic discussion using the English language.	3.49	.970	Confident
20. Communicate ideas effectively and efficiently in English written discourse.	3.46	.962	Confident
Overall Mean Level	3.69		Confident

The respondents reported an overall "Confident" level of self-efficacy in English (grand mean of 3.69), though this confidence varies significantly across different language skills. A clear distinction emerged between receptive and productive skills, with learners feeling most self-assured in their listening and reading abilities. This is highlighted by the highest mean score for understanding short conversations ($\bar{x}$ = 4.22) and a high score for understanding short articles ($\bar{x}$ =

4.01). This confidence in receptive skills aligns with research suggesting that early and engaging exposure to literacy through activities like storytelling fosters comfort and comprehension (Schatt & Ryan, 2021; Smith, 2024).

In contrast, learners demonstrated considerably lower self-efficacy in productive skills, particularly in speaking and writing. Confidence levels dropped for tasks such as delivering solo performances ($\bar{x}$ = 3.28) and writing long narratives ($\bar{x}$ = 3.18), which had the lowest mean score. This disparity is consistent with literature that attributes lower confidence in speaking and writing to a combination of factors, including linguistic limitations, psychosocial fears, social anxiety, and a notable gap between students' self-perceived abilities and their actual performance (Garcitos et al., 2024; Lucas & Lucas, 2023; Sandigan, 2018; Separa et al., 2020). This stark contrast between confidence in receptive versus productive skills provides an early clue as to why self-efficacy may not function as a consistent predictor of overall proficiency in the subsequent regression analysis. The high confidence in listening and reading suggests educators can use authentic materials effectively. Conversely, the lower self-efficacy in speaking and writing underscores the critical need for supportive, low-pressure classroom environments and explicit, structured instruction to build confidence and improve language outcomes.

Table 7. Perceived mean level of anxiety influencing English language proficiency

Statement	Mean	Std Dev	Verbal Equivalent
1. I panic when I have to speak in English.	3.38	1.057	Average
2. I tend to be at a loss for words whenever I speak in English.	3.42	1.003	High
3. I feel self-conscious whenever I speak in English.	3.32	1.104	Average
4. I tremble when I am to be called on to recite in an English class.	3.18	1.113	Average
5. I quiver at the thought of speaking in English before the class.	3.05	1.104	Average
6. I am afraid that my English work would look absurd.	3.51	1.099	High
7. I am afraid of activities requiring the use of English.	2.76	1.091	Average
8. I get upset when the class is required to write a composition in English.	2.92	1.009	Average
9. I am not confident in my writing skills in English.	2.99	1.028	Average
10. I get nervous when the test requires essay writing in English.	2.99	1.129	Average
11. I am afraid of being corrected while I am speaking in English.	3.18	1.168	Average
12. I worry that my English composition will be criticized.	3.40	1.065	Average
13. I feel embarrassed about seeing red marks in my English compositions.	3.40	1.104	Average
14. I am afraid that my classmates will criticize my written work in English.	3.25	1.219	Average
15. I am anxious that my English composition will turn out funny.	3.38	1.093	Average
16. I am afraid I will sound absurd when speaking with a foreigner.	3.31	1.067	Average
17. I am afraid of talking to a native English user.	3.11	1.139	Average

18. I am afraid of writing to a native English user.	3.00	1.053	Average
19. I get nervous just at the thought of talking to a foreigner.	2.96	1.100	Average
20. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the English language in front of native speakers.	3.35	1.060	Average
21. I feel inferior to my classmates as far as English is concerned.	3.16	1.166	Average
22. I am not confident in my performance in my English classes.	3.05	1.099	Average
23. I have a feeling I will not do good in my English classes.	3.14	1.142	Average
24. My classmates do better in English than I do.	3.40	1.058	Average
25. I have a feeling I will fail in my English classes.	3.02	1.130	Average
26. I am afraid I do not really understand the English materials that I read.	3.05	1.108	Average
27. I fear I do not accurately understand the English materials that I heard.	3.05	1.050	Average
28. I am afraid I may not understand directions written in English.	2.81	1.063	Average
29. I am afraid of not understanding discussions in English.	2.98	1.127	Average
30. I feel I will not be able to give details of the English material I read.	3.05	1.062	Average
Overall Mean Level	3.15		Average

The findings reveal that respondents experience an "average" overall level of English language anxiety, with a grand mean of 3.15. However, this "average" masks specific areas of high concern, particularly related to productive skills. The highest anxiety levels were reported for fears that their "English works would look absurd" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.51) and the tendency "to be at a loss for words whenever I speak in English" ($\bar{x}$ = 3.42). These findings indicate that while general anxiety about using English is moderate, learners are particularly apprehensive about the perceived quality and fluency of their written and spoken output.

This interpretation moves beyond simply reporting the numbers by connecting these anxieties directly to the theoretical framework: such fears actively raise the affective filter, creating a psychological barrier to language production. Speaking anxiety is often pronounced due to the pressures of real-time communication, which amplifies the fear of making mistakes, receiving negative feedback, and losing face (Labicane, 2021; Maquidato, 2021). This fear is further compounded by factors like low self-efficacy and emotional intelligence (Natividad et al., 2024). Similarly, writing anxiety stems from the significant cognitive load of organizing thoughts in a second language and the fear of judgment (Giray et al., 2022; Soriano & Co, 2022). The convergence of these studies explains why learners feel more anxious about producing language than they do about receptive activities like listening or reading.

To address these specific anxieties, teachers should implement low-stress activities like pair and group work, normalize errors as a natural part of the learning journey, and provide constructive feedback that focuses on progress rather than criticism. By understanding these specific anxieties, educators can design targeted interventions that foster both language skills and emotional well-being.

Table 8. Mean proficiency level in the English language

Indicators of Proficiency in English Language	Descriptive Statistics		Verbal Description
	Mean	Std Deviation	
Vocabulary	5.95	11.42	Approaching Proficiency
Correct Usage	5.68	2.409	Approaching Proficiency
Sentence Improvement	6.58	1.821	Approaching Proficiency
Verbal Ability	3.17	1.659	Developing
Analogy	4.67	1.677	Approaching Proficiency
Grammar	3.24	1.777	Developing
Reading Comprehension	6.68	2.531	Approaching Proficiency
Spelling	6.26	2.198	Approaching Proficiency
Overall Language Proficiency Level		42.22	Approaching Proficiency

The findings reveal that respondents are, on the whole, "Approaching Proficiency" in English. This foundational competence can be attributed to several factors identified in the literature, such as strong reading attitudes and the application of various learning strategies (Pampag & Baloran, 2024; Quinto & Cacanindin, 2024).

Despite this foundation, the data clearly indicate that learners are still at a "Developing" level in the critical areas of verbal ability and grammar. This weakness can be interpreted as a direct consequence of the previously identified affective barriers; the high anxiety and low self-efficacy in productive skills logically manifest as lower proficiency in the rule-based, productive domains of grammar and verbal ability. This is compounded by other factors, including a disparity between self-assessed and actual skills, and a lack of practice in sociolinguistic competence (Manalastas & Batang, 2024; Echavez, 2024).

Educators should continue to build on the students' stronger areas by consolidating existing knowledge, while simultaneously implementing targeted interventions to address the pronounced weaknesses in verbal ability and grammar. The relatively high proficiency in reading comprehension can be strategically leveraged as a tool to reinforce grammatical concepts and expand vocabulary in context.

Table 9. Relationship between Affective Filters and Indicators of Proficiency in the English Language

Indicators of Proficiency in English Language	Affective Filters		
	Motivation	Self-Efficacy	Anxiety
Vocabulary	.091[NS]	.057[NS]	**-.284****
Correct Usage	**.184****	**.174****	**-.216****
Sentence Improvement	**.215****	.014[NS]	**-.183****
Verbal Ability	**.153****	.113[NS]	**-.207****
Analogy	**.198****	.094[NS]	**-.187****
Grammar	**.159****	**.173****	**-.206****
Reading Comprehension	**.135***	-.015[NS]	-.110[NS]
Spelling	.063[NS]	-.035[NS]	**-.117***
Overall Language Proficiency	**.210****	.090[NS]	**-.275****

**	significant at .01 level
*	significant at .05 level
NS	not significant

The data reveals a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between motivation and English language proficiency, aligning with literature that asserts motivation drives

deeper engagement and perseverance (Athirathan, 2025; Nusrat et al., 2024; Pandey, 2025). Conversely, anxiety exhibited a powerful and pervasive negative relationship with proficiency, supporting the concept that anxiety hinders performance by creating cognitive overload (Abutiang & Ushie, 2025; Santi et al., 2024). In contrast, self-efficacy demonstrated a more limited influence, showing significant positive correlations only with correct usage and grammar. This suggests its impact is most pronounced in rule-based areas requiring confidence in structural application, a finding consistent with research that views self-efficacy's role as often mediated by other factors (Hanik et al., 2025; Müller, 2024; Santi et al., 2024).

The strong positive impact of motivation highlights the necessity for educators to foster engaging, relevant, and supportive classroom environments. The pervasive negative effect of anxiety points to the critical need for strategies that create a psychologically safe space, such as relaxation techniques and positive reinforcement. Finally, the specific role of self-efficacy suggests that targeted interventions aimed at building confidence in discrete skills like grammar are crucial.

Table 10. Regression Estimate Analysis for English Language Proficiency

Predicting Variable	Regression Coefficient	SE	t-value	p-value	95% CI
Intercept	3.911	.963	4.060	.000	[2.02, 5.80]
Motivation	.682	.207	3.298	.001	[0.28, 1.09]
Anxiety	-.478	.105	-4.563	.000	[-0.68, -0.27]
F (2, 285) = 17.383, *p<.001*	R^2 =.110 (small effect size, f^2 = 0.12)		VIF < 1.5		

The regression analysis confirms that affective filters are significant predictors of English language proficiency, with the overall model being statistically significant (F(2, 285) = 17.383, p < .001). Together, motivation and anxiety explain 11% of the variance in students' English proficiency scores (R^2 = .110). Assumption checks were satisfied, with Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) scores of 1.02 for both predictors, indicating no multicollinearity issues and deeming the model robust.

Individually, both motivation (β = .682, p = .001) and anxiety (β = -.478, p < .000) emerged as powerful predictors, aligning with research showing motivated learners achieve more while anxious learners are hindered (Alrabai, 2022; Liu & Li, 2024). A key unexpected finding was the non-significance of self-efficacy as a predictor in the final regression model. While correlated with specific rule-based skills, it did not predict overall proficiency when considered alongside motivation and anxiety. This may be because self-efficacy functions more as a mediating variable, influencing proficiency indirectly by boosting motivation or lowering anxiety (Teng, 2024; Wu et al., 2022). Additionally, the disparity between high confidence in receptive skills and low confidence in productive skills may neutralize its effect when predicting a composite proficiency score.

The significant positive effect of motivation reinforces the need for interventions that foster student engagement. The strong negative impact of anxiety underscores the importance of creating low-stress, supportive classroom environments where learners feel safe to practice and make mistakes. By focusing on these two key affective factors, educational programs can more effectively improve students' English language proficiency.

CONCLUSIONS
This study concludes that affective filters, particularly motivation and anxiety, are significant predictors of English language proficiency among Grade 9 Filipino learners. The findings showed that while learners exhibited high motivation and moderate confidence, their proficiency was

largely at an "Approaching Proficiency" level, with notable weaknesses in grammar and verbal ability. The central conclusion is that motivation is a powerful facilitator, and anxiety is a significant inhibitor of language acquisition. The hypothesis that self-efficacy would also be a significant predictor was not supported, as it did not predict overall proficiency, underscoring that the drive of motivation and the negative effect of anxiety are the more dominant forces in the language learning journey of these students.

The primary theoretical contribution of this research is its validation and extension of Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis through an integrated, multi-variable model. By analyzing motivation, self-efficacy, and anxiety simultaneously across eight distinct proficiency indicators, this study offers a more nuanced understanding of the affective filter. It reveals that its components do not carry equal predictive weight, as motivation and anxiety overshadowed self-efficacy, demonstrating their relative dominance in the affective landscape of Filipino learners. This moves beyond a monolithic view of the hypothesis, suggesting a more complex interplay where certain emotional factors are more critical to overall language acquisition than others.

The implications for educational practice and policy are profound. The findings strongly suggest that addressing these affective barriers is a critical step toward helping students achieve higher competence. English language instruction must evolve to become more emotionally intelligent, with educators actively cultivating classroom environments that boost motivation and mitigate anxiety. This includes connecting learning to students' instrumental goals and creating psychologically safe spaces for practice. Policymakers are encouraged to support the development of engaging instructional materials and invest in professional development that equips teachers with strategies to manage classroom anxiety and build student confidence, thereby fostering a more supportive and effective learning ecosystem for all Filipino learners.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

The interpretation of this study's findings must be framed within several methodological limitations that provide clear avenues for future research. Firstly, the correlational and cross-sectional research design does not permit causal inferences and provides only a static snapshot of the variables, which is a limitation because language acquisition is a dynamic process. Furthermore, the reliance on self-report instruments introduces the potential for response bias, and the study's generalizability is constrained by the specificity of the sample. Finally, the regression model's explanatory power ($R^2 = .110$) indicates that a large portion of the variance in English proficiency is attributable to factors not measured in this study.

These limitations directly inform several recommendations for future inquiry. To address causality and the static nature of the data, future studies should employ experimental and longitudinal designs. For instance, researchers could test the effectiveness of a motivation-enhancement program or track a cohort of students over several years to understand the dynamic interplay between affective filters and language development. Future research should also aim for a more comprehensive predictive model by investigating other potential predictors such as cognitive factors, learning strategies, and instructional quality.

The unexpected finding regarding self-efficacy presents a particularly interesting avenue for future research. Qualitative methods, such as case studies or in-depth interviews, could explore why self-efficacy correlated with specific skills but did not predict overall proficiency, thereby uncovering the complex, contextual role it plays. Finally, to enhance generalizability, replication of this study with larger, more diverse samples across different regions, school types, and age groups is crucial to test and extend the validity of the current findings.

REFERENCES

Abutiang, P., & Ushie, J. (2025). Impact of anxiety and achievement motivation on colleges of education students' academic performance in Cross River State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis, 8*(1). https://doi.org/10.47191/ijmra/v8-i01-03

Alrabai, F. (2022). The predictive role of anxiety and motivation in L2 proficiency: An empirical causal model. *Language Teaching Research.* https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688221136247

Amorati, R., & Quaglieri, A. (2023). Commonplace or exotic? A comparative mixed-method study on the instrumental work-related motivations of EFL and LOTE students. *Language Learning Journal.* https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2023.2249009

Athirathan, S. (2025). The influence of academic motivation on the academic performance of senior secondary grade students (A study based on Tamil medium schools in the Colombo South education zone, in Sri Lanka). *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 8*(12), 3748–3752. https://doi.org/10.47772/ijriss.2024.8120312

Castro, M. (2023). English varieties: A case study on the exploration of Filipino students' perceptions. *International Journal of English Language Studies, 5*(2), 12–20. https://doi.org/10.32996/ijels.2023.5.2.3

Chung, D., & Long, N. (2024). Language learning through a cultural lens: Assessing the benefits of cultural understanding in language education. *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research, 7*(07). https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v7-i07-82

Clement, R., & Kruidenier, B. (1983). Orientations in second language acquisition: The effects of ethnicity, milieu, and target language on their emergence. *Language Learning, 33*, 273–291.

Clement, R., Dornyei, Z., & Noels, K. (1994). Motivation, self-confidence, and group cohesion in the foreign language. *Language Learning, 44*(3), 417–448.

Cocca, M., & Cocca, A. (2019). Affective variables and motivation as predictors of proficiency in English as a foreign language. *Educational Research and Innovation in European Schools, 12*(3), 75–83. https://doi.org/10.7160/ERIESJ.2019.120302

Corcuera, L. (2024). Uncovering QuillBot: Filipino senior high school students' experiences and factors influencing its use in enhancing language writing skills. *Uluslararası Eğitim Araştırmacıları Dergisi.* https://doi.org/10.52134/ueader.1497368

Cruz, J. (2018). Factors Affecting Second Language Acquisition as Indicators of English Language Proficiency among Senior High School Students. Unpublished Manuscript, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College of Guimba, Inc. Guimba, Nueva Ecija.

Dankova, N. (2019). Perceptions of English l2. Language of Shakespeare or just a tool for intercultural communication. *Language, Individual & Society, 13*(1), 173–179. https://www.scientific-publications.net/en/article/1001961/1000038-1570484760462523.pdf

Deci, E. & Ryan, R. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist, 55*(1), 68–78. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68

Eccles, J. & Wigfield, A. (2002). Motivational beliefs, values, and goals. *Annual Review of Psychology, 53*(1), 109–132. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.53.100901.135153

Echavez, C. (2024). Shapeshifting in social spaces: Sociolinguistic competence of multilingual learners. *Kajian Linguistik Dan Sastra, 9*(2), 202–218. https://doi.org/10.23917/kls.v9i2.6606

Fulgarinas, J., & Canoy, I. (2020). Determinants of interest toward schooling among the Grade 9 students of San Francisco National High School, San Francisco (Anao-Aon), Surigao Del Norte. *International Journal of Humanities and Education Research, 2*(1), 10–16. https://doi.org/10.33545/26649799.2020.v2.i1a.15

Gabriel, E. (2018). English proficiency of education students in Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology San Isidro Campus. *International Research Journal of Education and Technology, 1*(1), 19–25.

Garcitos, A., Gargar, C., Lomocso, Z., Amacna, R., & Bonganciso, R. (2024). English Communication Skills (ECS) of Grade 9 Learners: The Basis for Designing an ECS Intervention Program.

Journal of English as a Foreign Language Teaching and Research, 4(2), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.31098/jefltr.v4i2.2382

Giray, L., Alcala, M., Edem, J., & Sabacajan, T. (2022). English language anxiety among college students. *International Journal of Qualitative Research, 2*(1), 65–76. https://doi.org/10.47540/ijqr.v2i1.569

Gonzales, R. (2010). Motivational orientation in foreign language learning: The case of Filipino foreign language learners. *Social Science Research Network*. https://doi.org/10.2139/SSRN.2746312

Gonzales, R. (2011). Differences in motivational orientation in foreign language learning context: Findings from Filipino foreign language learners. *Social Science Research Network*. https://doi.org/10.2139/SSRN.2746285

Goswami, S., & Rahman, M. (2023). Developing English language skills through competency-based language teaching. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research, 5*(4). https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2023.v05i04.4549

Hanik, K., Pramono, S., Yulianto, A., & Utomo, C. (2025). The effect of self-efficacy on academic performance: The mediating role of adaptation and motivation in seafaring students. *Journal of Ecohumanism, 4*(1). https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v4i1.5991

Horwitz, E., Horwitz, M., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *Modern Language Journal, 70*(2), 125–132.

Jiang, Y., Wu, Y., & Liang, Y. (2024). Affective filter hypothesis and second language acquisition: A study on anxiety levels in the dictation part of TEM-4. *Arts, Culture and Language, 1*(9). https://doi.org/10.61173/8y785633

Jugo, R. (2020). Language anxiety in focus: The case of Filipino undergraduate teacher education learners. *Education Research International*, 2020, 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1155/2020/7049837

Krashen, S. D. (1982). Principles and practice in second language acquisition. *Oxford: Pergamon Press*.

Kuciel, E. (2013). Self-efficacy in L2: A research proposal. *In Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching* (pp. 31–42). Springer, Heidelberg. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-00161-6_3

Labicane, G. (2021). Foreign language anxiety experiences of Filipino students across the four macro skills. *Linguistics and Language, 5*(1), 254–264. https://doi.org/10.30743/LL.V5I1.3761

Labicane, G., & Oliva, R. (2022). Common errors in composition writing by college students. *Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Language Education, 6*(1), 1–6. https://doi.org/10.30743/ll.v6i1.4975

Li, Q., & Zhou, Y. (2023). Enhancing EFL class design: Affective filter hypothesis in action. *International Journal of Education and Humanities, 9*(3), 38–40. https://doi.org/10.54097/ijeh.v9i3.10161

Liu, M., & Li, T. (2024). Predictive effects of English classroom anxiety and motivation on Chinese undergraduate EFL learners' English achievement. *Journal of Language and Education, 10*(2), 84–94. https://doi.org/10.17323/jle.2024.16906

Lucas C. & Lucas J. (2023). Attitude toward English, communication apprehension and speaking competence of juniors in the Philippines. *EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 67–68. https://doi.org/10.36713/epra13459

Manalastas, A., & Batang, B. (2024). Factors influencing the English language competency of Filipino university students. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis, 7(*6). https://doi.org/10.47191/ijmra/v7-i06-34

Maquidato, I. (2021). The experience of English speaking anxiety and coping strategies: A transcendental phenomenological study. *International Journal of Teaching and Education, 1*(2), 45–64. http://i-jte.org/index.php/journal/article/view/32

Mendoza, K. (2024). Influence of cultural background on language comprehension in the Philippines. *International Journal of Linguistics, 5*(3), 15–28. https://doi.org/10.47604/ijl.2980

Müller, C. (2024). Exploring the link between Romanian accounting students' goal orientations, self-

efficacy, test anxiety, and performance: A cluster analysis approach. *Studia Universitatis Babeş-Bolyai, 69*(3), 56–72. https://doi.org/10.2478/subboec-2024-00015

Munder, D. (2024). Writing Errors of English as Second Language (ESL) Learners in the 21st Philippine Context. *Randwick International of Education and Linguistics Science Journal, 5*(2), 276–292. https://doi.org/10.47175/rielsj.v5i2.955

Natividad, A., Lasalita, A., Mercado, M., & Mesina, S. (2024). The influence of speaking self-efficacy and emotional intelligence on foreign language anxiety among Filipino college students. *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research, 6*(4). https://doi.org/10.36948/ijfmr.2024.v06i04.24250

Nurbaiti, N., Qismullah, Y., Asnawi, A., & Nurul, N. (2023). Why do we learn English? Investigating the first-year students' motives to learn English in Aceh. *VELES (Voices of English Language Education Society), 7*(1), 23–32. https://doi.org/10.29408/veles.v7i1.6015

Nusrat, M., Abdel Jawad, M., Fatima, H., Yaseen, M., Awan, Z., & Siraj, J. (2024). Examining the interplay between academic motivation, writing anxiety, and writing proficiency of Pakistani ESL learners: A correlational analysis. *Social Science Review Archives, 2*(2), 1645–1657. https://doi.org/10.70670/sra.v2i2.222

Pampag, R., & Baloran, E. (2024). The relationship between attitudes and proficiency of junior high school students as mediated by reading self-efficacy: An explanatory sequential design. *EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research,* 435–444. https://doi.org/10.36713/epra19526

Pandey, G. (2025). Motivational drivers in English for academic purposes: Teaching, texts, and tasks. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management, 12(*1), 18–26. https://doi.org/10.3126/ijssm.v12i1.73492

Quinto, J., & Cacanindin, M. (2024). Pinoy tells: The typology of English language learning strategies. Advanced Education, 12(25), 106–124. https://doi.org/10.20535/2410-8286.309352

Ramalingam, S., & Islam, M. (2024). English language proficiency as linguistic capital among Bangladeshi graduates. *Issues in Language Studies, 13*(1), 131–144. https://doi.org/10.33736/ils.5556.2024

Rivera, L. (2023). Affective filter: Mexican English learners in Chicago. *Open Journal for Sociological Studies, 7*(1), 11–22. https://doi.org/10.32591/coas.ojss.0701.02011c

Salayo, J., & Amarles, A. (2020). Relationship between anxiety in second language learning and motivation orientation: The case of young Filipino learners. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics Studies, 2*(2), 191–209. https://doi.org/10.36892/IJLLS.V2I2.237

Sandeman, D. (2022). The relationship between the L2 motivational self-system and attainment. Lingua Posnaniensis, 64(2), 35–47. https://doi.org/10.14746/linpo.2022.64.2.2

Sandigan, A. (2018). Oral Communicative Competence of Filipino College Students: Levels, Correlates, and Characteristics. *International Journal of English and Literature, 3*(5), 264468. https://doi.org/10.22161/IJELS.3.5.15

Santi, E., Gorghiu, G., & Pribeanu, C. (2024). The relationship between intrinsic motivation, academic self-efficacy, learning engagement, and test anxiety, as perceived by university students. *Problems of Education in the 21st Century, 82*(6), 892–903. https://doi.org/10.33225/pec/24.82.892

Santos, A., Fernandez, V., & Ilustre, R. (2022). English language proficiency in the Philippines: An overview. *International Journal of English Language Studies, 4*(3), 46–51. https://doi.org/10.32996/ijels.2022.4.3.7

Saragih, T., & Subekti, A. (2024). Instrumental motivation and L2 speaking achievement of Indonesian L2 learners of English: A survey study. *Folios de Literatura e Idiomas, 60*, 128–140. https://doi.org/10.17227/folios.60-20073

Schatt, D., & Ryan, P. (2021). I am able to really listen. It's because of the stories. Increasing engagement and focus (pp. 15–38). *Palgrave Macmillan, Cham*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-65358-3_2

Separa, L., Generales, L., & Medina, R. (2020). Situational speaking difficulties of English second language learners in the Philippines. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies, 25*(1), 144–167. https://doi.org/10.22452/JATI.VOL25NO1.8

Shih, H. (2019). L2 anxiety, self-regulatory strategies, self-efficacy, intended effort, and academic

achievement: A structural equation modeling approach. *International Education Studies, 12*(3), 24–35. https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v12n3p24

Siahaan, A., Ardayati, A., & Ramasari, M. (2022). The importance of instrumental motivation among students in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) process. *Educafl: Journal of Education of English as a Foreign Language, 5*(1), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.educafl.2022.005.01.01

Smith, G. (2024). 'Listening to my readers': Exploring the 'Personal literacies landscapes' of beginner readers. *Global Studies of Childhood*. https://doi.org/10.1177/20436106241260888

Soriano, R., & Co, A. (2022). Voices from within: Students' lived experiences on English language anxiety. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education, 11(*1), 449. https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v11i1.21898

Teng, M. (2024). Understanding anxiety, self-efficacy, and motivation in online English learning. *TESL-EJ, 27*(4). https://doi.org/10.55593/ej.27108int

Wang, T. (2024). Analysis of the affective factors of high school struggling students' English learning based on affective filter hypothesis. *Journal of Education and Educational Research, 8*(2), 178–180. https://doi.org/10.54097/vep4rp21

Wu, X., Yang, H., Liu, J., & Liu, Z. (2022). English use anxiety, motivation, self-efficacy, and their predictive effects on Chinese top university students' English achievements. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.953600