

## Academic Help-Seeking and EFL Anxiety: A Correlational Study

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### Abstract

*This study investigates the correlation between academic help-seeking behavior and foreign language anxiety (FLA) among Indonesian EFL learners enrolled in Foreign Language for Specific Purposes (FLSP) classes. Using a quantitative correlational design, data were collected from 90 undergraduate students across four faculties through two validated instruments: the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and the Academic Help-Seeking Scale. Pearson's correlation revealed a significant negative relationship between academic help-seeking and FLA ( $r = -0.445, p < 0.05$ ), indicating learners who actively seek academic assistance experience lower levels of anxiety, particularly regarding fear of negative evaluation—the most dominant FLA dimension. These findings highlight academic help-seeking as a self-regulated learning strategy that mitigates affective barriers and enhances emotional resilience in language learning. Nonetheless, the study's cross-sectional design and limited sample size restrict generalizability. Future longitudinal and mixed-method studies are recommended to confirm causality and extend applicability across diverse educational context. Pedagogically, fostering supportive and collaborative classroom environments may encourage adaptive help-seeking and reduce anxiety, promoting greater learner autonomy and success in foreign language acquisition.*

**Keywords:** *academic help-seeking; EFL learner, foreign language anxiety.*

### INTRODUCTION

Within educational contexts, anxiety is recognized as a widespread phenomenon influencing learners across diverse disciplines (Borisova et al., 2024), including mathematics (Hembree, 1990), science (Mallow, 2006), and foreign languages (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014), with particular prominence in English as a foreign language learning (Bai, 2023). As a common phenomenon occurs in foreign language classroom, Botes et al. (2022) specifically mention the domain-specific form of anxiety that emerges in the process of learning a foreign language, especially in classroom settings, as Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA). In addition, they highlight that FLCA brings drawbacks to the foreign language learners learning process to acquire the target language learned. In EFL context, it infers that anxiety potentially affects EFL learner's learning development involving learner's performance, motivation, and confidence in acquiring English.

Furthermore, Bai (2023) points out that foreign language anxiety possibly fails the information entering process into EFL learners; therefore, it becomes crucial issue in EFL classroom determining the success and failures of the EFL learners to acquire English. Taking into account this concern, a considerable number of EFL learners, particularly in Indonesia, actively seek support to alleviate anxiety associated with learning English, especially within classroom settings. This form of support is commonly referred to as academic help-seeking, which involves obtaining assistance from teachers, peers, learning

resources, and other educational support services. In addition, in recent years has the phenomenon of academic help-seeking become increasingly evident among Indonesian learners of English as a foreign language (Winni et al., 2023; Hikma et al., 2022; Averina & Kuswandono, 2022; Lubis et al., 2018).

Specifically, Winnie et al. (2023) note that Indonesian high school graduates aspiring to pursue studies abroad often face challenges in communicating in English. Consequently, many of these students engage in English language courses or undertake self-directed improvement efforts to better equip themselves for the linguistic demands of university study. Furthermore, Lubis et al. (2018) present an insightful account of Indonesian students describing effective strategies for learning English. Their findings indicate that students demonstrate greater efficacy and heightened motivation when actively participating in English competitions or contests. Such improvement is attributed to the additional assistance and targeted guidance provided during preparation, which enables learners to enhance their skills and perform successfully in these events. Therefore, Averina & Kuswandono (2022) and Hikma et al. (2022) highlight academic help-seeking for Indonesian EFL learners play a crucial role in fostering their academic persistence, enabling them to address learning challenges, and encouraging active engagement in their educational process.

Concerning the growing phenomenon of academic help-seeking among Indonesian EFL learners, recent observations indicate an escalation of both academic and psychological pressures experienced by these learners in their efforts to acquire English within their respective learning environments. Abrar et al. (2016) revealed that the majority of EFL students enrolled in an English teacher education program at a public university in Jambi, Indonesia, experienced high levels of anxiety when participating in speaking activities. Further, Marlia et al. (2023) identified two primary sources of speaking anxiety: linguistic factors—such as inadequate pronunciation, limited vocabulary, and difficulty generating ideas—and non-linguistic factors, including low self-confidence, insufficient preparation, shyness toward peers, and fear of ridicule.

Referring to Marlia et al. (2023) findings, it can be noted that psychological pressures associated with non-linguistic factors were found to significantly contribute to learners' anxiety, ultimately hindering their ability to acquire English fluently. Consequently, such challenges often prompt Indonesian EFL learners to seek academic assistance aimed at addressing both their language learning difficulties and the anxiety that accompanies them. In other words, it implies that there is a potential relationship between psychological factors, such as anxiety, and academic help-seeking; however, empirical research addressing this specific linkage remains limited as most studies investigate the factors and effects of FLA in either students' perspective or teacher's perspective. Therefore, this study is organized to address the underexplored relationship between academic help-seeking and Indonesian EFL anxiety, filling both a theoretical gap (linking two psychological and behavioral constructs) and a practical gap (guiding intervention strategies).

Grounded in the theoretical frameworks of affective learning and self-regulated learning, this study highlights to examine the correlation between academic help-seeking behavior and foreign language anxiety among EFL learners. Academic help-seeking, as an adaptive and socially oriented learning strategy, reflects learners' proactive engagement in resolving academic challenges through interaction with peers and teachers. Conversely, foreign language anxiety is frequently characterized as a debilitating affective factor that can impede learners' linguistic performance, motivation, and self-efficacy. Understanding the interaction between these two constructs is crucial for informing pedagogical practices that promote emotional regulation and academic resilience in language learning contexts. Accordingly, this study is guided by the following overarching research questions: What is

the correlation between academic help-seeking behavior and foreign language anxiety among EFL learners?

Based on the above research questions, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: There is significant negative correlation between academic help-seeking behavior and foreign language anxiety; that is, learners who exhibit higher levels of academic help-seeking behavior are likely to experience lower levels of anxiety in foreign language learning contexts. In addition, this study is designed to uncover the extent to which help-seeking can serve as a protective mechanism against the negative emotions often associated with learning a foreign language, including stress, nervousness, and fear of negative evaluation. By examining this correlation, the study is expected to provide valuable insights into how learners' academic behaviors influence their emotional experiences and overall success in acquiring a second or foreign language.

### **Foreign Language Anxiety**

Foreign language anxiety (FLA) has long been recognized as one of the most significant affective variables influencing language learning outcomes. Research consistently shows that heightened levels of anxiety negatively affect learners' motivation, confidence, and overall performance in foreign language classrooms. Zhang (2019), for instance, reported a negative correlation between FLA and language performance, indicating that students with higher levels of anxiety tend to achieve lower results in their foreign language learning. Similarly, Tuncer (2016) found that FLA was positively predicted by academic self-efficacy beliefs, suggesting that students' confidence in their own academic abilities plays a critical role in how they experience and manage anxiety in language learning contexts.

Prior research has consistently shown that language anxiety negatively affects EFL learners' performance. Research by Arifin and Manda (2021) reported a strong negative correlation between speaking anxiety and speaking performance among Indonesian high school students. They further identified low proficiency, fear of negative feedback, and low motivation as key contributors to anxiety, suggesting that supportive learning environments and collaborative tasks can mitigate these effects. Handayani and Ngadiman (2018) also reported a strong negative correlation between speaking anxiety and speaking performance, indicating that heightened anxiety tends to impair learners' accuracy, fluency, and comprehensibility. Such findings highlight the importance of developing support mechanisms, like academic help-seeking, to help learners regulate anxiety and enhance performance.

Other studies have highlighted specific contributing factors to FLA. Chen (2004) identified English learning difficulties as a major predictor, showing that these difficulties accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in learners' anxiety levels. In addition, Noormohamadi (2009) discovered that high-anxious learners reported using language learning strategies less frequently compared to low-anxious learners, which further exacerbates their struggles with language acquisition. Collectively, these findings indicate that FLA is not only a psychological phenomenon but also one with clear behavioral and cognitive implications for how students approach learning.

Moreover, several studies have emphasized the broader impact of FLA on learners' academic experiences. Luo (2013), Mzeil and Ahmad (2013), and Lileikienė and Danilevičienė (2016) all noted that FLA is a powerful predictor of demotivation and often leads to significant complications in language acquisition. Students experiencing high levels of stress, nervousness, or fear of failure tend to avoid communication opportunities, withdraw from classroom interactions, and demonstrate reduced persistence in the learning process. This highlights the necessity of exploring interventions that can reduce FLA, thus fostering more effective and sustainable language learning outcomes.

### **Academic Help-Seeking**

In parallel, academic help-seeking has been increasingly recognized as a vital self-regulated learning strategy. It refers to students' proactive efforts to seek assistance from teachers, peers, educational resources, and institutional support services when they encounter academic challenges. Far from being a sign of weakness, academic help-seeking reflects an adaptive behavior that contributes to problem-solving and learning success. Research has shown that the frequency of academic help-seeking is positively correlated with academic achievement, as students who seek help are better able to manage difficulties and enhance their academic outcomes (Martín-Arbós, Castarlenas, & Dueñas, 2021; Li, Che Hassan, & Saharuddin, 2023).

Despite its importance, the connection between academic help-seeking and foreign language anxiety has not been extensively studied. While FLA has been well-documented as an obstacle to language acquisition, relatively little attention has been given to how students' willingness or reluctance to seek academic assistance interacts with their levels of anxiety. This research therefore seeks to address this gap by examining the correlation between FLA and academic help-seeking behaviors, with the aim of understanding whether encouraging students to seek help could potentially reduce anxiety and support more effective language learning.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the correlation between academic help-seeking behavior and foreign language anxiety among undergraduate students. The correlational design was deemed appropriate because it allows for identifying the direction and magnitude of statistical associations between psychological and behavioral constructs within a natural educational setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Ary et al., 2019; Fraenkel, 2019). Through this design, the study sought to provide empirical insights into how students' help-seeking strategies relate to affective variables influencing their foreign language experiences.

### **Respondents**

The respondents of this study consisted of 90 undergraduate students enrolled in Foreign Language for Specific Purposes (FLSP) classes across four faculties: Engineering, Health Science, Social and Political Science, and Law. The sample included 42 female students and 48 male students, aged between 17 to 21 years. The diversity of faculties provided a broader representation of students with varying academic backgrounds, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship under investigation. The sampling method employed in this study was accidental sampling, in which participants were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate. This method was suitable given the accessibility of the target population and the exploratory nature of the research.

### **Instruments**

Two validated instruments were utilized to collect data. The first was the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) adapted from Al-Tamimi (2016), which consists of 35 items designed to measure three dimensions of foreign language anxiety: fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test anxiety. The second instrument was the Academic Help-Seeking Scale adapted from Syafitri (2018), which includes 33 items assessing students' tendencies to seek academic support from peers, teachers, or other sources. Both instruments employed a four-point Likert-type scale in which responses were coded as 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Agree), and 4 (Strongly Agree), providing

a quantitative basis for assessing participants' foreign language anxiety and help-seeking tendencies.

To ensure the instrument, a pilot test was conducted with a small group of students from a similar population. The normality test results indicated p-values of 0.20 and 0.09, indicating that the data were normally distributed. As a result, correlational analysis was deemed appropriate for answering the research question and testing the relationship between academic help-seeking and foreign language anxiety.

## **Procedures**

The data procedure was implemented through a series of systematically organized phases, encompassing preparation, instrument validation, participant recruitment, data collection, and data analysis and interpretation. Each phase was designed to ensure transparency, replicability, and compliance with ethical research standards.

### ***Preparation Phase***

The study began with an extensive literature review to establish a theoretical foundation and identify empirical gaps concerning FLA and academic help-seeking in Indonesian EFL contexts. This informed the conceptual framework and research hypothesis, which proposed a negative correlation between the two constructs. Ethical clearance was subsequently obtained from the participating university's institutional review board. All research activities were conducted in accordance with ethical principles of the American Psychological Association (APA, 7th edition).

### ***Instrument Adaptation and Validation***

Following expert consultation, both the FLCAS and AHSS were adapted and pilot-tested to ensure contextual suitability. Feedback obtained during the pilot stage was used to refine wording and ensure cultural relevance. Statistical reliability and distributional properties were verified through reliability testing and normality assessment, confirming both instruments' adequacy for full-scale deployment.

### ***Data Collection***

Data were gathered over a four-week period through an online survey distributed via Google Forms. This format ensured convenience and accessibility particularly given students varied academic schedules. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: (a) demographic information, (b) FLCAS items, and (c) AHSS items. Instructions were provided at the beginning of the form to guide participants in responding accurately. All responses were automatically stored in a secure digital database, accessible only to the researchers. The dataset was subsequently screened for completeness and accuracy, and duplicate or incomplete responses were excluded.

## **Data Analysis**

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques through SPSS version 25. The analysis process involves multiple steps to ensure statistical rigor and interpretative data. Steps included are data screening and assumption testing, descriptive statistical analysis, inferential statistical analysis, exploratory dimension-level analysis, and results interpretation.

### ***Data Screening and Assumption Testing***

Preliminary data screening was conducted to identify missing values, outliers, and data entry errors. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test confirmed normal distribution for both variables ( $p > .05$ ), validating the use of parametric tests. Linearity and homoscedasticity

assumptions were also verified through scatterplot inspection and residual analysis, confirming suitability for correlation analysis.

**Descriptive Statistical Analysis**

Descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, and range, were calculated for both the academic help-seeking and foreign language anxiety variables. Frequency distributions were used to summarize demographic characteristics such as gender, age, and faculty affiliation. The mean score for academic help-seeking ( $M = 88.82$ ,  $SD = 5.24$ ) indicated a moderately high level of help-seeking behavior, while the mean score for FLA ( $M = 86.39$ ,  $SD = (.23)$ ) reflected a moderate degree of anxiety.

**Inferential Statistical Analysis**

To test the main hypothesis, a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was applied to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between academic help-seeking and foreign language anxiety. The analysis yielded a moderate negative correlation ( $r = -0.445$ ,  $p = .000$ ), indicating that students who engaged more frequently in academic help-seeking reported lower levels of anxiety. This finding supports theoretical assumption that adaptive help-seeking functions as a self-regulatory strategy capable of mitigating affective barriers in language learning.

**Exploratory Dimension-Level Analysis**

An additional analysis examined the subdimensions of FLA (communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation). Among these, fear of anxiety was primarily social rather than evaluative or task-based. This insight provided contextual depth to the interpretation of the correlation results and informed the subsequent discussion and pedagogical implications.

**Results Interpretation**

The results were interpreted in relation to prior literature, highlighting both consistencies and departures from existing findings. Correlational coefficients were interpreted using Cohen’s (1988) classification as cited in Schober et al. (2021) identifying the relationship as moderate in strength. The findings were then synthesized into broader theoretical implications linking affective and behavioral constructs within the framework of self-regulated learning.

**RESULTS**

**Description of Respondents’ Characteristics**

This study involved 90 participants with various characteristics. The description of respondents’ characteristics was tested using a frequency distribution test, with the results as follows.

Table 1. Description of Respondents’ Characteristics

No	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Faculty			
1	Engineering	50	55.6%
2	Health Science	6	6.7%
3	Social and Political Sciences	12	13.3%
4	Law	22	24.4%
Age			
1	17 years	1	1.1%
2	18 years	57	63.3%
3	19 years	24	26.7%
4	>20 years	8	8.9%
Gender			

1	Male	48	53.3%
2	Female	42	46.7%
Total		90	100.0%

The results show that most respondents came from the Faculty of Engineering, totaling 50 people or 55.6%. In terms of age, the majority were 18 years old, totaling 57 people or 63.3%. Based on gender, the number of male and female respondents was relatively balanced.

### Description of Research Variables

This study examined two primary variables, namely academic help-seeking and foreign language anxiety. The descriptive analysis was conducted to provide an overview of participants' responses for each variable. The data were summarized using frequency distributions, as well as mean and standard deviation, in order to capture both the general trends and the variability of the participants' perceptions and experiences. The descriptive results for each variable are presented as follows.

Table 2. Overall Description of Variables

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Academic Help-seeking	90	88.82	5.235	77	102
Foreign Language Anxiety	90	86.39	9.238	65	115

Table 2. presents the descriptive statistics for the two main variables investigated in this study; academic help-seeking and foreign language anxiety. The analysis includes the mean scores, standard deviations, and frequency distributions derived from participants' response on each scale. These descriptive measures provide an initial overview of the overall trends and variations in students' levels of help-seeking behavior and language anxiety.

The results indicate that the mean score for academic help-seeking behavior was  $M = 88.82$  with a standard deviation of  $SD = 5.235$ , with scores ranging from 77 to 102. This finding indicates that, on average, the students demonstrated a moderately high level of help-seeking behavior, suggesting a generally positive tendency to seek academic assistance from peers and instructors when encountering learning difficulties.

Meanwhile, the foreign language anxiety variable yielded a mean score of 86.39 ( $SD = 9.238$ ), with observed scores ranging from 65 and 115. These results suggest that participants experienced a moderate degree of anxiety in foreign language learning contexts, reflecting the presence of affective challenges such as communication apprehension, test-related stress, and fear of negative evaluation.

Overall, the descriptive findings highlight a noticeable distinction between the two variables, implying that while students are inclined to seek academic support, they concurrently experience moderate levels of anxiety in language learning situations. This descriptive trend provides a preliminary indication of a potential inverse relationship between academic help-seeking behavior and foreign language anxiety, which is examined further in the correlational analysis presented in the following section.

Table 3. Distribution of Items for Academic Help-Seeking Variable

No	Statement	Percentage (%)				Mean
		SD	D	A	SA	
1	When I ask my lecturer for help, I prefer to be given an explanation or guidance rather than just the answer.	1.1	6.7	71.1	21.1	3.12
2	When I ask my lecturer for help in class, I prefer that the lecturer does the work for me rather than explain how to solve it.	10.0	60.0	26.7	3.3	2.23
3	I do not ask for help in class even though the task is too difficult for me to complete on my own.	21.1	65.6	12.2	1.1	1.93

No	Statement	Percentage (%)				Mean
		SD	D	A	SA	
4	I like asking questions in class.	4.4	15.6	70.0	10.0	2.86
5	When I encounter difficulties and ask my lecturer for help, I want to be given an example of a similar problem that has been explained.	0.0	5.6	71.1	23.3	3.18
6	When I ask my lecturer for help with something I don't understand, I prefer the lecturer to do it for me.	4.4	50.0	38.9	6.7	2.48
7	If I need help with an English assignment, I would rather skip it than ask for help.	20.0	65.6	11.1	3.3	1.98
8	I feel smart when I ask questions in class.	15.6	58.9	23.3	2.2	2.12
9	When I ask my lecturer for help with something I don't understand, I want the lecturer to explain it to me rather than just give me the answer.	1.1	6.7	68.9	23.3	3.14
10	When I ask my lecturer for help with something I don't understand, I prefer the lecturer to give me the answer rather than explain it.	7.8	67.8	22.2	2.2	2.19
11	I do not ask for help in class even when I don't understand the lesson.	21.1	62.2	14.4	2.2	1.98
12	Asking questions makes the class more interesting for me.	2.2	12.2	68.9	16.7	3.00
13	When I ask my lecturer for help in class, I only want as much help as necessary, then I finish the work myself.	0.0	11.1	78.9	10.0	2.99
14	When I ask my lecturer for help with my work, I prefer to be given the answer rather than an explanation of how to do the work myself.	7.8	67.8	21.1	3.3	2.20
15	If I don't understand something in class, I will guess rather than ask someone for help.	12.2	54.4	28.9	4.4	2.26
16	I want to ask for help in class because it helps me understand English better.	1.1	3.3	66.7	28.9	3.23
17	When I ask my lecturer to help me understand the material in class, I prefer that the lecturer help me understand the general idea rather than just tell me the answer.	0.0	6.7	77.8	15.6	3.09
18	When I ask my lecturer for help, I want the lecturer to do the task for me rather than help me complete it myself.	16.7	56.7	25.6	1.1	2.11
19	I would rather get a bad grade on a difficult task I completed on my own than ask for help in class.	14.4	63.3	18.9	3.3	2.11
20	I believe asking questions in class can help me learn.	1.1	4.4	64.4	30.0	3.23
21	When I ask another student for help with an English assignment, I do not want the student to give me the entire answer.	3.3	25.6	64.4	6.7	2.74
22	When I ask another student for help with something I don't understand, I prefer the student to give me the answer rather than explain it.	11.1	66.7	16.7	5.6	2.17
23	Even if the work is too difficult to do on my own, I will not ask for help in class.	18.9	57.8	14.4	8.9	2.13
24	When I ask another student to help me understand the material in class, I prefer the student to help me understand the general idea rather than just tell me the answer.	0.0	6.7	75.6	17.8	3.11
25	When I ask another student for help with my task or work, I prefer the student to do the work for me rather than explain how to do it.	12.2	67.8	18.9	1.1	2.09
26	I will write down any answer rather than ask for help in class.	11.1	66.7	18.9	3.3	2.14
27	I want to ask for help in class because it can help me understand the topic more completely.	1.1	3.3	67.8	27.8	3.22
28	When I ask another student for help in class, I want to be helped to complete my work myself rather than the student doing the work for me.	1.1	13.3	67.8	17.8	3.02
29	When I ask another student for help with something I don't understand, I ask the student to do it for me.	14.4	62.2	21.1	2.2	2.11
30	I do not ask questions in class even if I do not understand the material.	15.6	62.2	21.1	1.1	2.08
31	When I ask another student for help in class, I prefer to be given	1.1	2.2	77.8	18.9	3.14

No	Statement	Percentage (%)				Mean
		SD	D	A	SA	
	an explanation or guidance rather than just the answer.					
32	When I ask another student for help in class, I want the task or work to be done for me rather than being helped to complete it myself.	11.1	57.8	30.0	1.1	2.21
33	If a classroom task is too difficult, I prefer not to do it rather than ask for help.	27.8	54.4	17.8	0.0	1.90
34	When I ask another student for help with something I don't understand, I want the student to explain it to me rather than just give me the answer.	1.1	4.4	72.2	22.2	3.16
35	When I ask another student for help with my assignment, I prefer to be given the answer rather than an explanation of how to do it myself.	12.2	58.9	27.8	1.1	2.18
Academic Help-seeking						2.54

The distribution results of the academic help-seeking variable, which comprised 35 items, showed an overall mean score of 2.54, indicating a low level of academic help-seeking behavior among the respondents. This indicates that respondents were less likely to seek academic assistance when facing learning challenges, whether from peers, lecturers, or other available resources. Such a low average score reflects a limited tendency among students to engage in proactive help-seeking strategies, which may be influenced by factors such as self-reliance, fear of judgement, or lack of awareness regarding the benefits of collaborative learning support.

**Table 4. Distribution of Items for Foreign Language Anxiety Variable**

No	Statement	Percentage (%)				Mean
		SD	D	A	SA	
1	I feel confident when speaking in my English class.	5.6	34.4	55.6	4.4	2.59
2	I worry about making mistakes in my English class.	2.2	27.8	56.7	13.3	2.81
3	I tremble when I know that I will be called on in English class.	7.8	37.8	46.7	7.8	2.54
4	I am afraid when I do not understand what the teacher is saying in English class.	3.3	18.9	65.6	12.2	2.87
5	It does not bother me to take more English classes.	1.1	26.7	63.3	8.9	2.80
6	I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the lesson during English class.	5.6	58.9	33.3	2.2	2.32
7	I keep thinking that other students are better at English than I am.	2.2	21.1	58.9	17.8	2.92
8	I usually feel at ease during tests in my English class.	5.6	55.6	35.6	3.3	2.37
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.	3.3	23.3	56.7	16.7	2.87
10	I worry about the consequences of failing my English class.	3.3	17.8	63.3	15.6	2.91
11	I can understand why some people get so upset over English classes.	6.7	33.3	52.2	7.8	2.61
12	In English class, I can get so nervous that I forget things I know.	1.1	23.3	63.3	12.2	2.87
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class.	7.8	65.6	24.4	2.2	2.21
14	I would feel nervous speaking English with native speakers.	2.2	30.0	58.9	8.9	2.74
15	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	4.4	33.3	58.9	3.3	2.61
16	Even if I am well prepared for English class, I feel anxious about it.	4.4	44.4	47.8	3.3	2.50
17	I often feel like not going to my English class.	17.8	67.8	13.3	1.1	1.98
18	I don't feel comfortable speaking in my foreign language class.	4.4	68.9	24.4	2.2	2.24
19	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	15.6	58.9	23.3	2.2	2.12

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20	I can feel my heart pounding when I am going to be called on in my foreign language class.	3.3	35.6	53.3	7.8	2.66
21	The more I study for an English test, the more confused I get.	11.1	47.8	35.6	5.6	2.36
22	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for English class.	4.4	16.7	67.8	11.1	2.86
23	I always feel that other students speak English better than I do.	2.2	16.7	64.4	16.7	2.96
24	I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	2.2	28.9	54.4	14.4	2.81
25	English class moves so quickly that I worry about getting left behind.	1.1	44.4	45.6	8.9	2.62
26	I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes.	6.7	57.8	31.1	4.4	2.33
27	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class.	3.3	34.4	55.6	6.7	2.66
28	When I am on my way to English class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	2.2	24.4	66.7	6.7	2.78
29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says.	2.2	24.4	64.4	8.9	2.80
30	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.	5.6	63.3	27.8	3.3	2.29
31	I am afraid that other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	4.4	35.6	43.3	16.7	2.72
32	I would probably feel comfortable around native English speakers.	1.1	34.4	61.1	3.3	2.67
33	I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions I haven't prepared in advance.	1.1	17.8	61.1	20.0	3.00
Foreign Language Anxiety						2.62

Similarly, the descriptive analysis of the foreign language anxiety variable, consisting of 33 items, yielded an overall mean score of 2.62, which also falls into a low degree of anxiety in their foreign language learning contexts. The relatively low level of anxiety may reflect students' increasing familiarity with the language learning process, exposure to communicative classroom tasks, and the existence of supporting learning environments that help alleviate apprehension, nervousness, and fear of negative evaluation. Taken together, these descriptive findings suggest that while students in this study tend to report low levels of both anxiety and help-seeking behavior, these patterns reveal a potentially complex dynamic between emotional and behavioral aspects of learning. This relationship is further examined through correlational analysis, as presented in the following section.

### Normality Test

The normality test was conducted to determine whether the research data were normally distributed. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used, with the results as follows.

Table 5. Normality Test Results

Variable	p	Requirement	Description
Academic Help-seeking	0.200	>0.05	Normal
Foreign Language Anxiety	0.090	>0.05	Normal

The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test show that the significance values (p) for both academic help-seeking and foreign language anxiety exceeded the threshold of 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ), 0.20 and 0.09 accordingly. This finding confirm that the data for both variables were normally distributed, thereby satisfying one of the key assumptions required for conducting parametric statistical analyses, such as Pearson product-moment

correlation.

### Correlation Test

The correlation test was conducted to examine the relationship between the two variables: academic help-seeking and foreign language anxiety. The Pearson correlation test was used, with the following results.

Table 6. Pearson Correlation Test Results

Variable	r	p	Description
Academic Help-seeking	-0.445	0.000	Significant
Foreign Language Anxiety			

The results of the Pearson product-moment correlation analysis revealed a moderate negative correlation between academic help-seeking behavior and foreign language anxiety, with correlation coefficient of  $(r) = -0.445$ , and a significant value of  $p = 0.000$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). This finding indicates a statistically significant inverse relationship between the two variables, suggesting that students who demonstrate a higher tendency to seek academic assistance tend to experience lower levels of anxiety in foreign language learning contexts. In other words, active engagement in help-seeking behaviors appears to function as a protective factor that mitigate affective barriers such; fear of negative evaluation, apprehension, and communication-related anxiety.

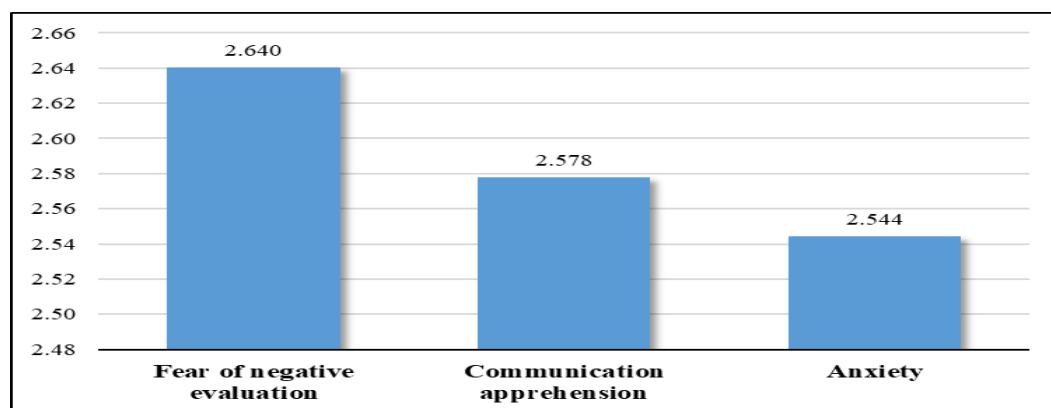


Figure 1. Dimensions of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety and Their Mean Scores

Moreover, the findings revealed that among the dimensions of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCAS), fear of negative evaluation recorded the highest mean score ( $M = 2.64$ ), indicating that students were particularly concerned about how they were perceived by others during language learning activities. On the other hand, test anxiety emerged the lowest-scoring dimension, suggesting that evaluative judgement from peers or lecturers induced greater anxiety than formal assessment.

### DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm that academic help-seeking, when conceptualized within the framework of self-regulated learning, constitutes a pivotal factor in shaping students' affective experiences in foreign language classrooms. Defined as a proactive social strategy, academic help-seeking involves students' efforts to engage classmates, teachers, and even parents to obtain guidance, clarification, and support in overcoming learning difficulties (Karabenick & Berger, 2013; Nelson-Le Gal, 1981; Zimmerman, 2008; Newman, 1990). Rather than reflecting dependency or weakness, such

behavior highlights learner autonomy and responsibility in navigating academic challenges. The present study extends this perspective by demonstrating that help-seeking is not only a cognitive and behavioral strategy but also an effective tool for mitigating the affective barriers that students face in language learning.

Further, Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) has long been recognized as one of the most pervasive obstacles in second and foreign language acquisition. It is associated with stress, nervousness, and lack of confidence, all of which negatively influence students' classroom participation and performance (Luo, 2013; Mzeil & Ahmad, 2013; Lileikienė & Danilevičienė, 2016). The current findings resonate with previous research identifying FLA as a major affective barrier in language learning (Zhang, 2019; Luo, 2013; Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014), reinforcing that high levels of anxiety can hinder motivation and impede linguistic development. Among the three dimensions of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), the fear of negative evaluation emerged as the most dominant factor, indicating that students are particularly concerned about how they are perceived by peers and instructors. This finding suggests that social judgment exerts a stronger psychological influence on learners compared to communication apprehension or test anxiety, which appeared less prominent.

The present study empirically demonstrated a significant negative correlation between academic help-seeking behavior and foreign language anxiety among Indonesian EFL learners. This association indicates that students who more actively seek academic assistance tend to experience lower levels of anxiety in their language learning processes. Situated within the framework of self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 2008; Karabenick & Berger, 2013), this finding reinforces the notion that academic help-seeking represents a proactive and adaptive learning strategy rather than a compensatory response to failure. It serves both cognitive and affective functions—facilitating comprehension while simultaneously mitigating emotional distress. Hence, help-seeking can be viewed as a form of emotional regulation that enhances academic resilience and promotes sustained learner engagement.

This finding is consistent with prior evidence by Alrabai (2015), Huang (2010), and Toyama (2021), who reported that students who actively seek academic support tend to exhibit lower levels of language-related anxiety. However, while previous studies primarily emphasized teacher-directed help-seeking, the present research broadens this perspective by incorporating assistance sought from peers and other sources, underscoring that collaborative learning interactions can equally contribute to anxiety reduction. The broader implication is that encouraging help-seeking behavior not only enhances students' comprehension and skill development but also strengthens their emotional resilience—an essential yet often neglected element in maintaining motivation throughout the language learning process.

The current study's finding that help-seeking behavior was inversely related to EFL anxiety aligns with Handayani and Ngadiman's (2018) report that anxiety strongly and negatively correlates with speaking performance. This consistency reinforces the notion that anxiety undermines learners' communicative competence, and that active coping strategies, such as seeking help from teachers or peers, can mitigate these effects. Furthermore, the present results expand on Botes et al. (2022) and Bai (2023), who underscored the cognitive and emotional dimensions of anxiety in language learning, by identifying help-seeking as a behavioral mediator linking these two domains. The prominence of fear of negative evaluation among participants also mirrors Marlia et al. (2023), who found that Indonesian learners' anxiety is socially constructed—rooted in concerns about peer judgment and classroom perception.

Importantly, this study advances the discussion by demonstrating that academic help-seeking may moderate the negative effects of anxiety—an aspect underexplored in prior research. While earlier studies (Chen & Chang, 2004; Mzeil & Ahmad, 2013)

emphasized the detrimental impact of anxiety without identifying behavioral countermeasures, the present findings highlight help-seeking as a viable pathway for anxiety alleviation. This aligns with Li, Che Hassan, and Saharuddin (2023), who reported that help-seeking enhances academic outcomes, and extends their conclusion by showing that such behaviors can also reduce affective tension in EFL contexts. Similarly, Kurniawan (2023) found that non-EFL students employed spontaneous, self-regulated techniques such as visual aids, intonation control, and positive body language to alleviate speaking anxiety. These findings collectively suggest that anxiety can be reduced through proactive and adaptive coping strategies, which parallels the concept of academic help-seeking as a self-regulated mechanism for managing EFL learning challenges.

The findings also lend empirical support to the study's initial hypothesis, which predicted an inverse relationship between help-seeking behavior and foreign language anxiety. The results confirm that students who demonstrate higher levels of help-seeking are less likely to report debilitating anxiety, implying that self-regulated learners are better equipped to cope with emotional barriers. Nevertheless, alternative interpretations should be considered. For instance, it is possible that students with lower anxiety levels are inherently more willing to seek help, suggesting a bidirectional rather than purely causal relationship. Future longitudinal or experimental studies could further clarify this directionality.

From a pedagogical standpoint, these findings carry important implications. Teachers should actively encourage students to ask questions and seek clarification, thereby normalizing help-seeking as a positive and expected behavior. Creating an open and supportive classroom climate can reduce students' fear of negative evaluation, as peer collaboration and mutual assistance become integral to the learning process. Moreover, integrating structured help-seeking activities—such as peer mentoring, collaborative problem-solving, or reflective learning logs—may serve as practical interventions to decrease anxiety and improve both affective and cognitive outcomes. Despite these valuable contributions, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design limits causal inference; while the negative correlation between help-seeking and FLA is evident, the directionality remains inconclusive. Second, the sample size and scope—restricted to 90 undergraduates from a single institution—may constrain the generalizability of the findings across diverse educational, linguistic, and cultural contexts. Third, reliance on self-reported data introduces potential biases, including social desirability and inaccurate self-assessment, which may have influenced participants' responses.

To strengthen the robustness and transferability of future research, several directions are proposed. Longitudinal studies could trace the evolution of help-seeking and anxiety dynamics over extended learning trajectories to ascertain causal pathways. Mixed-methods approaches, combining quantitative measurement with qualitative inquiry through interviews or classroom observations, could yield more nuanced insights into the emotional and interpersonal dimensions of help-seeking. Cross-cultural comparative studies are also essential to uncover how sociocultural norms, educational values, and classroom hierarchies influence learners' willingness to seek academic assistance. Finally, intervention-based research integrating help-seeking skills training or peer-support frameworks could empirically test the practical efficacy of such strategies in reducing anxiety and enhancing communicative confidence.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings suggest that students who actively seek academic assistance are more likely to experience reduced levels of anxiety in language learning contexts. Academic help-seeking, understood as a self-regulated learning strategy, enables learners to utilize support from teachers, peers, and other resources to overcome learning obstacles. On the other

hand, foreign language anxiety; as characterized by nervousness, stress, and fear of negative evaluation; can undermine students' motivation, confidence, and overall success in acquiring a new language. The results underscore the importance of integrating support mechanisms into language classrooms to empower students to engage more confidently in the learning process. By promoting help-seeking as a constructive behavior rather than a sign of weakness, educators can contribute to lowering classroom anxiety and fostering greater learner autonomy, ultimately leading to more effective language learning outcomes. This underscores the dual function of help-seeking as both a self-regulated learning strategy and a psychological coping mechanism that facilitates emotional regulation, enhances learner confidence, and optimizes language performance. Consequently, academic help-seeking should be recognized not merely as a remedial behavior but as an adaptive strategy integral to fostering resilience and sustained engagement in foreign language learning.

The principal novelty of this study lies in its empirical integration of two underexplored dimensions of language learning, academic help-seeking and foreign language anxiety, within the Indonesian EFL context. Whereas previous scholarship has predominantly investigated affective and behavioral constructs in isolation, the present study bridges these domains by illustrating how self-regulated behavioral engagement can mitigate affective barriers to language acquisition. This interdisciplinary linkage contributes original insight to the broader discourse in applied linguistics and educational psychology, advancing theoretical understanding of how learners' adaptive behaviors mediate emotional well-being and academic outcomes.

Notwithstanding its contributions, several limitations merit consideration. First, the study's cross-sectional design restricts causal inference, as it captures relationships at a single point in time. Longitudinal investigations are therefore recommended to elucidate the dynamic, reciprocal influences between help-seeking tendencies and anxiety regulation over extended learning trajectories. Second, the sample size—comprising 90 undergraduate students from a single institution—may limit the generalizability of the findings to wider EFL populations with differing cultural, institutional, or linguistic backgrounds. Third, the use of self-report instruments introduces potential social desirability and response biases, which may not fully capture learners' authentic emotional and behavioral experiences.

To address the above-mentioned constraints, future research should adopt mixed-method or multi-institutional approaches, incorporating qualitative interviews or classroom observations to triangulate and enrich quantitative findings. In addition, it would be valuable to explore the impact of specific instructional strategies or classroom practices on reducing foreign language anxiety and enhancing help-seeking behaviors. Longitudinal studies could also provide deeper insights into how these two variables interact over time and influence learners' long-term proficiency and confidence. Finally, expanding research to include diverse educational contexts and proficiency levels would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how academic help-seeking can serve as a protective factor against the challenges posed by foreign language anxiety.

Based on these findings, several practical and research-oriented suggestions can be offered. First, language instructors should create a supportive classroom environment in which asking for help is normalized and encouraged, reducing the stigma often associated with help-seeking behavior. Second, integrating structured opportunities for peer collaboration and teacher feedback can provide students with multiple avenues for obtaining assistance, thereby alleviating feelings of isolation or fear of judgment. Third, institutions may consider implementing intervention programs, such as workshops on anxiety management or help-seeking strategies, to strengthen students' coping mechanisms in language learning. Last but not least, theoretically, this study contributes to a growing body of literature affirming that affective and behavioral dimensions of learning are not mutually exclusive but mutually reinforcing, offering a nuanced, integrative framework for understanding the emotional ecology of second language acquisition.

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