

Lexical Sesquipedaliophobia among Higher Education Students in Region Xi: A Convergent Mixed Methods Investigation

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Abstract

Lexical sesquipedaliophobia, or anxiety toward long and complex vocabulary, remains an underexplored affective barrier in higher education despite its influence on students' communication, assessment performance, and academic confidence. Addressing this gap, the present study investigated the extent and nature of lexical sesquipedaliophobia among higher education students in Region XI, Philippines. Specifically, the study aimed to determine the level of lexical sesquipedaliophobia among higher education students; examine variations across degree program, provincial classification, school type, and sex; and explore students' lived experiences both generally and within these contextual groupings. It further sought to assess the convergence or divergence between quantitative and qualitative findings and to develop an evidence-based intervention scheme grounded in the integrated results of the study. A convergent mixed methods design was employed. Quantitative data were collected from 330 students selected through stratified random sampling using an adapted survey questionnaire, while qualitative data were generated through purposive sampling involving 20 in-depth interview participants and 20 focus group discussants from eleven private higher education institutions in Region XI. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (mean, standard deviation, one-way ANOVA, and independent t-tests), whereas qualitative data underwent thematic analysis with a priori coding. Findings revealed a consistently high level of lexical sesquipedaliophobia, with statistically significant differences across all grouping variables. Qualitative results confirmed three core indicators—communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation—demonstrating how lexical complexity elicits anticipatory anxiety, avoidance behaviors, and negative self-perceptions. Integration of findings yielded a strong merging–confirmation pattern, underscoring the coherence of the results. The study concludes that lexical sesquipedaliophobia is a salient and systematically patterned affective concern in higher education. In response, an evidence-based intervention scheme titled, LEXI-CALM: Lexical Confidence and Anxiety-Lowering Modules for Academic Lengthy and Complex Word Use, is proposed to promote inclusive and anxiety-responsive language instruction.

Keywords: Applied linguistics, lexical sesquipedaliophobia, convergent mixed method, Davao Region, Philippines