

A Study on English Learning Anxiety of Local Normal College Students

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ABSTRACT

English learning anxiety refers to the learners' anxiety, tension, self-doubt and other subjective emotions produced in English learning, which is reflected in students' low evaluation of their English communicative ability. This paper investigates the English learning anxiety of 260 college students in Hubei Province by means of questionnaire. It is found that the overall level of English learning anxiety of college students is high, among which the main causes of anxiety are fear of negative evaluation, fear of communication, and lack of confidence in English, and communication fear is the strongest correlation with English learning anxiety. Therefore, this study finds out the degree and distribution of college students' English anxiety through investigation and research and gives corresponding countermeasures and suggestions to prepare for overcoming anxiety in future English learning.

Key words: college students; English; learning anxiety; local university

INTRODUCTION

English is not only an important course in the field of pedagogy, but also an important course in all non-English fields. For a long time, foreign language education has had two key points: language knowledge and language skills training. Although emotion and emotion are important factors affecting the intuition of foreign language learners, foreign language education studies always focus on the cognitive level of learners, but largely ignore the emotional level of learners. Numerous studies have demonstrated that emotional elements play a pivotal role in the process of language learning and acquisition. In the teaching of language, positive emotional affect helps to boost the effectiveness of the language teaching process. On the contrary, negative emotions will deal a blow to students' self-confidence, resulting in a kind of pressure accompanied by fear, that is, the so-called "anxiety". In the process of English learning, people have a very deep understanding of the negative emotions produced in the process of English learning. The related research on emotion focuses on a certain kind of emotion (Dewaele & Li, 2018; McIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). Due to the rise of the theory of positive psychology, the positive affective effect in English teaching has gradually attracted the attention of researchers. Macintyre & Vincze (2017) believes that attention should be paid to the influence of positive and negative emotions on language learning. Reve (2018) pointed out that positive emotion can enhance the cognitive ability of language learners and enhance their language learning ability.

The paper mainly consists of five aspects: introduction, literature review and research methods, which mainly introduces the problems of anxiety in English learning; data analysis, discussion and review. The first part focuses on a brief outline of the paper. The introduction contains the background of the study and

the meanings of the study. The second part is a literature review of the study of English learning anxiety among college students. The literature review primarily summarizes the definition of learning anxiety, the measurement of anxiety, and the factors influencing English learning anxiety at domestic and international levels. The third part is the research methodology, covering research questions, research participants, research instruments, and research procedures. We conducted an offline and online questionnaire survey on university students. The Fourth part is the dealing and analysis of the data. The last part is the conclusion and reflection of the survey.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on Anxiety

Anxiety is a major emotional factor in the process of foreign language learning. (Arnold, 2005) A phenomenon of language anxiety in the process of English teaching is very common, which has a negative impact on students. English learners in colleges and universities in China generally have high English learning anxiety. the reason is that there are some problems in Chinese college English education, such as a monotonous way of learning, a nervous and meticulous way of learning, a way of learning based on tests, a way of learning based on tests, an inefficient way of learning English at the cost of time, and so on. Therefore, it has become the focus of second language scholars to solve students' anxiety problems in the process of second language acquisition, so as to improve students' language ability and promote their language ability development.

It is only natural to worry. In life, everyone will experience all kinds of anxiety. The definition of "worry" in the dictionary: in "Cihai", "Anxiety" is interpreted as "worry" and "concern". The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary explains anxiety as: troubled feeling in the mind caused by fear and uncertainty about the future, meaning worry. In CCMD-3, "anxiety" is defined as a kind of pressure and pressure with neither specific goal nor specific content. This definition includes two aspects: tension and pressure; have no clear object and fixed content.

The psychoanalytic model believes that worry is a hint. This is another suppressed sex. Therefore, Freud, defined worry as a kind of pressure and fear generated by himself, but without specific reason or motivation: the object of worry is a kind of imperceptible influence, which is related to the loss of the understanding of one's own image.

Others also define the word "anxiety". Based on Sullivan's theory of "anxiety", Piplao defines "anxiety" as a kind of subjective and emotional experience such as "anxiety", "unease", "confusion" and so on. According to the theory of Beck, Rawlus, Williams and others, anxiety is regarded as a kind of psychological discomfort and discomfort, which can cause a series of physical discomfort. (Spielberger, May, Barry, etc.) that "anxiety" refers to a feeling of unhappiness, ambiguity, uncertainty and fear that people feel.

At present, the most popular definition of "anxiety" as a kind of psychological pressure caused by not realizing their expectations or overcoming the difficulties encountered. This paper holds that English learning anxiety is a specific psychological phenomenon related to their own cognition, belief, emotion and behavior in English teaching. It has been the common concern of English teachers and educators on how to better facilitate English teaching and learning. A survey shows that students' anxiety has a great impact on academic achievement. Therefore, many people begin to pay attention to the relationship between anxiety and achievement in English learning. Through a questionnaire survey, Zhu (2012) analyzed the English anxiety of non-English master's degree students. The findings indicated that there was a marked negative correlation between the proficiency in English listening and the students' listening abilities. Yao (2013) divides students' anxiety about English into four aspects: communication anxiety, negative evaluation

anxiety, test anxiety and English classroom anxiety. The result revealed that there was a distinct negative correlation between them.

Measurement of Anxiety

Horwitz et al. (1986: 128) Defined foreign language learning anxiety as “learners’ unique and complex self-awareness, beliefs, emotions and behaviors related to classroom foreign language learning caused by the uniqueness of the foreign language learning process”. According to this concept, an English classroom anxiety scale is developed to measure the breadth and depth of English learning anxiety. The presence of anxiety scales in English classrooms signifies the emergence of students’ anxiety in the process of teaching English. In several years, an increasing number of scholars have discussed the phenomenon of English anxiety in ELT. (Ada 1994, Horwitz, 2001). However, in further research, it was found that the scale paid more attention to the anxiety caused by oral performance in the classroom. (Ada 1994 (d) (Zheng et al. 1999)). Relevant scholars have discussed English learning anxiety and language skill learning anxiety in English teaching and developed some questionnaires about English learning anxiety and language skill learning anxiety.

So are they, Saito. The Foreign language Reading anxiety scale (1999) has been developed. Cheng (2004) developed the second language Writing anxiety scale (SLWAI) and studied it. Elkhafafi (2005) compiled the Foreign language listening anxiety scale according to Saito’s Foreign language Reading anxiety scale, and compared and analyzed it. The findings indicated that students’ reading anxiety, writing anxiety, and listening anxiety were significantly and negatively associated with their reading proficiency, writing proficiency, and listening proficiency, respectively. This paper adopts the FLCAS questionnaire compiled by Horwitz et al. Foreign language listening anxiety scale (1986) and Kim Ming, Korea (2000).

Domestic and Foreign Research on Anxiety

In the 1970s and 1980s, foreign scholars began to explore English learning anxiety in English learning. Earlier research has concentrated on defining and categorizing anxiety. Horwitz et al. distinguished three types of language anxiety, communication fears, negative evaluation fears, and fear of examinations (1986), which were representative. Since 2006, the measurement method of English learning anxiety in English classroom teaching written by Horwitz has been unified. Therefore, this paper makes an in-depth study of English learning anxiety in English learning. Ellis (2013) studied the phenomenon of English learning anxiety in English learning. In recent years, on the Internet, people have done a lot of research on language learning anxiety on the Internet (Presno,1998).

Professor Yang believes that there are at least six factors that cause students’ tension in English learning, including individual tension, individual tension, and individual and other people’s tension. How English learners feel in the learning process. Chinese education from the perspective of teachers. Communication between teachers and students. The format of class activities. Zhang (2008) discussed four problems in English teaching from four aspects. In the test, the students’ tension is mainly manifested in the content and vocabulary learned in advance, the preparation of questions in advance, and repeated typing. Nishitani and Mari (2011) explores the effects of language anxiety and internal motivation on the use of learning strategies from the perspective of cognitive impairment. The study found that the stronger the internal motivation of students, the more they can use a variety of different learning strategies. In English teaching, high-level students tend to associate the problems in English teaching with those in their English teaching.

There are few theories and methods about English learning anxiety in China, especially after entering the 21st century. They use empirical analysis to explore the relationship between anxiety in English learning and some foreign language abilities. For example, Xue Lifang (2005) studied foreign language anxiety from three aspects: listening, speaking and reading, and the “new” in English classroom teaching. Just like Zeng

Xiaoshan and them. (2012) through comparative study, it is found that the combination of Internet and traditional teaching methods can effectively reduce anxiety in English teaching, but this emotion has not been completely eliminated. Or explore the causes of anxiety.

Domestic scholars such as Liu Zehai, Zhu Xiaodong, Deng Wei, Xing Li and others have proposed solving strategies to help students relieve and overcome language anxiety from the perspective of teachers. They believe that teachers should create a good classroom atmosphere, adopt flexible teaching methods, give students enough time to discuss the questions they need to answer, give students appropriate encouragement and so on. Only by overcoming language anxiety from the perspective of learners can language learning achieve better results. For example, Lu Shiming proposed to cultivate learners' self-esteem and self-confidence, and conduct cooperative language learning to reduce foreign language learning anxiety. Since 2007, due to the popularization and application of Internet and multimedia teaching methods in China, domestic researchers have gradually shifted their focus to studying language anxiety from the aspects of Internet and multimedia technology.

In general, foreign studies on foreign language anxiety mainly focus on the theoretical level, while domestic studies mostly focus on traditional classrooms. There are relatively few researches on the anxiety of college students' independent English learning, especially the English majors.

Research Design

In a broader sense, learning anxiety means that learners fail to achieve their expectations within a specified period of time, or fail to overcome their learning difficulties, resulting in a lack of self-esteem or confidence. there will be a sense of failure, which will lead to a tense psychological and emotional state. In college English teaching, students' learning anxiety is mainly reflected in self-guessing, restlessness, neuroticism and so on. As a specific situational anxiety, students' self-cognition, belief, emotion and behavior will affect their learning effect in the process of English teaching.

Research Questions

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the current situation of English anxiety among college students, to study the degree and distribution of English anxiety among college students, to analyze its causes, and to propose appropriate strategies. Here are four questions:

1. What is the overall level of students' anxiety about English learning?
2. What is the relationship between sub-construct with the general anxiety?
3. What are the strategies to solve English learning anxiety?

Research participants

The research objects of this paper are mostly college students in local normal universities. The participants in this study were mostly college students between 18 and 22 years old. A total of 300 questionnaires were given out for this study. After eliminating 40 invalid questionnaires due to incomplete filling or consistent choices, 260 valid questionnaires were actually obtained.

Research Instruments

Based on the widely recognized foreign language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) compiled by Horwitz and other scholars, the questionnaire used in this paper is designed to be suitable for English learning and network environment. The 20-item scale included questions such as communication apprehension, lack of

confidence in English class, and fear of negative evaluation. The option (10.12.14.15.16.20) is the reverse questionnaire. The scoring form of this questionnaire is Likert five-level scale, with five options including “strongly agree”, “agree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “disagree” and “strongly disagree”. The score is 1-5, with 1 being low anxiety and high anxiety. After confirming the questionnaire, the author will issue the questionnaire through wechat, Weibo and other network social platforms, as well as some offline questionnaires. When issuing the questionnaire, the author will briefly introduce the purpose and filling method of the questionnaire to students, explain the items that students have doubts about, provide guidance in the process of filling in the questionnaire, and finally return all the questionnaires. In the process of measuring, we should pay attention to the reverse scoring of the reverse scoring items, and finally use Excel to organize and analyze the data.

Research Procedure

It was primarily conducted at a university in Hubei Province. 300 college students were surveyed online and offline about whether they had English learning anxiety. Before the questionnaire was distributed, the author cooperated actively with the tutor and shared his opinions. Some questionnaire samples were consulted through the network as reference objects for this questionnaire. After determining the reference questionnaire, the author carefully made a questionnaire on a website named Wenjuanxing. After checking whether the contents of the questionnaire were complete and correct, the author conducted a preliminary survey and issued online and offline questionnaires officially after confirming that there were no problems. There were about 300 questionnaires in total. In the later stage, excluding some invalid questionnaires and incomplete questionnaires, we received 260 valid questionnaires. Finally, we conducted detailed data analysis on these 260 questionnaires.

Reliability

The reliability analysis of communicative fear is 0.757. The negative evaluation fear is 0.567 and the in confidence is 0.710. And the general reliability analysis of this questionnaire is 0.845. In general, there is no problem with this questionnaire, and it has a good reliability effect and validity effect.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

An analysis of the General Level of English Learning Anxiety

TABLE I: Mean and Deviation of Satisfaction

	Mean	Std. Deviation
General anxiety	3.5004	.53895
Communicative fear	3.5786	.64674
Fear of negative evaluation	3.7058	.62212
Lock of confidence	3.3049	.65557

Through statistical analysis of 260 valid questionnaires collected, we conclude that college students are more or less anxious about English learning at present. Some of these emotions come from the interaction with teachers in class, some from interpersonal communication outside class, and some are resistant to English. To summarize, college students' anxiety about learning English remains high. We need to find out the sources of these anxieties and give suggestions and methods to help college students learn English better.

we can find that the overall English learning anxiety levels of college students are all above 3, which shows that the overall English learning anxiety level of college students is high.

The Relationship between Sub-Construct and the General Anxiety

TABLE II: Correlation between Sub-Construct and the General Anxiety

	General anxiety
Communicative fear	.890**
Negative evaluation	.684**
Lock of confidence	.864**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From TABLE II we can see that the author analyzed and compared the correlation between various anxiety factors and the overall anxiety level through the table. As shown in table 4.3, it can be found that $r=.890^{**}$, $r=.684^{**}$, $r=.864^{**}$, $r>0.5$, indicating that the correlation between the three different dimensions of anxiety and the overall anxiety level is still strong and in a prominent positive correlation. The highest correlation with overall anxiety was fear of communication, with lack of self-confidence second and the weakest correlation was fear of negative evaluation.

The Causes of English Learning Anxiety

English learning anxiety is a common psychological phenomenon of English learning, which is also an important emotional factor and psychological variable that affects the improvement of language ability. Through the analysis of the survey results, the researchers believe that students' English learning anxiety is generally caused by the following aspects.

Communication fear. It refers to the fear or anxiety that arises in the process of communicate with people. Consequently, when a student realizes that he cannot express his ideas freely in English or cannot understand the English spoken by others, he may lose his communicative avoidability or communicative withdrawal. The main reason of communication fear lies in the pressure of English classroom competition and students' doubt of their English language ability. More and more students in English class become afraid to speak, dare not to interact with the teacher in English, dare not stand up to answer questions in English, afraid of speaking wrong, afraid of pronunciation of words, afraid of grammar mistakes. The more they think about it, the less confident they become in their English ability and, over time, the less they dare to speak English in class.

Negative evaluation fear. It mainly comes from students' lack of self-confidence and fear that they will not be fully recognized by teachers and classmates in class, so they try to avoid speaking English in public. Psychologist Sullivan pointed out that anxiety is a signal that self-respect is in danger, so it is the essential feature of anxiety to recognize that self-respect is threatened by external stimuli. When a learner is concerned about and values others' opinions or comments on his thoughts, words and deeds, he is too concerned about and sensitive to the opinions and comments from the outside world, he is likely to have a low self-assessment, which further causes different degrees of anxiety.

Students' lock of confidence. They constantly become anxious when speaking in English because they do not know how to express themselves properly. Some of the students worried that they would make mistakes when speaking in public and hurt their self-esteem, so they were afraid of the oral English communication organized by teachers in class. Students' lack of self-confidence and the pressure caused by frustration in the

process of learning will lead to different degrees of learning anxiety.

Strategies to Relieve Anxiety in English Learning Anxiety

With the findings in the survey, this article offers some recommendations for addressing students' English learning anxiety from the angle of teachers and students.

Diversified Teaching Models and Evaluation Methods

Language encourages evaluation. For students' daily performance, teachers should give priority to encouraging, praising and other positive evaluations, and use motivational comments to guide them positively as far as possible. In the classroom, the most used and most convenient evaluation method is "language encouragement evaluation method", which can mobilize students' enthusiasm, initiative and creativity in learning, so as to improve the effectiveness of classroom teaching. Therefore, teachers should be good at making use of motivational language in teaching to give students affirmation and mobilize their enthusiasm.

Action and expression evaluation refers to the positive or negative evaluation of teachers by expression, body posture, movement and other non-verbal ways. Because classroom time is limited and teachers have teaching tasks to complete, it is impossible to encourage, motivate or criticize students with a lot of language all the time. Therefore, corresponding to spoken language, in the classroom teaching process, the use of this gesture and expression evaluation is the most simple, the most frequent, and the most effective, with other evaluation methods do not have the advantages.

Good Teacher-Student Relationship

In order to make students have better learning quality, we must first create a better teaching atmosphere. The relaxed and friendly learning atmosphere allows students to relax themselves and speak English actively and boldly. In the aspects of curriculum setting and curriculum arrangement, it should be carried out from the needs of students and from a practical point of view. According to the difficulty of the course, the methods adopted are not the same. Such a good and positive learning atmosphere can make students in a relaxed mood, thus effectively reducing their anxiety.

Cultivating students' positive attitude towards English is the spirit and motivation that enables them to keep going. In foreign language teaching, it is necessary to strengthen the education of English majors so that they can establish correct foreign language learning motivation and form correct foreign language learning ideas and examination-oriented ideas. Only when students have a good motivation to learn English, can they reduce their tension and constantly exercise and improve their ability to use English in the course of hard study.

Foster the relationship among students and teachers. In teaching, teachers should treat every student equally, do not force their opinions into every student, learn to appreciate each student, listen to each student's opinions and opinions, and give each student enough tolerance and tolerance to safeguard their personality and dignity. Secondly, the educational concept of "people-oriented" should be established in order to improve the enthusiasm of English learning, improve students' language ability, improve their language proficiency and cultivate their language ability. On this basis, through the infiltration of English culture (such as the reading of English novels, the performance of English plays, etc.), we can mobilize students' curiosity and curiosity to actively guide them to understand the customs and customs of the English world, history and culture, so as to improve their English cultural literacy.

Students Character

Students are encouraged to confront their deficiencies valorously. In English teaching, English learners lack a correct understanding of their own problems and defects, which is also one of the main reasons for their anxiety in English teaching. The author advocates that under the guidance of teachers, teachers should have enough consciousness and initiative, so as to enhance teachers' consciousness and initiative. Some students may have a poor foundation, so it is difficult to participate in the early stages, but as the study progresses, this situation will gradually improve, and students' foreign language learning performance will be greatly improved.

Supported by the teacher, students can adapt their learning approach to their individual needs and thus obtain better learning impact. Make reasonable adjustments to your studies and examination purposes, work out a practical academic plan, and learn to use listening, reading, vocabulary and writing skills. If they can use these strategies well, they will not have too much worry about their studies and tests, so they will not have too much anxiety.

In English teaching, students who use "collaborative learning", especially those who are introverted and have poor learning ability, show a shy side in the classroom. Some students are very anxious because they are unable to answer this question. Collaborative learning not only has strong autonomy and autonomy, but also has strong autonomy and competitiveness. This kind of competition changes from individual competition to group competition, which greatly reduces students' learning anxiety. In addition, by participating in various forms of group activities, we can reduce the tension in English teaching, improve their enthusiasm for English learning and improve their English self-confidence.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In the process of language learning, students' anxiety will have a negative impact on the final result of learning to some extent, and the effective control of learning anxiety needs the joint efforts of teachers and students. Therefore, if we want to effectively manage the anxiety in foreign language teaching, we must make teachers and students work together. It is necessary to improve students' self-confidence, their adaptability, their learning style and their English proficiency. English teachers are the leading figures in English teaching, which have a great influence on students' learning and anxiety in the process of learning. In teaching, we should not only create a harmonious and relaxed teaching environment, but also pay attention to and respect their feelings, so that they can get enough security in teaching, and be able to establish a good sense of self-efficacy. In addition, teachers should also set up appropriate links in teaching to improve students' self-esteem as much as possible. English teachers should not only train the students' language ability, but also give them psychological counseling.

lastly, there are still some problems to be ameliorated and reflected. For example, due to the negligence in the early stage, the author omitted the basic information of the research object, resulting in the completeness of the questionnaire is not so high, and the content of the questionnaire is a little monotonous and boring. In addition, there were difficulties in collecting questionnaires. The author will learn from the experience and lessons of this questionnaire, hoping to facilitate the next investigation and continue to make meaningful research. The author also hope that my research can provide some useful references for later scholars to help them better conduct their research.

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