

# *Anxiety of Second Language Learner's Oral Expression in English Class from the Perspective of Psychological Anxiety Disorder*

**Xing Hao**

*Jincheng College NUAA, Nanjing City, Jiangsu Province, 211156, China*

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**Abstract:** With the development of globalization, countries need comprehensive talents with English communication skills. Many non-English-speaking students have a better understanding of English vocabulary and grammar through compulsory English learning. However, among the four basic English skills, the weakest one is oral ability. Therefore, this article focuses on the analysis of non-English speaking students' anxiety in English classrooms, investigates the causes of anxiety, and then explores ways to reduce oral anxiety.

## **1. Introduction**

Nowadays, more and more people realize that affecting affects language learning at least as much as cognitive factors, and often larger. Effect of affective factors "has attracted great attention. Language Anxiety is a complex psychological phenomenon unique to language learning. Because it is a common phenomenon in language learning and has a great influence on academic performance, it is considered to be one of the most critical emotional factors, and is therefore subject to many Researchers' attention. Anxiety contains emotion of nervousness, depression, unconsciousness and uneasiness. It is obviously shows that anxiety exerts a great influence in foreign language learning. Macintyre & Gardner found that language anxiety has some correlations to language proficiency. He also points out three kinds of anxiety including "trait anxiety, state anxiety and situation specific anxiety". Horwitz classified the foreign language into three constituents: "communication apprehension, fear of negative social evaluation and test anxiety". At the same time, Horwitz and other researchers created the famous FLCAS by exploring the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety, a measurement which is used to examine the anxiety in the aspect of speaking. Horwitz also suggests that foreign language anxiety would exert negative effect in language learning, that is to say, it means that if someone want to make a better performance, he or she should reduce the anxious level of foreign language. This article focuses on the anxiety of non-English speaking students.

## **2. Psychological Anxiety Disorder**

Since the 1970s, in second language acquisition, foreign language learners have shown different learning results under the same external conditions. The researchers noticed the phenomenon, so they began to explore factors of individual differences. Among the individual factors, the most important

is the emotional factor, and the language learning anxiety among the emotional factors is considered to be the key emotional variable. Language learning anxiety is a unique self-perception and emotional entanglement in language learning. It has a special sense of tension and fear in the foreign language context.

## 2.1 Definition of Psychological Anxiety Disorder

Nowadays, more and more people realize that “affecting” affects language learning at least as much as cognitive factors, and often larger “Effect of affective factors” has attracted great attention. Anxiety is a complex psychological phenomenon unique to language learning. Because it is a common phenomenon in language learning and has a great influence on academic performance, it is considered to be one of the most critical emotional factors, and is therefore subject to many Researchers’ concerns. People usually divide anxiety into “promotional anxiety” and “obstructive anxiety”. Although some researchers believe that “promotional anxiety” which is used in language learning does exist, most researches show that anxiety has a negative effect on academic performance<sup>[1]</sup>.

The Ministry of Education of China has always regarded English as an important subject. Since the third year of primary education, English has been included in the compulsory education curriculum, but in learning English, especially in the English classroom, students Difficulties in oral expression often occur, and the problems caused by anxiety in oral expression are becoming increasingly prominent. “Anxiety is an emotional state of nervousness and fear. Language anxiety is a complex psychological phenomenon unique to language learning. It is a kind of language learning caused by the uniqueness of the language learning process, related self-awareness, beliefs, feelings, and behavior”. In order to further explore the causes of students’ anxiety in English classroom, this article investigates and analyzes the overall situation of students’ oral anxiety in English classroom through questionnaire survey and case interview.

## 2.2 Previous Studied on English Learning Anxiety

The previous relevant academic research basically started from the following two perspectives: according to the classification of anxiety disorder itself to analyze the anxiety of English and its oral expression, and according to the specific influencing factors. Research methods like literature research method, questionnaire survey method, case study method, and interview method are often adopted.

Some scholars hold the opinion that the occurrence of anxiety mainly considers the following six influencing factors communication fear: teacher evaluation, peer evaluation, negative attitude, Environmental impact, English language ability, and through the questionnaire survey method, interview method and quantitative analysis method and qualitative analysis method to draw conclusions as follows: (1) Among the six anxiety factors surveyed, communication anxiety is the most influential anxiety Factors, English language ability followed, teacher evaluation impact and environmental impact are third and fourth, respectively, peer evaluation and negative attitudes have little impact. (2) There is no significant gender difference in the expression of anxiety between boys and girls, and the degree of anxiety between boys and girls is similar. (3) Students’ expression anxiety is significantly positively correlated with their oral output level. (4) Qualitative research found that the factors that affect the expression of anxiety in English classrooms are as follows: students’ self-evaluation of oral English level, personality characteristics, English learning motivation, fear of failure, and fear of making mistakes. The shortcoming is that in the research conducted, a questionnaire survey was conducted only for students in the first grade of a school. The diversity and comprehensiveness of the selected samples may be insufficient. The results deviate greatly from the real situation.

From a global perspective, the number of people who speak English has exceeded the number of people in any language. English is the mother tongue in more than 10 countries, the official language of 45 countries is English, and one third of the world's populations (more than two billion) speak English. English is also a subject that the Ministry of Education of China attaches great importance to. However, the ultimate goal of learning English is to span the face-to-face communication between books and people in English-speaking countries. Oral communication serves as a bridge. Speaking anxiety will greatly affect students' enthusiasm for learning English and the efficiency of teaching<sup>[2]</sup>. This article aims to analyze the causes of students' anxiety through the specific reasons of student feedback and on-site characterization observation, combined with anxiety psychology, to explore how to effectively relieve students' anxiety in oral expression in class.

### **3. Anxiety of Second Language Learners' Oral Expression in English Class**

Researchers have found that anxiety is a common psychological phenomenon in English classrooms. So far, domestic and foreign researchers have focused on the impact of students' anxiety on English learning. Therefore, this article aims to explore the oral anxiety of students in non-English speaking countries.

#### **3.1 Reasons for Anxiety in Oral Expression**

The main reason is the learner's competitiveness. If a language student compares himself with others, and a person finds that others are superior to him, he will not feel inferior, and then he may feel frustrated and depressed.

##### **3.1.1 Classroom Teaching Model**

In English classes, teachers usually ask students more questions or practice in English. Students must perform in the target language they are not familiar with in class. Students worry that they may be incompetent, but they will therefore put a lot of pressure on students in class performance and bring great challenges to their self-confidence and self-cognition<sup>[3]</sup>.

##### **3.1.2 The Relationship between Teachers and Students**

If the relationship between the learner and the teacher is tense, it will be hostile to the teacher, which will cause anxiety. Teachers' dress, behavior, speech and even questions raised by teachers may make students feel tired, bored and bored. All of this leads to anxiety.

##### **3.1.3 Negative Experience**

He may feel embarrassed and frustrated if a student fails in a test, and he is laughed at by other students when he cannot answer the question correctly in class, or is publicly criticized by the teacher for errors in practice or homework. Negative experiences will become a shadow in his mind, and anxiety and pain will embarrass him.

##### **3.1.4 Language Skills**

It is believed that the learner's foreign language ability is closely related to his anxiety. In other words, low language learning ability is another manifestation of anxiety. This situation often occurs in language classrooms, that is, students or students with higher language ability may not be as anxious as students with language ability or ability.

### 3.1.5 Self-esteem

Generally speaking, learners with lower self-esteem are more likely to show anxiety in the classroom. Anxiety can impair their performance in many ways, either through worry and self-doubt, or through cognitive activities that are not related to tasks, directly reduce academic performance, or reduce classroom participation. Anxiety in the classroom makes them nervous and fearful, which leads to poor performance, which in turn causes more anxiety, which in turn makes their performance worse<sup>[4]</sup>. By then, they may become more passive and even drop out. Therefore, anxiety will weaken their language learning ability, and the anxiety caused by low self-esteem may be the result and cause of language learning problems.

### 3.1.6 Cultural Shock

Cultural shock is considered to be another source of language anxiety. It usually happens that if the learner feels this sense of identity, the anxiety will decrease; if the learner does not agree with the target language group, the anxiety will be higher. However, anxiety disorder also stems from learners' over-identification of the target language group and the loss of their personal identity. Therefore, learners should take effective measures to raise cultural awareness and transform cultural shocks into cross-cultural learning opportunities so that anxiety can be alleviated naturally.

## 3.2 Forms of Anxiety in Oral Expression

After entering the 1980s, foreign language acquisition research has made great progress. Many studies have agreed on the relationship between affective variables in learning and foreign language learning. Anxiety is considered to be one of the most critical psychological variables, and language anxiety is a complex psychological phenomenon unique to language learning.

The results of these studies prove that the external typical response to foreign language learning anxiety can be general symptoms of anxiety, such as "sweaters in the palm of the learner's palm; abdominal pain; rapid heartbeat and pulse" and so on. However, the further response to foreign language learning anxiety may be shown by the following behavioral performances, namely, phonological tone modulation; the inability to pronounce the speech and rhythm of the language normally; feeling "frozen" when standing up to answer the question; forgetting it before learning Vocabulary; not even speaking at all, just keeping silent and so on. Some extreme symptoms may be "skip the class; avoid eye contact with the teacher; come to the class without previewing" and so on. Anxious students have little consciousness in answering questions and participating in classroom activities<sup>[5]</sup>. They also tend to avoid more complex sentence structures, while more relaxed students behave eagerly. Therefore, language anxiety is negatively correlated with language course performance and teachers' assessment of student achievement. The impact of anxiety on foreign language learning is not limited to these aspects. There are also specific reflections on students' academic issues, such as anxiety has been shown to have a negative effect on speaking and listening; anxious students often complain that the course is progressing too fast; they are left behind; they need more time Own course, etc. In examinations and exams, foreign language learning anxiety also exists.

## 4. Corresponding Solutions to Anxiety

Individual students should take the initiative to improve their self-efficacy. Self-efficacy and language anxiety have significant effects on motivational behaviors of oral participation in the classroom, but the effects are different. Self-efficacy can encourage students to actively participate in oral activities, while language anxiety can inhibit students' participation.

## 4.1 Solutions to the Influence of Personality from Own Growing Environment

It is generally believed that the stronger the learner's sense of self-efficacy, the better the learner's learning behavior. This is because individuals with strong self-efficacy can fully understand and estimate the nature of the task and the difficulties encountered.

In-depth processing of information and seeking ways to complete tasks will invest more energy and time; people with poor self-efficacy will consider their own defects, deficiencies, lack of confidence, and are susceptible to negative emotions such as tension and anxiety. Trouble eventually led to retreat and give up. Strengthening one's own English level can effectively improve one's self-efficacy, which can bring self-confidence and then enter the circle of conscience. Otherwise, anxiety will bring frustration. Psychological explanation is learned helplessness. Such vicious circle is the biggest resistance to the improvement of spoken English. According to the above, we can watch some oral English related videos in our spare time, such as English speech, American TV series, etc., and record the words that we don't know which can effectively improve our language sense ability. On the other hand, we don't have to be afraid of speaking wrong. Because English is a second language, it's inevitable that we can speak wrong. Students who are not native English speakers are all the same. So speaking wrong is also a necessary way to find the right way to speak. It is a cognitive problem in psychology. In fact, it is the same for all of us, so we should change our cognition. It's not a shame to speak wrong.

## 4.2 Solutions to Teachers' Rigid Teaching Methods

Young interviewed experts such as Krashen and Omaggio Hadley on foreign language learning anxiety <sup>[6]</sup>. Krashen believes that language acquisition seems to be most effective when anxiety is zero. He pointed out that in order to master a language, learners should assume that they will succeed. Omaggio Hadley emphasized that in order to succeed in foreign language learning, teachers will inevitably enable students to practice a large number of skills and constantly test students, but if the teacher's behavior induces anxiety in the practice and testing process, or it is created in the classroom "Anxiety-inducing situation" is not only undesirable, but also counterproductive.

The role of teachers should be to reduce students' anxiety to a minimum. Among the four elements of listening, speaking, reading and writing in foreign language learning, it is generally believed that speaking can induce anxiety the most. But for many students, reading, writing and even vocabulary memory and recovery may induce anxiety. As another example, Omaggio Hadley believes that in classroom teaching, if students respond to questions, if the teacher's response is not a simple right or wrong, or there is not only a simple yes or no assessment, then the possibility of students' anxiety significantly reduced <sup>[3]</sup>.

As mentioned above, in psychology, if students are in a state of helplessness and shame for a long time, they will cause learned helplessness. In this case, students tend to think that they are not good and that they are not born with this material. But as a student, in fact, it is difficult to understand the real situation, which is often subjective self-judgment. Teachers need to encourage students and hold an open and inclusive attitude, which is of great significance to the establishment of students' confidence and the promotion of the sound development of students' oral English. Another important factor is the atmosphere in English class. The biggest characteristic of Chinese education is that no one can talk to each other in class. But perhaps the most needed part of English is communication. If not, much communication has become the teaching of exam-oriented skills, it is not difficult for students to understand their poor oral English. As far as the English classroom is concerned, teachers should give students more opportunities to speak and demonstrate how to speak, rather than memorizing words, so mechanical teaching of high scores.

## 5. Conclusion

The results of the above studies tell us that the motivational behavior of students' oral participation in classrooms is driven by many factors that interact with each other. In order to increase students' enthusiasm for oral participation and improve teaching effect.

We must not only proceed from the overall situation, grasp the key points, but also make overall plans and coordinate all parties. Self-efficacy has a positive effect on building a future self, alleviating anxiety, and promoting motivation and behavior. In teaching, we should evaluate students' performance positively, encourage and praise them in time, improve their self-confidence, enhance their sense of effectiveness in completing tasks, and build a good ideal self-image.

Teachers should understand what students need to do to help students realize the importance of keeping their ideals and their values consistent, and reduce the difference between the two. This requires teachers to help students scientifically assess their own true level, so that they are neither good nor far-sighted, nor self-effacing, and guide students to set up ideal self-goals that have both higher value and higher possibility; pleasure. The setting of oral tasks in the classroom should take into account both reasonable challenges and sufficient fun, so that students can devote themselves to the tasks and experience the joy and sense of accomplishment when the tasks are completed; finally, play an active role that should be self. The self should have a dual role, which can not only wake up the learner's anxiety, inhibit learning, but also turn stress into motivation to promote learning. Teachers should emphasize their positive significance, guide students to change their concepts, help them deal with the relationship between competition and cooperation, create a relaxed learning atmosphere, reduce anxiety, and promote self-gradual internalization into a good ideal self for students to achieve learning motivation maximum effect on learning behavior.

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