

A Study of Foreign Language Anxiety of EFL Elementary School Students in Taipei County

Daniel Yu-ching Chan & Guo-cheng Wu*

ABSTRACT

Different from previous studies on foreign language anxiety which focused on either college or high school level, this study investigated foreign language anxiety of EFL elementary school students in Taiwan. The population of this study was all fifth graders in 205 elementary schools of Taipei County. The researchers used stratified purposeful sampling and cluster sampling to select 18 classes from the total nine educational districts. All the 601 students from the 18 classes were the participants answering the questionnaires. In order to have a further understanding of the students' foreign language anxiety, 18 high-anxious students were selected as the interviewees according to their scores in the questionnaires. In addition, all the 9 English teachers were interviewed, too. In this study, questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, and document collection were applied as instruments. The results were as follows. First, the analysis of the questionnaires showed that the foreign language anxiety tendency of elementary school EFL students was quite obvious. Six variables of English learning experience were found that might affect learners' anxiety level. The result corresponded to that of the previous studies, in which there was a significant negative correlation between foreign language anxiety level and English learning achievement. Second, through a combinational analysis of multiple data sources, we found that low proficiency, fear of negative evaluation, competition of games, anxious personality, and pressure from students themselves and their parents were the five sources of language anxiety. Third, tests, speaking in front of others, spelling, incomprehensible input, and speaking to native speakers were the five

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anxiety-provoking situations. Fourth, both teachers and students in this study thought that the balance of instructional languages helped lower foreign language anxiety. Finally, the study revealed that teachers' awareness of foreign language anxiety is insufficient. Based on the findings in this study, suggestions of reducing foreign language anxiety were given to teachers, students, and parents. The implications of this exploratory study include encouraging teachers to enrich their awareness of foreign language anxiety, carefully dealing with anxiety-provoking situations, encouraging teachers' use of more comprehensible input, encouraging students' participation in additional English activities, encouraging students to share their anxiety experiences, and encouraging parents' involvement in their children's English learning. Based on the findings and implications of this study, students, teachers, and parents can increase their awareness of foreign language anxiety. Accordingly, better ways of dealing with foreign language anxiety can be adopted, and an enjoyable and effective language-learning environment can therefore be developed.

Key words: EFL elementary school students, foreign language anxiety, sources of foreign language anxiety, anxiety-provoking situations

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Introduction

Background and Motivation

In Taiwan, English teaching has been implemented to all 5th and 6th graders from the academic year 2001. However, Chan (2001) pointed out that almost half of the total primary schools in Taiwan began to teach English in different ways at different periods before the new English education policy started. It was found that some students began to learn English in school while others studied English at English language centers or institutes. There was much discrepancy at students' proficiency levels. According to the Guidelines of the Nine-Year Integrated Curriculum set by the Ministry of Education, the main goals of English teaching in primary schools are to develop students' basic communication abilities and their interest in learning English. For primary school students, English is a new foreign language rather than their mother tongue. Emphasis on oral aspects of language means that students have to learn to understand what others speak and try to speak out what they want to express in a foreign language class. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) pointed out since speaking in the target language seems to be the most threatening aspect of foreign language learning, the current emphasis on the development of communicative competence poses particularly great difficulties for the anxious student. To ensure the success of English education in primary schools, foreign language anxiety is a significant issue which cannot be ignored.

Anxiety is generally seen as a psychological concept and has been explored by

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researchers. Spielberger (1966) defines anxiety as “subjective, consciously perceived feelings of apprehension and tension, accompanied by or associated with activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system.” Anxiety can be either facilitating or debilitating. Facilitating anxiety motivates learners to adopt an approach attitude and is willing to confront the new learning task. Debilitating anxiety motivates learners to assume an avoidance attitude and therefore tends to escape from the learning task (Scovel, 1978). The factor of task difficulty affects learners to develop a facilitating or a debilitating anxiety. MacIntyre (1995) claimed only when a given task is relatively simple, foreign language anxiety could be facilitating. Once the task is too difficult, anxiety will impair performance. In addition to task difficulty, factors such as teachers’ attitude and evaluation, teacher-students interactions in class, parents’ expectation, classmates’ attitude, students’ own achievement are the potential sources of students’ foreign language anxiety.

Since some researchers assume that "foreign language anxiety is more relevant to language learning among adults" (MacIntyre & Gardener, 1991a), the empirical study on the role of anxiety among children is fairly sparse. Over the past years, there were numerous studies on students’ foreign language anxiety, but most of them focused on either college level (Aida, 1994; Ganschow et al., 1994) or high school level (Chang, 1999; Ganschow & Sparks 1996; Liao, 1999). Few of them paid attention to primary school level except the study of Chan and Wu (2000), which showed that foreign language anxiety of primary school students in Taiwan was obvious.

Purposes of the Study

Foreign language classroom anxiety is totally different from other types of anxieties (Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986). Learners may have the feeling of being unable to express their own ideas in a foreign language classroom where foreign language anxiety emerges. Since foreign language anxiety not only affects students’ attitude and language learning but also is considered to have more debilitating effects than facilitating effects, an investigation and detailed analysis of foreign language anxiety is necessary and significant. The first purpose of this study is to investigate the foreign language anxiety level of EFL primary school learners in Taiwan. The second purpose is to find out to what extent foreign language anxiety is correlated to students’

English learning experience and English achievement. The third purpose is to figure out the sources of students' foreign language anxiety and anxiety-provoking situations. In addition, teachers' awareness of students' anxiety and the issue of lowering students' foreign language anxiety are explored.

Literature Review

Perspectives of Anxiety

There are three perspectives from which research studies on anxiety are conducted. They are trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. Trait anxiety, a motive or acquired behavioral disposition that predisposes an individual to perceive a wide range of objectively nondangerous circumstances as threatening, and to respond to these circumstances with anxiety state reactions disproportionate in intensity to the magnitude of the objective danger, is relatively permanent and steady personality feature (Spielberger, 1966). State anxiety is apprehension experienced at particular moment in time, for example, prior to taking exams. This anxiety can be provoked in the confrontation of the perceived threat (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991b). However, it is temporary and altered in time. In order to attribute the experience to a particular source, researchers adopt situation specific perspective to the study of anxiety. This perspective focuses on the situations in which anxiety is aroused and this kind of anxiety is therefore termed as situation-specific anxiety. Unlike trait and state perspective, situation-specific perspective requires the respondents to ascribe their anxiety to particular sources. Specific situations can offer more understanding to particular anxiety in diverse situations.

Foreign Language Anxiety

According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), foreign language anxiety belongs to situation-specific anxiety. In the following, we will review the literature on foreign language anxiety concerning the concept of foreign language anxiety, the construct of foreign language anxiety, and the effects of foreign language anxiety.

The role of anxiety in language learning was not put much emphasis because

previous studies usually generated contradictory results and were hard to interpret (Chastain, 1975; Scovel, 1978). Gardner and MacIntyre (1993a) believe that using general measures of anxiety is the reason to generate contradictory results. Based on the situation-specific perspective, recent studies have focused on anxiety which is specific to language situations. After examining the concept of language anxiety empirically, researchers find language anxiety is distinct from any other type of anxiety and is not merely a composite of other anxieties (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991b). In order to identify and measure foreign language anxiety, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), in which 33 question items ask respondents to respond to situations specific to foreign language learning anxiety and reflect the three components of foreign language anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (Ganschow & Sparks, 1996). For example, they ask questions about students' anxiety in situations like speaking in front of the language class, taking exams in language course, and perceiving other students' evaluation of them. Due to the scale's success on construct validation and reliability, FLCAS has been widely adopted by many researchers to explore learners' foreign language anxiety (Aida, 1994; Chang, 1999; Ganschow et al., 1994; Ganschow & Sparks, 1996; Liao, 1999).

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) describe three components of foreign language anxiety: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. According to McCroskey's (1978) definition, **communication apprehension** is an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with other persons. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) submit the construct of communication apprehension to their conceptualization of foreign language anxiety. They think interpersonal interactions are the major emphasis in the English class. In a foreign language classroom, language learners' oral tasks include not only learning a second language but also performing the language. Therefore, communication apprehension in a foreign language context is different from that in other context. Oral communication consists of two components: listening and speaking. Speaking is anxiety-provoking in foreign language activities (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991c). Daly (1991) and Young (1986) find that most students are

particularly anxious when they have to speak a foreign language in front of their class. As to listening, it is a problem for language learners, too. Foreign language learners usually have difficulty understanding others. Because of the lack of control of oral communication, communication apprehension emerges (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991d).

Test anxiety is defined by Sarason (1984) as “the tendency to view with alarm the consequences of inadequate performance in an evaluative situation.” Test anxiety occurs when students have poor performance in the previous tests. Students develop a negative stereotype about tests and have irrational perceptions in evaluative situations. These students might have unpleasant test experience from either language class or other subjects, and they transplanted the unhappy image to the present English class unconsciously (Chan & Wu, 2000). Test-anxious students may have false beliefs in language learning. These students habitually put impractical demands on themselves and feel that anything less than a perfect test performance is a failure (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Young (1991) claims test anxiety would affect foreign language learners with low levels of oral proficiency more than those with high levels of proficiency. On the other hand, learners experience more language anxiety in highly evaluative situations. Researchers find that test anxiety could be significantly higher under an official and unfamiliar condition (Daly, 1991; Young, 1991). Moreover, an oral test is more complicated because it provokes both test anxiety and oral communication apprehension. The fact reveals that the constructs of foreign language anxiety overlap and are difficult to distinguish. Unfortunately, constant evaluations by the instructor in the foreign language classrooms are rather commonplace, and “even the brightest and most prepared students often make errors” (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986), so test-anxious learners will doubtlessly suffer stress and anxiety frequently. As mentioned above, test anxiety is a type of performance anxiety deriving from a fear of failure and evaluative situations. Although it overlaps with other constructs of foreign language anxiety, test anxiety is relevant to academic context where performance evaluation is frequent.

Fear of negative evaluation is defined as ‘apprehension about others’ evaluations, distress over their negative evaluations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively” (Watson, & Friend, 1969). Although it is similar to

test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation is broader in scope because it is not restricted to test-taking situations. In addition to situations of tests, it may take place in any social, evaluative situation such as interviewing for a job or speaking in foreign language class. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991d) propose that fear of negative evaluation is closely related to communication apprehension. When students are unsure of what they are saying, fear of negative evaluation occurs and they may doubt about their ability to make a proper impression. In a foreign language context, negative evaluation derives mainly from both teachers and their peers because foreign languages require continual evaluation by the teacher and anxious students may also be intensely susceptible to the evaluations of their peers. Students with fear of negative evaluation might adopt the action of avoidance. In Aida's (1994) opinion, students with fear of negative evaluation might "sit passively in the classroom, withdrawing from classroom activities that could otherwise enhance their improvement of the language skills. In extreme cases, students may think of cutting class to avoid anxiety situations, causing them to be left behind." These components are considered to have a deleterious effect on second language acquisition. Besides, they overlap and are closely related to each other (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986).

Over the past few years, foreign language educators have found that anxiety plays a role in success or failure in the foreign language classroom (Ganschow, et al., 1994). In addition, a lot of researchers indicate that high level of anxiety can interfere with foreign language learning (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991c; Madsen, et al., 1991). Actually, anxiety can be either facilitating or debilitating. Facilitating anxiety motivates the learner to adopt an approach attitude and is willing to confront the new learning task. On the other hand, debilitating anxiety motivates the learner to assume an avoidance attitude and therefore tends to escape from the new learning task (Scovel, 1978). The factor of task difficulty affects the learner to develop a facilitating or a debilitating anxiety. MacIntyre (1995) suggests only when "a given task is relatively simple," foreign language anxiety could be facilitating. In such a situation, anxiety may improve performance through increased effort. But once the task is too difficult, anxiety will impair performance. Therefore, anxiety could either benefit or impair the language learning and performance, and the determinant is task difficulty.

The above-mentioned approach and avoidance behavior caused by anxiety can be further confirmed by the theory of language class risk-taking and language class discomfort. Ely (1986) defines language class risk-taking as “an individual’s tendency to assume risks in using the L2 in the second language class.” The learners’ willingness or policy of approach to undertake actions that involve a significant of risk is an important characteristic of successful foreign language learning. Because successful learners have to be willing to try out the new language and take the risk of being wrong. Conversely, language class discomfort is the personality construct that is contrary to language class risk-taking. Adopting the policy of avoidance, a language learner with discomfort is unwilling to participate in activities or volunteer answers. Consequently, he performs poorly in the language classroom settings.

Although anxiety could be facilitating or debilitating, it in most cases “negatively affects performance in the second language” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991b). In the following, the impact of language anxiety on foreign language achievement will be reviewed.

Impact of Language Anxiety on Foreign Language Learning

Foreign language learning can be separated into three stages: input, processing, and output. Anxiety can affect the ability of an individual to process information at each of the three stages. According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a), research of the effects of anxiety on language learning has shown an understandable emphasis on the output stage in terms of production, performance, course grades, and other criteria. This is because the performance at output stage is the easiest one to obtain and has been regarded by the majority of teachers and parents as the most important indicator of students’ learning. Although anxiety does have effects on language learning, the results of research in the relationship between anxiety and foreign language learning are mixed and confusing (Scovel, 1978). Young (1991) finds no significant correlations between the results of Oral Proficiency Index (OPI) and anxiety measures. In her opinion, ability in the foreign language may have become a more important variable. Finding that test anxiety would probably affect those with low levels of proficiency, she suggests that test anxiety should be viewed with a learner’s language proficiency.

Although the results differ, language anxiety displays the negative effects in most cases. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991b) even suggest that anxiety have been proved to negatively affect performance in the second language. Horwitz (1991) supports significantly negative correlation between anxiety and foreign language achievement after conducting research to verify the reliability and construct validity of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). In addition, several studies revealed that language anxiety was negatively correlated with students' performances in terms of standardized tests (Gardner, et al., 1987), course grades (Aida, 1994; Chang, 1996; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Liao, 1999), and the grades in mid-term exams (Chang, 1996; Liao, 1999). The fact that numerous studies have displayed significantly negative correlations means language anxiety does affect foreign language learning at the output stage. As a result, researchers in second language learning have recognized the negative effect of anxiety and thus developed teaching methodologies such as the Natural Approach, Counseling-Learning and Suggestopedia (Young, 1991).

To explain the negative correlations between language classroom anxiety and second language proficiency, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991b) point out that as experience and proficiency increase, anxiety declines in a fairly consistent manner. On the contrary, foreign language anxiety develops if the student's following experiences with the foreign language are not positive. Poor foreign language performance, in turn, reinforces foreign language anxiety. Consequently, these two variables affect each other constantly. In addition to the significant correlations, researchers such as MacIntyre (1995) and MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a) further raises question of causality: Does anxiety interact with pre-existing language ability, which, in turn, impairs foreign language performance or does poor foreign language performance lead to anxiety as consequence? This is a question that needs to be clarified by way of further studies. On the whole, the researchers agree that language anxiety can play a significant causal role in learning a foreign language.

Summary

In this section, we review literature of foreign language anxiety in terms of concept, construct, effects, and impact on foreign language learning. It is obvious that foreign language anxiety affects foreign language learning. Although foreign language

anxiety can be facilitating or debilitating, communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation have a deleterious effect. In Taiwan, since English has been taught in primary schools, it is important to investigate the foreign language anxiety level of EFL primary school learners and to find out to what extent foreign language anxiety is correlated with students' English learning experience and English achievement. Moreover, it is necessary to understand the sources of students' foreign language anxiety and anxiety-provoking situations. Furthermore, it is also valuable to explore related issues such as lowering foreign language anxiety and teachers' awareness of foreign language anxiety. These issues certainly increase our understanding of foreign language anxiety. When teachers are well aware of students' foreign language anxiety and when we are familiar with the ways of lowering the anxiety, the goal of reducing foreign language anxiety can be effectively reached. Based on the results and suggestions in this study, improvement in our English teaching could be obtained, and the foreign language classroom anxiety of our students could accordingly be reduced.

Method

Participants

The population of this study was all fifth graders in 205 elementary schools of Taipei County. The researchers used stratified purposeful sampling and cluster sampling to select 18 classes from the total nine educational districts. All the 601 students from the 18 classes were the participants answering the questionnaires. In order to have a further understanding of the students' foreign language anxiety, 18 high-anxious students were selected as the interviewees according to their scores in the questionnaires. In addition, all the 9 English teachers were interviewed, too.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study included questionnaires, interviews, classroom observations, and document collection. Both the questionnaires and interviews were conducted in the participants' native language, Mandarin Chinese. The first part of the

questionnaire was English Learning Experience Questionnaire. It was intended to investigate students' general English learning experience, especially those experiences related to learners' English learning anxiety. The second part of the questionnaire was Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which was used to investigate elementary students' foreign language anxiety in English learning. In the FLCAS, there were 33 question items, and a 5-point scale ranging from "strongly agree" (5 points) to "strongly disagree" (1 point). Each anxiety score was gained by summing the ratings of the thirty-three items. The theoretical range of this scale was from 33 to 165. The higher the total points were, the more anxious the student was.

In addition, interviews with students and teachers were given to explore the possible sources and anxiety-provoking situations. The semi-structured interview techniques were used in the study. The interviewer modified the questions and procedures according to the interviewees' responses. There were twelve questions for student interview and nine for English teacher interview. These prepared questions were designed based on the research questions. These questions were not asked in a fixed order, and the actual wording was not determined in advance. Modification was made according the survey results and participants' responses. Just as Patton (1990) suggested that participant's response format should be open-ended, the interviewer did not supply and predetermine the phrases or categories that must be used by respondents to express themselves. The strategy of open-ended response helped capture the complexities of the respondents' individual perceptions and experiences.

Classroom observations focused on the anxiety-provoking situations. First, students' anxious behaviors in class were observed. Then the teacher's teaching activities and techniques relevant to students' foreign language anxiety were observed, too. Two checklists for observing teachers and students were designed. Besides, events which were not in the checklists but related to the study were written down. In addition to the document data on students' final scores and performances, students' textbooks, assignments, tests, and related materials were also collected and copied for references in this study.

Data Collection and Procedures

The data collected in this study included questionnaires, audiotapes of interviews, videotapes of classroom observations, and related documents. The questionnaires were administered by the nine English teachers.

According to the scores of the questionnaire, eighteen high-anxious participants were selected as the interviewees. The researchers interviewed the participants one by one. The interviews were tape-recorded, and the researchers took notes at the same time. In addition to note-taking, comments on observations were done during or right after the interviews. The comments on observations contained the researchers' own feeling, and reflections of what happened to the interviewees. The purpose was to offer inferential clues for the subsequent analysis. After interviewing the students, the researchers interviewed the teachers one by one. The procedures were the same as those for students' interviews. During the interviews with the teachers, the researchers asked the teachers to provide related documents.

Each of the nine English teachers' English classes was then observed for one or two periods. Each period lasted for forty minutes. With the teachers' permission, the observations were videotaped with a camcorder. Comments on observations were made right after the observation to provide inferential information for further analysis. Besides, the English teachers were asked to provide the participants' final English grades in the first semester and written documents like textbooks, assignments, tests, and related materials. The documents were collected as supplemental information for understanding the data gained from questionnaire, interviews, and observations.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics for English learning experience, and English learning anxiety were summarized and analyzed. ANOVA and Posteriori Comparisons were used to explore the differences in language anxiety level between students with different English learning experiences. In addition, Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was used to analyze the correlation between English learning achievement and English learning anxiety

Processing of the data from interviews, observations, and documents started with

transcribing the interview audiotapes and observation videotapes. All the interview audiotapes were transcribed into word-by-word transcripts in Chinese. As to classroom observation videotapes, only those events that were necessary for data analysis and related to the study would be transcribed. For the documents, the researchers reviewed all the data and summarized them. After making sure that all the data from the above three sources were completely transcribed, they were further translated into English and transferred to approximately 1900 entries with separate units of information.

Through inductive analysis, units of data were sorted into categories that provided meaningful information related to foreign language anxiety. Individual entries with special units of information were sorted and placed into temporary categories. Units of data could be assigned into several different categories. During the sorting process, memos were also written down to sketch out the relationship between units of data and categories. The sorting process proceeded until all units were assigned into categories. Through constant comparison of the units, categories could be modified, new categories would be developed, and old ones might be discarded. The massive amounts of data were reduced by this analysis method and significant patterns were effectively identified.

Results & Discussion

Foreign language anxiety as a whole is a complex issue instead of an isolated part of language learning. Using a combination of multiple data sources for the results and discussion helps assemble a more comprehensive and complete picture of the topic. In this section, results from the questionnaires will be presented first. Then, all the data, including questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documents, will be discussed respectively in terms of current situations of English teaching, sources of language anxiety, anxiety-provoking situations, balance of instructional languages, and teachers' awareness of language anxiety.

Results from the Questionnaires

The results of the questionnaires on English learning experience depicted a general picture of the 5th graders' English learning experience. First, most of the

students took extra English courses outside school (61.6%), and the native English teachers for the courses provided them opportunities to speak to native English speakers. Second, although they took extra courses, 58.1% of the students did not spend much time reviewing or previewing English courses (including “never” and “spent less than 1 hour weekly”). Third, the majority of them did not have the experience of touring, studying, or visiting relatives abroad (71.0%). What’s more, half of them (49.9%) almost never had the experience of speaking to native English speakers. Fourth, as to the students’ parents, more than half of them encouraged their kids to learn English (55.9%), but they seldom or never participated in their kids’ reviewing the English lessons (50.6% totally). Fifth, with regard to the instruction language in class, most students would like their English teachers to use more English, and to switch to Chinese when necessary, especially in difficult parts (41.9%). Some preferred half English and half Chinese (37.3%). Sixth, they preferred to be evaluated by means of games or activities (74.7%), and they preferred to take part in the class activities with the whole class (42.3%) or in small groups (39.6%). Finally, they felt that their pressure of learning English mainly came from the demands they put on themselves (39.5%), and their parents’ expectation (31.1%).

In the previous studies which applied the FLCAS to examine learners' foreign language anxiety at college level or high school level, Aida (1994), Liao (1999), and Chang (1999) obtained 96.7, 97.79, and 97.78 respectively for the mean of their participants' scores of foreign language anxiety. The mean of all participants' scores of the FLCAS in this study was 97.57(see Table 1), which was almost the same as the previous ones. This finding indicated that foreign language anxiety of elementary school students in Taiwan reached the same extent as that at different school levels. In other words, the tendency of foreign language anxiety of the primary students in Taiwan was obvious.

Table 1 Minimum, Maximum and Mean Scores in the FLCAS

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Scores in FLCAS	35	164	97.57

Responses to all the FLCAS items are reported in Table 2. All percentages

referred to the number of students who agreed or disagreed with the statements. The last column of the table showed the combinational percentages of students who agreed and strongly agreed with the statement (or disagreed and strongly disagreed in the reverse items, item 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, and 32).

Table 2 Mean Scores & Percentage of the FLCAS

Item	Mean	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	Both Strongly Agree and Agree %
1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English class.	2.70	9.3	18.3	30.13	18.6	23.6	27.6
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in English class.	2.99	20.3	18.1	21.0	23.6	17.0	40.6*
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be asked to speak in English class.	2.62	9.7	17.8	24.0	21.8	26.8	27.5
4. I am afraid when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the English class.	2.69	10.5	18.0	25.6	21.8	24.1	28.5
5. It wouldn't bother me at all to take more English classes.	2.83	23.6	20.3	22.6	16.1	17.3	33.4
6. In English classes, I think of things that are unrelated to the lesson.	2.62	12.1	13.6	26.5	19.3	28.5	25.7
7. I think that my classmates' English is better than mine.	3.44	29.1	21.6	24.8	12.8	11.6	50.7*
8. I am usually at ease during tests in my class.	2.82	23.8	19.8	22.8	18.3	15.3	33.6
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.	3.18	20.3	26.1	21.0	16.1	16.5	46.4*
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my English class.	3.43	31.4	23.1	17.5	13.3	14.6	54.5*
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over English class.	2.92	17.6	19.8	31.9	14.6	16.0	30.6
12. In English class, I am so nervous that I forget what I know.	3.0	16.3	24.5	21.6	18.1	19.5	40.8*
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class.	2.81	13.8	16.6	25.5	24.8	19.3	30.4
14. I will not be nervous when speaking with native English speakers.	3.25	15.6	18.6	18.3	19.8	27.6	47.4*
15. I get depressed when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	2.97	15.2	18.0	31.3	20.3	15.3	33.2

16. Even if I am well prepared for English class, I feel anxious about it.	2.99	16.0	23.8	20.6	22.0	17.6	39.8
17. I often feel like not going to my English class.	2.59	13.1	10.5	27.3	20.0	29.1	23.6
18. I feel confident when I speak in English class.	2.99	16.8	20.3	26.3	20.5	16.1	36.6
19. I am afraid that my English teacher will correct every mistake I make.	2.99	16.0	19.6	27.3	21.3	15.8	35.6
20. I feel my heart pounding when I am going to be asked to speak in English class.	3.3	25.5	22.3	22.5	16.6	13.1	47.8*
21. The more I prepare for an English test, the more confused I get.	2.74	14.3	13.6	26.8	22.1	23.1	27.9
22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for English class.	2.87	19.6	19.3	30.3	15.8	15.0	30.8
23. I always feel that my classmates speak better English than I.	3.45	30.1	20.8	24.8	13.0	11.3	50.9*
24. I feel shy when speaking English in front of other students.	2.99	16.8	21.3	24.0	19.5	18.5	38.1
25. English class moves so quickly that I worry about getting left behind.	2.96	19.1	19.3	22.3	16.8	22.5	38.4
26. I feel tenser and have more pressure in English class than in other classes.	2.79	14.5	18.0	23.8	20.0	23.8	32.5
27. I get nervous when I speak in my English class.	2.66	13.5	14.3	23.3	22.5	26.5	27.8
28. Before English class, I feel confident and relaxed.	2.76	26.8	16.8	24.8	16.6	15.0	31.6
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says.	2.85	14.3	19.0	27.1	16.8	22.8	33.3
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.	3.07	20.1	21.8	22.8	15.3	20.0	41.9*
31. I am afraid that my classmates will laugh at me when I speak English.	2.84	18.3	17.0	21.1	17.5	26.1	35.3
32. I feel easy when native English speakers are with me.	3.21	18.5	12.3	23.8	20.3	25.1	45.4*
33. I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	3.27	26.3	22.5	21.8	11.3	18.1	48.8*
Average Mean	2.96						

* means that the percentage of both “strongly agree” and “agree” is more than 40%.

The situations that make students the most anxious about foreign language classroom are as follows. First, test anxiety caused students' anxiety greatly. The result of responding to No. 10, "*I worry about the consequences of failing my English class*", is 54.5%. These students were test-anxious either because of undue expectation of test results or because of unpleasant test experience in the past. Besides, anxious students were worried that they were less competent than their classmates. They highly endorsed the statements in No. 23 "*I always feel that my classmates speak English better than I do*"(50.9%) and in No. 7 "*I think my classmates' English is better than mine*"(50.7%). These students not only were apprehensive about others' evaluation but also anticipated that their classmates would evaluate them negatively. Last, anxious students were afraid to speak in English. They endorsed the statements "*I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class*"(46.4%); "*I feel my heart pounding when I am going to be asked to speak in English class*"(47.8%). These students were exceedingly shy when they had to speak English in front of others. They were easily embarrassed and nervous because they felt that everyone was looking at them and judging them.

By using the FLCAS, we figured out foreign language anxiety of primary school learners here in Taiwan (mean score and average mean of each item were 97.57 and 2.96 each). The results showed that test anxiety, fear of being less competent, and being afraid to speak in English were three main constructs of students' anxiety. This finding corresponded with the three components of foreign language anxiety of Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, (1986). Besides, we found that insufficient preparation, speaking English with native English speakers, and fear of making mistakes made students anxious too.

After identifying learners' foreign language anxiety, we used ANOVA to analyze the differences in language anxiety levels among different variables. Six variables that affected anxiety level were obtained. The variables were time to take extra English course outside school, schedule to prepare for weekly English courses, experiences of speaking to native English speakers, perceived encouragement from both parents in different ways, parents' participation in reviewing courses, and preference towards teacher's use of English or Chinese. These variables help figure out the characteristics of learners with lower foreign language anxiety: having longer experience in taking

extra courses outside school, having sufficient preparation for English courses, having more opportunities to speak to native English speakers, having more encouragements from parents, having steady parents' participation in reviewing courses, and having a preference to listen to more English from teachers.

As to the correlation between foreign language anxiety level and English learning achievement, the correlation coefficient was $r = -.279$ ($p < .01$). The result showed that there was a significant negative correlation between the score of the FLCAS and the final score. That is, the higher the learners' anxiety level was, the lower the English learning achievement would be. The result was correspondent with that in the previous studies (Aida, 1994; Chang, 1999; Gardner, et al., 1987; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Liao, 1999).

Current Situations of English Teaching in Taiwan

Analyzing data from the multiple sources, the researchers found that several issues were relevant to the current situations of English teaching and students' foreign language anxiety. The first issue was the great differences among students in English proficiency. All the teachers in this study endorsed the differences. They thought that the difference was one of the main problems of their teaching. Here is the statement from a teacher.

The main problem is that there are big differences among students. Some have learned English outside school for years, and some haven't. (Interview/Teacher A)

The great differences unavoidably intensify students' fear of negative evaluation, one of the three components of foreign language anxiety. Several teachers thought the differences came from the extra English courses students took outside school. One of the teacher said, "The reason of the difference is that they have different experiences of learning English outside school" (Interview/Teacher C). Actually, here in Taiwan, extra English courses outside school influence English teaching in school greatly.

The second issue teachers paid attention to was the limitation of English teaching time. In this study, each class had two periods of English class each week. Most teachers thought the time was insufficient. Teachers believed that if they had had more

time, the teaching effect could have been better. Actually, in a typical class of about 35 students at primary school, eighty minutes a week didn't seem enough to learn a foreign language well. The deficiency of teaching time may be likely to result in students' low proficiency. As we have mentioned previously, the lower the learners' English proficiency was, the higher the anxiety level would be. The limitation of English teaching time inevitably leads to teachers' frustration and students' anxiety.

The third issue was the extra English courses outside school. In Taiwan, many elementary school students go to the extension EFL (English as a foreign language) centers to learn English (61.6% according to the questionnaire). The extra courses influenced elementary school English teaching greatly. For example, the big differences of students' English level resulted mainly from the extra courses. Many teachers found that those who took extra courses outside school performed much better than those who did not. Similarly, students taking extra courses in language centers thought those courses helped their English learning in school. Accordingly, some students responded that it was because of the extra English courses that they became less nervous in English class in school. In short, both teachers and students thought that the courses helped English learning and lowered foreign language anxiety. However, the big discrepancy at English proficiency levels among students, which might intensify students' foreign language anxiety, was partly because of the extra English course. Therefore, the role of extension EFL center in Taiwan is controversial and needs further examination.

Sources of Language Anxiety in English Learning

Since foreign language anxiety influences foreign language learning, it is necessary to reduce it. To reduce foreign language anxiety and foster learning, we have to find out the sources first. The sources of foreign language anxiety, therefore, develop into an important issue explored by many researchers. Based on the data collected in this study, students' sources of language anxiety were grouped into five types. They were low proficiency, fear of negative evaluation, competition of games, anxious personality, and pressure from students themselves and parents.

Students' low proficiency was the major source of their language anxiety. Their language anxiety happened when they did not know how to answer teachers' oral

questions. Also, they became anxious when they could not understand their teachers or could not read the materials. In a word, low proficiency in any one of the four skills would make the learners anxious and hamper anxious students' English learning seriously. The following interview between the researcher (R) and Student H1 (SH1) illustrates how low proficiency causes the anxiety.

SH1: Sometimes, English teacher will ask us to read a dialogue aloud one by one, and that makes me nervous.

R: But the teachers of other subjects will also ask you to read something aloud. Are you nervous about that?

SH1: No.

R: Why not?

SH1: Because I know how to read it. They are all Chinese characters.
(Interview/Student H1)

The response showed when the student knew how to read the material, she would not be nervous.

The second source of language anxiety was fear of negative evaluation. In English class, negative evaluation may come from teachers and/or peers. In this study, negative evaluation derived mainly from peers. From our observations, the teachers in the study were so skillful that they didn't make their students have the feeling of negative evaluation. However, some students felt embarrassed when their classmates watched their English performance. The following is one of the statements about their fear.

Answering question is the most anxiety-provoking situation. Sometimes, my classmates ridicule me. (Interview/ Student E1)

Once when we were playing games, the teacher showed my classmates some words and asked them to write down the words on my back. I didn't know some of the answers and I flushed. (Interview/ Student H1)

We found that most of the students' fear happened when they were answering questions. The result conforms to MacIntyre and Gardner's (1991b) study that fear of

negative evaluation is closely related to communication apprehension.

Competition of games is another source of students' language anxiety. Under the circumstance of competition, many students get nervous. The following is one of the examples of playing games in English class, in which one student was standing in front of the blackboard, trying to find out the right flash card for his team. The dialogue between the members of the team goes like this.

Student 1: It's not right. Quick! Quick! Try it again!

Student 2: Oh, hurry up! That's quite close. Oh, we are going to lose.

(The boy tried many times nervously, but still didn't get the right flash card.)

Student 2: Why don't you hurry up? I hate to be with you in the same team.

Student 3: Hey, teacher. He cannot do it every time. (Observation/Class

F1)

During interviews, both students and teachers thought anxiety was partly from competition of games. Some students reported that they were nervous when their turn came. Besides, as some teachers said, most students were afraid that they did not score for their team and lost in the game because in these cases their team members would scold them. In other words, in order to win the game, they had to compete with others. Consequently, their anxiety occurred. Games, which are most students' favorite activities in English class, not only attract children's attention but also provoke children's anxiety to some extent. It is necessary to explore the nature and functions of games so that we can design and use games properly to foster English learning in a more pleasant and less pressure environment.

In addition, anxious personality was one of the sources of students' language anxiety. Persons with anxious personality tend to be anxious in any situations. The sources mentioned above could be only small incidents that touch off their language anxiety, but the real reason is the person's anxious personality. In this study, the researchers found that some students belonged to this type. When the researchers asked them the question "Do you think you are a person who gets worried and nervous easily?" Seven students replied, "Yes." One of the students described his anxiety as follows: "Right now I am nervous when you (the researcher) are asking me, and I have no idea about what you will ask me" (Interview/ Student A1). This was a typical

student with anxious personality. He felt nervous even when he talked to the researcher in Mandarin Chinese. Students like this feel nervous in a variety of anxious-provoking situations. Their anxiety is a permanent state, which is a part of their personality.

Furthermore, pressure from students themselves and parents could also be the source of foreign language anxiety. Contrary to our expectation that students' pressure of English learning primarily came from teachers and classmates, a number of students felt that their pressure was from the demands they put on themselves (39.5%), and from parents' expectation (31.1%). Actually, students themselves and parents were two factors resulting in students' pressure, so the two sources can not be ignored.

Anxiety-Provoking Situations

In this study, there were five categories of anxiety-provoking situations found in our data. Tests and speaking in front of others are the two common anxiety-provoking situations. They have been widely discussed in previous studies and topped the categories in this study.

Data from the interviews revealed that tests provoked anxiety in most of the students. Most test-anxious students were nervous because of their low proficiency in English. Look at the following statement.

I will be nervous whenever there is a vocabulary test. I will think why it is so difficult. Why can't I do it? (Interview/Student A1)

The other reason was related to fear of negative evaluation. Students were afraid that their classmates laughed or ridiculed them if they had poor performance in tests, especially in oral tests. Here is the statement.

I will not be nervous, because in a written test all I have to do is to write down the answer. I will be nervous in an oral test, because I am afraid that classmates will say something about me. (Interview/Student H2)

Most test-anxious students were anxious in both oral and written tests, but they still had their preferences for test forms. Some preferred oral tests and some written ones. Generally speaking, students' English proficiency decided their preference. Those who had better proficiency in speaking preferred oral tests, while those who had

better proficiency in writing preferred pencil and paper tests.

To summarize, most students got anxious in test situations, where proficiency was a pivotal factor. Test anxiety appeared when students had low proficiency. When they were in low evaluative situations like games or activities, they went through less language anxiety.

Speaking English in front of others made many students nervous, too. Students were afraid that they could not respond appropriately or correctly in front of their classmates. Sometimes, their peers would laugh at them if they had poor performances. They do not want to lose face. Some students even said that speaking English in front of others made them more nervous than individual oral tests did. One student responded like this.

I am not afraid of oral tests. It is easy to answer the teacher's questions. Nobody except my teacher hears my answers. But if I have to answer the question in my seat, I am afraid that everyone will hear me and laugh at me. (Interview/Student G2)

It is obvious that speaking in front of others really resulted in some students' foreign language anxiety, and for some students, the influence of this kind of anxiety was even more serious than that of individual oral tests.

As for the other three categories of anxiety-provoking situations, spelling, incomprehensible input, and speaking to native English speakers, they were rather unique and seldom discussed in previous studies. First, many students responded that spelling was the most difficult part in English class. They got anxious every time they had to spell English words. The following is one of the statements.

The most difficult part of learning English is spelling. I am afraid that my teacher asks me to spell or to write down the words. (Interview/Student B2)

English spelling is a new task for these EFL students. It is not easy to master it in a short period of time. Teachers found that some students had difficulty recognizing English vocabulary. When they had to read or write, their language anxiety appeared because of their insufficient spelling ability. In order to lower students' anxiety in spelling, most of the teachers focused on the instruction of phonics.

Anxiety-provoking situations include the happening of incomprehensible input. Quite a many students said that they were nervous if they did not understand what their teachers were talking about. One of them gave the following response.

Suddenly, a language which I do not know comes out from the mouth of my English teacher. She says a lot of things at a high speed. I don't have any idea about what she is talking about. (Interview/Student B2)

In this study, we found that many students suffered from incomprehensible input. They were anxious because they did not know what their teachers were talking about. For some students, English was "a kind of language that I do not know," and the teacher was like a machine that produced the language at a high speed. According to the input hypothesis in the Natural Approach (Krashen & Terrell, 1998), learners acquire language by understanding input that is a little beyond their current level of competence. In order for learners to understand teachers' meaning, teachers have to not only control the speed of instruction language but also add visual aids or use extra-linguistic context. Using too much English was the first reason that caused incomprehensible input. Most EFL primary school learners in Taiwan do not have enough exposure to English. Too much English would definitely cause students' anxiety because they could not understand what their teachers were talking about. The other reason of incomprehensible input was the teachers' speaking speed. Speaking too fast in primary English class is not suitable. For beginners, before they were familiar with the speech and expressions of the new language, fast expressions from their teachers would only be meaningless utterances in students' ears. Being asked about the reason of her students' anxiety, a teacher said that her speaking speed might be the main reason.

My speed of speaking is too fast. I know that. Probably that's because I worked in a foreign company for a long time, and I am used to that. So I will slow down my speed in class. (Interview/Teacher B)

The last anxiety-provoking situation we found in this study was speaking to native English speakers. Most of the students did not have the experience of speaking to native English speakers. For those who had chances to speak to their native English

teachers, they were less nervous than those who did not. They adopted some practical ways to lower their anxiety. Here are some examples.

I play games or have free talks with foreign English teacher. Sometimes, I cannot understand him. I just say whatever I like, or just ignore it. Sometimes I will say some Mandarin, and the teacher knows it a little bit. (Interview/Student E2)

More experiences would effectively reduce their anxiety of speaking to native English speakers. As to those who had no experiences of speaking to native English speakers, when the researchers asked them how they would feel if they spoke to native English speakers, almost all of them said that they would be very nervous. Each of them imagined their embarrassment and expected some problems they would face. This phenomenon implies that the best way to reduce the learners' fear is to offer more chances to speak to native English speakers.

Reducing Students' Foreign Language Anxiety and Teachers' Awareness

In this study, many students said that they got nervous when they did not understand what their teachers said. Just as we have mentioned previously, using too much English as the instructional language could be one of the reasons that caused incomprehensible input. Surely, using English as the only instructional language in English class has an advantage in giving students more English input. However, it is still debatable if it really works in the present learning environment that the teaching time is limited and students' exposure to English is insufficient (Chan & Lin, 2002).

In answering the questionnaire about their preference of teachers' instructional language, the majority of the students (79.2%) said that they preferred "more English, and switch to Chinese in the difficult parts" or "half English and half Chinese." Basically, they agreed on the use of both Chinese and English. Only a small part of them chose "English all the time" (7.8%) or "more Chinese, and less English" (12.0%). The result from interviews agreed with that in questionnaires. For the students in this study, they were willing to listen to more English; however, they thought that some Chinese would do them good for their understanding. They knew they should listen to more English, but they also believed that Chinese was needed in certain conditions.

The following is one of their opinions.

I hope the teacher speaks more English and switches to Chinese when we don't understand. More English won't make me nervous if someone can explain it for me. (Interview/Student F1)

As to teachers, they thought that using English as the only instructional language was "good but not practical" (Interview/ Teacher E) in present primary school situations. Teachers described their unsuccessful experience as follows.

Half English and half Chinese is good. I tried my best to use all English before, but they just did not understand. (Interview/ Teacher F)

I have tried to use English, but I am often interrupted. The students will say, "What are you saying?", one after another for many times. You have to do a lot of actions to make them know what you are saying, but sometimes it's hard to do so. They become impatient, and the effect is poor. (Interview/ Teacher C)

Because of the above experiences of frustration, most teachers gave up using English only in class. Almost all the teachers agreed that half English and half Chinese was appropriate, and they also agreed that gradually increased use of English was good for students. In a word, the balance of using both English and Chinese as the instructional languages was widely accepted by teachers and students.

Although there is an obvious tendency of students' foreign language anxiety in this study, most teachers were not aware of it. In addition to the results of foreign language anxiety from questionnaires (97.57 in the FLCAS), most students in the interviews also indicated their foreign language anxiety in terms of sources and anxiety-provoking situations. However, when the teachers were asked, "Have you ever heard the issue of foreign language anxiety before this study?" most of the teachers' answer is "No." Only two of them had ever paid attention to this issue. Furthermore, when being asked their students' general situation of foreign language anxiety, most teachers felt that their students were either not anxious at all or only a little anxious in English class. Here are their answers.

No, not in my class. (Interview/Teacher E)

Do you mean they (the students) are anxious? Are they anxious? Really? (The teacher was quite doubtful about it.) (Interview/Teacher D)

For most of them, they are not anxious. (Interview/Teacher A)

Most teachers said that their students seldom talked to them about anxiety in learning English. Although most teachers thought the situation of their students' anxiety was not serious, some of them did notice their students' anxiety. Basically, teachers were capable of realizing their students' anxiety. However, in this study, only a small portion of them had awareness of students' anxiety in learning English. Since discussion between teachers and students about anxiety was apparently insufficient, more efforts to raise teacher's attention to the issue of foreign language anxiety are definitely needed.

Conclusion and Suggestions

While other studies of foreign language anxiety focused on either college or high school level, this study focused on primary school level and found obvious tendency of language anxiety in EFL primary school learners. We found six variables of English learning experiences that may affect anxiety level and a significant negative correlation between the score of FLCAS and students' final score. Moreover, several sources of language anxiety and anxious-provoking situations were discussed in this study, which deepened our understanding of foreign language anxiety and facilitated our efforts to reduce it.

Based on the findings of this exploratory study, some implications and suggestions are given as follows. First, we have to increase teachers' awareness of foreign language anxiety. Most teachers in this study did not think that their students were anxious. Obviously, teachers' awareness of foreign language anxiety is insufficient. It is necessary to increase teachers' awareness because foreign language anxiety is an important factor which affects students' learning. Second, it is important to deal with anxiety-provoking situations carefully. The anxiety-provoking situations we found in this study are the most direct factor that provokes students' anxiety. Completely avoiding all these anxiety-provoking situations is neither practical nor

helpful. We suggest that teachers carefully design teaching activities. Then, students will not perceive anxiety-provoking elements in the activities and the activities can reduce students' anxiety. Third, teachers should give more comprehensible input to their students. In order to provide more comprehensible input, teachers can slow down their speaking speed in class. In addition, teachers are responsible for finding their own patterns of instructional languages based on their students' proficiency, their teaching goals, and the objective conditions. In fact, most teachers in this study agreed on the balance of using both English and Chinese, which is useful when students have difficulty in understanding their teachers' English.

The results of this study show that the experience of taking extra course contributed to lower anxiety. Also, the more frequently the learners talked to native English speakers, the less anxious they were. Therefore, we encourage students to participate in any well-designed extra English activities that can promote students' familiarity with and proficiency in English. Besides, we also support students' sharing anxiety experience either between students, or between students and teachers. Actually, talking about feelings of English learning is helpful in reducing foreign language anxiety. As Horwitz (1999) indicated, "many students are relieved to learn that they are not the only ones experiencing anxiety about learning and using a foreign language". In addition, talking about concerns and fears about learning English also gives students chances to learn methods of handling anxiety both from their classmates and teachers.

As to the parents, we encourage them to get involved in their children's English learning. The results of the study showed that parents' encouragement and participation indirectly help lower their children's anxiety. Although parents can be a beneficial factor to lower anxiety, the parents in this study did not play the positive role. Learning English under pressure from parents and without parents' participation is definitely not good in reducing foreign language anxiety. In our opinion, parents can make the use of suitable ways to support their children's learning. After all, parents influence their children most. Appropriate encouragement from parents and parents' involvement will undoubtedly be able to reduce children's foreign language anxiety.

In this study, great differences among students in English proficiency and the limitation of English teaching time were two problems that most teachers confronted. Although these two problems may be related to anxiety, it is necessary to conduct

further studies to find out why and how they are related to young learners' foreign language anxiety. Second, games, parents, and extension EFL centers were the three controversial matters we found in this study. As one of the learners' favorite activities in English class, games both promote interest and provoke anxiety. Next, parents' expectation gave their children a great deal of pressure; however, they did not participate often in their children's English learning. Finally, extension EFL centers helped the students reduce anxiety, but they also cause the problem of great differences of English level between learners in school. The latter might leads to learners' anxiety. It is therefore valuable to find out the relationships between these three controversial matters and foreign language anxiety, because the findings definitely give us further understanding of foreign language anxiety.

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台北縣國小學生外語焦慮探究

詹餘靜、吳國成*

摘 要

在過去，外語學習焦慮之相關研究主要針對大學或中學學生，本研究則是首次針對台灣國小學童之外語學習焦慮及相關課題做深入探究。藉由問卷、訪談、課堂觀察及文件蒐集等多元化的資料來源，本研究探討之範圍包括國小學童之外語學習焦慮程度、外語學習焦慮和英語學習經驗及英語學習成就的關係、焦慮來源、引發焦慮之情境、降低外語學習焦慮之意見、及教師對外語學習焦慮之認知。

根據問卷分析，研究結果顯示台灣國小學童之外語學習焦慮傾向顯著，其外語課堂焦慮量表之平均總分及分項分數各達 97.57 及 2.96。而六種英語學習經驗相關之變因亦可能影響其外語學習焦慮程度。此外，研究結果也顯示，外語學習焦慮程度和英語學習成就之顯著負相關，此與之前的相關研究結果一致。其次，就本研究多元化的資料來源之總合分析而言，研究結果顯示低英語程度、負面評價恐懼、遊戲競爭性、焦慮個性、及來自自己和父母的壓力是構成外語學習焦慮的五個主要來源。此外，研究結果也顯示考試、在他人面前講英語、拼字、不可理解的語言輸入、和英語母語的外國人講話等五種情境，最容易引發外語學習焦慮。此外，參與本研究之師生均認為，在課堂上平衡使用英語及國語有助於降低焦慮。最後，此研究也發現教師對外語學習焦慮之認知不是十分足夠。依據上述之研究發現，本研究提出的建議事項包括：鼓勵教師增加對外語學習焦慮之認知、謹慎處理容易引發外語學習焦慮之情境、鼓勵教師增加對可理解的語言輸入之使用、鼓勵學生參與正課之外的英語活動、及鼓勵學生分享其焦慮經驗。根據本研究提出的研究發現及建議事項，不論學生、教師及家長都能據以增加其對外語學習焦慮之認知。由採取更佳的外語學習焦慮處理方式開始，進而創造一個

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關鍵字：以英語為外語之國小學生、外語焦慮、外語焦慮來源、引發焦慮之情境