



**FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY OF RURAL EFL JUNIOR
MIDDLE SCHOOL CHINESE STUDENTS: A CASE
STUDY OF A SCHOOL IN EAST CHINA**

**BY
MIN WANG**

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Abstract

Many Chinese EFL students experience anxiety in learning English as there are a number of pressures from teachers, parents, peers and society; in addition, the situation may be worse in rural schools. This study was conducted to explore these two questions: 1) what extent do the foreign language anxiety factors affect the rural junior middle school Chinese students? 2) What anxiety-reducing strategies should be suggested for the rural junior Chinese middle school students? The research participants included 110 students and 4 English teachers from a junior middle school in China. Data were collected through mixed methods. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) designed by Horwitz (1986) was adapted to collect quantitative data from the students to identify the level of foreign language anxiety factor that the students have, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with 9 students and 4 teachers to explore for anxiety-reducing strategies for the students.

The results of the FLCAS questionnaire showed that the English learning anxiety level of rural junior middle school Chinese students was moderate ($\bar{x}=3.26$), including the level of communication anxiety ($\bar{x}=3.26$), the level of test anxiety ($\bar{x}=3.28$), and the level of fear of negative evaluation ($\bar{x}=3.24$). The results of the semi-structured interviews revealed that the main factors of English learning anxiety among Chinese rural junior middle school students were student-related factors and teacher-related factors. Anxiety-reducing strategies for EFL learning were proposed from three perspectives: students, teachers, and parents.

(Total 146 pages)

Keywords: Chinese Rural Junior Middle School, English Anxiety Level, English Anxiety Factors, Anxiety-Reducing Strategies

Student's Signature Thesis Advisor's Signature

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Meaning
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
FLCAS	Foreign Language classroom anxiety scale
ELA	English learning anxiety
FLA	Foreign Language anxiety
IOC	Item Objective Congruence
SLA	Second language acquisition

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the research background, research questions, research objectives and research significance. It also includes other three sections that are the limitations of the study, the conceptual framework and the definition of terms.

1.1 Research Background

In the 21st century, with the pace of the work and life gradually accelerated, increasing pressure and anxiety on people. Chinese students also often feel anxious because of heavy schoolwork. Anxiety is called a negative emotion, which often has a negative influence on learners' learning outcomes. With the popularity of English in the world, China has been the country with the largest number of people learning English. The data from Baidu showed that more than 400 million people in China were learning English by 2021, but the learning outcome was not optimistic. Many studies have shown that the effect of second language acquisition was influenced by affective factors.

As early as 1985, Krashen postulated that the affective filter hypothesis that low motivation, low self-esteem, high anxiety level, introversion and can raise the affective filter and form a 'mental block' that prevents comprehensible input from being used for acquisition. The higher anxiety level, the deeper negative impact on second language acquisition. Horwitz, E., Horwitz, M., & Cope (1986) first put forward the concept of language anxiety and found that foreign language anxiety was negatively correlated with language performance.

Chinese researcher Yang (2016) used FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) to test 439 junior middle school students from Tanguan nine-year compulsory education school, and interviewed 10 students and 2 English teachers. She further confirmed that affective factors such as attitude, motivation and belief have an important impact on language learning, and anxiety was considered to be one of the most key affective variables in the journey of foreign language learning.

In 2011, interpretation of compulsory education English Curriculum Standard issued by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China clearly pointed out that the overall goal of the English curriculum was to enable students to form an initial comprehensive language application ability through English learning, promoted mental development and improved comprehensive humanistic quality. The formation of comprehensive language application ability was based on the overall development of language skills, language knowledge, emotional attitude, learning strategies and cultural awareness. It can be seen that affective factors play an important role in English learning.

With the promotion of quality education, Liu (2011) proposed that junior high school English teaching should also pay attention to the research in the field of emotion and pay attention to students' English learning anxiety.

Tian (2011) thought that the process of junior high school English teaching was the process of emotional education. How teachers cultivate students' interest in learning English of grammar teaching, instead of just emphasizing the acquisition of skills and knowledge, and realizing student-centered emotional education is a topic worth exploring. English learning anxiety is the key factor of learners' affective disorder and has an important impact on learners' academic performance and classroom performance.

At present, Chinese students' English learning anxiety is a common phenomenon. On the one hand, the 'teacher centered' teaching model has long been deeply rooted in our country. In order to catch up with the teaching progress and

improve various evaluation indicators, teachers have not or neglected to guide the students' psychology correctly or the guidance methods are inappropriate. In the process of English teaching, teachers do not pay enough attention to students' learning attitude and interest. In addition, the limitations of teachers' teaching skills and their teaching methods have led to negative emotions such as dislike and evasion of learners, and teachers failed to take effective measures for students whose interest in English learning declines in time.

On the other hand, students have spent a lot of time and energy on English learning, but their learning outcomes are not optimistic. The heavy pressure and low self-confidence have caused some students to feel anxious and tired of learning English, and some even escape or give up learning English. This incorrect understanding for English learning and the experience of failure in the past English learning have resulted in poor English performance of students. At the same time, the influence from the surroundings, such as the fierce competition among students, the high expectations of parents, and the high standard of the school, will hurt the students' self-esteem, resulting in the high level of anxiety, which will seriously affect the students' learning effect and mental health.

Therefore, how to alleviate students' English learning anxiety, cultivate students' interest in English learning, and enhance the learning effect has been an urgent problem in middle school English teaching, especially in junior high school.

However, the research participants involved in previous research studies about foreign language anxiety and second language acquisition are mostly college students. Foreign language anxiety is only studied as a small part of affective factors, and the research site always focus on urban schools. Researchers ignore that rural students' foreign language anxiety is more serious, especially junior middle school students.

Since the mid-1960s, English has been regarded as the first foreign language in China. After China implemented the reform and opening-up policy in 1978, China

has closer ties with the world. As a tool to communicate with the world, English has gradually been recognized and accepted by the Chinese people, and has begun to be popularized throughout the country. In Chinese middle schools, especially in urban junior middle schools, English is a compulsory course for students. In April 1986, China promulgated the law of the people's Republic of China on compulsory education. All middle schools in rural areas in China have set up English as a compulsory course. but the students' performance in English classroom is not optimistic.

Ren (2019) pointed out rural junior middle school students were not quite active participating in classroom using English, and the students were often nervous and unable to speak English. Zhan (2021) investigated 305 students and interviewed 18 teachers from Wuhe middle school and Duzhai middle school in Jingyuan County. It was concluded that there was a serious phenomenon of classroom silence in the English classroom of rural junior middle schools, of which the most important factor was foreign language anxiety.

At the same time, some researchers found that the foreign language anxiety of middle school students was more serious than primary students. Unfortunately, neither middle school teachers nor parents pay attention to students' foreign language anxiety, which was an important reason why students cannot effectively improve their English ability and teachers can not improve their teaching efficiency

There are few studies on foreign language anxiety of rural junior middle school students in English learning. For example, Chinese scholars Ren, Kang, & Hu (2011) conducted research on related subjects, with the research objects being high school students, Zhong (2015) conducted research on master's degree students in science and engineering, Li (2015) conducted research on studied non-English majors, Cheng, Zhang, & Wu (2018) conducted research studied Japanese majors and so on. Among the nearly 60 literatures referred by the author, a few researchers such as Li (2015), Yang (2016), Zhao (2019) and Zhan (2021) studied junior middle school students. Therefore, it is of great significance to focus on this specific topic in

research. In addition, the author wants to be a volunteer English teacher in rural areas of China for one year in the future. The research results of this topic will provide theoretical basis for the practical teaching. In the journey of teaching the author can also optimize the research content in the practical teaching and finally obtain reliable, objective and valuable research results.

1.2 Research Objectives

1.2.1 To examine the factors and identify the level of the factors affecting the foreign language anxiety of the rural junior Chinese middle school.

1.2.2 To explore anxiety-reducing strategies that should be used by the rural junior Chinese middle school students in this study.

1.3 Research Questions

1.3.1 To what extent do the foreign language anxiety factors affect the rural junior middle school Chinese students?

1.3.2 What anxiety-reducing strategies should be suggested for the rural junior Chinese middle school students?

1.4 Conceptual Framework

From Figure 1.1 the conceptual framework of this study following the purposes of the study to explore factors affecting Chinese students' foreign language anxiety and the anxiety-reducing strategies suggested by students and teachers. In this study, researcher used FLCAS to conduct a questionnaire survey with 110 research samples. Through the obtained quantitative data, the researcher examined factors and identify the current level of English learning anxiety of rural junior middle school students in China, which including the level of students' English learning anxiety, and the relationship among students' English learning anxiety level and gender, grade, personality, whether left behind children. One week after the questionnaire, the

researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with volunteer students and volunteer teachers, and analyzed the influencing factors of students' English learning anxiety through the content analysis for qualitative data. Finally, the data of quantitative analysis and the results of qualitative analysis were integrated, the researcher then put forward the solutions of English learning anxiety in the context of rural junior middle school in China.

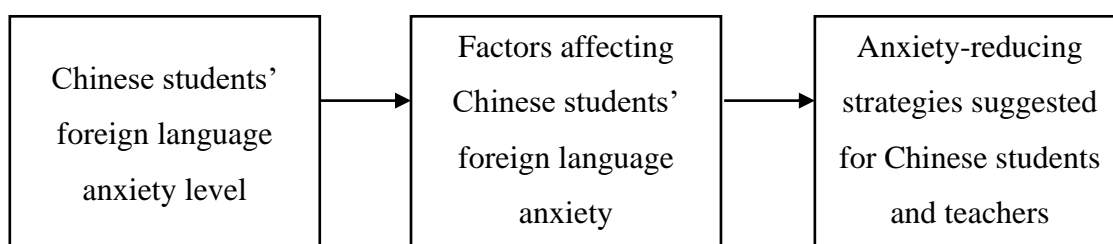


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

1.5 Research Significance

For Students: This study provides effective anxiety-reducing strategies for rural junior middle school students' English learning. These strategies can help enhance students' confidence in English learning, stimulate students' interest in English learning, and improve the outcomes of English learning. The solutions of the study are helpful to alleviate students' anxiety in English classroom, enable them to speak actively in class, and improve their oral English expression ability. In English tests, students' final test scores will not be affected by anxiety.

For Teachers: The study helps some English teachers who from rural junior middle school of China understand their students' current English anxiety level and makes teachers recognize the negative relationship between students' English learning anxiety and achievement, so as to pay more attention to students' emotion in the process of English learning, and pay attention to students' English learning anxiety. The study also analyzes the causes of students' English learning anxiety and puts forward some strategies. Based on the results of the study, teachers can set reasonable

and effective teaching plans, change frozen teaching ideas and invalid teaching methods, so as to improve the efficiency of English teaching.

For Parents: This study provides parents with the factors for their children's ELA from the parents and how parents can help their children to reduce their ELA. The results of this study make parents aware of their children's anxiety in learning English and that the ELA have a negative impact on English outcomes. That will make parents aware of the importance of family environment, parental behavior, etc. on English learning anxiety, which will encourage parents to cooperate with teachers to help their children reduce their English learning anxiety so that their children can achieve positive English outcomes.

For Researchers: This study expands the research field of vision on English learning anxiety. At present, the scope of research on this topic is mainly focused on college students, urban students, etc. and few studies pay attention to the English learning anxiety of rural junior middle school students. The study will provide effective research basis for other researchers and the results of the study can also be used as a reference for other researchers. It can be used to compare the English learning anxiety of junior middle school students in other regions, so that researchers can obtain objective and meaningful research results.

1.6 Limitation of The Study

1.6.1 The subjects of this study are 110 students from Da Dong junior middle school in Huai'an City, Jiangsu Province. As we all know, China has a vast territory, and the education level and students' English learning level in the East, South, West and North regions are different. Therefore, the results of this study may not be applied to all rural junior middle school students in China.

1.6.2 This study only investigated the students of Da Dong junior middle school for a period of time, and did not continuously track or understand the follow-up learning status of students, so the results of the studies may need to be carefully applied.

1.7 Definitions of Terms

EFL is an abbreviation for English as a foreign language that refers to a term used to describe non-native speakers learning English in countries where English is not the main language. In this study, EFL is the English that rural junior middle school Chinese students are learning.

Foreign Language Anxiety refers to a complex feeling of nervous, uneasy, fear and anxiety when learners learning or speaking a second language or foreign language. In this study, foreign language anxiety refers to English learning anxiety, which is a significant self-perception, belief and emotional complex related to classroom learning and produced in the process of language learning. Based on the requirements of this study, the researcher revised the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale designed by Horwitz et al. (1986) to test students' foreign language anxiety level. The scale divides English learning anxiety into three dimensions, including anxiety communication, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety. See Appendix A for details. The different definitions and classifications of foreign language anxiety are specifically elaborate in chapter two.

Rural Junior Middle School Students refer to students studying in rural junior middle schools (Liu, 2019). This study defines rural junior middle school students as students studying in Da Dong junior middle school in Huai'an City, Jiangsu Province. The teaching resources, ideas and teachers' skills of this school are not as good as those of urban schools.

Left-Behind Students refer to children under the age of 16 who has to live apart from their parents and entrust other relatives to take care of them when their parents have been working in other cities for a long time (Jiang (2006). In this study, left-behind students refer to Da Dong junior middle school students whose parents or any of them live separately from their children for a long time due to their work.

The current level of the anxiety refers to the current level of English learning anxiety of Chinese rural junior middle school students, which including the overall English learning anxiety level, communication anxiety level, fear of negative evaluation level and test anxiety level. In addition, the relationship between students' gender, grade, performance, personality, whether they are left behind children and English learning anxiety level is also included in the current level of anxiety in this study.

English Learning Anxiety Factors refer to the conditions that promote or prevent things from happening, and the factors that make the people who have been affected changed. In this study, factors refer to the causes of EFL learning anxiety of rural junior middle school Chinese students, including factors of communication anxiety, factors of test anxiety and factors of negative evaluation anxiety. These factors may be the students' English learning proficiency, English learning attitude, teachers' teaching methods and school environment, etc.

Anxiety-Reducing Strategies refer to the solutions and methods used to deal with problems, so as to alleviate the English learning anxiety of rural junior middle school Chinese students, including reducing-strategies of communication anxiety, reducing-strategies of test anxiety, and reducing-strategies of the fear of negative evaluation. The researcher gets solutions from different directions based on the factors found from research question 1.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter elaborates on the definition and classification of anxiety and foreign language anxiety, reviews the current situation, influencing factors, anxiety-reducing strategies and relevant research and studies of students' foreign language anxiety from Chinese rural junior middle school, and finally summarizes the chapter according to the contents of literature reviewed by the researcher.

2.1 Anxiety

This section introduces the definition of anxiety from the perspective of Chinese scholars and foreign scholars. According to these different definitions, the researcher will synthesize the information and justify the information to be used in this research. Then, introducing different types of anxiety by the research theories.

2.1.1 Definition of anxiety

Anxiety belongs to the category of psychology, that is an important affective factor. Kierkegaard (1844) first conducted an in-depth study on anxiety. In his article, he clearly pointed out that anxiety was the inevitable psychological experience when people face free choice. The emergence of anxiety is related to the formation and development of people's self-consciousness. Spielberger (1976) also thought anxiety could spontaneously activate the mental system, that was a subjective feeling of tension, fear and uneasiness. Arnold (1999) proposed that anxiety could lead to people's bad psychological state. With a series of negative emotions, such as restlessness, anxiety, self-doubt and tension, it was one of the important factors blocking people's learning. Although his definition of anxiety was convincing, the

researcher think that this definition is imperfect. As early as 1960, Alpert and Haber had divided anxiety into facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety. Anxiety has both negative and positive effects on learning. Kosslyn & Rosenberg (2005) defined anxiety as a kind of intense and rapid anxiety and fear, as well as psychological activities and behaviors that try to get rid of this emotion.

In general, foreign scholars defined anxiety as a kind of psychological state, psychological experience and subjective feeling, and they rarely mention that individual reaction and behavior under the anxiety state.

Chinese researchers Wang and Wan's (2001) definition of anxiety was quite interesting and related to the current context of the junior middle school in China. They defined anxiety as the nervous and phobic emotional state formed by the frustration of some people's self-confidence or the increase of their sense of failure and guilt, because individuals cannot achieve the expectation or overcome the threat of obstacles. Anxiety may be a psychological state that will disappear with the passage of time, or it may become a personality trait or psychological trait due to repeated occurrence.

Guo and Wang (2007) believed that anxiety includes different emotions such as restless, nervousness, fear and anxiety. In case of anxiety, there may be reactions such as rapid heartbeat, increased blood pressure, even shaking, dizziness and sweating. Jia (2010) defined anxiety as a complex emotional state, which is composed of tension, anxiety, restless, worry, fear, expectation and other feelings.

According to many definitions of previous researchers, the researcher believe that anxiety is not only relate to psychological reactions, such as psychological stress, anxiety, insecurity and tension, but also relate to physiological reactions, such as mouth felt completely dry, a tremendous pressure on chest, a cold sweat, trembling and anorexia.

2.1.2 Classification of anxiety

Based on the difference of research perspective, research participants and research type, the classification of anxiety by Chinese and foreign scholars is quite different. The author gives five examples which are Freud Sigmund (1899), Rollo May (1950), Alpert & Haber (1960), Ellis (1994) and Chinese scholar Pi (2009). See the table 2.1 for details.

Table 2.1 Classification of anxiety

Researcher	Anxiety type
Freud Sigmund (1899) According to psychoanalysis and subconscious theory	Realistic anxiety
	Nervous anxiety,
	Moral anxiety
Rollo May (1950) According to Existentialism theory	Normal anxiety
	Neurotic anxiety
Alpert& Haber (1960) According to the influence of anxiety on students' learning in the process of language learning	Facilitating anxiety
	Debilitating anxiety
Ellis (1994) According to the characteristics of people with language anxiety	Trait anxiety
	State anxiety
	Situation-specific anxiety
Pi (2009) Learning anxiety	Normal anxiety
	Allergic anxiety

Source: Researcher, 2023

In the classification of anxiety by five researchers, Ellis (1994) and Alpert & Haber (1960) are the most classic.

Alpert and Haber (1960) proposed that anxiety has both negative and positive effects on learning. According to the influence of anxiety on students' learning in the

process of language learning, he divided anxiety into facilitating anxiety and debilitating anxiety.

Facilitating anxiety accelerates the language learners to promote a way to conquer the new learning tasks and wipe off or retard their feelings of anxiety. The facilitating anxiety could help learners to learn actively, cultivate their determination to learn English, and made students try to prove themselves, but learners need to grasp the appropriate level of anxiety (Tran, Baldauf, & & Moni, 2013a). The study of Coryell & Clark (2009) also found that facilitating anxiety could promote Spanish learners to work harder. Ellis (1994) found that facilitating anxiety can help learners overcome anxiety.

Kleinmann (1977) proposed that anxiety could also promote learning. In a recent study, Park & French (2013) noted that students with higher anxiety level measured by FLCAS obtained higher scores than students with lower anxiety level when investigating gender differences in foreign language anxiety. Bell & McCallum (2012) believed that these findings supported the view of facilitating anxiety.

Debilitating anxiety is called harmful anxiety. Researchers have a consensus that debilitating anxiety has a negative impact on people's academic performance (Horwitz et al., 1986; Oxford, 1999; MacIntyre, 1999; Xiang 2015). Oxford (1999) proposed debilitating anxiety has a negative impact on people's academic performance in many aspects. The impact happens both indirectly and directly. In the indirect way, the impact happens by worrying and lacking confidence. In the direct way, the impact happens through reducing participation and producing obvious avoidance of the language. For example, Horwitz et al. (1986) found that students with high anxiety often absence and delayed homework. At the same time, harmful anxiety could be connected with reducing motivation, passive attitudes and beliefs, and disability in using language. Williams (1997) pointed out that the standard of the difference between the two kinds of anxiety was the anxiety level. Low anxiety level could promote learning and high anxiety level would block learning.

According to the characteristics of people with language anxiety, Ellis (1994) divided anxiety into three different areas, which are trait anxiety, situation-specific anxiety and state anxiety.

Trait anxiety is defined as more permanent predisposition to be anxious. It is a general personality trait and a stable predisposition. When a person has a permanent anxiety intention, the trait perspective would be occurred (Scovel, 1978). It was a personality trait of a person who was naturally prone to anxiety, and may occur under any circumstances. MacIntyre & Gardner (1991) believed that trait anxiety would affect individual cognitive function, which meant that trait anxiety would destroy individual memory, leading to avoidance behavior and other effects. Those with higher trait anxiety would feel more anxious in many different situations or at any time. They were anxious about many things, which was predictable.

Situation-specific anxiety is the anxiety aroused by specific situations or things, such as speaking and exam anxiety. Spielberg (1983) pointed out that situation specific anxiety was a reaction to a specific situation at a specific time. The situation-specific anxiety was a unique form of anxiety, which inevitably occurred in a specific situation over time (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Learning foreign language was related to situational anxiety, which was related to specific situation (Oxford & Ehrman, 1992). This just proved the opinion of MacIntyre and Gardner that the situational perspective was the best research method for FLA, because language learners would feel anxiety in different situations in the classroom.

State anxiety as apprehension that is experienced at a particular moment in time as a response to a definite situation. State anxiety can be considered a kind of trait anxiety, which only happens in specific situation. Besides, it is also seen as a combination of trait anxiety and situational anxiety. Young (1998) also defined state anxiety as a feeling of tension, which could change over time and fluctuate in severity. It was a state, which referred to the feeling of fear at a moment, such as, before an exam, when encountering an emergency, a moment of fear occurred, that emphasized the emotional state at a time or a moment.

To sum up, anxiety has been classified into different categories based on different research perspectives, research participants and types of research. The classification of anxiety came from Alpert and Haber (1960) who categorized anxiety into facilitating and debilitating anxiety and Ellis (1994) who categorized anxiety into trait anxiety, situation-specific anxiety, and state anxiety, which are the two classifications of the most common and referenced by most people.

2.2 Foreign Language Anxiety

This section introduces the definition of foreign language anxiety from the perspective of Chinese and foreign scholars, and foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS) designed by Horwitz et al. (1986).

2.2.1 Definition of foreign language anxiety

Foreign language anxiety is an anxiety response produced in a specific environment and a unique anxiety in language learning. In this paper foreign language anxiety refers to English learning anxiety, because the research objects are Chinese students and English is a compulsory subject for Chinese students.

In 1973, Brown published an article on affective variables in second language acquisition in the *Journal of language learning*, which marked that the research on language anxiety officially entered the stage of foreign language teaching research.

From the specific situation, Horwitz and Young (1991) defined foreign language anxiety as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process. In this way, language anxiety is clearly defined as the special anxiety generated in the language classroom context and only related to foreign language learning.

MacIntyre and Gardner (1993) found that many native English students thought that foreign language classes make them more anxious than other classes. Therefore, language anxiety was clearly defined as the feeling of tension and anxiety that had a special relationship with the second language learning context. The author found that

Aida (1994) combined with the definition of foreign language anxiety by Horwitz et al. (1986) and he put forward that foreign language anxiety was a unique anxiety generated in the process of foreign language learning, with obvious fear and nervous self-consciousness, feelings, beliefs and behaviors.

Oxford (1999) thought that foreign language anxiety refers to the emotional factors produced in foreign language learning, which emphasize the fear or uneasiness of individuals when expressing themselves in a foreign language or a second language.

The research on English learning anxiety in China began in 1999. Qian published a journal entitled *Anxiety of foreign students when learning Chinese at Peking University*. After that, Wang and Wan first put forward the definition of foreign language anxiety in 2001, language anxiety refers to a kind of fear experienced by an individual without fully mastering a foreign language he has learned.

Li (2004) defined foreign language anxiety as fear or uneasiness when learners expressed themselves in the target language. Jiang and He (2010) believe that foreign language anxiety was the psychological state of worry, vexation, depression and fear of making mistakes that learners show in the process of language learning. Yi (2011) defined English learning anxiety as reactions to various negative emotions and combination of psychological discomfort.

To sum up, foreign language anxiety has the following characteristics. Firstly, foreign language anxiety was a kind of anxiety, a special psychological state belonging to the category of psychology. Secondly, foreign language anxiety refers to a specific emotional state produced by individuals in the process of language learning,

which was closely related to personality traits. Thirdly, foreign language anxiety refers to a negative emotion when individuals face situations that they couldn't cope with in the process of language learning, which has a great relationship with the learning environment of students. Finally, foreign language anxiety refers to a kind of negative emotion of fear and uneasiness when individuals worried that they couldn't use target language to express their own opinion accurately, which would reduce students' enthusiasm for foreign language learning in the long run.

2.2.2 Foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS)

In order to reasonably test foreign language anxiety, Horwitz et al. (1986) designed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which consists of 33 questions. The FLCAS project adopts the 5-point Likert scale, and the score range from 1 to 5 represents strongly agree to strongly disagree. They divided anxiety into three dimensions which are communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation.

Communication apprehension is a kind of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety about communication with people. Communication anxiety could be associated with foreign language anxiety because it was a situational anxiety related to communication and oral expression (Argaman & AbuRabia, 2002; MacIntyre & Gardner 1989).

Test anxiety means that students worry too much about the test and worry about not doing well in the test (Horwitz et al., 1986, p.127).

Fear of negative evaluation as an apprehension about others' evaluation avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would not evaluate oneself negatively (Horwitz et al., 1986, p.127).

FLCAS is the most commonly used scale to measure foreign language learning anxiety. It can not only measure the anxiety level of middle school students in

the process of foreign language learning, but also measure the differences in all aspects of anxiety in foreign language learning. Foreign researchers all adopted FLCAS to test students' foreign language anxiety level in traditional foreign language classroom (Aida, 1994; Kim, 2009; Gregersen, MacIntyre, & Meza, 2014). At the same time, Chinese scholars Wang Qi and Ding (2001; Tang, 2021; Li, 2015; Yang, 2013; Yang, 2016; Chang, 2018) all adopted FLCAS and proved the FLCAS has great validity and reliability.

2.3 Theories Related of Foreign Language Anxiety

According to the current research results in the field of education, humanistic learning theory and Krashen's affective filter hypothesis provide necessary theoretical support for exploring the current situation of junior high school students' English learning anxiety, the influencing factors of English learning anxiety and the strategies of students' English learning anxiety.

2.3.1 Humanistic learning theory

Humanistic psychology arose in the United States in the 1950s-1960s. It advocated taking people as the core and paying more attention to people's high-level psychological activities, such as enthusiasm, self-esteem, life, belief, etc. Some theories proposed by the humanistic psychology school had a great impact on the field of education and language teaching. Humanistic learning theory is one of the mainstream theories that combine modern education theory with practice system. The main representatives are Combs, Maslow and Rogers.

First of all, regarding the essence of learning, Combs (1959) proposed that personal perception was closely related to their learning behavior. In the process of learning, teachers not only teach students learning knowledge and life skills, but also pay attention to students' emotional demands, so that students can develop in a balanced way in cognition and emotion, so as to shape a sound personality.

Secondly, in terms of learning motivation, Maslow (1954) proposed that demands of human were like a ladder, and there are seven levels from high to low. Among them, the needs at the bottom of the ladder included the needs of physiology, safety, belonging, love and respect. When the individual's life needs were met to a certain extent, the individual would continue to pursue the three high-level needs above, including the needs of knowledge, beauty and self-realization. Therefore, everyone needs to be respected, praised and recognized by others and society. The needs are particularly important for students in the period of self-image formation.

Finally, as for the principle of learning, Rogers (1969) elaborated the important principle of adhering to free learning in his book *freedom of learning*. Under appropriate environment, the natural tendency and intrinsic motivation of individual learning can be fully released. Learning was meaningful when learners realize that what they learned was related to their own knowledge, experience or purpose. Every student should get the teacher's unconditional and active attention. Teachers should respect students' emotional needs, create a learning atmosphere of mutual understanding, mutual tolerance and cooperation for students, and minimize external threats. It was necessary to created contexts that the actual situation of students in the process of learning, so that students can devote themselves to meaningful learning and let children learn by doing. When students participate in the learning process actively and spontaneously, great learning results would be produced.

Chinese researcher Yang (2015) proposed the viewpoint advocated by the humanistic learning theory that 'people-oriented' was very suitable for the current education idea in China. English teaching should be student-centered, and the learning is a process of combining cognition and emotion. English teaching for junior middle school emphasizes that students should actively participate in teaching activities. The more active students are, the better the teaching effect will be. He believes that teachers should adopt the idea of humanistic learning theory, cultivate students' interest in English, provide suitable English material for students, let students learn English related to real life in a relaxed and pleasant environment, lay a good

foundation for students' future life, and train them to be talents with all-round development.

Chen (2021) thought that the concept of 'people-oriented' advocated by the humanistic learning theory has had a great impact on English Teaching in Chinese middle schools, especially in terms of emotion and cognition. Teachers should play a leading role, cultivate students' learning motivation, stimulate students' interest in learning, create a relaxed learning atmosphere, and help students overcome negative emotions such as anxiety and low self-confidence in English learning. No matter teachers or students, only by controlling their emotions can the teaching work proceed successfully. Anyway, teachers should take the humanistic learning theory as the basis in the teaching process, combine the teaching situation and the students' learning situation, and help students improve their English learning effect.

To sum up, humanistic learning theory emphasizes the important role of affective factors in language learning, opposes the traditional 'Teacher centered' teaching method, and advocates the 'learner centered' teaching mode. This theory holds that learners are the core of learning. Teachers should organically combine classroom teaching with students' interests and needs, create a relaxed, comfortable and pleasant classroom learning atmosphere for students, and encourage students to actively participate in classroom activities to improve their comprehensive language ability in practice.

In this way, students' enthusiasm for learning can be improved, their self-confidence can be enhanced, their anxiety about English learning can be alleviated, the effective input of language can be promoted, and great learning outcomes can be obtained. Therefore, in order to reduce students' anxiety, teachers should establish the teaching ideal of 'learner centered', create a low anxiety learning atmosphere for students, and encourage students to actively display their personality in classroom activities.

2.3.2 Krashen's affective filter hypothesis

In 1977, Dulay and Burt first proposed the 'affective filter hypothesis', which mainly explained how foreign language learning is affected by learners' affective factors. They defined affective filter as learners cannot get enough language input because of the affective factors, which is a subconscious internal processing system (Dulay & Burt, 1977).

Krashen (1985) developed this theory on this basis. The affective filter hypothesis was one of the five hypotheses of Krashen's second language acquisition theory. He thought that affective factors were a kind of adjustable filter, which affected language input. If the affective role was well played, language input could freely reach the learners' brain, and the process of language acquisition could be proceeded successfully. If there were some affective factors that are not conducive to learning, the affective filter will prevent the language input from reaching the brain, and the learner cannot acquire the language. Therefore, it can be seen that second language acquisition not only comprehensible language input but also the affective factors of learners should be taken into account.

Affective filter is an intermediary between comprehensible input and second language acquisition. We can also regard 'affective filter' as a psychological barrier. Due to the influence of affective factors, each learner's affective filtering degree will be different. Krashen proposed three important affective factors that affect second language acquisition, which are motivation, self-esteem and anxiety. If learners have high motivation, strong self-esteem and low anxiety, their affective filtering degree will be low and they can better acquire language. If learners have low motivation, low self-confidence and high anxiety, their degree of emotional filtering will be high.

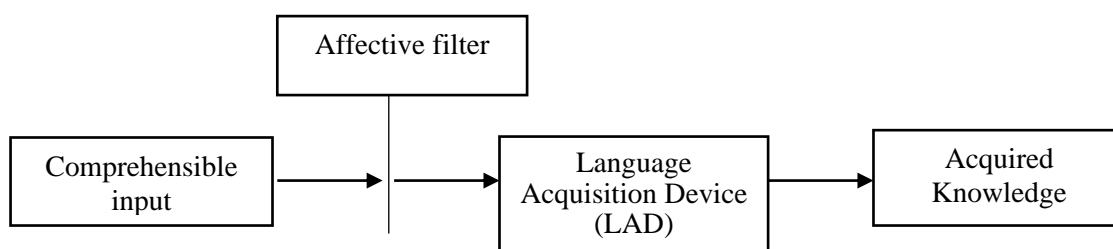


Figure 2.1 Krashen's affective filter hypothesis

Source: Krashen, 1985

We can see from the above figure that if language input wants to reach the language acquisition device successfully, it must pass through the affective filter. We regard the 'affective disorder' as a wall. When the 'language input' encounters it, it will be affected by the reaction of the "affective disorder". Some of the "language input" will bounce back. In this way, the learners will not get all the 'language input' and affect the effect of language learning. If language input receives positive feedback from affective disorder, learners can get a great outcome of language acquisition. Therefore, English teachers must pay attention to the reaction of affective disorder while 'language input'. Especially for junior middle school students, they are in the formation period of their outlook on life and world outlook, and are easy to be emotional. Their English learning anxiety level greatly affects their learning interest and effect.

Chinese researcher Huang (2012) found that Krashen's affective filter hypothesis has extremely important guiding and practical significance for English teaching reform in China. Affective factors play a great role in English learning. The purpose of foreign language learning is to learn to communicate in a foreign language, and communication cannot be separated from emotion. In addition to paying attention to students' Applied Intelligence and communication skills, teachers should also pay attention to students' emotional level. Teachers should also adjust students' psychological and emotional state, help learners establish confidence, correct attitude, clarify motivation, eliminate anxiety, and get better English Acquisition.

Wen (2020) found that Krashen's affective filter hypothesis is helpful to the improvement of English teachers' teaching level. Through affective teaching, teachers can eliminate students' negative emotions and regulate students' emotional state in the process of learning English, so as to obtain better English learning results. She thought that the affective filter hypothesis is really enlightening to the current English teaching, and she put forward some affective teaching strategies. For example, creating a relaxed classroom atmosphere and strengthen students' learning motivation; Explore the advantages of students and improve their self-confidence; Establish an equal relationship between teachers and students and create a harmonious classroom atmosphere.

2.4 Foreign Language Anxiety of Rural Junior Middle Scholl Students

2.4.1 Current situation of foreign language anxiety of rural middle school students

The research results from Horwitz et al. (1986), Aida (1994) and more than 20 Chinese researchers showed that Chinese and foreign students both had a certain degree of foreign language anxiety, and the foreign language anxiety level of Chinese rural middle school students was medium and high. Among them, Tang (2021), Zhao (2019) and Yang (2013) found the foreign language anxiety of Chinese rural middle school students was a medium level. Zhan (2021), Li (2015), Yang (2016), Peng (2017) and Wang (2001) all believed that students' foreign language anxiety level was high. According to the data from FLCAS designed by Horwitz et al. (1986), the fear of negative evaluation level of rural junior middle school Chinese students was highest (Tang, 2021; Peng, 2017). A questionnaire that the communication anxiety level of rural junior middle school Chinese students was the highest (Wang & Ding, 2001; Zhang, 2009; Li, 2020). The research results of Zhao (2019) showed that the test anxiety level of rural junior middle school Chinese students was highest.

From the researcher's perspective, the differences of research results were related to research locations and research participants. For example, the research site of Zhao (2019) was northeast China, and people in northeast China were more

outgoing than those in the south, so their communication anxiety level and fear of negative evaluation level were low, while the research site of Tang (2021) was southwest China, where people's personality traits were relatively shy and the level of fear of negative evaluation was higher.

Wang & Ding (2001) also pointed out that the anxiety level of students with poor or average performance was higher than that of students with great performance, which positively indicated that the foreign language anxiety of rural junior middle school students was negatively related to their performance and the results were consistent with (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre, 1999; Tallon & Luo, 2010; Marwan, 2016), that was, students with low anxiety level had better performance, while students with high anxiety level had bad performance. Yang (2017) and Huang (2019) also proved this view through their survey of rural junior middle school students in China. Fang (2017) and Luo (2018) used Horwitz's FLCAS to investigate junior middle school students showed that the three dimensions of anxiety were also negatively related to English learning achievements.

In addition, Zhao (2014) also found that the grade and gender of students were related to their English anxiety level. This found was very interesting, because Li (2015) and Yang (2013) also mentioned that foreign language anxiety of Chinese rural junior middle school students was related to grade. They pointed out that in rural junior middle Chinese schools, the anxiety level of students from senior grades was higher than that of students from lower grades. As early as 1997, Li surveyed 809 Chinese junior middle school students and found that the anxiety level of students would gradually increase with age. Shi (2001), He (2005) and Gao (2006) conducted a questionnaire survey on 1994 students from rural junior middle school and urban school respectively. The research results were consistent with Li's opinion, that was, the higher the grade of junior middle school students, the higher the level of foreign language anxiety, and the highest level of foreign language anxiety among students in grade 9. They also found that there was a difference between the test anxiety level and gender, and the test anxiety level of boys was higher than that of girls.

Zhang (2009) investigated 87 Chinese junior middle school students found that boys' test anxiety level was higher than girls', and girls' fear of negative evaluation was higher than boys. The researchers found that the anxiety level of boys was higher than that of girls in their investigation of the overall anxiety level of English learning (Da, 2005; Song, 2011; Li 2015; Yang, 2016; Wang & Ding, 2001; Yang, 2013). These findings showed that there was a significant correlation between students' gender and foreign language anxiety, and boys' foreign language anxiety level was higher than girls. However, few researchers have analyzed the relationship between the three dimensions of communication anxiety, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation and gender, grade, and performance, which was a problem worthy of in-depth study.

Tran, Baldauf, & Moni (2013b) mentioned that learners' EFL learning ability, EFL learning attitude, previous English learning experience and some other psychological factors would affect students' foreign language anxiety. Chinese researcher Wang (2014) found in the study that the personality traits among the internal factors of rural junior middle school students had a significant impact on the level of EFL learning anxiety. Chang (2018) conducted a questionnaire survey on 121 students in grade one and grade two of Jilin middle school, interviewed 4 English teachers, and studied by classroom observation and confirmed Wang's opinion. She found that students with average performance tended to be introverted, and their English anxiety level was higher than that of other students. This research result also showed two key points: 1. students with average performance tended to be higher anxiety levels; 2. students were introverted had higher anxiety level.

The personality traits of left-behind children in rural junior middle schools in China were introversion, inferiority, loneliness and 's more anxious than other students (Liu, 2021; Zhao, 2013). Yang (2016) also found that the English learning anxiety level of left-behind children in rural areas was higher than that of other rural children and rural children whose mothers are at home have the highest anxiety level. However, few researchers pay attention to this problem. The author hoped that teachers, parents and educators should pay more attention to left-behind children in English learning.

On February 27, 2008, the National Research Report on the situation of left-behind children in rural junior middle schools gave the most authoritative definition of it, that was, minors under 17 years old who had both or one of their parents moving from rural areas to other areas, and whose children stayed in their registered residence, and couldn't live with their parents. To sum up, several key points of left-behind children in rural junior middle schools are rural junior middle schools, junior middle school students over the age of 17, and their parents are not around them. In 2018, the data from Chinese Women's Federation that there were about 61 million left-behind children, including 6.97 million left-behind children in rural junior middle schools. This huge number reminds the whole society to pay more attention to left-behind children.

In general, the differences of foreign language anxiety among rural middle school students are mainly reflected in whether the students' anxiety level is medium or high, and the relationship between foreign language anxiety and students' grade, gender, academic performance and whether they are left behind children.

2.4.2 Causes of foreign language anxiety of rural junior middle school students

Different influencing factors are proposed by researchers because of different research objects. Karen Moni and others (2013) categorized the factors of FLA into four groups: learner-related factors, teacher-related factors, the nature of English learning and external factors. In relevant studies, these factors represent almost all foreign language anxiety factors. Karen Moni and others (2013) taking 419 non-English majors in Vietnam University as samples, and through students' autobiography and interviews with teachers and students, concluded that learner-related factors are the most causes of foreign language anxiety, followed by external factors, teacher factors and the nature of foreign language learning.

The learner-related factors can be categorized into four subcategories: English learning ability, attitude to English learning, prior negative English learning

experience and some psychological factors. EFL learning ability has been proved to be most closely related to FLA. External factors include school factors, family factors and contextual factors, of which school factors were the most factors. Teacher-related factors that caused students' anxiety were related to teachers' behaviors and professional skills. Behavior-related anxiety tended to cause temporary anxiety, while professional skill related anxiety tended to cause long-term anxiety when students think of their consequences. The nature of foreign language learning was the complexity of foreign language, which was considered unimportant. Due to their subjects are college students, the researchers also put forward the hypothesis that foreign language anxiety may be more influenced by teachers or other external factors, especially family factors, in low level foreign language learning.

Weng (1988) investigated 84 English majors found that their foreign language anxiety was caused by fear of making mistakes (psychological factors), poor memory (EFL learning ability) and fear of failure or poor performance (FEL learning attitude). Littlewood (1990) proposed that many factors could led to FLA, not only learning environment but also learners. Young (1991) believed that there may be six kinds of factors that caused anxiety, which include both internal and external factors. He summarized teacher-related factors as external causes. The reasons from learners were interna factors, such as students' motivation, emotional status, attribution of success or failure in learning, etc. These factors had a direct impact on students' self-confidence and self-worth (Liao, 2004). Psychological factors among learner-related factors have proved to be an important factor influencing FLA, such as fear of emotion, fear of negative comments, fear of speaking English and asking questions in class, worry, tension, inferiority, etc (Witternborn, Larsen, & Mogil, 1946; Huo, 2009; Wang, 2003; Lin and Wu 2010). EFL learning ability and attitude of learners were also important factors for English learning anxiety. Jin and Yu (2009) compared the performance of 23 senior high school students in the English classroom. The study showed that students' English learning level and low motivation would cause FLA. Du and Liu (2009) also found that the weak English learning level of senior high school students could produce high anxiety levels.

Huo (2009) believed that students' evaluation of their foreign language ability would also affect students' English learning anxiety. According to Gardner and Macintyre (1993) that the correlation between students' anxiety level and French scores was lower than that between students' anxiety level and self-rating. Anxious students may underestimate their actual language level (Horwitz, 2010). Stephenson and Hewitt (2010) supported this point by finding that anxious students' actual test scores were better than they expected. However, this underestimation of proficiency could be seen as a negative effect of anxiety, which may reduce their confidence in using a foreign language. Guo and Xu (2014) also found through their research on college students that students' lack of confidence in themselves, worry about exams and worry about the accuracy of using foreign languages could cause students' anxiety. In addition, Huo (2009) also proposed that prior failure experiences could also lead to foreign language learning anxiety, but this factor could be ignored (Tran, Baldauf, & Moni, 2013a).

Young (1991) believed that how teachers treat language teaching, the way of communication between teachers and students, classroom activities and foreign language tests were all reasons for foreign language anxiety. Adler (1987) also proposed that teachers' teaching methods and organizational forms of teaching activities could cause students' anxiety. The single teaching method led to the decline of students' English listening ability and increased the foreign language anxiety level of senior high school students (Chen, 2004). These researchers all paid attention to the influence of teachers' teaching skills on students' FLA. The research data of Phillpis (1992) proved that teachers' overemphasis on the competition among students in the process of organizing classroom activities would cause students' anxiety. Besides, the students were instructed by the teacher to speak in public and excessive correction and criticism would also cause anxiety, which belongs to teachers' improper teaching behavior. Tang (2006) analyzed the causes of students' anxiety in English learning, including teachers' behaviors and professional skills, which were specifically reflected in teachers' speed of speaking, the number of mother tongues used, the number of teachers' questions, the type of questions, and the way of error correction. The research of Jin and Yu (2009) also found that teachers' failure to give positive comments

immediately would cause foreign language anxiety. Wang (2003) has studied college students and found that students' anxiety was also affected by classroom atmosphere and bad atmosphere made students feel depressed, which was also related to teachers' teaching behavior. Wang (2005) used the quantitative research method to study the foreign language learning anxiety of 301 junior middle school students found that teachers had insufficient awareness of students' foreign language anxiety. Karen Moni and others (2013) also believed that teachers did not attach importance to the impact of FLA on students.

Adler (1987) gave a detailed definition of cultural conflict. He believed that cultural conflict or cultural differences would cause FLA. Tian (2006) taking college students as research subjects, also found that students' EFL learning anxiety was affected by cultural background. In addition, Da (2007) pointed out that was one of the reasons for students' anxiety which was students' lack of real language environment when learning foreign languages. Ma (2008) proved that language learning environment affected students' EFL learning anxiety after investigating the factors of foreign language learning anxiety of Chinese senior high school students. Liao (2004) divided the factors that affect foreign language learning anxiety into two groups. The exogenous factors came from the aspects of society, school and family, which were specifically shown as: parents' expectations and educational methods, teachers' educational methods, the competition of entering a higher school and the pressure of employment, and competition among students, etc.

The factors of foreign language anxiety of rural junior middle school Chinese students can also be categorized into student-related factors, teacher-related factors and external factors.

Tang (2021) used FLCAS questionnaire to interview students and teachers in rural middle schools. The research showed that the factors of English learning anxiety mainly came from learners (students' EFL learning ability, learning interest, personal character, learning methods and reducing-Strategies), teachers (teachers' evaluation methods, communication methods, teaching methods and classroom atmosphere) and

parents (parents' educational background, expectations for achievements, families company and education idea). This is almost consistent with the opinion of (Yang, 2016). However, Huang (2012) also proposed that family environment and school teaching conditions were also factors that affect students' foreign language anxiety. Yang (2013) also raised the impact of family environment on FLA, and she also added social factors and cultural background factors.

Zhao (2019) used the methods of questionnaire, interview and classroom observation to explore the English learning anxiety of rural junior middle school students. He analyzed the factors for students' FLA from the three dimensions of communication anxiety, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. This research result was more specific and accurate. The causes of communication anxiety. The first was students' language expression ability was poor, and they did not pay enough attention to the preview before class (EFL learning ability and learning attitude); The second was rural English teachers lack questioning skills and teaching methods (teachers' professional skills). The causes of test anxiety. The students did not grasp English learning methods and cannot grasp the key and difficulties (students' EFL learning ability); English teachers frequently organized examinations and lacked guidance for students' test preparation methods (teachers' teaching behavior); The parents' high expectations of their children's English achievements (family factors); The school only focused on the rate of entering a higher school and frequently organized examinations (school factors). The causes of negative evaluation anxiety. The students could not reasonably allocate English learning time and lack self-regulated learning ability (students' EFL learning ability and attitude); One of the reasons for students' negative evaluation anxiety was the too fast teaching speed of rural English teachers, vague directives, and strict and single evaluation methods (teachers' behavior and professional skills).

To sum up, the author also categorized EFL learning anxiety of rural junior middle school students into three factors which are student-related factors, teacher-related factors and external factors. 1) Student-related factors. Students' English ability, interest, personality traits, learning habits and methods, stress relief methods

and other factors will affect their anxiety in English learning. 2) Teacher-related factors. Teachers' evaluation methods. Teachers' direct negative evaluation will affect students' emotion and confidence, and give them psychological pressure and foreign language anxiety. Some teachers have no emotional communication with students, and serious communication methods will affect students' love for English teachers or English subjects, and even affect their attitude towards learning English; The monotonous oriented teaching of teachers can't increase the interest of the class and Serious classroom atmosphere increases students' foreign language anxiety. 3) External factors include family factors, school factors and contextual factors. Family factors. Parents' educational background, expectations for their children's performance, whether to accompany them at home and their educational ideas are all family factors affecting students' foreign language anxiety. School factors. Zhao (2019) pointed out that the school rule was also one of the reasons for the foreign language anxiety of rural middle school students. The school paid too much attention to the students' English test scores and took the scores as the only standard for selecting talents, which increased the students' English learning anxiety. Heavy workload, learning environment and teaching conditions were also school factors. Contextual factors. Lacked of opportunities and occasions to speak English and opportunities to communicate with native speakers face to face. The research data of Chang (2018) showed that teachers' questioning by call the roll is easy to cause students' foreign language anxiety. A high proportion of students feel nervous when students don't know the roll call order. At the same time, they don't have enough time to think and questions are too difficult will also produce foreign language anxiety. Peng (2017) proposed another detail factor that is teachers' direct negation and interruption students would produce foreign language anxiety.

2.5 Anxiety-Reducing Strategies on Learners' Foreign Language

Many researchers agreed that enhancing learners' confidence in foreign language learning was an important anxiety-reducing strategy. Alrabai (2015) found that the anxiety-reducing strategies used in the experimental group were the reasons for the significant decline of FL anxiety and the enhancement of learners' self-

confidence. This finding revealed the positive causal relationship between anxiety-reducing strategies and students' foreign language anxiety. At the same time, this finding also revealed that English teachers' anxiety-reducing strategies played a positive role in reducing students' foreign language learning anxiety. Chang (2018), Zhao (2019), Tang (2021), Li (2015) Yang (2016), Yang (2013) and Ren (2019) all proposed in their research with Chinese rural junior middle school students as experimental objects that enhancing learners' confidence was conducive to reducing their FL anxiety.

Chang (2018), Tang (2021), Li (2015), Yang (2016) and Liu (2020) found that teachers can reduce students' FL anxiety by creating a relaxed classroom atmosphere and establishing through questionnaires, classroom observations and interviews with rural junior middle school students in China. Li (2015) thought that a relaxed classroom atmosphere can stimulate students' learning interest and motivation. Yang (2016) found that teachers' different teaching methods and teaching styles made the classroom more interesting. Liu (2020) found that many different class activities can create a better classroom atmosphere.

The researcher found that all researchers agreed that teachers' positive feedback and evaluation are important anxiety-reducing strategies on learners' foreign language anxiety. Chang (2018) proposed that teachers should adhere to positive feedback to cultivate students' self-confidence; Zhao (2019) proposed that teachers should not only strive to optimize teaching evaluation methods, but also alleviate students' negative evaluation anxiety; Alrabai (2015) also proposed to alleviate the negative evaluation anxiety of students. Tang (2021) believed that when students make mistakes, they should choose appropriate ways to correct them. Teachers should still smile when commenting, so as to alleviate students' embarrassment and avoid direct negative evaluation. She also proposed to optimize the way of teacher evaluation. Besides Teachers should formulate appropriate evaluation methods for students in combination with the actual situation and effectively reduce the tension of students when they are subjected to negative evaluation. Ren (2019) and Yang (2013) proposed that teachers can adopt a tolerant attitude to correct students' mistakes. More

importantly, English teachers need to give students positive feedback to improve their English learning motivation. Liu (2020) proposed that teachers should take appropriate measures to correct students' mistakes and respect students' personalities and let them understand the differences between Chinese and English cultures.

Chang (2018; Ren, 2019; Tang, 2019; Tang, 2021) all proposed that teachers should improve the way of questioning in class. They can create situations to ask questions and ask different students according to different types of questions. Teachers can ask questions for individual or groups. At the same time, students should be given enough time to think. Among them, Ren (2019) also proposed that teachers should pay more attention to the mid-achievers and guide them to speak actively.

Alrabai (2015) proposed to reduce the fear of language testing in learners. Tang (2021; Li, 2015; Yang, 2016; Zhao, 2019; Yang, 2013) all found that it was really important to reduce the FL test anxiety of Chinese rural junior middle school students. Li (2015) proposed that teachers should correct their attitude towards the FL test. Zhao (2019) proposed that teachers should not only help students correctly view the failure of English examination, but also help students establish a correct view of attribution of success or failure, so as to alleviate their anxiety of examination and negative evaluation. Yang (2013) also proposed that teachers should treat students' scores correctly and not overemphasize scores.

It was mentioned that teachers should demonstrate proper teaching behavior to your students, strengthen the learning of teaching theoretical knowledge, and improve teaching professional skills, and pay attention to students' mental health and emotion. Chang (2018) proposed that teachers should design teaching objectives and plans according to students' actual language level. Tang (2021) proposed that teachers should scientifically and reasonably arrange learning time and plan, and adjust teaching methods according to students' individual differences. At the same time, English teachers should pay attention to students' mental health and personalities. Yang (2016) proposed that English teachers should pay more attention to the foreign language learning of left- behind children. Yang (2013) proposed teachers can change

students' negative consciousness through multiple self-confidence training, so as to gradually weaken students' English learning anxiety. Liu (2020) proposed that English teachers should cultivate students' foreign language learning attitude.

2.6 Related Research and Studies on Foreign Language Anxiety

There are many studies on foreign language anxiety. The researcher reviews some typical studies at home and abroad. In foreign countries, the concept of foreign language anxiety was first put forward by Brown in 1973. Horwitz et al. (1986) established the foreign language classroom anxiety scale and more and more studies on foreign language learning anxiety have been carried out, and the results were relatively consistent. In China, researcher Qian proposed the concept of foreign language anxiety in 1999. In recent years, Chinese researchers have just paid attention to foreign language anxiety, and most scholars have conducted research on learners' English as a foreign language.

2.6.1 Studies in Chinese context

In recent years, the studies of foreign language anxiety have been enriched and expanded in China, which including the influence of foreign language anxiety on learners' performance and second language acquisition, the related factors affecting foreign language anxiety and the study of foreign language anxiety reduction strategies.

Huang (2007) proposed seven possible reasons for middle school students' English learning anxiety and mentioned some strategies to alleviate their English learning anxiety. Jin and Yu (2009) used a quantitative research method to compare the performance of 23 junior middle school students in Suzhou in the English classroom. They found that the more students were afraid of speaking in class, the greater the pressure they feel, and the more serious the anxiety of oral English, and even affect the confidence of students in English learning. The main reasons include that the English proficiency of junior middle school students is irregular and the

teachers did not give a positive evaluation in time, and the weak learning motivation. The results showed that junior middle school students' foreign language learning anxiety was negatively correlated with their attitudes towards foreign language communication problems.

A survey conducted by Ren et al. (2011) on high school students showed that the self-evaluation of high school students was negatively correlated with their foreign language learning anxiety. High school students with high self-evaluation are more active in class. They are more confident in answering questions and more willing to participate in classroom learning activities, and their English learning anxiety level is lower. According to the survey, college students' emotional intelligence was negatively correlated with anxiety in foreign language learning (Huo, 2011). Zhong and Zhong (2015) explored the current situation and influencing factors of academic English anxiety of postgraduate students majoring in science and engineering through the self-made academic English anxiety scale. The research showed that most postgraduate students have medium or high level of academic English anxiety; Male were more anxious than female; CET-6 scores can predict the level of English anxiety; Gender, second language self-evaluation and English proficiency all affect academic English anxiety.

Li (2015) conducted a study on the relationship between English writing anxiety and achievement of non-English majors. Based on the second language writing anxiety scale, qualitative interviews and two writing tests, it was found that students' writing anxiety is the influencing factor of their writing performance. Wang and Huang (2015) investigated the English anxiety of College English teachers through the teachers' foreign language anxiety scale. The results showed that the teachers' average level of English anxiety was low, which may be related to their teaching years; Meanwhile, negative evaluation anxiety and communication anxiety were the main causes of teachers' anxiety.

Wei and Ma (2015) conducted a questionnaire on English learning anxiety of 47 junior high school students in Changchun by a quantitative research method. The results showed that there were four key points. 1) Girls are more confident than boys to learn English well. 2) Students who keep a high degree of self-discipline and self-consciousness in their study and life have a low anxiety level, which is related to the problems they pay attention to in the study process. These students are always looking for their own learning methods and strategies. 3) The class with active classroom atmosphere and stable learning environment, the level of students' anxiety is low. Teachers' appropriate teaching strategies and teaching methods can help students reduce their foreign language learning anxiety. 4) Correct learning strategies can help students reduce their anxiety in foreign language learning.

Zhong and Fan (2018) used the English writing anxiety scale to conduct a one-year survey on English Majors' writing anxiety. They found that English Majors' foreign language writing anxiety was high; The researcher also used CLIL (content and language integrated learning) teaching method to compare and analyze the anxiety of students with different writing levels, and found that appropriate teaching methods can effectively alleviate students' writing anxiety. Chen and others (2018) conducted a study on Japanese majors and found that the average anxiety level of Japanese majors was high; There was a significant negative correlation between anxiety level and Japanese achievement in classroom learning.

Ren (2019) pointed out rural junior middle school students were not quite active participating in classroom using English, and the students were often nervous and unable to speak English. Zhan (2021) Proposed there was a serious phenomenon of classroom silence in the English classroom of rural junior middle schools, of which the most important factor was foreign language anxiety.

2.6.2 Studies in other countries

The foreign research on this topic mainly focuses on the investigation and intervention of foreign language anxiety, the influence of foreign language anxiety on

learning achievement and the study of foreign language anxiety related factors. Among them, the related factors are important sections of research.

1) Investigation and intervention studies on foreign language anxiety.

Sparks, Ganschow, Artzer, Siebenhar, & Plageman (1997) found that there were differences in foreign language proficiency among senior high school students of different anxiety levels. Chang (2008) investigated learners' listening anxiety and its causes through a listening questionnaire. The results showed that learners' listening anxiety level was medium or high; Learners' listening anxiety was higher in the test; Lack of self-confidence and excessive attention to English listening were the main reasons for learners' listening anxiety in the classroom.

Liu and Jackson (2008) explored the current situation of foreign language anxiety in the English class of Chinese non-English majors. The results showed that most students were afraid to use or speak English in class; More than 1 / 3 students felt anxious in English class; Poor communication is significantly related to foreign language anxiety. Tran et al. (2013a) investigated the cognition and attitude of Non-English Major Students and teachers towards foreign language anxiety through questionnaires, interviews and class observation, and found that most students have foreign language anxiety; Teachers do not pay enough attention to students' foreign language anxiety. Alrabai (2015) investigated the influence of anxiety-reducing strategies on Saudi Arabia English learners. Through the FLCAS, 465 learners were divided into the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group was trained with anxiety-reducing strategies for 8 weeks. It was found that the foreign language anxiety level of the experimental group was significantly lower than that of the control group, indicating that the intervention training can effectively reduce the anxiety level of the learners.

2) The relationship between foreign language anxiety and learning achievement.

Hewitt and Stephenson (2012) investigated the relationship between foreign language anxiety and college students' oral test scores. The results showed that

there was a significant negative correlation between foreign language anxiety and oral performance; There were significant differences in oral performance among the groups with different anxiety levels.

However, some studies have shown that a certain degree of anxiety does not necessarily have a negative effect. For example, Marcos-Llinás, and Garau (2009) used the FLCAS to investigate the impact of foreign language anxiety on the performance of primary, intermediate and advanced Spanish learners. The results show that advanced learners have a higher level of anxiety than primary and intermediate learners; Foreign language anxiety and learning performance are interrelated, but the performance of high anxiety level learners is not necessarily worse than that of low anxiety level learners; Most of the students have a moderate level of anxiety, which will not have a significant impact on the academic performance.

3) Studies on the related factors of foreign language anxiety.

Cheng (2002) used four language anxiety scales and background information questionnaire to investigate the relationship between College Students' foreign language writing anxiety and individual differences and different forms of language anxiety. The results showed that perception based foreign language writing ability can predict foreign language writing anxiety more than writing achievement; Foreign language writing anxiety was different from native language writing anxiety; The level of foreign language writing anxiety of female was significantly higher than that of male. Pichette (2009) investigated the current situation of foreign language anxiety, foreign language reading anxiety and foreign language writing anxiety of English and Spanish learners in classroom and distance learning. The results showed that there was no significant difference in anxiety between classroom learners and distance learners.

Cheng and Erben (2012) explored the impact of living time, major, gender and cultural adaptation on the language anxiety level of Chinese postgraduate students in a public university in the United States. The results showed that the subjects with the lowest level of anxiety are students who have lived abroad for a

longer time and majoring in art; Gender and cultural adaptation have some effects on foreign language anxiety.

Arnaiz (2012) used the FLCAS to explore the relationship between Spanish learners' English learning anxiety level and gender, age, grade and language level. The results showed that the subjects showed a moderate level of anxiety, and female were more anxious than male; Age was negatively correlated with anxiety; The anxiety level of lower grade learners is higher; learners with low English proficiency are more likely to feel anxious

Chowdhury (2014) investigated the Oral Anxiety of English learners in Bangladesh. The quantitative data show that English language level, background, teacher's role and social communication are all important factors affecting learners' oral English anxiety; Learners, social and academic backgrounds are also affected by oral anxiety; Both teachers and learners play important roles in reducing learners' oral English anxiety. Jin, de Bot, & Keijzer (2015) used the foreign language proficiency scale, social status scale, self-esteem scale, competitiveness index and FLCAS to investigate the influence of foreign language proficiency, family and social status, competitiveness and self-esteem of English learners and Japanese learners of China on foreign language anxiety. The results showed that foreign language proficiency, competition and self-esteem can significantly predict foreign language anxiety, and foreign language proficiency was the strongest predictor; Social status is not related to foreign language anxiety.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter explained the definitions of terms related to foreign language anxiety in detail, introduces the research theories related to foreign language anxiety, and reviewed the empirical studies on foreign language anxiety at China and abroad. Of course, the research focuses on the literature of Chinese researchers on foreign language anxiety of rural middle school students in China, but these studies also have some limitations.

Firstly, lack of comparative theoretical and empirical research. In the literature searched by the author, there is a lack of research on the difference of foreign language anxiety between rural middle school students and urban areas, as well as the foreign language anxiety of rural middle school students in different regions of China. Most researchers only focus on one school or case study. Secondly, previous studies focused on college students, and few studies focused on junior middle school students, especially rural junior middle school students. Finally, previous studies have not paid enough attention to foreign language anxiety which is one of the affective factors and it is only a little part of many studies. Researchers often study foreign language anxiety together with motivation and self-esteem, ignoring the importance of anxiety in English learning. Therefore, this study will explore the foreign language anxiety level, the factors and solutions of rural junior middle school students, which will be a really valuable and meaningful research.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlined the research methods of this study, including research design, research context, research samples, research instruments, data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The research design of this study was a mixed method, which collected quantitative and qualitative data. In this study, the factors that affect students' English learning anxiety in Chinese rural junior middle school are the focus of the research. Combining these factors and the content from semi-structured interviews to obtain some effective strategies to reduce anxiety.

This study combined two research methods of questionnaire and interview. According to the technique of random sampling, students in three classes as the sample group of the questionnaire. The students' English learning anxiety levels were tested through the modified version of Horwitz's FLCAS. They were interviewed based on several items with high anxiety levels in order to analyze factors of communication anxiety, factors of test anxiety and factors of fear of negative evaluation. Finally, semi-structured interviews with English teachers and students were used to explore the reducing-anxiety strategies of students' English learning.

There are many different terms for mixed method research, such as integrated methods, qualitative and quantitative methods, combined methods, etc. In recent years, most literatures almost adopted the appellation of mixed method. The mixed method is beneficial to expand the breadth of research, improve the accuracy of research results and

enhance the depth of research (An, 2010). Mixed method research is a study in which researchers mix quantitative and qualitative technologies, methods, paths, concepts or languages in a single study or a series of related studies (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004). Mixed method is a research method that combines qualitative and quantitative research forms that not only simply collects and analyzes two types of data, but also use two methods at the same time. The conclusion is the comprehensive advantages of mixed method are more than qualitative or quantitative research (Creswell, 2009).

As shown in Figure 3.1, this study aims to explore the level and influencing factors of students' English learning anxiety. Therefore, questionnaire and semi-structured interview can help the author collect objective and effective data in order to provide teachers and students with corresponding strategies.

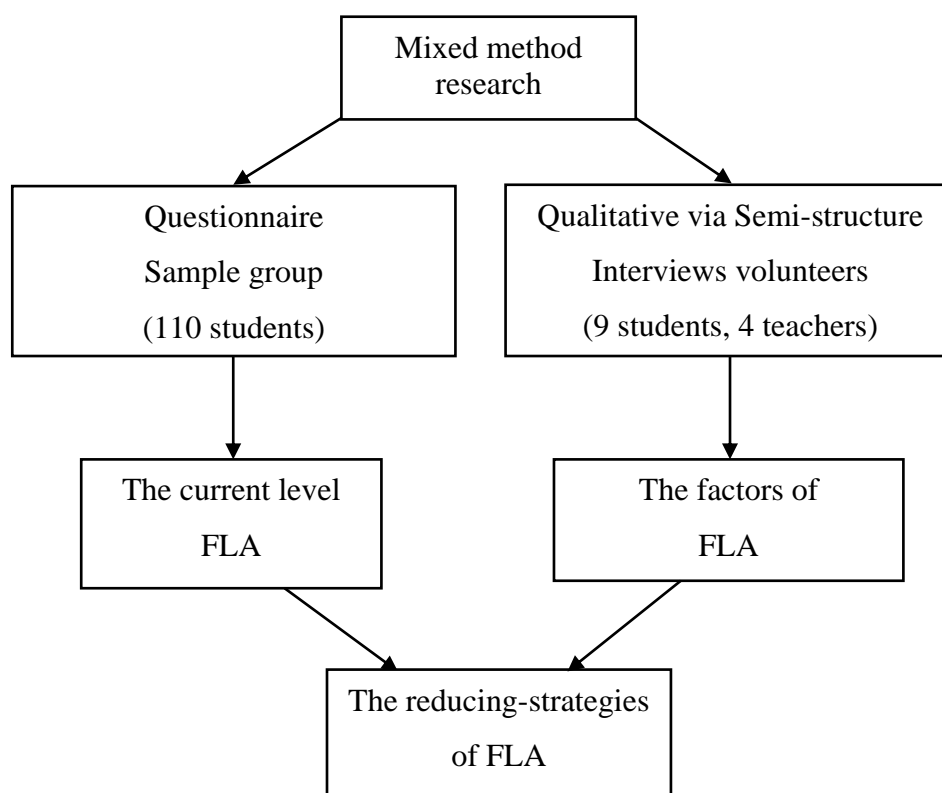


Figure 3.1 Research design

3.2 Research Context

Da Dong junior middle school, a rural junior middle school in Huai'an City, Jiangsu Province in China is selected as the research site. Jiangsu province belongs to East China and is located in the Yangtze River Delta (See the map in Figure 3.2). In 2021, Statistical Bulletin on National Economic and Social Development of Jiangsu Province showed that the economic and educational level of Jiangsu Province ranks in the forefront of China, and the comprehensive development level is the highest. In 2021, the GDP of Jiangsu Province reached 11.64 trillion Yuan, equivalent to 1.805 trillion US dollars. However, there is a great gap in economic development and education level between the southern and northern regions of Jiangsu Province. Among them, Nanjing, Zhenjiang, Changzhou, Wuxi and Suzhou are classified as southern Jiangsu, with developed economy, rich educational resources, high teaching level and strong teachers. Lianyungang, Xuzhou, Suqian, Yancheng and Huaian are classified as Northern Jiangsu where the economic level and education level are significantly behind those in the southern Jiangsu. In 2019, the total GDP of Southern Jiangsu exceeded 5.66 trillion yuan and the total GDP of Northern Jiangsu exceeded 2.29 trillion yuan. It can be seen that there is a great gap between Southern Jiangsu and Northern Jiangsu, and the economic gap will inevitably lead to the education gap (Jiangsu Provincial Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

Xu (2015) investigated the current situation of English Teaching in Northern Jiangsu and southern Jiangsu, she found that the English level of students from northern Jiangsu is much lower than that in southern Jiangsu. First of all, there are great differences in educational ideas between the two regions. Schools in Northern Jiangsu pay more attention to students' English test scores, and teachers only pay attention to the content of the test. Secondly, the level of teachers in Northern Jiangsu is low. Due to the low income of English teachers in Northern Jiangsu, a large number of English teachers with high teaching ability and high teaching quality moved to schools in southern Jiangsu. Thirdly, the teaching facilities in Northern Jiangsu are backward. Some rural middle schools still do not have multimedia classrooms, and English teachers can't use modern educational tools in Huaian. In addition, teachers'

teaching methods, evaluation system and teaching objectives are also the factors that cause students' low English level in rural middle schools in Northern Jiangsu.

Da Dong is a town with backward economic development in the north of Jiangsu Province and it is a rural junior middle school. Comparing with urban middle schools, this school teaching quality, students' foreign language level and teaching equipment are relatively backward. Therefore, it meets the requirements of the author's paper and this type of research context will help author to get objective and real research data.



Figure 3.2 Map of China

Source: Fair Usage, 2023

3.3 Research Population and Samples

The research populations were 350 students in three grade levels: grade seven, grade eight and grade nine from Da Dong junior middle school, which was a rural junior middle school in Jiangsu Province of China. There are three classes in each grade, with 37-42 students in each class.

The research group samples were divided into questionnaire and interview. According to the transcript provided by the school authority, there was no significant difference in the average score of students in each class of each grade in the final English test. Therefore, the author used the technique of random sampling. One class of students from each of the three grades as the samples of the questionnaire and a

total of 110 students in three classes. Besides, the students' English foundation and learning status are different, and the research scope is all students of Da Dong junior middle school. So, the students of different grades as the research object. At the same time, considering the effective recovery of questionnaire, the number of samples selected for this study is more appropriate.

The research samples of the interview are 9 volunteer students and 4 English teachers. The researcher used stratified sampling technique to recruit the teachers and students for the interview. A total of 9 volunteer students from the three classes that had done the questionnaire will be selected according to the students' English learning anxiety level, and 3 volunteers were interviewed in each class. Chinese researchers Pan, Yao & Huang (2010) drew on the qualitative research should implement the 'information saturation of the largest difference' in the selection of objects, that is, select the appropriate interviewees according to the research questions and the richness of the respondent's information, instead of specifying the number of samples. Since the purpose of the questionnaire was to test the foreign language anxiety levels of students who from Chinese rural junior middle school, the researcher selected 9 volunteers with high and highest anxiety levels from these respondents for semi-structured interviews. As there were four English teachers in Da Dong junior middle school all of them were invited for to be the interview. The appointments of four English teachers were pre-arranged to ensure their available time and cooperation for the interviews.

3.4 Research Instruments

The research instruments of this study included the foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS) and the students' and teachers' semi-structured interviews.

3.4.1 Students' questionnaire

Questionnaire was a quantitative research method, and the research data were objective and reliable. The author conducted an anonymous questionnaire on 110 students in Da Dong junior middle school. Before the survey, the author explained the

purpose, research value and answer requirements of this questionnaire to the students, in order to dispel any fears of students.

There were two purposes in this questionnaire. The first point was to explore the English learning anxiety level of Chinese rural junior middle school students, including communication anxiety level, test anxiety level, fear of negative evaluation level and overall anxiety level. The second point was to examine the relationship between students' English anxiety level and gender, personality, grade and left-behind children, as well as some influencing factors of English learning anxiety.

This questionnaire has four main characteristics, which are 1) efficiency--not limited by time and space and objectivity. 2) objectivity--not contacting, standardization, and reducing subjective interference. 3) economy-- means low cost of funds and manpower. 4) anonymity--authenticity and randomness, which ensured the authenticity of the questionnaire.

The study recompiled the questionnaire on English learning anxiety of rural junior middle school students based on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) designed by Horwitz (1986). Many studies have shown that Horwitz's FLCAS has high internal consistency. This classification system was the most widely used in the study of foreign language learning anxiety and has a certain authority and representativeness. The questionnaire consists of three dimensions which were communication anxiety, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety, with a total of 40 items.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts (See the Appendix B for details). The researcher used a translated version of it. The back translation process was applied to ensure the content was accurate. The first part includes the basic information of students' gender, class, personality, the mid-term exam achievement and whether left-behind children. The second part was the English learning anxiety questionnaire scale. This questionnaire scale adopts the scoring method of 5-point Likert scale (a scale proposed by Rensis A. Likert in 1932 to test people's attitude

towards advertising, products and other objects). Each item was based on a five - point Likert Scale. 1 point means strongly disagree, 2 points means disagree, 3 points means not sure, 4 points means agree and 5 points means strongly agree.

The level of anxiety was determined by the mean range. The higher the score, the higher the students' English learning anxiety level. The level of the students' English learning anxiety was described and interpreted as follows:

The mean between 1.00-1.49, indicates that the English learning anxiety level is at the lowest.

The mean between 1.50-2.49 indicates the anxiety level is relatively low,

The mean of 2.50 -3.49 indicates the anxiety level is moderate,

The mean of 3.50- 4.49 indicates the anxiety level is high,

The mean of 4.50 - 5.00 indicates the anxiety is at the highest level.

Among these items, Q1-Q15 was used to tests students' communication anxiety level, Q16-Q25 tested students' test anxiety level, and Q26-Q40 tested students' negative evaluation anxiety level. The researcher used the following table to record the data of anxiety in these three dimensions of total anxiety level of 110 students. At the same time, the anxiety level of students was classified and counted according to their gender, grade, personality and whether they were left behind children. The following Table 3.1 was the questionnaire to test students' English learning anxiety.

Table 3.1 Classification of English anxiety for questions in the questionnaire

NO	Content of the questionnaire	
1	在英语课上说英语时，我一直都不自信 I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English class.	Communication anxiety
2	在英语课上得知我要被点名回答问题时我会发抖 I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.	

Table 3.1 Classification of English anxiety for questions in the questionnaire (Cont.)

NO	Content of the questionnaire	
3	英语课上没听懂老师用英语说什么时会感到害怕 It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	Communication anxiety
4	我在用英语与其他同学交流时，我经常会感觉到恐惧 When I communicate with other students in English, I often feel fear.	
5	我觉得其他同学的英语说得都比我好 I think other students speak English better than me.	
6	我在上英语课时比上其他课更紧张 I am more nervous in English class than in other classes.	
7	英语课上，当我被指定为小组发言人时，我经常感到紧张 In English class, I often feel nervous when I am appointed as a group presenter.	
8	英语课上，当没听懂老师讲的某个知识点的时候我会感到很不安 In English class, I feel uneasy when I don't understand an important part when the teacher is teaching.	
9	英语课上，我会因为老师没有给予充分的思考时间而进行提问感到心理恐慌 In English class, I feel psychological panic because the teacher doesn't give me enough time to think and answer the questions.	
10	英语课上做没有准备的发言时感到很紧张 I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.	

Table 3.1 Classification of English anxiety for questions in the questionnaire (Cont.)

NO	Content of the questionnaire	
11	英语课上很紧张以至于知道的东西都忘了 In English class, I can get nervous easily and forget what I know.	Communication anxiety
12	英语课上自愿发言时我感到很尴尬 I feel embarrassed when I have to volunteer to answer the questions in my English class.	
13	用英语和外国人交谈时我会非常紧张 I feel nervous when I have to speak English with native speakers.	
14	在英语课上发言时感到紧张不安 I get nervous while I am speaking in English class.	
15	说英语要掌握那么多规则让我害怕 I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.	
16	英语测验时我通常会很紧张，我经常手心出汗、心率加快 When I take an English test, I usually get so nervous that my palms sweat and my heart rate increases.	Test anxiety
17	我会担心因为英语不及格带来的后果 I am worried about the consequences of failing my English class.	
18	每次英语考试后，我总会担心自己成绩太差会被老师批评 After taking English test, I always feel worried that my scores will be criticized by the teacher.	
19	英语课上的一些小测试也会让我感到紧张 Some quizzes in English class will also make me nervous.	

Table 3.1 Classification of English anxiety for questions in the questionnaire (Cont.)

NO	Content of the questionnaire	
20	每次英语考试后，我总会担心自己成绩太差会被同学嘲笑 After taking English test, I always feel worried that my classmates will make fun of my test score result.	Test anxiety
21	虽然每次英语考试我都准备的很充分，但还是会感到焦虑 Although I am well prepared for every English exam, I still feel anxious.	
22	英语考试时，我有时会紧张到连会的题都做错了 During taking English test, I sometimes feel so nervous that I might make some mistakes in answering the questions.	
23	每次英语考试前我都担心英语考试考不好 Before taking English test, I always feel worried that I cannot do well in the test.	
24	英语考试时，我总会担心自己无法完成全部题目 When I take an English test, I always feel worried that I am not able to finish answering all the questions.	
25	每次英语考试，我总会担心成绩下降被父母批评 I always worry that my English test scores will decline and be criticized by my parents.	Fear of negative evaluation
26	我很担心在英语课上犯错 I'm worried about making mistakes in English class.	
27	我总觉得其他同学的英语能力都比我强 I always think that all students are better at English than me.	
28	我觉得我没有学习英语的天赋 I don't think I am talented in English learning.	

Table 3.1 Classification of English anxiety for questions in the questionnaire (Cont.)

NO	Content of the questionnaire	
29	我会担心英语老师会纠正我的每一个错误 I would worry that my English teacher would correct every mistake of me.	Fear of negative evaluation
30	当不理解英语老师提到的纠错内容时，我经常会觉得羞愧 I often feel ashamed when I still don't understand the mistakes that have been corrected by my English teacher.	
31	每次在英语课堂上发言时，我都会感觉很不自信 I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English class.	
32	每次英语老师纠正我的错误时，我都会感到害怕 I often feel scared when my English teacher corrects my mistakes.	
33	预感到自己可能会被点名回答问题时，我总会感到心跳很快 I always feel my heart beating fast when I have a feeling that I might be called by my English teacher to answer the questions.	
34	当用英语表达自己的想法时，我总担心会被其他同学嘲笑 When I express my ideas in English, I always worry about being laughed at by other students.	
35	英语课上，我通常不主动回答自己没有把握的问题 In English class, I usually don't take the initiative to answer some uncertain questions.	

Table 3.1 Classification of English anxiety for questions in the questionnaire (Cont.)

NO	Content of the questionnaire	
36	英语课上，我经常低着头，尽量不引起老师的注意，以免被点名回答问题 In English class, I often ducked and avoid making eye contact with teacher in order not to be called.	Fear of negative evaluation
37	英语课前尽管预习了，上课时我还是会感到心里恐慌 Although I have prepared and reviewed before English class, I still feel panic during learning English in classroom.	
38	在英语课堂上回答问题出错时，我害怕老师直接否定我 When I make mistakes in English class, I'm afraid the teacher will criticize me directly in the classroom.	
39	英语课的进度很快，我担心跟不上 I'm always worried that I can't keep up with the progress of English.	
40	英语学习使我感到压力很大 Learning English makes me feel a lot of pressure.	

3.4.2 Students' and teachers' semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interview, a qualitative study, was conducted one week after the questionnaire was collected. The researcher interviewed 4 English teachers and 9 students by a face-to-face interview. The interview was conducted in Chinese so that the language was not an obstacle to their self-reported.

The semi-structured interview refers to an informal interview conducted according to a rough outline. This method has only a simple requirement for the conditions of the interviewees and the interview questions.

The purpose of the interviews with students and teachers was to analyze and come up with factors and anxiety-reducing strategies for students' English learning anxiety from the students' and teachers' perspectives, respectively.

The semi-structured interview has the characteristics of high participation of interviewees, strong flexibility of interview outline, casual interview form, open interview and deep questions. The semi-structured interview was really suitable for this study. This kind of interview can not only help the researcher understand the real thoughts of students and teachers more accurately, but also know the real situation and causes of students' English learning anxiety. In the flexible semi-structured interview, the researcher extended the problem according to the current situation and found out which details may had been ignored by other researchers.

The interview outline was divided into students' and teachers'. Each version of the outline contains 7 questions that were formulated by the researcher according to the data of the questionnaire, which focus on the dimension with the highest anxiety level of students, so as to know students' anxiety causes and the solution they may need. Refer to the appendix for the answers to the interview questions.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

3.5.1 Validity

Validity refers to effectiveness that is to measure whether the comprehensive evaluation system can accurately reflect the evaluation of the objectives and requirements. It refers to the degree to which the measuring tool can measure the correctness of the characteristics that wants to measure. The higher the validity, that is, the more the measurement results can show the characteristics to be measured. On the contrary, the lower the validity.

In order to evaluate the validity of the research instrument, the questionnaire and interview outline will be submitted to the three experts, and item-objective congruence index will be used to assess the content validity of items.

IOC (item objective Conference) is an item objective consistency index system established by Rovinelli and Hamilton (1977). Its main purpose is to provide a mathematical expansion mode suitable for multi-dimensional indicators for project development. In order to ensure the validity of the research data, researchers can apply IOC to test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire to evaluate the suitability between the measurement content and the measurement objectives. The item objective Conference (IOC) index provides effective support for the reliability and validity of the interview outline.

The scoring range of IOC is between -1 and +1. The three item experts are invited to choose one of the three options -1, 0 and +1 as the given mark.

+1: The item is clearly consistent with the objective

0: It is not sure whether the item fully meets the objective, and some items need to be modified or deleted

-1: The item does not meet the objective at all and needs to be modified.

The total score of each project must be above 0.67, so that the item can be effective and the item can be consistent with the measurement objective (Rovinelli and Hamilton, 1977). The item objective Conference (IOC) value of each item is calculated by dividing the total score of each expert by 3. For example, in the first item, an expert given 1 point, the second expert given 0 point, and the third expert given 2 points. The final score of the first item is $(1 + 0 + 2) / 3 = 1$. So, the first item is proved to be effective and consistent with the objective. The experts are also asked to give comments in each item.

There were 40 questionnaire items and 14 the interview questions in this study. The author used IOC to evaluate the validity of these items. The researcher

counted the results of IOC Interview of experts' assessment. See the appendix C for details.

3.5.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency, stability and reliability of test results. Generally, internal consistency is used to prove the reliability of the test. The higher the reliability coefficient is, the more consistent, stable and reliable the test results will be.

The researcher used Cronbach's Alpha to test the reliability of questionnaire. The researcher will use Cronbach's alpha to test the correlation coefficients of three sub dimensions (communication anxiety, test anxiety and negative evaluation anxiety) and the total dimension to determine whether the scale has internal reliability. In general, the reliability coefficient should be 0-1. If the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the questionnaire scale is more than 0.9, the reliability of the scale is excellent; If the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the questionnaire scale is between 0.8 and 0.9, the reliability of the scale is acceptable; If the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the questionnaire scale is between 0.7 and 0.8, some items of the scale need to be revised; If the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the questionnaire scale is less than 0.7, some items of the scale need to be discarded.

Table 3.2 The Cronbach's alpha coefficient Rating Scale

Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$\alpha < 0.7$	Unacceptable

The researcher used SPSS 27 to test the reliability of the questionnaire and the reliability of the questionnaire of three dimensions, and the results showed that the reliability of the questionnaire was good. Please see Table 3.3 below for details.

Table 3.3 The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of each dimension

Dimensions	Numbers	Cronbach' s alpha
Communication anxiety	15	0.862
Test anxiety	10	0.833
Fear of negative evaluation	15	0.894
Total	40	0.874

3.6 Data Collection

The data collection into two steps. Firstly, the researcher collected the data of questionnaire. Secondly, one week after the researcher have completed the questionnaire data, she interviewed 9 students and 4 English teachers at random. The interview questions mainly focused on the dimensions in which students felt the most anxiety, in order to further collect the answers to the factors and anxiety-reducing strategies of students' English learning anxiety.

3.7 Data Analysis

The data analysis includes the quantitative data analysis of the questionnaire and the qualitative analysis of the interview. The details are as follow:

3.7.1 Questionnaire analysis

According to the research plan, the researcher has sorted and analyzed the overall level and different dimensions of English learning anxiety among Chinese rural junior middle school students, as well as the level of English anxiety among different types of students.

The researcher used SPSS 27.0 to analyze the data. The report was subjected to descriptive analysis. The data statistics in the table were completed after analyzing and sorting out the data. The researcher calculated the maximum, minimum, mean and

standard deviation of each data to reveal the relationship between the English learning anxiety level of rural junior middle school students and gender, grade, personality and whether they are left behind children. That provided data support for the analysis of the causes of English learning anxiety in Chapter 4.

In order to clearly explained how the level of English learning anxiety was counted, the researcher designed a table below, see Table 3.4 for details.

Table 3.4 The explanation of English anxiety level

Likert Scale	Answers	English Learning Anxiety Level	Score
1	Strongly disagree	Lowest	1.00-1.49
2	Disagree	Low	1.50 -2.49
3	Not sure	Moderate	2.50 -3.49
4	Agree	High	3.50-4. 49
5	Strongly agree	Highest	4.50-5.00

The data of each item indicates the students' English learning anxiety level. The higher the score, the higher the students' English learning anxiety level, and vice versa.

3.7.2 Interview Analysis

Interview analysis is one that can be described as a method of thematic content analysis (Burnard, 1991). According to the transcripts and recording of the interviews, the researcher recorded the effective answers of the interviewees in the memo and remove the invalid words or short sentences, and finally translate the interview answers into English and record them in the thesis. The interview data was analyzed based on the content analysis the data was coded and themes will be explored. The thematic content analysis was divided into student version and teacher version. Details refer to the table below. Inter-coding reliability check was employed to ensure the reliability of the coding. The researcher integrated the data of each item of the questionnaire to analyze the factors and anxiety-reducing strategies of English learning anxiety of rural junior middle school students in China from the perspective of students and teachers.

To conclude this chapter, the data analysis scale in Table 3.5 was to summarize the research tools, the expected type of data, how the data were collected, and interpreted based on each research question.

Table 3.5 Data Analysis Scale

Research Question	Research Instrument	Type of the data collection	Data analysis/ interpretation
1. To examine the factor and identify the level of the foreign language anxiety factors affecting the rural Chinese junior middle school students.	Questionnaire and interview	Quantitative and qualitative data	<p>Descriptive analysis for quantitative data and content analysis for qualitative data to identify the level of foreign language anxiety factor that the students have; e.g., communication anxiety, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety.</p> <p>The interpretation of English anxiety level Likert Scale criteria was set as follows: Lowest 1.00-1.49 Low 1.50 -2.49 Moderate 2.50 -3.49 High 3.50-4. 49 Highest 4.50-5.00</p> <p>Content analysis was coded and analyzed using Lichtman's 3 Cs Model (2013), which consists of three major steps:</p>

Table 3.5 Data Analysis Scale (Cont.)

Research Question	Research Instrument	Type of the data collection	Data analysis/ interpretation
			Codes—Categories—Concepts.
2. To explore the anxiety-reducing strategies suggested for the rural Chinese junior middle school students	Semi-structured interview	qualitative data	Content analysis for qualitative data to explore anxiety-reducing strategies for the students. Content analysis was coded and analyzed using Lichtman's 3 Cs Model (2013).

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH RESULTS

This study adopted a mixed research method, which combines quantitative analysis with qualitative analysis. Quantitative data comes from the FLCAS questionnaire, while qualitative data comes from semi-structured interviews with students and teachers. The research objectives of this chapter are as follows: 1) To examine the factors and identify the level of the factors affecting the foreign language anxiety of the rural junior Chinese middle school. 2) To explore anxiety-reducing strategies that should be used by the rural junior Chinese middle school students in this study.

4.1 Results for Research Question 1

The research findings are presented based on the research objectives as follows:

Research Result 1. The factors and the level of the factors affecting the foreign language anxiety of the rural junior Chinese middle school.

This section used questionnaire and some questions from semi-structured interviews to obtain the results of the study. Firstly, to understand the level of English learning anxiety among Chinese rural junior middle school students based on the questionnaire. The following descriptive analysis criteria were established, with special attention to the mean scores. The same criteria explained in Chapter 3 were used to explain the mean scores obtained. The mean scores of English learning anxiety ranged from 4.50-5.00 for highest, 3.50-4.49 for high, 2.50 -3.49 for moderate, 1.50-2.49 for low, and 1.00-1.49 for lowest. Secondly, combining interviews to confirm students' anxiety factors.

4.1.1 Analysis of English Learning Anxiety Level

This is a descriptive analysis of English learning anxiety levels of Chinese rural junior middle school students. See table 4.1 for detail.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Analysis of English Learning Anxiety

Dimensions	N	Max	Min	Mean	S.D.
Test anxiety	110	5	1.40	3.28	0.783
Communication anxiety	110	5	1.60	3.26	0.746
Fear of negative evaluation	110	5	1.13	3.24	0.821
Overall anxiety	110	4.83	1.85	3.26	0.676

As shown in Table 4.1, the overall mean value for students' English learning anxiety was 3.26, standard deviation was 0.676. The data results showed that the students' English learning anxiety level is at the moderate level according to the criteria developed in this study. The mean value of the sub-dimensions of the English learning anxiety were all at moderate level and were ranked from the highest to the lowest: test anxiety, communication anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation, with the mean of 3.28, 3.26, and 3.24, respectively.

The detailed of each questionnaire item for the English learning anxiety dimension, test anxiety, and negative evaluation are displayed in Table 4.2, Table 4.3, and Table 4.4 Below:

Table 4.2 Descriptive analysis of Communication Anxiety Dimension

Communication Anxiety Dimension	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English class.	1	5	3.45	1.089	Moderate level
2. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.	1	5	3.03	1.295	Moderate level

Table 4.2 Descriptive analysis of Communication Anxiety Dimension (Cont.)

Communication Anxiety Dimension	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
3. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	1	5	2.93	1.304	Moderate level
4. When I communicate with other students in English, I often feel fear.	1	5	2.66	1.329	Moderate level
5. I think other students speak English better than me.	1	5	3.62	1.271	High level
6. I am more nervous in English class than in other classes	1	5	2.80	1.276	Moderate level
7. In English class, I often feel nervous when I am appointed as a group presenter.	1	5	3.62	1.256	High level
8. In English class, I feel uneasy when I don't understand an important part when the teacher is teaching.	1	5	3.11	1.229	Moderate level
9. In English class, I feel psychological panic because the teacher doesn't give me enough time to think and answer the questions.	1	5	3.25	1.302	Moderate level
10. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.	1	5	3.55	1.186	High level
11. In English class, I can get nervous easily and forget what I know.	1	5	3.19	1.398	Moderate level
12. I feel embarrassed when I have to volunteer to answer the questions in my English class.	1	5	3.33	1.382	Moderate level

Table 4.2 Descriptive analysis of Communication Anxiety Dimension (Cont.)

Communication Anxiety Dimension	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
13. I feel nervous when I have to speak English with native speakers.	1	5	3.78	1.350	High level
14. I get nervous while I am speaking in English class.	1	5	3.36	1.202	Moderate level
15. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.	1	5	3.16	1.245	Moderate level
Total communication anxiety	1.60	5	3.26	0.746	Moderate level

From Table 4.2 above, the statements in the communication anxiety dimension rated at high level are those of questions 5, 7, 10, and 13. Interestingly, the question 10 statement: “I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.” were also mentioned by the students in the interview question as follows:

“I would be anxious and nervous when I was suddenly called up by the teacher to answer a question when I was unprepared.” (Student 7, personal communication, March 20, 2023).

“I want the teacher to talk about the problem first, then express his or her thoughts, and then point out the reason for my mistake.” (Student 1, personal communication, March 20, 2023).

“My English foundation is not good and I cannot catch up with teacher's lecture.” (Student 8 personal communication, March 20, 2023).

Table 4.3 Descriptive Analysis of English Test Anxiety Dimension

English Test Anxiety Dimension	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
16. When I take an English test, I usually get so nervous that my palms sweat and my heart rate increases	1	5	3.04	1.270	Moderate level
17. I am worried about the consequences of failing my English class.	1	5	3.44	1.289	Moderate level
18. After taking English test, I always feel worried that my scores will be criticized by the teacher.	1	5	3.51	1.131	High level
19. Some quizzes in English class will also make me nervous.	1	5	3.21	1.150	Moderate level
20. After taking English test, I always feel worried that my classmates will make fun of my test score result.	1	5	3.07	1.276	Moderate level
21. Although I am well prepared for every English exam, I still feel anxious.	1	5	3.34	1.251	Moderate level
22. During taking English test, I sometimes feel so nervous that I might make some mistakes in answering the questions.	1	5	2.96	1.263	Moderate level
23. Before taking English test, I always feel worried that I cannot do well in the test.	1	5	3.41	1.273	Moderate level
24. When I take an English test, I always feel worried that I am not able to finish answering all the questions.	1	5	3.43	1.252	Moderate level

Table 4.3 Descriptive Analysis of English Test Anxiety Dimension (Cont.)

English Test Anxiety Dimension	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
25. I always worry that my English test scores will decline and be criticized by my parents.	1	5	3.43	1.230	Moderate level
Total Test anxiety	1.40	5	3.28		Moderate level

Based on the statement in question 18: “After taking English test, I always feel worried that my scores will be criticized by the teacher.” which is the only statement rated as a high level of English Test Anxiety Dimension in Table 4, the students revealed their feeling towards this aspect as follows:

“The main source of anxiety is the teacher, because the teacher will criticize you for lowering your test scores.” (Student 1, personal communication, March 20, 2023).

“I was mainly afraid of being criticized by my teacher because I did not do well in English and I was afraid of being despised and criticized by my teacher for having too low a score.” (Student 4, personal communication, March 20, 2023).

“If I couldn't answer the teacher's questions or what he had said or emphasized, I would be criticized in public, and of course, I didn't review my English knowledge often enough.” (Student 5, personal communication, March 20, 2023).

“I feel stupid, I always fail in exams, and I worry about being ridiculed by my teachers.” (Student 9, personal communication, March 20, 2023).

Table 4.4 Descriptive Analysis of Negative Evaluation Anxiety Dimension

Negative Evaluation Anxiety	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
26. I'm worried about making mistakes in English class.	1	5	3.20	1.187	Moderate level
27. I always think that all students are better at English than me.	1	5	3.32	1.180	Moderate level
28. I don't think I am talented in English learning.	1	5	3.49	1.305	Moderate level
29. I would worry that my English teacher would correct every mistake of me.	1	5	2.98	1.271	Moderate level
30. I often feel ashamed when I still don't understand the mistakes that have been corrected by my English teacher.	1	5	3.14	1.230	Moderate level
31. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English class.	1	5	3.27	1.354	Moderate level
32. I often feel scared when my English teacher corrects my mistakes.	1	5	3.08	1.307	Moderate level
33. I always feel my heart beating fast when I have a feeling that I might be called by my English teacher to answer the questions.	1	5	3.51	1.393	High level
34. When I express my ideas in English, I always worry about being laughed at by other students.	1	5	3.19	1.324	Moderate level
35. In English class, I usually don't take the initiative to answer some uncertain questions.	1	5	3.62	1.285	High level

Table 4.4 Descriptive Analysis of Negative Evaluation Anxiety Dimension (Cont.)

Negative Evaluation Anxiety	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
36. In English class, I often ducked and avoid making eye contact with teacher in order not to be called.	1	5	3.15	1.347	Moderate level
37. Although I have prepared and reviewed before English class, I still feel panic during learning English in classroom.	1	5	3.02	1.278	Moderate level
38. When I make mistakes in English class, I'm afraid the teacher will criticize me directly in the classroom.	1	5	3.10	1.270	Moderate level
39. I'm always worried that I can't keep up with the progress of English.	1	5	3.31	1.269	Moderate level
40. Learning English makes me feel a lot of pressure.	1	5	3.22	1.404	Moderate level
Total negative evaluation anxiety	1.13	5	3.24	0.821	Moderate level

Statement in question 33: “I always feel my heart beating fast when I have a feeling that I might be called by my English teacher to answer the questions,” which rated as high level for Negative Evaluation Anxiety in Table 5, the students shared similar ideas.

“I was afraid that I would be ridiculed by other students for my wrong answers.” (Student 8, personal communication, March 20, 2023).

“Direct criticism from the teacher will only make me more nervous the next time I answer a question. I wish the teacher could not criticize me seriously, but talk about the problem before giving the correct answer, and slowly guide us to find out the correct answer and tell us the reason of the error, so that we

can deepen our memory of the correct answer.” (Student 6, personal communication, March 20, 2023).

And the statement from question 35 in Table 5: “In English class, I usually don’t take the initiative to answer some uncertain questions,” can be substantiated by students 3 and 9 as in their statements below:

“I hope the teacher will communicate with me more and help me figure out the meaning of the words and the text.” (Student 3, personal communication, March 20, 2023).

“I wish my teacher could encourage me more, slow down the pace of the lecture and create a relaxed classroom atmosphere for us.” (Student 9, personal communication, March 20, 2023).

4.1.2 Analysis of Factors Involved with English Learning Anxiety

To explore further on analyzing the factors involved with English learning anxiety, the mean score of the items representing high levels with the mean ≥ 3.50 from each dimension were the focus points of follow-up interviews with the 9 students. The list consisted of seven items: 1) communication anxiety: Q5, Q7, Q10, Q13; 2) test anxiety: Q18; and 3) fear of negative evaluation: Q33, Q35.

From the semi-structured interviews, content analysis was coded and analyzed using Lichtman’s 3 Cs Model (2013), which consists of three major steps: Codes, Categories, and Concepts. The students reported factors causing their anxiety English learning based on the three dimensions: communication anxiety, English test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. The codes, categories and concepts were analyzed related to the learner, teacher, and other factors (see details in Appendix F). The emerging data from the student-related factors are EFL learning skills (10 or 22.22%), EFL learning attitudes (9 or 20%) and psychological related issues (4 or 8.89%). The results from teacher-related factors included teaching behaviors (19 or

42.25%). The last factor involved the parents' high expectations of the students' English performance (3 or 6.6%).

The emerging data which is interesting to state here is the identification of the source of anxiety:

Table 4.5 Sources of English language anxiety reported by the students

Source of anxiety	Frequency
1. Teachers	21 (42.22%)
2. Students themselves	23 (51.11%)
3. Parents	3 (6.67%)
Total	45 (100%)

The results of Table 4.5 seem to reflect that these students feel that the students may need help to improve their self-esteem and they need help on anxiety-reducing strategies.

4.2 Results for Research Question 2

The Research Result 2. Anxiety-reducing strategies suggested for the rural junior Chinese middle school students in this study.

Nine students, together with their parents, and 4 teachers were voluntarily recruited to participate in the interview. Based on content analysis of 7 questions from semi-structured interviews, the researcher obtained strategies to reduce English learning anxiety from the perspective of students, parents and teachers. Content analysis was coded and analyzed using Lichtman's 3 Cs Model (2013), which consists of three major steps: Codes, Categories, and Concepts and the results of the content analysis of anxiety-reducing strategies are as follows:

From the students' perspectives

From the codes, categories and concepts in appendix G there are two emerging themes based on the concepts: students' anxiety- reducing strategies by improving English learning skills and increasing self-regulated learning in English. Within these two main anxiety-reduction strategies, students suggested: 1) they should improve EFL learning skills through memorizing words (4 or 28.57%); reading the text thoroughly (3 or 21.43%); improving basic English skills (3 or 21.43%), and mastering grammar rules (1 or 7.14%); and 2) they should increase self-regulation in learning English by setting up study goal to improve English test scores (2 or 14.29%) and improving self-confidence (1 or 7.14%).

From the parents' perspectives

The emerging themes of English reducing-anxiety strategies based on the parents' interview data (see details in Appendix H) are: parents' anxiety-reducing strategies by giving encouragement and care about their children English learning, not criticizing harshly on children English learning outcome, and avoiding placing undue focus on English test results. Based on these three emerging themes, the parents thought that they may need give more encouragement and care about their children's learning (5 or 45.46%), should not criticizing harshly about their children's English learning outcomes (4 or 36.36%), and avoid placing undue focus on English test results of their children (2 or 18.18 %).

From the teachers' perspective

The emerging themes from the coded data based on the teachers' interviews are: teachers' strategies of using effective instructional approach, and providing comments and feedbacks to support the students in learning English (Appendix I). Teachers reported that the anxiety-reducing strategies could be done through:

1) Teachers' strategies of using effective instructional approach.

These English anxiety-reducing strategies can be done by applying effective instructional approach by a) using interesting teaching techniques and assignments in class (15 or 24.19%), b) applying effective instructional approach

providing example and explaining more about how to arrive at answers (13 or 20.97%), c) communicating and interacting more with the students (6 or 9.68%), d) giving enough time to think and answer the question (5 or 8.06%), creating a good atmosphere in class (3 or 4.84%), e) mastering strong English teaching skills (2 or 3.23%), and f) being patient (1 or 1.61 %).

2) Teachers' strategies of providing comments and feedbacks to support the students in learning English.

These English anxiety-reducing strategies can be done by a) not discriminating (5 or 8.06%), b) not criticizing the students' answers harshly in class (5 or 8.06%), c) being gentle (3 or 4.84%), d) not being too serious about students' grades (3 or 4.84%), and e) not forcing students to answer questions (1 or 1.61%).

4.3 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the following conclusions were drawn through quantitative analysis combined with qualitative analysis. Firstly, the current situation about English learning anxiety of rural junior middle school students can be summarized as follows: The English learning anxiety level of Chinese rural junior middle school students is moderate ($M=3.26$) and the three dimensions of anxiety levels are ranked as, test anxiety ($M=3.28$), communicative anxiety ($M=3.26$), fear of negative evaluation ($M=3.24$). Secondly, the factors of English learning anxiety among Chinese rural junior middle school students can be summarized into three aspects, which are student-related factors, teacher-related factors, and external factors. Finally, strategies to reduce English learning anxiety of Chinese rural junior middle school students are proposed from students, teachers and parents.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION, PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATION

A mixed-method was used for this study. A quantitative analysis of the questionnaire was conducted to explore the level of English learning anxiety and the factors influencing it among rural junior middle school students in China. The data from semi-structured interviews with students and teachers were analyzed qualitatively to further explore the factors affecting students' English learning anxiety and some strategies to alleviate it. Combining the findings of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis, effective strategies are provided to reduce English learning anxiety among Chinese rural junior middle school students.

In this chapter, first, the findings of the quantitative and qualitative studies are summarized. Then, the main findings are discussed. Finally, the benefits of the findings for students, English teachers, and future research in this area and the limitations of this study are briefly summarized.

5.1 Conclusion

This study is based on two research objectives:

- 1) To examine the factors and identify the level of the factors affecting the foreign language anxiety of the rural junior Chinese middle school.
- 2) To explore anxiety-reducing strategies that should be used by the rural junior Chinese middle school students in this study.

5.1.1 The factors and the levels of English learning anxiety for rural Chinese junior middle school in this study

The factors for English language anxiety for rural Chinese junior high school in this study were communication anxiety, English test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation and the level of the overall students' English learning anxiety level is at the moderate level (\bar{x} = 3.26, S.D = 0.676). The anxiety factors were found to be student-related factors, teacher-related factors, and other factors; i.e., language environment in class, tensions by parents' expectation and tension of failure of communication in front of public. The frequencies of the sources of the English language anxiety were listed from the students themselves (44.5%), the teachers (22.2%), and the parents (33.3%), respectively.

5.1.2 The reducing-anxiety of English learning anxiety for rural Chinese junior middle school in this study

Reducing-anxiety strategies were sought from the perspectives of the students—how they should improve their English language learning skills and learning attitudes, parents—how they should be more flexible in their children's expectations and teachers—how they should support their students and continue improving ways of their professional development.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 The overall students' level of English learning anxiety was at a moderate level with some specific sub-dimension rated as high level were similar to the research studies conducted by Tang (2021), Zhan (2021), Zhao (2019), Yang (2016), Li (2015), and Yang (2013). This may be explained from the qualitative data reported by the students in this study the students seem to be aware of the causes and the factors involved in their own English language anxiety when they could identify the sources of their anxiety and could explain how the sources affect their anxiety. The students could suggest how the they themselves, their parents and the teachers may help

alleviate their tensions. Some students admitted that they used to set goals for their English language learning but they did not set goal for the course. Some did not even think of setting goals for their English learning.

Based on the findings of the combined quantitative and qualitative data, the English learning anxiety factors of Chinese rural junior middle school students were divided into learner-related, teacher-related, family-related, and background-related factors, the most significant of which were student-related factors. Karen Moni et al. (2013) proposed that EFL learning ability was the main anxiety factor among student-related factors. The low English proficiency, limited English basic skills, inability to keep up with lectures, and poor vocabulary and grammar were the main problems of the participants (Jin & Yu, 2009; Du & Liu, 2009). In addition, students' fear of low scores, lack of confidence, and high expectations were also frequently mentioned in this study, and the importance of these factors was similarly proposed by Chinese researchers. (Liao, 2004; Huo, 2009; Guo & Xu, 2014). Finally, students' psychological factors, such as low self-esteem, fear of losing face, and fear of being ridiculed by classmates for low scores were also identified as important anxiety factors in this study, which is consistent with previous findings (Huo 2009; Wang 2003; Lin & Wu 2010).

5.2.2 Reducing-anxiety strategies were sought from the perspectives of the students—how they should improve their English language learning skills and learning attitudes, parents—how they should be more flexible in their children's expectation and teachers—how they should support their students and continue improving ways of their professional development.

The results of qualitative data from the students' perspectives reveal two anxiety-reducing strategies emerge: students' anxiety-reducing strategies by improving English learning skills and increasing self-regulated learning in English. From the parents' perspectives, three issues were listed: parents' anxiety-reducing strategies by a) giving encouragement and care about their children English learning, b) not criticizing harshly on children English learning outcome, and c) avoiding placing

undue focus on English test results. The emerging themes from the coded data based on the teachers' interviews are: teachers' strategies of using effective instructional approach, and providing comments and feedbacks to support the students in learning English.

One of the reducing-anxiety strategies which the students have raised is the more relaxing classroom environment which students can feel that the teachers care about them and their learning. The teachers also share this point that they should create a relaxed and active classroom atmosphere and establish a close teacher-student relationship to help reduce students' English learning anxiety. This finding is consistent with the opinion of some researchers that a relaxed classroom atmosphere can stimulate students' interest and motivation, and that teachers' various teaching methods and styles can make can add appeal to the classroom (Li, 2015; Yang, 2016; Liu 2020).

Many students rated the statement in the questionnaire item 18: "After taking English test, I always feel worried that my scores will be criticized by the teacher as high ($\bar{x} = 3.51$ S.D.= 1.131). In the interview, teachers also agreed that positive feedback and evaluation by them in the classroom can help to reduce students' anxiety about learning English. For this issue, Zhang (2018) suggested that teachers should insist on positive feedback to cultivate students' self-confidence. Zhao (2019) and Tang (2021) stipulated that teachers should still smile when commenting, which can reduce students' embarrassment and avoid direct negative comments. Ren (2019) and Yang (2013) proposed that English teachers need to give positive feedback to students to increase their motivation to learn English. In addition, students and teachers share the same view that the teachers should use appropriate methods of error correction. The students in this study reported their tension of negative feedback provision. The teachers, in their interview, mentioned that English teachers' gently correcting errors can reduce students' English learning anxiety. The results of this study are consistent with most previous studies, such as Ren (2019) and Yang (2013) who suggested that teachers can adopt a tolerant attitude to correct students' mistakes. Liu (2020) proposed that teachers should take appropriate measures to correct students' mistakes according to their different personalities.

The students mentioned their tension can be from the teachers' and their parents' excessive emphasis on their English test scores. From the teachers' side, the teachers reported in the interview that they should not place excessive emphasis on test scores, and teachers should cultivate positive attitudes toward students' perception of test failure. The results of this study are the same as the recommendations of previous studies in which Yang (2013) and Li (2015) suggested that teachers should correct their attitudes towards exams. Zhao (2019) suggested that teachers should not only help students to correctly perceive failure in English exams, but also help them to cultivate a correct perception of success and failure to reduce students' test anxiety. From the parents' side, they revealed that they should be more flexible and do not set too high expectations on their children's grades and scores.

5.3 Pedagogical Implication

Based on the analysis of the study in Chapter 4, the author found that Chinese rural junior middle school students had moderate levels of English anxiety. However, in the questionnaire survey, it was found that the students still had high anxiety levels on some items. For example, they are afraid to speak in class; they are worried about low scores and being criticized by the teacher; they are afraid of the teacher's naming and negative evaluation in class, etc.

Among the three dimensions of ELL anxiety, students had the highest level of test anxiety due to teachers' overemphasis on English test scores and students' fear of criticism from teachers for their low scores. The results of this study sufficiently demonstrate that teacher-related factors are important factors contributing to students' English learning anxiety. Based on the semi-structured interviews in Chapter 4, it can be concluded that there are many and complex factors that affect students' English learning anxiety. The researcher categorized these factors as learner-related factors, teacher-related factors, parent-related factors, and background factors, with learner-related factors being the most significant, followed by teacher-related factors.

In addition, the author also found that the left-behind children had higher levels of English anxiety than other students, and the main factor was their low self-esteem in English learning. Students with medium English scores tend to be introverted, and they are always unconfident. Naturally, their English anxiety levels are higher than those of extroverted students. Among the three grades, 9th grade students have the highest level of English anxiety, and the reason for this is their pressure to go on to high school.

Similarly, based on semi-structured interviews, the researchers proposed some strategies to reduce English language learning anxiety, which have important implications for English teaching and English learning.

For the students, first they need to be clear about their English learning challenges and English learning anxiety factors, and prescribe the right remedy to reduce English learning anxiety. Based on the results of this study, students need to improve their English proficiency. They can start by memorizing words, reading the text repeatedly and mastering grammar.

It is also important to allocate the time for English study in a reasonable way. On the one hand, completing the tasks assigned by the teacher on time and in quality will be conducive to developing good study habits. On the other hand, students should make good use of the time available in the class for the lesson and record the key points of the teacher's lecture. After class, they should take the time to review what they have learned and preview the new content. What will enable students to get twice the result with half the effort in the English learning, thus improving their confidence in learning English and achieving the goal of reducing anxiety.

Students should take the initiative to cultivate an interest in learning English and increase their enthusiasm for learning English. For example, buying or borrowing some appropriate extra-curricular English reading materials or watching English movies and dramas. Also, they can set a small goal for themselves that can be

achieved in the short term. What will help to build students' interest step by step and increase their self-confidence in learning English.

Appropriate methods of learning English are also important. For example, students should acquire the habit of self-regulated learning. They should take the initiative to communicate with their English teachers to help them set appropriate English learning goals and methods, and to increase their interest and confidence in learning English. Students should also take the initiative to develop a positive and optimistic attitude in the face of failure in English exams. At the same time, they can do some outside exercises to relax their bodies and minds, reduce stress and anxiety, and increase their self-confidence in learning.

For teachers, they need to pay attention to students' English learning anxiety. In the English classroom, teachers should pay more attention to students' emotion and praise and compliment them to improve their confidence in learning English. Teachers should adopt a gentle approach to correcting students' wrong answers and avoid direct criticism. Teachers' evaluation method is mainly positive. At the same time, teachers need to modify the way they ask questions in class without forcing students to answer them, because the students are always more anxious when they are suddenly asked questions by name. Teachers need to cultivate positive attitudes toward test failure because students are always anxious about low scores.

In terms of teaching methods, it is essential for teachers to create a relaxed and flexible classroom atmosphere. In the classroom, teachers face students with a smile on their faces. They can add more interactive classroom sessions, motivate students to participate in classroom activities and increase class interest with multimedia tools such as videos and pictures. By expanding the content of the course, they can provide students with engaging course content. After class, teachers interact with students to learn about their English learning challenges. An intimate teacher-student relationship will reduce students' anxiety about learning English.

In addition, English teachers should pay more attention to the English learning status of left-behind children and students with moderate achievement. Teachers can be more kind and patient with this group of students, communicate and interact more with them, and thus help them to build confidence in English learning.

For parents, it is important not to put too much emphasis on the student's English test scores. As rural parents are eager for their children to get high scores and get into top high schools, they neglect their children's mental health. What can increase students' English learning anxiety. Parents should establish a correct concept of education. They should face their children's low scores in English exams with a gentle attitude, without scolding them and with less criticism and more encouragement. Parents need to communicate more with teachers and children to understand their children's English learning situation.

5.4 Recommendations

This study explored the factors of ELL anxiety among Chinese rural junior middle school students and proposed anxiety-reducing strategies. However, foreign language anxiety is still an under-researched area and through this study, future researchers will obtain some meaningful recommendations.

First, it is recommended that future researchers can do a comparative study in studying similar topic. Since this study was only conducted in one rural junior middle school, Dadong Junior Middle School, the scope of the study was narrow, the coverage of the research participants was insufficient, and the results lacked representativeness and typicality. Future researchers can compare the English anxiety of rural students with that of urban students, compare the English anxiety status of rural students in different regions of China, etc.

Second, it is recommended that future researchers optimize the research methodology about similar topic. The results of this study were obtained using a mixed research method. Only semi-structured interviews were used in the qualitative

analysis, and this method is too subjective, which is bound to affect the reliability of the study results. In future studies, the researcher can add other qualitative analysis methods such as classroom observation and students' EFL learning autobiographies to obtain more comprehensive findings.

Third, it is recommended that future researchers expand the scope of interview respondent. The results of this study showed that the factors influencing English learning anxiety among junior middle school students in rural China were not only related to teachers and students, but also to parents. Therefore, interviews with parents are also necessary.

Fourth, it is recommended that future researchers pay more attention to the English learning anxiety status of left-behind children. The researcher found that half of Chinese rural junior middle school students are left-behind children, and their English anxiety level is higher than other students'. And this study did not focus on studying and analyzing the anxiety status of this group of students.

Finally, it is recommended that future researchers continue to follow up and identify the participants' following English learning status. This study did not apply the anxiety-relief strategies to actual teaching and learning, and therefore could not verify the practicability and validity of the research strategies.

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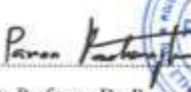
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL BY ETHICS REVIEW BOARD OF
RANGSIT UNIVERSITY

		COA. No. RSUERB2023-003
Certificate of Approval By Ethics Review Board of Rangsit University		
COA. No.	COA. No. RSUERB2023-003	
Protocol Title	FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY OF RURAL EFL JUNIOR MIDDLE SCHOOL CHINESE STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF A SCHOOL IN EAST CHINA	
Principle Investigator	Wang Min	
Affiliation	Suryadhep Teachers College, Rangsit University	
How to review	Expedited Review	
Approval includes	1. Project proposal 2. Information sheet 3. Informed consent form 4. Data collection form/Program or Activity plan	
Date of Approval:	5 January 2023	
Date of Expiration:	5 January 2025	
<p>The prior mentioned documents have been reviewed and approved by Ethics Review Board of Rangsit University based Declaration of Helsinki, The Belmont Report, CIOMS Guideline and International Conference on Harmonization in Good Clinical Practice or ICH-GCP</p>		
 Signature..... (Associate Professor Dr. Panat Kanchanaphum) Chairman, Ethics Review Board for Human Research		
<hr/> Ethics Review Board of Rangsit University, 5th floor, Arthit Duraiat Building (Bldg.1) Rangsit University Tel. 0-2791-5728 Email: rsuethics@rsu.ac.th		

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE OF ENGLISH LEARNING ANXIETY

Questionnaire on English learning anxiety

Dear students,

This questionnaire aims to explore the current situation of English learning anxiety of junior middle school students in rural areas, so that teachers can improve teaching plans and teaching quality. The results of this survey are only for academic research, not impact on your English performance, and your information will be kept strictly confidential. Please fill in according to your actual situation. The answer will not be judged whether it is right or wrong. Thank you very much for your cooperation. Please tick in the provided space.

Part 1: Basic information

- Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
- Class: _____
- Personality: ☐ Introvert ☐ Extrovert
- Do you live with? ☐ parents ☐ Grandma and Grandpa ☐ Other
- Final exam marks: _____

Part 2: FLCAS (Foreign language classroom anxiety scale)

There are 40 items in this table, and each item has 5 options. Please choose one of the options according to your actual situation and tick (√) in blank.

1 means strongly disagree, 2 means disagree, 3 means not sure, 4 means agree, 5 means strongly agree.

No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English class.					
2	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.					
3	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.					
4	When I communicate with other students in English, I often feel fear.					

No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5
5	I think other students speak English better than me.					
6	I am more nervous in English class than in other classes.					
7	In English class, I often feel nervous when I am appointed as a group presenter.					
8	In English class, I feel uneasy when I don't understand an important part when the teacher is teaching.					
9	In English class, I feel psychological panic because the teacher doesn't give me enough time to think and answer the questions.					
10	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.					
11	In English class, I can get nervous easily and forget what I know.					
12	I feel embarrassed when I have to volunteer to answer the questions in my English class.					
13	I feel nervous when I have to speak English with native speakers.					
14	I get nervous while I am speaking in English class.					
15	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.					
16	When I take an English test, I usually get so nervous that my palms sweat and my heart rate increases.					
17	I am worried about the consequences of failing my English class.					
18	After taking English test, I always feel worried that my scores will be criticized by the teacher.					
19	Some quizzes in English class will also make me nervous.					
20	After taking English test, I always feel worried that my classmates will make fun of my test score result.					

No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5
21	Although I am well prepared for every English exam, I still feel anxious.					
22	During taking English test, I sometimes feel so nervous that I might make some mistakes in answering the questions.					
23	Before taking English test, I always feel worried that I cannot do well in the test.					
24	When I take an English test, I always feel worried that I am not able to finish answering all the questions.					
25	I always worry that my English test scores will decline and be criticized by my parents.					
26	I'm worried about making mistakes in English class.					
27	I always think that all students are better at English than me.					
28	I don't think I am talented in English learning.					
29	I would worry that my English teacher would correct every mistake of me.					
30	I often feel ashamed when I still don't understand the mistakes that have been corrected by my English teacher.					
31	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English class.					
32	I often feel scared when my English teacher corrects my mistakes.					
33	I always feel my heart beating fast when I have a feeling that I might be called by my English teacher to answer the questions.					
34	When I express my ideas in English, I always worry about being laughed at by other students.					
35	In English class, I usually don't take the initiative to answer some uncertain questions.					
36	In English class, I often ducked and avoid making eye contact with teacher in order not to be called.					

No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5
37	Although I have prepared and reviewed before English class, I still feel panic during learning English in classroom.					
38	When I make mistakes in English class, I'm afraid the teacher will criticize me directly in the classroom.					
39	I'm always worried that I can't keep up with the progress of English.					
40	Learning English makes me feel a lot of pressure.					

英语学习焦虑调查问卷表

亲爱的同学：

你好！这是一份关于英语学习焦虑的问卷调查表，旨在了解农村地区初中学生的英语学习焦虑状况，以便于教师有针对性的改进教学计划，提高教学质量。本次调查的结果仅用于分析研究， 对您的学习成绩没有任何影响，并且会对您的信息严格保密。请根据自己的真实情况填写，答案无所谓对错，十分感谢您的积极配合！请在括号里打钩（√）。

一、个人信息（请如实填写）

- 1. 性别：男（ ） 女（ ）
- 2. 年级：初一（ ） 初二（ ） 初三（ ）
- 3. 性格：内向（ ） 外向（ ）
- 4. 你和谁住在一起：父母（ ） 爷爷奶奶（ ） 其他（ ）

二、英语课堂学习焦虑量表

说明：本表共 40 个问题，每题有 5 个选项，请根据自己的实际情况选择其中一个选项在方框里打钩（√）。1-5 分代表的情况如下：1 完全不赞同；2 不赞同；3 一般；4 赞同；5 完全赞同

题号	问题	1	2	3	4	5
1	在英语课上说英语时，我一直都不自信					
2	在英语课上得知我要被点名回答问题时我会发抖					
3	英语课上没听懂老师用英语说什么时会感到害怕					
4	我在用英语与其他同学交流时，我经常会感觉到恐惧					

题号	问题	1	2	3	4	5
5	我觉得其他同学的英语说得都比我好					
6	我在上英语课时比上其他课更紧张					
7	英语课上，当我被指定为小组发言人时， 我经常感到紧张					
8	英语课上，当没听懂老师讲的某个知识点 的时候我会感到很不安					
9	英语课上，我会因为老师没有给予充分的 思考时间而进行提问感到心理恐慌					
10	英语课上做没有准备的发言时感到很紧张					
11	英语课上很紧张以至于知道的东西都忘了					
12	英语课上自愿发言时我感到很尴尬					
13	用英语和外国人交谈时我会非常紧张					
14	在英语课上发言时感到紧张不安					
15	说英语要掌握那么多规则让我害怕					
16	英语测验时我通常会很紧张，我经常手 心出汗、心率加快					
17	我会担心因为英语不及格带来的后果					
18	每次英语考试后，我总会担心自己成绩太 差会被老师批评					
19	英语课上的一些小测试也会让我感到紧张					
20	每次英语考试后，我总会担心自己成绩太 差会被同学嘲笑					
21	虽然每次英语考试我都准备的很充分，但 还是会感到焦虑					
22	英语考试时，我有时会紧张到连会的题都 做错了					

题号	问题	1	2	3	4	5
23	每次英语考试前我都担心英语考试考不好					
24	英语考试时，我总会担心自己无法完成全部题目					
25	每次英语考试，我总会担心成绩下降被父母批评					
26	我很担心在英语课上犯错					
27	我总觉得其他同学的英语能力都比我强					
28	我觉得我没有学习英语的天赋					
29	我会担心英语老师会纠正我的每一个错误					
30	当不理解英语老师提到的纠错内容时，我经常会觉得很难					
31	每次在英语课堂上发言时，我都会感觉很不自信					
32	每次英语老师纠正我的错误时，我都会感到害怕					
33	预感到自己可能会被点名回答问题时，我总会感到心跳很快					
34	当用英语表达自己的想法时，我总担心会被其他同学嘲笑					
35	英语课上，我通常不主动回答自己没有把握的问题					
36	英语课上，我经常低着头，尽量不引起老师的注意，以免被点名回答问题					
37	英语课前尽管预习了，上课时我还是会感到心里恐慌					
38	在英语课堂上回答问题出错时，我害怕老					

题号	问题	1	2	3	4	5
	师直接否定我					
39	英语课的进度很快，我担心跟不上					
40	英语学习使我感到压力很大					

APPENDIX C
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH STUDENTS
AND TEACHERS

The semi-structure interview questions in the English version

Students' version

- (1) Do you like English? Why? What qualities make someone a good teacher?
- (2) Are you close to your English teacher? If your English teacher gets along with you like a friend, will it ease your English learning anxiety?
- (3) What kind of English classroom activities do you think make you feel most anxious? What kind of English classroom atmosphere do you like?
- (4) Do you set goals in learning English language regularly? If yes, how do you set your goals? What methods will you apply to achieve those goals?
- (5) If your English score is very low, will you feel afraid and anxious? What is the source of the anxiety?
- (6) If you feel anxious when you learn English, how would you change the situation for yourself? How can teachers and parents help you?
- (7) If you give incorrect answer in class, will your English teacher criticize you directly? And this way of comment help you reduce the frequency of similar problems? If yes, please explain the reason. If not, what kind of evaluation method would you like?

Teachers' Version

- (1) How do you evaluate your students whether they have high or low proficiency level in English?
- (2) If a student answer incorrectly in class, how will you manage? How do you provide feedback and/or give prompts to the students before giving the correct answer?
- (3) Will you apply different types of feedback and/or evaluation for students with higher English proficiency level than with the lower ones? Can you give some examples?
- (4) How do you feel about those students who cannot complete learning tasks on time or the quality of the tasks that students complete?
- (5) Will you take the initiative to communicate with students' parents about the students' English learning? What is the purpose of communication?

- (6) Have you observed that your students got anxiety in learning English? What do you think are the factors of their English learning anxiety?
- (7) Will you help those students with high English learning anxiety level to reduce their anxiety? If yes, what anxiety-reducing strategies will you apply to help them?

The semi-structure interview questions in the Chinese version

学生版:

- (1) 你喜欢英语吗? 为什么? 你认为一个好老师应该具备什么品质?
- (2) 你和你的英语老师亲近吗? 如果你的英语老师像朋友一样和你相处, 会缓解你的英语学习焦虑吗?
- (3) 你觉得什么样的英语课堂活动会让你感到最焦虑? 你喜欢什么的什么样的英语课堂?
- (4) 你会定期设定学习英语的目标吗? 如果是, 你如何设定目标? 你将采用什么方法来实现这些目标?
- (5) 如果你的英语分数很低, 你会感到害怕和焦虑吗? 焦虑的根源是什么?
- (6) 如果你在英语学习过程中感到焦虑, 你应该如何为自己改变这种情况? 老师和家长如何帮助你?
- (7) 如果你在课堂中回答问题错误, 你的英语老师会直接并且严肃的批评你吗? 老师的评价会帮助你减少类似问题出错的频率吗? 如果是, 请说明原因。如果不是, 你希望是什么样的评论方式?

教师版:

- (1) 您怎么评价一个学生英语水平的高低?
- (2) 如果学生在课堂上回答错误, 你将如何处理? 在给出正确答案之前, 您如何向学生提供反馈和/或提示?
- (3) 对英语学习成绩好的学生和对英语学习成绩不好的学生, 您会采取不同类型的反馈和评估吗? 您可以举例说明吗?
- (4) 学生不能按时或按质完成你布置的学习任务, 您有什么想法?

- (5) 关于学生的英语学习情况，您是否会主动跟其家长进行沟通？沟通的目的是什么？
- (6) 您注意到您的学生在英语学习时感到焦虑吗？您认为是什么原因造成的？
- (7) 您会帮助那些英语学习焦虑程度高的学生减少焦虑吗？如果是的话，您会采用哪些减少焦虑的策略来帮助他们？

APPENDIX D
ITEM OBJECTIVE CONGRUENCE INDEX (IOC) FORM

Item Objective Congruence: Questionnaire

Item Objective Congruence (IOC)					
“Foreign language anxiety of rural junior middle school Chinese students: A case study of a school in east China”					
The Experts need to evaluate the content validity of each item of the research instrument (Agree =A, Not sure=N, Disagree =D) Objective: To test the foreign language level and the factors of students' English learning anxiety.		Experts Review			Remark
	Question	A	N	D	
		+1	0	-1	
Communication Anxiety	1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English class.				
	2. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.				
	3. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.				
	4. When I communicate with other students in English, I often feel fear				
	5. I think other students speak English better than me				
	6. I am more nervous in English class than in other classes				
	7. In English class, I often feel nervous when I am appointed as a group presenter				

The Experts need to evaluate the content validity of each item of the research instrument (Agree =A, Not sure=N, Disagree =D) Objective: To test the foreign language level and the factors of students' English learning anxiety.		Experts Review			Remark
	Question	A	N	D	
		+1	0	-1	
Communication Anxiety	8. In English class, I feel disconcerted when I don't understand an important part when the teacher speaking				
	9. In English class, I feel psychological panic because the teacher doesn't give me enough time to think and ask questions				
	10. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.				
	11. In English class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.				
	12. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class.				
	13. I feel nervous speaking English with native speakers.				
	14. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in English class.				
	15. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English.				
Test Anxiety	16. When I take an English test, I usually get so nervous that my palms sweat and my heart rate increases.				

<p>The Experts need to evaluate the content validity of each item of the research instrument</p> <p>(Agree =A, Not sure=N, Disagree =D)</p> <p>Objective: To test the foreign language level and the factors of students' English learning anxiety.</p>		Experts Review			Remark
	Question	A	N	D	
		+1	0	-1	
Test Anxiety	17. I worry about the consequences of failing my English class.				
	18. After English test, I always worry that my poor grades will be criticized by the teacher.				
	19. Some small tests in English class will also make me nervous.				
	20. After English test, I always worry that my poor grades will be ridiculed by my classmates.				
	21. Although I am well prepared for every English exam, I still feel anxious				
	22. During the English test, I sometimes get so nervous that I make mistakes in the questions I will do				
	23. Before the English test, I always worry that I can't do well in the English test.				
	24. When I take an English exam, I always worry that I can't finish all the questions.				
	25. I always worry that my English test scores will decline and be criticized by my parents.				

<p>The Experts need to evaluate the content validity of each item of the research instrument</p> <p>(Agree =A, Not sure=N, Disagree =D)</p> <p>Objective: To test the foreign language level and the factors of students' English learning anxiety.</p>		Experts Review			Remark
	Question	A	N	D	
		+1	0	-1	
Fear of negative evaluation	26. I'm worried about making mistakes in English class				
	27. I always think that all students are better at English than me				
	28. I don't think I have the talent to learn English				
	29. I would worry that my English teacher would correct every mistake of me				
	30. I often feel ashamed when I still don't understand the mistakes that have been corrected by my English teacher				
	31. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English class.				
	32. I often feel scared when my English teacher corrects my mistakes				
	33. I always feel my heart beating fast when I have a hunch that I may be called by my English teacher				
	34. When I express my ideas in English, I always worry about being laughed at by other students				

The Experts need to evaluate the content validity of each item of the research instrument (Agree =A, Not sure=N, Disagree =D) Objective: To test the foreign language level and the factors of students' English learning anxiety.		Experts Review			Remark
	Question	A	N	D	
		+1	0	-1	
Fear of negative evaluation	35. In English class, I usually don't take the initiative to answer my uncertain questions				
	36. In English class, I often bow my head and try not to attract the teacher's attention, so as not to be called by my English teacher				
	37. Although I prepared before English class, I still felt panic in English class				
	38. When I make mistakes in English class, I'm afraid the teacher will criticize me directly in the classroom				
	39. I'm always worried that I can't keep up with the progress of English				
	40. Learning English makes me feel a lot of pressure				

Scoring criteria:

The scoring range of IOC is between -1 and +1.

+1: The item is clearly consistent with the objective

0: It is not sure whether the item fully meets the objective, and some items need to be modified or deleted

-1: The item does not meet the objective at all and needs to be modified.

The total score of each project must be above 0.67, so that the item can be effective and the item can be consistent with the measurement objective (Rovinelli, Hambleton 1977).

IOC questionnaire of Experts' Assessment

Item Number	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	IOC
1	1	1	1	1
2	1	1	1	1
3	1	1	1	1
4	1	1	1	1
5	1	1	1	1
6	1	1	1	1
7	1	1	1	1
8	0	1	1	0.67
9	0	1	1	0.67
10	1	1	1	1
11	1	1	0	0.67
12	1	1	1	1
13	1	1	0	0.67
14	1	1	1	1
15	1	0	1	0.67
16	1	1	1	1
17	1	1	0	0.67
18	1	1	1	1
19	1	1	1	1
20	1	1	1	1
21	1	1	1	1
22	0	1	1	0.67
23	1	1	1	1
24	0	1	1	0.67

Item Number	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	IOC
25	1	1	1	1
26	1	1	1	1
27	1	1	1	1
28	1	1	1	1
29	1	1	1	1
30	1	1	1	1
31	1	1	1	1
32	0	1	1	0.67
33	1	1	0	0.67
34	1	1	1	1
35	1	1	1	1
36	1	1	1	1
37	1	1	1	1
38	1	1	1	1
39	1	1	1	1
40	1	1	1	1
IOC=	0.90			

Item Objective Congruence: Interview students

Item Objective Congruence (IOC)					
“Foreign language anxiety of rural junior middle school Chinese students: A case study in east China”					
The Experts need to evaluate the content validity of each item of the research instrument (Agree =A, Not sure=N, Disagree =D) Objective: To understand the influencing factors of students' English learning anxiety.			Experts Review		Remark
NO.	Question	A	N	D	
		+1	0	-1	
1	Do you like English class? Do you like your English teacher? Why?				
2	What's the main reason why you don't like English class? You can share the reasons with your English learning experience				
3	What kind of English classroom activities do you think make you feel most anxious? What kind of English classroom atmosphere do you like?				
4	Will you be very concerned about your English test score? Why?				
5	Do you like your English teacher's teaching strategies? How do you think English teachers communicate with you to make you feel relaxed?				
6	Do you feel worried, nervous or even scared in English class? What makes you nervous?				
7	If you answer questions incorrectly in class, will your English teacher criticize you directly and seriously? Will the teacher's comments help you reduce the frequency of similar problems?				

IOC Interview students of Experts' Assessment

Item Number	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	IOC
1	1	0	1	0.67
2	1	1	1	1
3	1	0	1	0.67
4	1	1	1	1
5	1	1	1	1
6	1	1	1	1
7	1	1	0	0.67
IOC	0.9			

Item Objective Congruence: Interview teachers

Item Objective Congruence (IOC)					
“Foreign language anxiety of rural junior middle school Chinese students: A case study in east China”					
The Experts need to evaluate the content validity of each item of the research instrument (Agree =A, Not sure=N, Disagree =D) Objective: To explore the causes of students' English learning anxiety and get some strategies to alleviate students' English learning anxiety.			Experts Review		Remark
NO.	Question	A	N	D	
		+1	0	-1	
1	How do you evaluate whether a student is excellent or not?				
2	Will you point out the student's wrong answer directly in class, or will you evaluate him positively before giving the correct answer?				
3	Will you take some different treatment or measures for students with good English performance and students with poor English performance? Can you give an example?				
4	What's your attitude when students can't complete the learning tasks you assigned on time or according to quality?				
5	Will you take the initiative to communicate with their parents about their English learning? What is the purpose the of communication?				
6	Are there any English learning anxiety among your students? What do you think is the cause of their English learning anxiety?				
7	Will you help students with English learning anxiety alleviate their anxiety? If your answer is yes, what are your anxiety-reducing strategies?				

IOC Interview teachers of Experts' Assessment

Item Number	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	IOC
1	1	1	0	1
2	1	0	1	0.67
3	1	1	1	1
4	1	1	0	0.67
5	1	1	1	1
6	1	1	1	1
7	1	1	1	1
IOC	0.9			

APPENDIX E
TRANSLATION OF SEMI-STRUCTURED
INTERVIEW RESPONSES

Semi-structured interviews with students

1. Do you like English? Why? What qualities make someone a good teacher?	
Student 1	Like. I think a good English teacher should create a lively classroom atmosphere. Usually, he can joke with us, but he is professional and serious when teaching English.
Student 2	Normal. Because I always failed the exams, couldn't understand the lessons and couldn't catch up with the teacher's lectures, which made me lose interest in learning English. I hope the teacher is gentle, because every teacher is fierce.
Student 3	Normal. Because of my weak English foundation and bad English exam performance, that makes me lose interest in learning English. An excellent English teacher, in my opinion, is kind and not overly aggressive.
Student 4	Dislike. Because of my poor English foundation, I can't catch up with the teacher's lectures, and I have no confidence or interest in learning English. I think a good English teacher should be gentle, have professional English teaching skills, be able to create a relaxed and pleasant classroom atmosphere for us, and not discriminate against students with low English scores.
Student 5	Dislike. English teacher should be gentle, have professional English teaching skills and assign less tasks to us.
Student 6	Like. I was always nervous in English class because my English grades had dropped and I was afraid I wouldn't catch up teacher's lecture and couldn't answer the teacher's questions. I think a good English teacher should get along with his students like a friend and not be overly serious, and he should have professional English teaching skills.
Student 7	Dislike. Because I didn't master the vocabulary and grammar, the teacher would taunt us. I wish the English teacher would be less aggressive in class, give more lively lectures, prompt us to take notes on important words and grammar, and not assign too many

1. Do you like English? Why? What qualities make someone a good teacher?	
	tasks after class and give us enough time to finish these tasks.
Student 8	Dislike. That my English foundation is not good and I cannot catch up with teacher's lecture. I think English teachers should be gentle, have professional teaching skills, not scold and have patience.
Student 9	Dislike. That I cannot catch up with teacher's lecture, cannot grasp the knowledge of class and have bad test scores. I wish the English teacher was gentler, had less homework, and was patient with us.

2. Are you close to your English teacher? If your English teacher gets along with you like a friend, will it ease your English learning anxiety?	
Student 1	Not close. I'm not sure.
Student 2	Not close. If the teacher and I got along like friends, it might reduce my anxiety.
Student 3	Not close. I'm not sure.
Student 4	Not close. If the teacher and I got along like friends, it might reduce my anxiety.
Student 5	Not close. If the teacher and I got along like friends, it might reduce my anxiety.
Student 6	Not close. If the teacher and I got along like friends, it might reduce my anxiety.
Student 7	Not close. If the teacher and I got along like friends, it might reduce my anxiety.
Student 8	Not close. If the teacher and I got along like friends, it might reduce my anxiety.
Student 9	Not close. If the teacher and I got along like friends, it might reduce my anxiety.

3. What kind of English classroom activities do you think make you feel most anxious? What kind of English classroom atmosphere do you like?	
Student 1	The class is too quiet, and I get nervous when I'm suddenly called up to answer a question and may be criticized by the teacher when I can't answer. I like a class with a lively atmosphere, not too quiet and tense. The teacher lectures in a relaxed and active way, he can expand the content of the lecture, and the teacher is good at giving examples in the lecture and throwing in the towel.
Student 2	The class is too quiet, no one takes the initiative to answer the teacher's questions, and the teacher is nervous when answering questions by name. I hope the teacher will do the lecture in a game way, and I hope the teacher will not ask questions suddenly when the students are not ready.
Student 3	Excessive silence in the classroom, no one talking, very tense atmosphere. A lively atmosphere, able to arrange group discussions and group presentations, the teacher's lecture style is relaxed and active.
Student 4	Teachers randomly answering questions by name and being directly criticized by the teacher in class for wrong answers; A relaxed and active classroom atmosphere where the teacher can use pictures and videos to assist in teaching, and he can talk and laugh with us and not be so serious.
Student 5	Being asked questions and being punished with copying or outright punished with standing and criticism if they cannot answer. I like a very active classroom atmosphere, where the teacher can lecture by doing games and interacting with us more.
Student 6	I was afraid to mention myself when the teacher asked a question and no one answered, and when the teacher directly named me to answer the question. I like the more relaxed atmosphere of the class, the teacher is very humorous and interacts with us a lot.

3. What kind of English classroom activities do you think make you feel most anxious? What kind of English classroom atmosphere do you like?	
Student 7	I would be anxious and nervous when I was suddenly called up by the teacher to answer a question when I was unprepared. I like a lively classroom atmosphere, such as where students and the teacher can interact and have students take the lead in interaction.
Student 8	The way the teacher asked questions that no one answered and the teacher directly named the answers would make me nervous and I was afraid that I would be ridiculed by other students for my wrong answers. I like the relaxed and active classroom atmosphere.
Student 9	The teacher suddenly named me to answer a question. I like a relaxed and active classroom atmosphere where the teacher and students can interact more.

4. Do you set goals in learning English language regularly? If yes, how do you set your goals? What methods will you apply to achieve those goals?	
Student 1	I used to have English learning goal, but now I don't. If I set a goal, I would like to start with memorizing words and reading the text well.
Student 2	I used to have English learning goal, but now I don't. If I set a goal that is to get higher English test score.
Student 3	I used to have English learning goal, but now I don't. If I set a goal, I would like to start with memorizing words and reading the text well.
Student 4	No
Student 5	No
Student 6	No
Student 7	I have English learning goals.
Student 8	No
Student 9	No

5. If your English score is very low, will you feel afraid and anxious? What is the source of the anxiety?	
Student 1	Yes. The sources of anxiety are parents, teachers and yourself. The main source of anxiety is the teacher, because the teacher will criticize you for lowering your test scores.
Student 2	Yes. My anxiety stems from my teachers, my parents, and myself. Mostly it comes from my parents, who have high expectations of me and I used to get good grades and now I get average grades.
Student 3	Yes. The anxiety came from my teachers and myself, because my parents didn't care about my grades at all.
Student 4	Yes. I was mainly afraid of being criticized by my teacher because I did not do well in English and I was afraid of being despised and criticized by my teacher for having too low a score.
Student 5	Yes. The main source of anxiety was the teacher and myself, who was rather aggressive. If I couldn't answer the teacher's questions or what he had said or emphasized, I would be criticized in public, and of course, I didn't review my English knowledge often enough.
Student 6	Yes. My anxiety comes from my parents and myself. I was afraid that if I didn't do well on the test, people would say, "You are so bad at English. I would be self-denying and think I was bad at English, and I was also afraid of disappointing my aunt.
Student 7	Yes. My anxiety came from my parents and myself, mostly myself, and I would be afraid that I wouldn't get into high school.
Student 8	Yes. The source of my anxiety is mainly myself. I want to do better in my English exams and to get into a major high school. My parents don't care about me.
Student 9	Normal. The source of my anxiety is mainly myself and my teachers. I feel stupid, I always fail in exams, and I worry about being ridiculed by my teachers.

6. If you feel anxious when you learn English, how would you change the situation for yourself? How can teachers and parents help you?	
Student 1	I don't know. I wish teachers could talk to us more. Sometimes I still don't understand the questions after the teacher has finished talking about them, but I am afraid to ask the teacher; I also wish my parents would not look at the grades. If I don't do well on a test, my parents might criticize me for a week straight.
Student 2	I will memorize more words and ease my anxiety by improving my basic English skills. I hope my parents don't put too much emphasis on the score and don't criticize me harshly even if I don't do well on the test, they can encourage me more.
Student 3	I don't know. I hope the teacher will communicate with me more and help me figure out the meaning of the words and the text.
Student 4	I don't know. I hope the teacher can change the way she comments in class and be gentle with us.
Student 5	I don't know. I hope that the teacher can gently correct my mistakes and can often interact with us to reduce my anxiety.
Student 6	I want to change the anxiety, but there is no way to do so at the moment. I wish both teachers and parents could be gentle with us.
Student 7	I don't have a good way to relieve myself. I wish my parents could encourage me more and not scold me for not doing well in my exams.
Student 8	Improve my English performance, such as memorizing the words, reading the text, and figuring out the grammar rules my teacher has taught me. I also hope my parents can care more about my English learning.
Student 9	Improve basic English skills and self-confidence. I wish my teacher could encourage me more, slow down the pace of the lecture and create a relaxed classroom atmosphere for us.

7. If you give incorrect answer in class, will your English teacher criticize you directly? And this way of comment help you reduce the frequency of similar problems? If yes, please explain the reason. If not, what kind of evaluation method would you like?	
Student 1	No help. Because after the teacher points it out, I get nervous after the first mistake, and even if the teacher says it, I forget half of it for a moment when I sit down. I want the teacher to talk about the problem first, then express his or her thoughts, and then point out the reason for my mistake.
Student 2	It won't help me. At the moment I have no idea.
Student 3	It won't help me. At the moment I have no idea.
Student 4	It would have helped me little to nothing. I wish the teacher would talk about the topic first and guide us to find out the correct answer to get me interested in learning English, instead of just saying the answer and denying me in front of the whole class.
Student 5	It helped me a little, but unsustainable. I hope that the teacher will not immediately criticize me before giving the correct answer, but give me some time to think or explain the correct answer in a roundabout way so that I won't be embarrassed.
Student 6	It helps a little, but not much. Direct criticism from the teacher will only make me more nervous the next time I answer a question. I wish the teacher could not criticize me seriously, but talk about the problem before giving the correct answer, and slowly guide us to find out the correct answer and tell us the reason of the error, so that we can deepen our memory of the correct answer.
Student 7	The teacher would just say the correct answer, but it didn't help me very much. Because I was nervous when I answered wrong, it was hard to have a deep impression of the correct answer.
Student 8	No help. I would like the teacher to say the answer in a roundabout way, for example, she can issue a question and then give me time to think about it again or invite everyone to discuss it and finally give

7. If you give incorrect answer in class, will your English teacher criticize you directly? And this way of comment help you reduce the frequency of similar problems? If yes, please explain the reason. If not, what kind of evaluation method would you like?	
	the correct answer.
Student 9	No help. I hope that my teacher will not deny me directly in front of everyone and will guide me to find the right answer.

Semi-structured interviews with teachers

1. How do you evaluate your students whether they have high or low proficiency level in English?	
Teacher 1	I primarily evaluate students' English proficiency through their test scores.
Teacher 2	The main method is their English test scores, as most schools across the country do. There are also observations from the classroom, such as when questions are asked in class and students can answer them in very fluent English, this aspect can show their speaking skills. Some students are very motivated and will answer in class, and these students do better in English.
Teacher 3	English proficiency cannot be seen solely from a student's English scores. Even if they have high English test scores, they do not necessarily have high English proficiency, but also have to take into account speaking and classroom motivation. Generally, students with high English proficiency, they are very active in interacting with the teacher in class and answering questions quickly.
Teacher 4	I primarily evaluate students' English proficiency through their test scores. They are so poor in English and can only be evaluated by exams. There aren't high requirements for them, and there are only a few people in a class with high English proficiency.

2. If a student answer incorrectly in class, how will you manage? How do you provide feedback and/or give prompts to the students before giving the correct answer?	
Teacher 1	I will correct in class, but will not criticize students directly. I guide the students to answer before giving the correct answer, and if they are wrong, I ask: are you sure? The students with good grades will respond, but the students with bad grades are basically unresponsive. In the classroom, I hardly ever ask my low achievers to answer questions, and if they are asked to answer a question and answer incorrectly, I simply sit them down and give up on them.
Teacher 2	I don't point out students' mistakes directly. I would say, "think about it again or listen to other students' answers. Do other students have a different answer?" I would put the question through a discussion to come up with an answer.
Teacher 3	First of all, I don't criticize the students, I will guide them to answer the questions, if they criticize this time, they will be afraid to answer the questions next time. Students with good grades have high self-esteem and I cannot criticize them directly; students with poor grades cannot answer at all, and all I ask of such students is to be able to speak English.
Teacher 4	Each teacher handled it differently, and I would ask the other students, "Did he answer correctly?" If it was incorrect, I would ask, "Why was it wrong? What was wrong?" The class would participate in the discussion and finally come to a conclusion.

3. Will you apply different types of feedback and/or evaluation for students with higher English proficiency level than with the lower ones? Can you give some examples?	
Teacher 1	I will take a different approach to the assessment. Students with low grades will be praised and encouraged if their grades improve. For example, if they can remember words, I will encourage and praise them; if they answer correctly or get the questions right in class, I will praise them very directly, because I have lower demands and expectations for poor students. If a student with good grades gets a simple problem wrong, I criticize them severely. At the same time, when they failed the test, I would criticize them and let them summarize the reasons for their failure after class.
Teacher 2	Yes. I did an experiment in which I gave poor students an A in English on a classroom test because they would have low self-esteem if they always get C. I found that this helped improve the motivation and confidence of the poor students in English. Another example is the word silence. I criticize the students with good grades when they don't get a perfect score. If the low achievers get a higher score, I will encourage them gently.
Teacher 3	I expect different things from good and poor students. I would strictly criticize the good students for answering simple questions incorrectly, and I would praise and encourage the poor students for answering simple questions correctly.
Teacher 4	No, I'm a classroom teacher and I don't discriminate against students, regardless of their scores. With low achievers, I have no way to guide them in their studies, they just have to be disciplined. When I face students with good grades, I will make some academic demands on them.

4. Do you set goals in learning English language regularly? If yes, how do you set your goals? What methods will you apply to achieve those goals?	
Student 1	I used to have English learning goal, but now I don't. If I set a goal, I would like to start with memorizing words and reading the text well.
Student 2	I used to have English learning goal, but now I don't. If I set a goal that is to get higher English test score.
Student 3	I used to have English learning goal, but now I don't. If I set a goal, I would like to start with memorizing words and reading the text well.
Student 4	No
Student 5	No
Student 6	No
Student 7	I have English learning goals.
Student 8	No
Student 9	No

5. Will you take the initiative to communicate with students' parents about the students' English learning? What is the purpose of communication?	
Teacher 1	I don't initiate communication with parents.
Teacher 2	If the English teacher is the classroom teacher, there is more communication. The English teacher do not take the initiative to communicate with parents.
Teacher 3	No.
Teacher 4	I don't initiate communication with parents. Because most parents don't care about their children's English grades, they even think that they send their children to school and everything is the responsibility of the school and teachers, and they don't want to know how their children are doing.

6. Have you observed that your students got anxiety in learning English? What do you think are the factors of their English learning anxiety?	
Teacher 1	I didn't realize the anxiety condition of my students. I think most of the students are not anxious about learning English, maybe the students who are doing well in English will be anxious, especially the boys, who are worse than the girls'. As for the reason of anxiety, I think it is because their English foundation is too poor, their vocabulary is too small, and even if they want to learn English well, they are not able to do so. Generally introverted students will tend to have low self-esteem and may have English learning anxiety, and many of these are middle-achieving students. In addition, the absence of parents has a great impact on children, and left-behind children and orphans will be more introverted and will be prone to English learning anxiety. 9th graders' anxiety comes from the pressure of going on to higher education.
Teacher 2	I didn't focus on my students' anxiety about learning English, but compared to other subjects, I think English should cause them anxiety because they only start learning English in the third grade, which is more difficult when they are away from their native language.
Teacher 3	I have realized students' English learning anxiety. Students with good grades are occasionally anxious because they have higher expectations and demands on themselves. They worry about parental criticism if they do not do well on a test. They have high self-esteem and are ashamed to tell their parents their test scores. They also worry that the teacher will talk to them; students with poor English grades have no anxiety because they don't care about test scores.
Teacher 4	I don't think rural students have English learning anxiety; they don't understand what it is. I don't even think that learning English will be of much use to students in the future.

7. Will you help those students with high English learning anxiety level to reduce their anxiety? If yes, what anxiety-reducing strategies will you apply to help them?	
Teacher 1	I would, but I really didn't realize the importance of English anxiety. I'm already optimizing my teaching style. For example, when I teach reading comprehension, I will expand some related contents, I will tell students some history and humanities of British and American countries, but they are only interested in the expanded contents, not in the learning contents. I will also communicate with students to relieve their anxiety.
Teacher 2	I will. For example, during the dialogue part of the classroom activity, I will take them through a continuous practice and encourage students to participate and motivate them to reduce their anxiety.
Teacher 3	Occasionally, I would chat with the students and I would ask them, "What do you have confused and don't understand in English learning?" I would encourage students to communicate more with their teachers.

APPENDIX F
THE CONCEPTS: FACTORS INVOLVED WITH
ENGLISH LEARNING ANXIETY

Coding/ keywords	Category	Concepts
Inability to keep up with lectures; Low English proficiency; Limited vocabulary and grammar; Poor pronunciation	EFL learning skills (10 or 22.22%)	Student-related factors
Worry about low scores; Low self-confidence; Pressure to move on to high school.	EFL learning attitudes (9 or 20%)	
Fear of losing face and being ridiculed by teachers; Low self-esteem.	Psychological factors (4 or 8.89%)	
Overly quiet and serious classroom atmosphere; Sudden roll call to answer questions; A serious and direct method of error correction; Excessive amount of emphasis on English test scores; High expectations	Teaching behaviors (19 or 42.22%),	Teacher-related factors
High expectation of parents; No language environment to speak English	(3 or 6.67%)	Other factors
Total	45 (100%)	

APPENDIX G
THE CONCEPTS: STUDENTS' ANXIETY- REDUCING STRATEGIES
FROM THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

Codes/ Keywords	Categories	Concepts
Memorizing words	Memorizing words (4 or 28.57%)	Students' anxiety-reducing strategies by improving English learning skills
Reading the text well, reading the text thoroughly	Reading the text thoroughly (3 or 21.43%)	
Improving my basic English skills, improve my English performance	Improving basic skills (3 or 21.43%)	
Figuring out the grammar rules my teacher has taught me	Mastering grammar rules (1 or 7.14%)	
Setting up study goal to improve my English test scores	Setting goals to improve English test scores (2 or 14.29%),	Students' anxiety-reducing strategies by increasing self-regulated learning in English
Improving my confidence	Improving self-confidence (1 or 7.14%)	
Total	14 (100%)	

APPENDIX H

THE CONCEPTS: STUDENTS' ANXIETY- REDUCING STRATEGIES

FROM THE PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES

Codes/ Keywords	Categories/ frequencies	Concepts
Encourage, treat gently, care about children's learning	Giving more encouragement and care about the students' learning (5 or 45.46%)	Parents' anxiety-reducing strategies by giving encouragement and care about their children English learning
Criticize harshly, scold at me	Criticizing harshly about the students' English learning outcomes (4 or 36.36%)	Parents' anxiety-reducing strategies by not criticizing harshly on children English learning outcome.
Too much emphasis on test scores	Avoiding placing undue focus on English test results (2 or 18.18 %)	Parents' anxiety-reducing strategies by avoiding placing undue focus on English test results.
Total	11 (100%)	

APPENDIX I
THE CONCEPTS: STUDENTS' ANXIETY- REDUCING STRATEGIES
FROM THE TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

Codes/Keywords	Categories/ frequencies	Concepts
<p>Arrange group discussions and presentation, give less homework but assign many tasks that can be completed in class, apply active way of teaching and active lecture style, be more humorous, use games and interact with us more, use pictures and videos to support teaching</p>	<p>Applying effective instructional approach by using interesting teaching techniques and assignments in class (15 or 24.19%)</p>	<p>Teachers' strategies of using effective instructional approach</p>
<p>Encourage me more, talking about the problem, help me figure out the meaning of words and texts, point out the reasons for my mistakes, guide us to find out the correct answer, explain the correct answer, talk about the problem before giving the correct answer, slowly guide us to find out the correct answer, tell us the reason for the error, invite everyone to discuss it and finally give the correct answer, giving examples, encourage me more by slowing down the pace of teaching</p>	<p>Applying effective instructional approach providing example and explaining more about how to arrive at answers (13 or 20.97%)</p>	

Codes/Keywords	Categories/ frequencies	Concepts
Talk to us more, communicate with us more, get along with us like a friend, frequent interaction and chatting with us, get along well like a friend, students and the teacher can interact well.	Communicating and interacting more with the students (6 or 9.68%)	
Give us enough thinking time to answer the questions, give me some time to think, give enough time for us to finish our assignments	Giving enough time to think and answer the question (5 or 8.06%)	
Creating relaxed, flexible, lively classroom atmosphere	Creating a good atmosphere in class (3 or 4.84%)	
The teacher must have strong English teaching ability.	Mastering strong English teaching skills (2 or 3.23%).	
Being patient with us	being patient (1 or 1.61 %),	
Do not discriminate against students who have low English scores, do not deny me in front of the whole class or everyone.	Not discriminating (5 or 8.06%)	Teachers' strategies of providing comments and feedbacks to support the students

Codes/Keywords	Categories/ frequencies	Concepts
Do not criticize me right away; Do not always criticize me seriously; Do not criticize me right away before giving the correct answer.	Not criticizing the students' answers harshly in class (5 or 8.06%)	in learning English.
The teachers should be gentle with us.	Being gentle (3 or 4.84%),	
English teachers should not overemphasize grades.	Not being too serious about students' grades (3 or 4.84%)	
Do not force us to answer the questions we cannot answer.	Not forcing students to answer questions (1 or 1.61%)	
Total	62 (100%)	

BIOGRAPHY

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