

Analysis of the Causes of English Reading Foreign Language Anxiety and Coping Strategies at the Junior High School

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Abstract

In junior high school English reading teaching, foreign language anxiety (FLA) is a major obstacle faced by many students and seriously affects the development of their language skills and learning outcomes. This paper aims to explore how to help middle school students effectively cope with FLA in English reading classes. Through comprehensive analysis of existing research and practical teaching experience, we found that FLA mainly stems from students' uncertainty about English learning, fear of errors, and feelings of tension in classroom interactions. To effectively alleviate the FLA of junior high school students, this paper proposes a series of targeted strategies to cope with it and also emphasizes the importance of personalized guidance. The implementation of these strategies not only helps improve students' English reading comprehension ability, but also cultivates their ability for self-directed learning, laying a solid foundation for their future language learning.

Keywords

Junior high school English; English reading; Foreign language learning anxiety; Teaching strategies

1. Introduction

Junior high school stands as a pivotal juncture in honing language proficiency. Especially when it comes to mastering a second language like English. However, this critical phase is often overshadowed by the prevalence of FLA which can substantially impede students' progress. FLA manifests as a pervasive psychological barrier, marked by feelings of fear, unease and nervousness when engaging with a foreign language. These anxiety has the potential to undermine learning motivation, participation in classroom activities and even lead to an avoidance of language learning entirely.

The research on how to deal with FLA in English class has gained significant attention in recent years. Multiple studies have consistently shown that FLA can perva-

sively affect various aspects of language learning including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This widespread impact underscores the critical need to address FLA in the language learning process.

Researchers have actively explored various factors that contribute to the development of FLA. Individual differences such as personality traits and learning styles have been identified as significant contributors. The classroom environment, including teaching methods, classroom atmosphere and interaction patterns have also been recognized as a crucial determinant of FLA levels. Additionally, teacher behavior and peer relationships have been found to play pivotal roles in shaping students' anxiety experiences.

Furthermore, studies have investigated a range of interventions and strategies to alleviate FLA. Cognitive-behavioral therapy, relaxation techniques and mindfulness practices have emerged as promising approaches to help students manage and overcome their language anxiety. These strategies aim to enhance students' coping mechanisms, promote positive self-perception and reduce anxiety-induced performance impairments.

Despite these advancements in research, there remains a noticeable gap in the literature specifically focusing on junior high school students and their experiences with FLA in English reading classes. This age group faces unique challenges and pressures that may differently influence their anxiety levels and coping strategies.

Therefore, there is an urgent need for more tailored and context-specific research to better understand and address the particularities of FLA in this population. Such research could provide valuable insights into effective interventions and support systems that cater to the distinct needs of junior high school students, ultimately enhancing their language learning experiences and outcomes.

2. Definition and possible causes of FLA

2.1 Definition and classification of FLA

Anxiety is a complex emotion often associated with uncomfortable feelings like frustration, self-doubt, and nervousness. It is typically accompanied by physiological signals such as sweating, dry mouth, muscle tension, and an accelerated heart rate. Almost all of them will be in a variety of situations but some people are often more susceptible to anxiety environment reacts strongly, such as FLA.

FLA is an important emotional variable in foreign language learning. To a certain extent, it affects the effectiveness of foreign language learning. FLA is a distinct type of anxiety that learners encounter when engaged in the process of learning or utilizing a foreign language.

It can be characterized by the following three types: (1) communication apprehension; (2) evaluative anxiety or test anxiety; (3) anxiety over particular learning a skill or task. Obviously, the language anxiety discussed in this paper refers to the third type of language anxiety, that is, the anxiety that students have when they are faced

with reading tasks and mastery of reading skills in English class.

2.2 Possible Causes of FLA

Understanding the causes of FLA can help teachers and educators take appropriate measures to help students reduce anxiety. For some learners, the cause of FLA may be the embarrassment and ridicule they face after answering questions incorrectly in the language classroom, while for others, the cause of FLA may not be related to the language classroom. This paper analyzes the causes of FLA from two levels: learners and learning situations.

2.2.1 At the learner level

2.2.1.1 A sense of self-worth

Self-worth is a judgment of self-worth, which is based on a sense of efficacy. Learners with high self-worth experienced less FLA and were better able to cope with FLA than those with low self-worth.

2.2.1.2 Ambiguous tolerance

Ambiguity tolerance refers to the learner's perception that ambiguous situations in the language are tolerated. In this context, ambiguous context refers to language learning situations in which individuals are unable to construct and categorize adequately because they lack sufficient cues. In foreign language learning, many meanings, referents and pronunciations are ambiguous, which often makes learners anxious, and learners who are anxious about frequent ambiguity often have stage fright, allowing feelings of inhibition to prevail. Therefore, a certain degree of tolerance for language ambiguity is necessary to alleviate FLA.

2.2.1.3 Foreign language learning expectations

In terms of foreign language learning expectations, some foreign language learners often want to express themselves with standard pronunciation and accurate words, and if they can't do so, they tend to abandon the use of a foreign language. There are also foreign language learners who expect to be fluent in a foreign language in a short period of time, and these expectations are obviously difficult to achieve. Language anxiety arises when learners find themselves having a hard time, or even an inability to live up to these hopes or expectations.

2.2.2 The learning context level

2.2.2.1 Social phobia

Social phobia in the classroom generally includes speech anxiety, shyness, social evaluation anxiety and communication anxiety, and is often accompanied by possible social evaluation. Learners who are very concerned about what others say about

themselves are more likely to be anxious, tend to minimize negative evaluations, and deliberately avoid learning situations where negative evaluations of themselves may arise. In foreign language class, teachers can observe this through the behaviour of some students, such as the habit of remaining silent, responding only to the teacher's roll call, being passive, and avoiding the class.

2.2.2.2 Teacher-student relationship

There is also a relationship between the teacher-student relationship and FLA. Teachers must maintain a rapport with their students. For example, FLA is exacerbated when the teacher perceives his or her role as correcting the student's mistake and dealing with it in an uncomfortable way in front of the student. Second, teachers discourage teamwork and see themselves as classroom authorities rather than guides. Another important aspect of the teacher-student relationship that is often overlooked is the conflict between the teacher's teaching style and the student's learning style, which is positively correlated with students' low foreign language performance, increasing the anxiety and stress of foreign language learners in the classroom.

2.3 English reading anxiety for EFL learners

Reading is an important skill in foreign language learning and is the foundation for learners to become proficient in a foreign language. For EFL (English as a foreign language) learners, if their English reading level improves, several other English skills will also improve. In the case of EFL learners, English reading is not the same as spoken English, with most people believing that English reading is less prone to FLA, and that reading is mostly silent and in most cases private, with learners having the opportunity to think and reflect. At the same time, reading English is also an individual act, and reading success is not very strongly correlated with the meaning-making of two or more speakers.

Despite this, English reading still has high requirements for learners' cognitive ability, which not only requires learners to have strong attention, memory, insight and comprehension, but also has high requirements for learners' language ability, cultural knowledge and learning motivation. Many learners also experience varying levels of frustration and anxiety when trying to understand the simplest English texts.

In addition to the general causes of FLA, there are also peculiarities that arise when English reading anxiety arises. Two aspects of reading English can trigger a great deal of anxiety, one is an unfamiliar English writing system and the other is an unfamiliar cultural concept.

3. Strategies to help students handle FLA

Teaching coping strategies for English reading anxiety understand the general

causes of FLA and EFL learners the particular causes of reading anxiety in English help teachers to take measures to reduce learners' anxiety and improve the efficiency of English reading classes.

3.1 At the learner level

First of all, teachers should make students understand that English reading anxiety is just Short-lived and not necessarily develop into a long-term problem, helps Students build self-confidence and a sense of self-worth. For English reading focus Considering the student who has become a long-term trait, the teacher wants to show one by one Some of the experiences of successful students in the classroom help them to restart Build self-confidence.

Second, teachers should encourage students to tolerate reading in English and take appropriate risks. with those who are afraid of language learning Students with inherent language ambiguity can tolerate an average level compared to them Students with vague language, the less anxiety they generate and the more likely they are Stick to reading in English.

Finally, teachers should help students to understand themselves correctly own English reading level and establish short-term, hopeful Expectations and goals.

3.2 Learning Contextual Level

First, teachers should use music, video or games to conduct activities Create a relaxed classroom learning environment to alleviate students' anxiety and social speech Anxiety about communication and communication makes students more energetic With the Reading Activity, express your opinion on what you read.

Secondly, built Establish a good teacher-student relationship. Teachers should allow students to make mistakes, allowing them Express your point of view in less than perfect English, without over-correcting your studies If you have imprecise expressions, try to use them to reduce students' English reading Classroom activities and teaching methods for reading anxiety, such as group language learning.

3.3 The particularity of English reading

In terms of learning situations, teachers should devote more time to pre-class reading preparation activities and the setting of reading goals to explain the characteristics of English to students. When introducing English reading materials, teachers should inform students about the difficulty of the reading and the anxiety that may arise. Teachers can discuss the process of reading English with students to make the teaching objectives appropriate to the students and help make them aware of the expected learning goals they can achieve. Teachers also need to adjust the pace of reading lessons so that students are challenged without cognitive load.

In addition, teachers can provide guidance on reading strategies and transfer successful foreign language reading skills and experiences to students, not only to help

students overcome unrealistic expectations, but also to acquire reading skills that are more effective than translation.

4. Conclusion

In this paper addresses the issue of FLA (FLA) among junior high school students in English reading classes, emphasizing its significant impact on language learning outcomes. FLA, characterized by feelings of fear, unease, and nervousness, can hinder students' motivation, participation, and overall language proficiency. The paper identifies several key causes of FLA, including students' self-worth, tolerance for ambiguity, and unrealistic learning expectations, as well as factors related to the learning environment such as social phobia, teacher-student relationships. The paper also highlights the unique challenges faced by EFL learners in reading comprehension, where cognitive demands and unfamiliar cultural concepts can exacerbate anxiety. To address these issues, we can propose a series of strategies aimed at both the learner and the learning context. Additionally, the paper emphasizes the importance of pre-class preparation, setting clear reading goals, and providing guidance on effective reading strategies. By tailoring teaching methods to students' needs and helping them develop self-directed learning skills, teachers can alleviate anxiety and improve reading comprehension.

FLA is an important factor affecting foreign language learning, and English reading anxiety has its particularities in addition to the general characteristics of FLA. Understanding FLA and English reading anxiety and identifying effective coping strategies is important for English language teaching.

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