

A Survey on the Current Situation of Learning Anxiety in High School English Online Courses

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Abstract: High school students can develop learning anxiety when conducting online English course delivery. And the negative emotion of anxiety can affect students' English learning. This paper analyzes the causes of online English course anxiety among high school students in Jilin, objectively divides the advantages and disadvantages of online English courses, and aims to propose solutions to effectively deal with online course anxiety among elementary school students.

Keywords: Online English course; Foreign language anxiety; High school student

1. Research introduction

High school is an important time for students to hone their abilities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The emotional aspects that impact second language learning, according to linguist Krashen's (1982) Affective Filtering Hypothesis, include motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety.^[1] English learning anxiety is the most common negative emotional response of high school students in the learning process, which directly affects the efficiency of English learning. Scholars' research on English learning anxiety has mainly focused on the association between learning anxiety and English listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.^[2] However, following the emergence of the new coronavirus pneumonia in 2020, the Chinese government has chosen to use online delivery in order to protect the safety of instructors and children across the country. If there is learning anxiety in English online courses, what are the contributing variables, patterns, and processes that are currently understudied? The aim of this study is to explore the current situation of high school students' learning anxiety in online English courses, propose ways to solve the learning anxiety caused by the combination of offline and online education, and improve the quality of high school English teaching.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research participants

The study population was 528 students from the second year of high school in Jilin, of which 527 were valid study subjects, 239 (45.3%) were male students and 288 (54.7%) were female students.

2.2 Research tool

Based on the Self-Assessment Scale (SAS), the High School English Online Learning Anxiety Questionnaire was administered to 527 students in the second year of high school. The questionnaire consisted of 25 questions, of which questions 1-5 were related to students' personal information, and questions 6-25 were about subjective feelings of anxiety. Each item was rated in four levels according to the frequency of symptoms, with 15 questions rated positively and 5 (questions 5, 9, 13, 17, and 19) rated negatively (i.e., 1 = no or little time, 2 = little time, 3 = quite a lot of time, and 4 = most or all of the time).

The anxiety value was calculated according to the Anxiety Self-Assessment Scale by adding up the scores of 6-20 items to get the crude score and then converting them into percentages to get the standard score of anxiety value out of 100, with a minimum score of 25. The teachers distributed the questionnaire in the self-study class, and the answering time was 30 minutes.

3. Research results

3.1 The overall state of learning anxiety in high school English online courses

Anxiety scores are split into 50 points on the Self-Assessment Scale for Anxiety (SAS), with no anxiety below 50, mild anxiety between 50 and 59, moderate anxiety between 60 and 69, and severe anxiety beyond 69. Low anxiety is described as 50-59, mild anxiety as 60-69, moderate anxiety as 60-69, and severe anxiety as 69 or above. Among them, 145 students (27.51 percent) reported mild anxiety, 78 students (14.80 percent) reported moderate anxiety, and 31 students (5.9 percent) reported severe anxiety, indicating that the anxiety of high school students enrolled in online English courses is not encouraging and should be addressed by teachers and relevant management departments. The details are shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Overall table of learning anxiety in university English online courses

	Number	Min	Max	Mean	Std
Anxiety Score	527	38	98	53.54	12.758

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3.2 Learning anxiety differences between male and female college English online courses

The data analysis reveals that the average anxiety value of male students' college English online course study is greater than that of female students, and the anxiety values of male and female college English online course study are (58.33±13.037) and (48.75±9.419), respectively. The independent sample t-test analysis found that the difference in overall high school English online course learning anxiety values between male and female students was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), indicating that general male students experienced more significant college English online course learning anxiety. This conclusion is broadly compatible with Chen and Xu's findings.

Table 2 Statistics of male and female students' learning anxiety in online college English courses

	Sex	Number	Mean	Std
Learning anxiety in online courses	Male	239	58.33	13.037
	Female	288	47.64	9.419

3.3 The effect of English proficiency on learning anxiety in high school English online courses

The questionnaire classified the students' English proficiency into four levels according to the traditional method: excellent, good, pass, and fail according to their high school entrance examination results (see Table 3). The statistics show that 12.39% of male students are in good and above English level overall, while 37.15% of female students are in good and above English level, and the English level of female students is better than that of male students overall. The mean values of anxiety in online university English courses for students with excellent, good, qualified, and unqualified English levels were 40.28, 44.24, 56.11, and 69.69, respectively (see Table 3), and students' anxiety level in online university English courses changed significantly with their grades, and the higher the students' English level, the lower the anxiety level.

Table 3 Overall table of English proficiency and corresponding anxiety averages

English level	Mean	Sex	Number	Proportion
Excellent	40.28	Male	7	1.61
		Female	29	6.65
Good	44.24	Male	47	10.78
		Female	133	30.50
Pass	50.11	Male	55	12.16
		Female	136	31.19
Fail	69.69	Male	20	4.59
		Female	9	2.06

4. Discussion

To begin, students are accustomed to traditional face-to-face classroom teaching activities, and others are more acclimated to, and even prefer, "indoctrination" teaching techniques.^[3] As a result, students have not been exposed to systematic Internet learning for a long time, and they are unfamiliar with online course instruction. At the same time, they are unaware that they are engaging in teaching classroom activities and are concerned about professors' inquiries, which causes anxiety about studying English online courses. High school English online education also necessitates teacher-student contact for students to learn English language skills in instructional activities, which causes communicative anxiety in certain students. However, owing to network accessibility, teacher-student engagement in online courses is not as successful as it is in classroom instruction; furthermore, in online classes, students cannot feel the encouragement from the teacher's eyes and lack timely support from their classmates in the group, especially those with poor English foundations, which exacerbates the anxiety level of high school students in English online courses. Second, High school students' low self-restraint and independent learning ability lead to learning anxiety in English online courses. In the daily online teaching, we found that some students signed in and could not find anyone after drawing questions; or students entered the Tencent meeting room or other live rooms, which led to the teacher not seeing students when interacting. Furthermore, some students view English learning videos or listen to English audio while playing mobile games, watching TV shows or movies, reading books, or performing other activities unrelated to the teaching material, and the learning effect is insufficient. The capacity of students to learn independently has an impact on the efficacy of online high school English courses. Anxiety is also caused by a lack of appropriate self-learning objectives and preparation, as well as a lack of self-monitoring abilities in autonomous online learning.

5. Solution

First, teachers can arrange for students to watch and familiarize themselves with course content videos prior to class, prepare for classroom online discussions, stimulate students' interest in learning English, engage in classroom activities, and motivate them to participate in online college English courses. In addition, the goal of each question should be different when asked by the instructor, and the questions answered by relatively low-base students should not be too difficult so that all students can participate. Teachers should take care of all students, with weaker students answering questions that are not too difficult and better students answering some of the more difficult ones, allowing students to participate in teaching online courses, actively encouraging student responses, improving self-efficacy in learning English. Finally, in order to minimize students' anxiety about online college English courses, teachers must improve students' learning skills, especially in new learning environments.

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