# A Study on the English Learning Anxiety of College Students in Webcast Teaching Environment

**Tianhua Yang**

Dalian University of Foreign Languages, Dalian, China

**Abstract:** *English learning anxiety is a complicated psychological emotion. Based on a systematic review of existing research findings, this paper, employing the Affective Filter Hypothesis as the theoretical basis and 177 random undergraduates from a Minzu University as the research subjects, aims to understand the general situation and specific performances of students' English learning anxiety in online classes through a questionnaire and a structured interview and identify the causes of English learning anxiety so as to propose corresponding strategies. With the assistance of Excel, the investigation based on the questionnaire uncovers the fact that under webcast teaching environment, university students generally suffer from English learning anxiety, which maintains at the middle to the upper level and manifests itself primarily as negative evaluation anxiety and communicative anxiety, accompanied by a degree of interaction anxiety and general anxiety. Thus this paper recommends the following countermeasures. English teachers need to adjust their teaching content and structure, provide positive feedback and assessment to students, and organize learning groups, whereas students should build self-efficacy, increase enthusiasm to English learning, improve ambiguity tolerance, and strengthen self-control to ease their English learning anxiety in online classes.*

**Keywords:** Webcast teaching environment, English learning anxiety, College students.

## 1. Introduction

National Outline for Middle and Long Term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020) proposes to "cultivate a large number of international talents who can participate in international affairs and international competition equipped with an international outlook and well versed in international rules", the most basic requirement for which is English language proficiency, and it is the university English classrooms that is the major venue for students to improve it. However, the traditional teaching method is facing an enormous challenge due to the emergence of the COVID-19. Fortunately, the webcast teaching method acts as an effective supplement and extension of the traditional one during the recurrence of the epidemic. Foreign language learning anxiety, as one of the biggest emotional barriers to overcome in the language learning process (Brown 2010), often leads to tension and fear in many cases, squandering learners' energy and attention, hurting their cognition, and therefore increasing the anxiety and ultimately forming a vicious circle (Oxford 1999). As a result, it's critical to look into college students' English learning anxiety in webcast teaching environment.

The paper aims to investigate students' English learning anxiety and its main manifestations in webcast teaching environment and comprehend the causes of English learning anxiety and propose countermeasures to alleviate the anxiety in online teaching environment. Theoretically, this study can enrich the study on students' English learning anxiety in webcast teaching environment. Practically, it enables English teachers to better understand the situation and sources of anxiety among university students in online classes, allowing them to adjust their teaching strategies and methods to lower students' anxiety and to improve the quality and effectiveness of English teaching by creating a relaxing and harmonious learning environment. In addition, students can utilize the countermeasures in this study to reduce their anxiety and improve their English learning effectiveness when confronted with English learning anxiety in online classes.

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction, involving the research background, research purpose and significance, and the basic structure of the paper. The second chapter is the literature review, in which the concept of English learning anxiety is defined and relevant domestic and foreign research on English learning anxiety is summarized. The third chapter is research theory and methodology, presenting the Affective Filter Hypothesis and the research method such as the research questions, research objects, and research instruments. The fourth chapter is analysis and strategies, where the author makes an analysis of the situation of students' English learning anxiety and proposes corresponding strategies. The fifth chapter is the conclusion, it is a summary of the study, elaborating the main findings of the study.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 English Learning Anxiety

The word "anxiety" stems from the German word "angst" and was only briefly treated in a few works before 1950, a major body of study on anxiety appearing only after the publish of Sigmund Freud's Interpretation of Dream. According to Merriam Webster, anxiety is an abnormal and overwhelming sensation of worry and fear, typically accompanied by such physiological signs as sweating, uneasiness, and shaking, uncertainties about the nature of reality and threat, and concerns about one's ability to overcome difficulties (Abdurrahman 2012). MacIntyre explained it in terms of characteristics anxiety, states anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety (Brant & David 2010). The last refers to the feelings of tension in particular contexts, and it is the category that English learning anxiety in webcast teaching environment falls into, for it occurs mainly in some specific English-learning contexts, such as answering questions, speaking in public, being assessed by teachers and classmates. It is important to note that English learning anxiety differs from other types of anxiety in that it is a unique and complex set of self-perceptions, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors

related to language learning and acquisition in classrooms (Horwitz 2014). Different teaching models therefore can trigger different types of anxiety. Compared to the traditional teaching way, the webcast teaching model has three typical features: the separation of the teacher-student space, the synchronization between teaching and learning activities, and the reliance on online communication media and digital resources, and these add some uncertainty to classroom anxiety.

## 2.2 Previous Studies on Foreign Language Learning Anxiety

Foreign researchers began doing systematic studies on foreign language learning anxiety in the 1980s, focusing primarily on the measurement, classification, and causes of foreign language learning anxiety. In terms of measurement measures, Horwitz and Cope (1986) established the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), which has been generally acknowledged for its structure and content validity. Following the footsteps of the West, domestic research began in the 1990s. Scholars have been doing extensive researches on the connotation of English learning anxiety, measurement tools, and learning anxiety in the foreign language classrooms, in which the FLCAS is widely adopted, with some indigenous scales appearing, such as Foreign Language Learning Anxiety Scale (Zhao 2017). In response to the English learning anxiety in classrooms, domestic scholars commonly agree that English classrooms can create situation-specific anxiety for students and that the use of online multimedia technology can help to reduce classroom learning anxiety. However, the studies conducted during the outbreak of the COVID-19 indicate a different result, students at all levels still suffering from English learning anxiety in webcast English environment (Zhao 2017; Wu 2020; Zhang 2021). From the review of studies on the CNKI, it is clear that there are plentiful and profound research findings on English learning anxiety both at home and overseas, but most of them focus on English learning anxiety in traditional offline or blended learning classrooms; the online learning anxiety is rare, with a number of only ten. Therefore, this paper will take undergraduates from a Minzu University as the subjects to investigate the English learning anxiety of college students in webcast teaching environment, understanding the manifestations of students' English learning anxiety in online classes, figuring out the causes of anxiety, and giving relevant suggestions.

## 3. Research Theory and Methodology

### 3.1 Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis

In 1977, Dulay and Burt introduced the concept of the Affective Filter, suggesting that second language acquisition is influenced by affective factors. To explain the link between emotive components and language intake, Krashen (1981) further proposed the Affective Filter Hypothesis. He argued that providing foreign language learners with understandable language input does not guarantee the acquirement of the target language as second language acquisition is a complex process influenced not only by cognitive ability, learning strategies, and the learning environment but by affective factors that filter language information input. Based on the

Affective Filter Hypothesis, affective factors can be classified as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. If one has a strong motivation and clear learning purpose, the person will learn efficiently and quickly, or the efficiency will be hampered; if a learner has strong self-confidence and feels good about himself, the individual will easily be motivated and learn well, or the person will easily lose interest in learning and make little progress; if a learner enjoys a low level of anxiety, the individual will be easier to intake language knowledge, or his input of information can be encumbered. According to Krashen, the efficacy of second language learning is highly dependent on the condition of the learner's affective components, which are dynamic and can be altered to help or hinder linguistic information entry. When all other factors are equal, a low affective filter facilitates intelligible information to the learning subject while a high affective filter obstructs it. That's why Krashen argued that to achieve the desired acquisition effect, teachers should create a learning environment with a low affective filter when presenting information to learners, and they should not rely solely on external indoctrination to teach language but emphasize affective education by cultivating learners' interest, stimulating their motivation, and exploring their creative potential.

### 3.2 Research Methodology

This paper, from the perspective of students, investigates the English learning anxiety of college students in webcast teaching environment through a questionnaire and a structured interview, in an attempt to answer the following questions: (1) What is the overall situation of college students' English learning anxiety in online classes? (2) What are the main manifestations of English learning anxiety among university students? (3) What are the main factors that cause students' English learning anxiety in webcast teaching environment? The research subjects are 177 random undergraduates from a Minzu University, of whom 54 are male students (30.51% of the total number) and 123 are female students (69.49% of the total number); 81 students majoring in arts (45.76%) and 96 students majoring in science (54.24%).

In this study, the questionnaire is adapted from Hortwiz's FLCAS and the English Learning Anxiety Scale for College Students in Online Classes developed by scholars in China. The adapted anxiety scale contains 29 questions on a five-point scale, ranging from fully conforming to not conforming at all, with the score gradually decreasing from 5 to 1, and the total score ranges from 29 to 145. The higher the total score, the more pronounced the anxiety about English learning in webcast teaching environment. There are four dimensions of anxiety in the questionnaire: negative evaluation anxiety, interaction anxiety, communicative anxiety, and general anxiety. Negative evaluation anxiety refers to the fact that English learners fear negative evaluations from others when they doubt their ability to apply the language, for it can affect their social status. The items for it include questions 1 to 7. Communicative anxiety is the emotional anxiety that learners feel when they have to express themselves or communicate with others in English, which involves three typical behaviors: they have more difficulty communicating with others face-to-face, have trouble

speaking in public, and do not fully understand the speaker's message. The items for it include questions 18 to 25. Interaction anxiety refers to the anxiety caused by the lack of teacher-student interaction and peer interaction in classes, the items for which include questions 26 to 29. General anxiety refers to other aspects of anxiety in English classes that are not covered in the other three categories, and items for it include questions 8 to 17. To better understand the English learning anxiety of university students in webcast teaching environment, the study conducts a structured interview with the goal of verifying the authenticity of the questionnaire and compensating for its limitations, such as collecting constructive suggestions of easing the anxiety in online classes from students. There are six students being interviewed, and the interview involves the following questions: (1) Do you have anxiety in English online classes, and if so, what are the symptoms? (2) What do you think are the causes of anxiety? (3) What methods have you tried to relieve your English learning anxiety?

## 4. Analysis and Strategies

### 4.1 Questionnaire

4.1.1 General Level of Students' English Learning Anxiety

After data collection, this paper divides English learning anxiety into four levels: students with a total score of 58 or below are considered to have no English learning anxiety, those with a total score of 58 to 87 are considered to have low English learning anxiety, those with a total score of 87 to 116 are considered to have moderate English learning anxiety, and those with a total score of 116 or above are considered to have severe English learning anxiety.

**Table 1:** English Learning Anxiety Level in Webcast Teaching Environment

| English Learning Anxiety Degree | Number | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| No English Learning Anxiety | 12 | 6.78% |
| Low English Learning Anxiety | 54 | 30.51% |
| Moderate English Learning Anxiety | 83 | 46.89% |
| Serious English Learning Anxiety | 28 | 15.82% |
| The Lowest Score | | 29 |
| The Highest Score | | 145 |

As shown in Table 1, more than 90% of students experience varying degrees of English learning anxiety, with 62.71% experiencing moderate or higher anxiety in webcast teaching environment, indicating that most university students suffer English learning anxiety in English online classes. Additionally, the lowest score among the tested students is 29 and the highest score is 145, with an average overall anxiety score of 95. It not only shows that the tested students are generally anxious but exhibits a phenomenon of polarization.
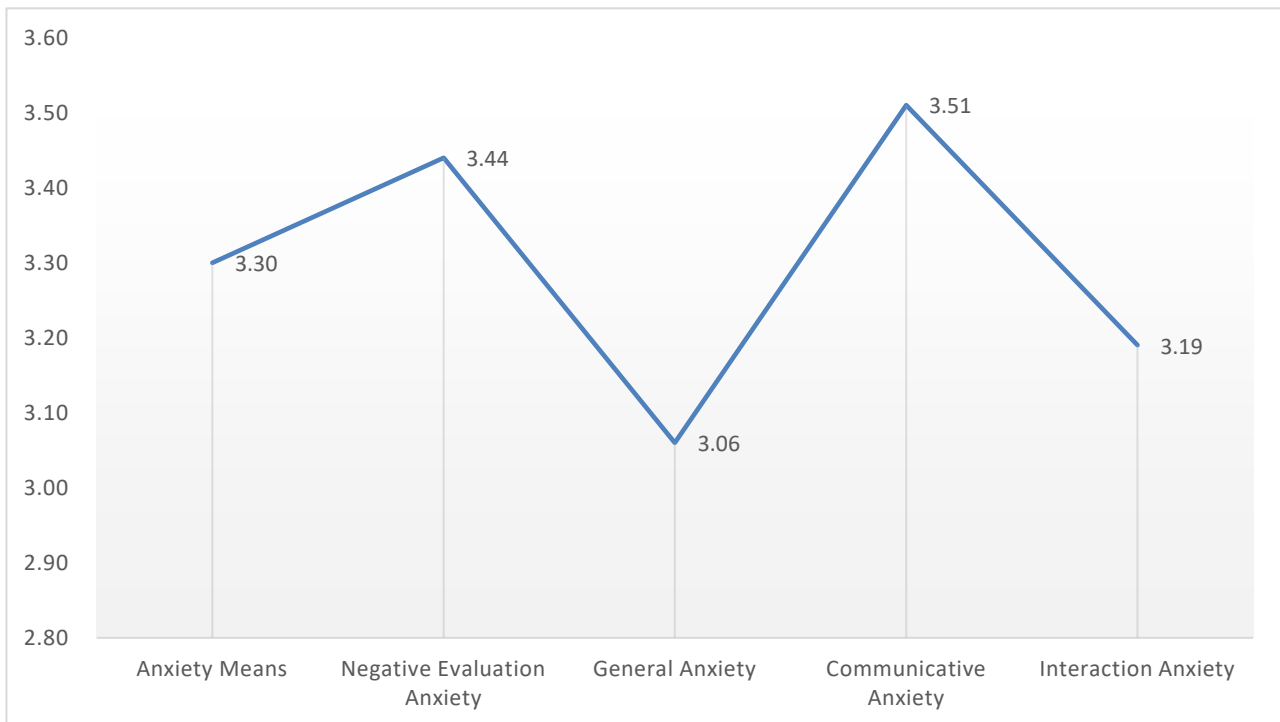


**Figure 1**

As shown in Figure 1, among the four dimensions of English learning anxiety in webcast teaching environment, communicative anxiety and negative evaluation anxiety are significantly higher than the mean value of anxiety, with the mean value of the former hitting 3.51, the highest score of anxiety. Although the value of interaction anxiety and general anxiety are both lower than the mean value, with a score of 3.19 and 3.06 respectively, they are higher than the demarcation value of 3. It indicates that students' English learning anxiety in webcast teaching environment is dominated by communicative anxiety and negative evaluation anxiety and supplemented by general anxiety and interaction anxiety.
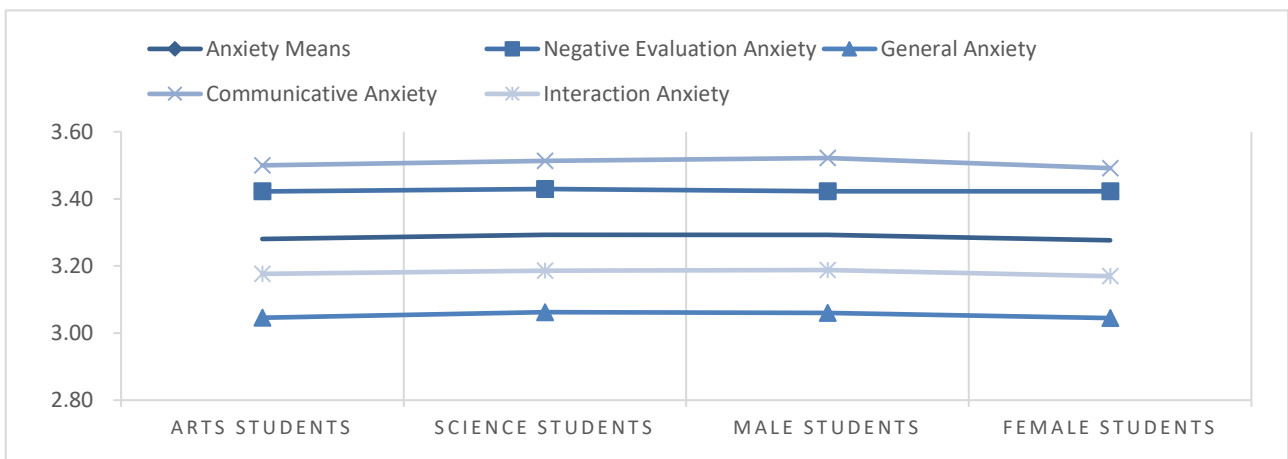
**Figure 2**

Figure 2 reveals that the anxiety of different kind of students is consistent with the overall situation, and there are some differences between them. In general, male students are more anxious than female students, science students more than arts students. However, it is clear that such differences are minor, implying that proper measures can be used to compensate for anxiety variations due to gender and major.

4.1.2 Specific Aspects of Students' English Learning Anxiety

To thoroughly comprehend the diverse manifestations of English learning anxiety in webcast teaching environment, a detailed analysis of students' anxiety can be done from the following four perspectives.

**Table 2:** Negative Evaluation Anxiety

| Item | Content | A | B | C | D | E | Mean |
|------|---------|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| 1 | In online classes, when I know I have to answer a question, I am worried that I will make a mistake. | 29% | 42% | 17% | 7% | 5% | 3.86 |
| 2 | I am afraid that the teacher will correct every mistake I make. | 16% | 33% | 25% | 16% | 10% | 3.30 |
| 3 | I worry about being criticized by the teacher and ridiculed by my classmates when I answer questions incorrectly in online classes. | 20% | 36% | 15% | 18% | 11% | 3.39 |
| 4 | I feel that other students are doing better than me in English online classes. | 22% | 36% | 25% | 8% | 9% | 3.55 |
| 5 | When I speak in English online classes, I always lose my confidence. | 23% | 36% | 18% | 15% | 8% | 3.53 |
| 6 | I am so nervous in English online classes that I forget all the knowledge I have mastered. | 15% | 32% | 21% | 20% | 11% | 3.21 |
| 7 | Even though I am well prepared, I still feel anxious in English online classes. | 15% | 36% | 18% | 19% | 12% | 3.26 |

Table 2 shows that the mean value of the above items is greater than the demarcation value 3, indicating that they are all expressions of students' negative assessment anxiety. Among them, the mean value of question 1 is the highest, and that of questions 4 and 5 are much higher than the rest, indicating the major manifestations of negative evaluation anxiety: in English online classes, students are concerned that they would make mistakes in answering questions, that their performances in classes are not as excellent as that of other

students, and that they lack confidence when speaking. Among them, 71% of students say they are worried about making mistakes and nearly 60% are not confident in their performances. It shows that students in English online classes generally enjoy low confidence and self-esteem. Students who are anxious in other aspects make up about half of the total number of students; they are afraid of receiving negative feedback from teachers and peers and not performing well. It indicates that students' fear of errors is much overwhelming.

**Table 3:** General Anxiety

| Item | Content | A | B | C | D | E | Mean |
|------|---------|---|---|---|---|---|------|
| 8 | Taking English online classes makes me feel annoyed. | 16% | 25% | 23% | 21% | 14% | 3.11 |
| 9 | I am not interested in the content of English online classes. | 11% | 28% | 23% | 25% | 13% | 3.01 |
| 10 | I do not like the way the teacher teaches. | 6% | 16% | 36% | 25% | 17% | 2.72 |
| 11 | The English online course is the one that makes me nervous most . | 9% | 24% | 22% | 21% | 24% | 2.74 |
| 12 | I'm still nervous when well prepared. | 11% | 27% | 22% | 26% | 15% | 2.94 |
| 13 | I feel irritated by the cumbersome grammar rules presented by the teacher. | 15% | 28% | 22% | 22% | 14% | 3.10 |
| 14 | I often worry that I will not be able to keep up with the fast pace of the classes. | 12% | 32% | 24% | 19% | 12% | 3.16 |
| 15 | I think about things that are not related to the course in English online classes. | 18% | 33% | 24% | 14% | 12% | 3.31 |
| 16 | I often don't want to take English online classes. | 15% | 24% | 21% | 25% | 16% | 2.98 |
| 17 | I never raise my hand to speak in English online classes. | 27% | 18% | 12% | 12% | 11% | 3.55 |

As shown in Table 3, the mean anxiety scores for questions 10, 11, 12, and 16 are all below three, indicating that stress is more associated with the other six factors rather than the teaching style, willingness to attend classes, and prevision before classes. Among them, questions 17 (3.55) and 15

(3.31), with the contents "never raise my hand to talk in English online classes" and "think about things not related to the course in English online classes," receive the highest mean scores. Besides, 60% of students lack initiative, and half would think about something unrelated to the classes,

showing that students' enthusiasm is cut and their attention is easily distracted in online classes. For questions 8, 9, 13, and 14, the mean anxiety values range from 3 to 3.2, with the contents "taking English online classes bothers me", "I am not interested in the content of the classes", "I feel irritated by the complicated grammar rules presented by the teacher", and "I worry I cannot keep up with the pace of English online classes." Approximately 40% of students express the anxiety in English online classes, indicating that difficulty, speed, and content of the course can trigger anxiety in students as well.

**Table 4:** Communicative Anxiety

| Item | Content | A | B | C | D | E | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | In online classes, I am worried that I will be asked a question if I do not understand the question. | 29% | 38% | 15% | 9% | 8% | 3.74 |
| 19 | I get nervous when I am asked to answer a question in English online classes. | 28% | 37% | 18% | 9% | 8% | 3.70 |
| 20 | My heart pounds when the English teacher asks me a question in online classes. | 21% | 40% | 19% | 11% | 8% | 3.56 |
| 21 | I get scared when the teacher asks me a question that I haven't prepared beforehand. | 23% | 40% | 19% | 11% | 8% | 3.59 |
| 22 | I feel embarrassed when volunteering to answer questions in English online classes. | 19% | 32% | 21% | 16% | 12% | 3.31 |
| 23 | I am afraid to express myself orally in online classes. | 22% | 37% | 18% | 15% | 8% | 3.51 |
| 24 | I feel embarrassed when speaking English in online classes. | 15% | 32% | 28% | 15% | 10% | 3.28 |
| 25 | I will be too nervous to express myself clearly in English online classes. | 18% | 35% | 21% | 17% | 8% | 3.39 |

As shown in Table 4, students' communicative anxiety is serious in webcast teaching environment, with the lowest anxiety value hitting 3.28, indicating that students are more anxious to classroom communication in general. In this study, the mean values of students' anxiety about being asked a question they do not understand and the anxiety about being chosen to answer a question are 3.74 and 3.7, respectively, reaching the top of them all, and 68% and 65% of students express severe anxiety in these two aspects. It indicates that in classroom communication, when not understanding teachers' questions or passively answering them, students feel nervous due to some uncertainties. In the meantime, the mean value for questions 3, 4, and 6 are likewise high, hitting 3.56, 3.59, and 3.51, respectively. When the teacher asks questions in online classes, 61% of students feel their heart beating, 62% feel nervous, and 59% are hesitant to express themselves orally. Furthermore, around 50% of students say that they will be humiliated and embarrassed to talk, and that they sometimes even be unduly apprehensive, resulting in slurred phrases. This suggests that students are diffident in their performances, both psychologically and physically, in English online classes.

**Table 5:** Interaction Anxiety

| Item | Content | A | B | C | D | E | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26 | The lack of interaction with the teacher in English online classes can easily distract me. | 16% | 31% | 23% | 18% | 12% | 3.22 |
| 27 | The lack of a group learning environment in English online classes leads to low participation in classes. | 16% | 33% | 23% | 14% | 14% | 3.26 |
| 28 | I feel helpless without the help of my group members in English online classes. | 14% | 31% | 27% | 16% | 12% | 3.19 |
| 29 | I lose confidence if I often fail to solve problems independently in English online classes. | 12% | 29% | 25% | 19% | 14% | 3.08 |

As shown in Table 5, interaction anxiety is common among university students. The anxiety caused by a lack of a group learning environment, with a mean value of 3.26, is the severest, and nearly half of the students suffer from it, demonstrating the positive impact of a group learning environment on students' learning and noting the need to improve students' independent learning ability. In addition, the anxiety caused by the lack of teacher-student interaction, group help, and independent problem-solving skills should be taken seriously, as the mean anxiety values respectively reach 3.22, 3.19, and 3.08, with 47%, 45%, and 41% of students experiencing anxiety in these areas. In this sense, the absence of positive and efficient interaction between students and teachers and between peers in English online classes is not only detrimental for teachers to understand the learning effect of students but also harmful for students to join the classes due to excessive anxiety.

**4.2 Interview**

To further understand university students' English learning anxiety in webcast teaching environment, this study conducts an interview, the result of which are greatly consistent with the questionnaire.

According to the interview, all students express that they have experienced varying degrees of anxiety in English online classes. There are three main manifestations. Firstly, many students think that the absence of a real face-to-face situation makes it difficult for the teacher to adjust the pace of the lesson, making it more stressful for students in classes. Secondly, in the virtual environment of online classes, students feel pressured to speak up since it is difficult to know the learning status of other students and the most direct and realistic feedback from peers and teachers. Thirdly, when encountering problems in classes, students are reluctant to ask questions right away, fearing the contingency of being verbally attacked by peers if they perform inordinately. But after classes, they are not proactive in contacting the teacher, leading to a build-up of problems and anxiety in English learning. The main causes of anxiety can be concluded given the above manifestation. First of all, students enjoy a low ambiguous tolerance in that a lack of real and direct feedback from teachers and students can make them particularly diffident about their performances. Besides, students' learning motivation is low; most take little enthusiasm to ask questions. In addition, they show little self-control; their attention can be easily distracted. Lastly, they tend to be influenced by ambiguous factors, such as whether positive classroom performance will be perceived as pleasing to the teacher. To alleviate their English learning anxiety, students have made many efforts. For instance, they can seriously

preview to improve concentration and learning efficiency, take notes in classes to keep up with the teachers, change the mindset about learning English by overcoming their fears and actively engaging with teachers and classmates, and clarify the learning goals to strengthen the motivation.

### 4.3 Cause Analysis of Students' English Learning Anxiety

The above data analysis reflects that under the online teaching environment, college students generally suffer English learning anxiety, the level of which is maintained at the middle to the upper level, with negative evaluation anxiety and communicative anxiety as the main manifestations, interaction anxiety and general anxiety the secondary. According to the data from the questionnaire and interview, the causes of college students' English learning anxiety in webcast teaching environment are shown from three different perspectives: students themselves, English teachers, and the online learning environment.

From the perspective of students, those will affect their English learning anxiety in webcast teaching environment are such factors as self-confidence, ambiguity tolerance, self-restraint ability, and motivation. The data shows that students enjoy low self-esteem; many of them believe that they always perform less well than others. Thus out of a desire to protect the self-esteem, they avoid answering questions with the worry of being criticized by the teacher and peers for mistakes they may make. Besides under the virtual learning environment, it is difficult for students to get quick and direct feedback from the teacher and classmates, such kind of uncertainty leaving them more troubled. With a low ambiguity tolerance, students' initiative in classes is subsequently reduced and the negative evaluation anxiety is heightened once again. In addition, due to the absence of self-control, students are easily influenced by their surroundings and hard to focus on the classes, resulting in anxiety with a few learning outcomes. Last but not least, in the process of learning English, students lack reasonable independent learning goals, so they tend to feel irritable and lose interest in English learning.

From the perspective of teachers, the teaching content, speed, and questioning style can invariably affect students' moods and learning effect in classes. According to the questionnaire, about 40% of the students say that they feel bored with content, especially the complicated English grammar rules. Obviously, optimizing and updating the teaching content and its presentation is a major challenge for teachers. The study also reveals that during the lessons, teachers sometimes present slides too quickly, so that the students begin learning the subsequent content before they fully understand the former one, which, in turn, leads to the accumulation of unfamiliar knowledge and eventually triggers off learning anxiety. In addition, teachers often ask questions randomly to check students' learning status. It is a common way for teachers to get students' attention, but most of them report that they are afraid of being asked questions as they may be criticized. It shows that such a method can not only increase students' anxiety in classes but also exacerbate the existing ambiguity tolerance.

From the perspective of the teaching environment, it is the distance between teachers and students and between peers that matters most. In traditional face-to-face offline classes, teachers can not only get students' attention through such body languages as eye contact but also be able to give timely feedback for students when they are puzzled. Nevertheless, in the online teaching environment, the only way for teachers and students to communicate is through voice calls or by typing in the comment section, making it difficult for teachers to know how is it going with students, thus to some extent, losing control of the classes. At the same time, online classes prevent students from interacting with each other, and for most students, solving problems independently and effectively requires a high individual competence. The failure of tasks therefore can undermine their confidence and aggravate their English learning anxiety. Furthermore, the lack of peer interaction and supervision hinders students from receiving adequate support, identity, and belonging. In turn, they will lose interest and develop English learning anxiety.

### 4.4 Strategies on the Alleviation of Anxiety in Webcast Teaching Environment

Teachers hold a dominant position in classes and play a key role in the development of students' cognition; therefore they should take advantage of it and implement efficient ways to assist students in overcoming their English learning anxiety in English online classes. Firstly, teachers must carefully organize and adjust the content and format of English classes. Before the class, the teacher can share some learning videos relative to the course so that students are familiar with it thus feel more at ease, lessening their negative evaluation anxiety and interaction anxiety. However, it's worth mentioning that preview cannot replace classroom instruction. With the aim of arousing students' cognitive conflicts, stimulating their cognitive motivation, and increasing their interest in English learning, teachers can appropriately present some scenarios that are completely different from students' meta-cognition. For instance, teachers can give students some domestic and international news, guiding them to pay attention to social issues and to express their opinions freely. Meanwhile, teachers need to control the pace of the classes, refine the content, and highlight the key points so that students will grasp the knowledge. Meanwhile, interesting and meaningful questions will enable teachers to create a lively class atmosphere, which is salutary to reducing students' tension. Furthermore in online classes, it is crucial for teachers to provide positive feedback and evaluation to students according to the difficulty of the questions, guaranteeing that every student can answer questions without the concerns of being criticized, experience the joy of victory, and build up self-confidence. More than this, teachers can develop interactive English learning groups. It will not only offer students the chance to exchange studying experience but foster their friendships, preventing a sense of separation resulting from online courses.

As the main subjects of learning, students should correct their attitudes to studying and take steps to alleviate their English learning anxiety in online classes. To begin with, students can try to consciously utilize success-failure experiences, alternative experiences, and emotional arousal to increase their self-efficacy. In setting learning goals, for example, it helps if one sets challenging but achievable targets, as the

accomplishments will improve the confidence in English learning. Then to further stimulate their motivation, students should primarily be realistic about their English language abilities rather than belittling themselves as inferior to others, especially in the case of male or science students, and next should set learning goals in terms of their own realities so that they will have a clear sense of what they need to do. Furthermore, fuzzy tolerance lays a greater impact on university-level learners of English than on learners at other levels. During English online classes, students should abandon the concept that the answer is definitive and absolute; they need learn to use their own knowledge to solve unknown problems and develop the ability to solve problems independently. Last but not least, in online classes, the big physical gap between teachers and students can distract students' attention easily; therefore, to improve their self-regulation skills, they should not hold the idea that online learning equals rest but take responsibility for creating a suitable learning environment by removing all unnecessary distractions before classes.

## 5. Conclusion

English learning anxiety is a complicated psychological emotion that impacts learners' learning energy and attention, reducing the effectiveness of language storage and output and generating a vicious cycle for language acquisition (Tang 2020). Under the influence of the epidemic, the live webcast teaching model has developed rapidly across the country. The actual anxiety condition under the new teaching mode is of great significance to both English learners and English teachers.

According to the questionnaire and the structured interview, this study finds that a majority of university students generally experience varying levels of English learning anxiety in webcast teaching environment. The specific manifestations are dominated by negative evaluation anxiety, general anxiety, communicative anxiety, and interaction anxiety, among which, communicative anxiety and negative evaluation anxiety are the most prominent. As for the reason, it mainly stems from such three perspectives as students themselves, English teachers, and the online learning environment. From the standpoint of the students, the influencing factors include their low self-confidence, low tolerance for ambiguity, low motivation, and low self-restraint. The teachers' perspective indicates that the main factors are the teaching content, teaching speed, and questioning style. From the perspective of the environment, it is the loose atmosphere of the real learning environment and the lack of interaction in online classes that affect most. Faced with these problems, both teachers and students need to try their best to get it over. Firstly, teachers should make timely adjustments to the content of the online courses to intrigue students' interest in English learning, give students more positive comments in classes to build their confidence in English and to create a relaxing learning atmosphere, and organize learning groups for students to eliminate the distance in online classes. Secondly, students need to increase their motivation to English learning, improve their self-efficacy, increase their ambiguity tolerance, and enhance their self-control.

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