

Exploring the causes of college students' English writing anxiety

-- Taking individual interviews as an example

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Abstract: Since the implementation of "Teaching Guide" for two years, there is a lack of relevant research to test the implementation effect from the perspective of college students' feedback. This paper actively explores the causes of English writing anxiety from the perspective of English writing learners, and conducts a survey in the form of semi-structured interviews, so as to explore the significance of the "Teaching Guide" in reducing English writing anxiety and ensure the implementation of special English writing teaching. Effect. We found that English writing anxiety is still prevalent, which provides teachers with a new perspective on targeted teaching activities.

Keywords: College students; English writing; Causes of anxiety; Interview method.

1. Introduction

After the 1970s, with the continuous development of second language acquisition research, the center of English teaching shifted from teachers to students. In order to improve the teaching results of second language acquisition and ensure the implementation of the special teaching of English writing, it is of great significance to explore the psychological barriers of students in the writing process. Students may encounter various difficulties in English writing, such as lack of good resources to consult in the early stage of writing, and unable to record inspiration and writing ideas in time (Hu 2003; Trang & Hoa 2008; Liu Kuanping, Zhou Ye 4fang 2004; Lou Huiru 2003; Trang & Hoa 2008). 2009; Wang Junju 2005); in the process of writing, he is unfamiliar with the writing framework, and cannot reasonably use the acquired knowledge of grammar and vocabulary to express semantics. (Trang & Hoa 2008; Zhu 2001). When self-esteem and self-confidence are thwarted and fail to achieve the desired effect, the individual develops an emotional state of anxiety. Following Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, more and more attention has been paid to anxiety as a major hindrance to English learning. Horwitz proposed in 1986 that "the complex of self-awareness, belief, emotion and behavior is called foreign language anxiety, which is derived from the particularity of foreign language learning", and in order to measure the anxiety level of foreign language writing, he compiled "Second Language Anxiety". Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory. Language anxiety is defined by MacIntyre & Gardner as "a feeling of tension and fear that has a special relationship with the second language context (including speaking, listening and learning)".

The College English Teaching Guide (2020 Edition) (hereinafter referred to as the "Teaching Guide") emphasizes the importance of academic English writing. Since the implementation of the "Teaching Guide" two years ago, there has been a lack of relevant research to test the implementation effect from the perspective of college students' feedback. In order to explore the significance of the "Teaching Guide" in

reducing English writing anxiety and ensure the implementation effect of special English writing teaching, this paper actively explores the causes of English writing anxiety from the perspective of learners, and conducts a survey by means of semi-structured interviews. The purpose is to study which factors lead to English writing anxiety, so as to provide a basis for the reform of English classroom teaching.

2. Study Design

2.1. Research methods

Informal individual interviews were used to collect qualitative data by focusing on students' anxiety about English writing. The research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of students' psychological activities about English writing. This will help us construct meaning and collect first-hand data for interpretation.

2.2. Research objects

4 (2 boys, 2 girls) undergraduates from a university in Jiangsu participated in this study, their age range is 19-22 years old, the average age is 20 years old, from different disciplines, namely economic statistics, computer, chemistry materials, etc. Two of the students passed the CET-6, and one student took an 8-week English writing course.

2.3. Research tools

Subjects underwent semi-structured interviews lasting 30-45 minutes. Recorded in pen and paper, the verbal activities of the subjects and the dialogue and interaction process of the two sides were truly reproduced, and the recording was made with the consent of the subjects.

3. Results and Discussion

The learners' writing anxiety is reflected in behaviors such as avoiding writing tasks, avoiding being criticized and reading. The first interviewee proved that such behaviors caused by anxiety do exist. He expressed that he was afraid

that the teacher would give unsatisfactory grades, and he was afraid of being used as an example by the teacher to show in front of other students. The factors that trigger anxiety were supplemented by the opinions of other respondents. The second interviewee said that when writing in English, there will be a phenomenon of forgetting the words, or there is no thinking, or the thinking is confused, and the language and layout cannot be organized. The third respondent expressed particular anxiety about writing for exams, where academic norms forced him to squeeze his creative space. Academic writing instruction is different from regular English writing practice and deserves more attention. The student was not interested in the English writing assignment assigned by the teacher and felt that the topic was not new. As English educators, we should help such students broaden their thinking and add interest to the design classroom. The fourth respondent believes that the main factor causing anxiety is the lack of grammar and vocabulary, and English writing as a foreign language does not always have the freedom and comfort of writing in the native language.

When asked about the factors of good English writing, the respondents mentioned profound or original ideas, clear structure, well-organized logic, strong arguments, precise use of words, and diverse sentence patterns. From this, it can be inferred that under the prevalence of English writing anxiety, college students have positive goals and directions in the process of English writing learning, which provides a new reference value for English writing teaching. Since college students have a clearer position for excellent English writing, the reason for anxiety in English writing is not enough time and energy for English writing? Or lack of thinking depth?

When discussing the important factors affecting English writing and the challenges they have encountered or encountered now, on the one hand, the respondents expressed anxiety about their vocabulary and grammar reserves. English educators need to help learners to supplement vocabulary and grammar knowledge. Curriculum and extracurricular masterpieces or film and television works. On the other hand, respondents mentioned anxiety about reading English literature, mainly due to not knowing academic vocabulary and being too long, which requires teachers to guide them to read references correctly.

Regarding the help they got in the process of learning English writing, three students from non-English majors said that after entering the university, there was no special English writing course, and they only studied English writing under the general elective course of college English. Students who are not English majors have fewer opportunities to contact academic writing, only in college English competitions, CET-4 and CET-6 exams, mid-term and final exams in schools, etc., so their attitude towards academic writing is relatively negative. The other is an English major. He first affirmed that the curriculum of this major will refine listening, speaking, reading, writing, and writing, which will improve his writing ability to a greater extent, but he also points out that college English major teachers default that English major students have a very good foundation of English writing, and there is no systematic teaching of grammar and vocabulary, which is a test of self-learning ability. At the same time, the English writing level of the students in the class is uneven, there is no targeted guidance, and the foundation is not very good. He feels anxious. This inspires English writing teachers to help learners broaden their knowledge and provide resources for English writing learning, such as apps or websites; teachers

teach knowledge is not limited to textbooks, the teaching purpose should not be too utilitarian, and learner-centered teaching.

Three respondents expressed a positive attitude towards daily English writing practice, and agreed that English writing practice would help improve their writing ability. Although they did not have a strong interest in English writing, there was no denying the positive effects of practice. Another interviewee took a passive and avoidant attitude towards English writing, leading to a delay. At the same time, it is worthy of English writing teachers to think about how to enrich the interest of English writing class so as to improve students' enthusiasm for English writing and help students develop their subjective initiative. In this way, students not only improve their English writing for the purpose of taking the test, but also push the school to offer more English-specific writing courses.

The current teaching methods and environment are affected by the new crown epidemic. Online English writing learning and English writing examinations account for an important part of writing teaching, and we have to pay enough attention. As previous studies have shown, although online English writing does not have a stressful and tense classroom atmosphere, the student group is not very proficient in using computers, and the slow typing speed will also make them feel anxious. One of the interviewees also mentioned that due to the impact of the new crown epidemic and various objective conditions, many schools will adopt the form of online examinations, and students sometimes lack self-discipline and will plagiarize their writing, although the scores reach My own expectations, but knowing my true level will increase my anxiety about continuing to participate in offline English writing. In addition, the computer will also help students to automatically correct or mark spelling errors with red underlines, which is not conducive to the learner's ability to master the spelling of words in English writing.

Previous studies have shown that peer review can effectively reduce writing anxiety, physical anxiety, avoidance behavior and cognitive anxiety. Two interviewees demonstrated that peer anxiety can indeed relieve their anxiety and have a positive attitude towards peer review. Through peer evaluation, learners can communicate with outstanding classmates of different levels, and classmates will also offer constructive opinions to each other, which is conducive to mutual learning. The other two respondents did not agree with the application of peer assessment in practice. They believed that most of the classmates in the class had limited English proficiency. When assessing English composition, they could not point out the other's differences in grammar and vocabulary. wrong or inappropriate.

4. Conclusion

The study found that although college students have been exposed to English writing for a long time, they still have a certain anxiety about writing. For English writing, both teachers and students should pay attention to it. Teachers should choose some topics that interest students or content that closely follows students' thoughts in the classroom, help students understand and digest the learning content and feel the resonance, so as to actively face the writing task. After completing the writing task, on the one hand, it is necessary to accurately point out errors such as vocabulary and grammar, and on the other hand, it is necessary to find an appropriate evaluation method to help students make corrections, so as to

reduce the anxiety level. A good learning atmosphere is created in the classroom, and the students can communicate with each other, which can help them improve. You should grasp the time in your practice, and you can complete your writing according to the prescribed time, and you will be handier in the exam process. In this way, students' anxiety in the writing process will be effectively controlled.

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