

A Study of Taiwanese Technical College Students' Affective Reactions to Speaking English in the EFL Classroom

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Abstract

Different from previous studies which focused on the learners' overall foreign language learning anxiety, the purpose of this study was to investigate the sources of Taiwanese technical college students' affective reactions to speaking English, anxiety-provoking situations, and how were their affective reactions to speak English and their attitudes toward an EFL classroom. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were conducted in this study: questionnaires and interviews. According to the results, college students' anxiety generally came from one of these following situations: first, the teacher asked them to answer questions in English which they could not prepare in advance; second, the teacher asked them to give an English oral presentation to the class; third, students were asked to discuss unfamiliar topics in English; and fourth, students had low self-confidence in their oral performance; as a result, they kept thinking that their spoken English was worse than their peers'. Regarding students' anxiety in the classroom, the results revealed that they felt excessively uncomfortable when they were asked to speak English in front of others, especially when they faced with topics they were not familiar with. In addition, they worried about the countless grammatical rules they have to learn to speak English, and they also feared making mistakes. The results also indicated that students' anxiety occurred when they took part in conversations with foreign English speakers due to their lack of such experience. Concerning students' affective reactions, the results revealed that students' anxious feeling occurred when they did not understand what the teacher said in English, and consequently they worried about themselves being left behind due to the rapid pace of the class, especially those less-competent students. Some pedagogical implications of the study are also included.

Key Words: English as a Foreign Language (EFL); language learning anxiety; English speaking skill; affective reactions.

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