

A Study of Chinese Students' General Anxiety, Cultural Anxiety and Foreign Language Anxiety

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Abstract: Literature shows a strong link between individuals' personality and their apprehension. Some demonstrate that language anxiety is often accompanied by second/foreign language learning; while others suggest that psychological disorientation is normally experienced by people who suddenly find themselves living and studying in a radically different cultural environment. The present study attempts to identify which type of anxiety: general, cultural or foreign language anxiety, affected more to Chinese EFL students, and their relationships with gender, length of time living in the UK, and the age. Questionnaire was utilized to explore the issue. The results show that compare to cultural anxiety, Chinese students suffered more from foreign language anxiety. Some implications of the study include:

- Chinese EFL students should be encouraged to immerse themselves into the host culture
- Chinese educators should introduce western educational systems and develop students' critical thinking skills through social interaction

Key words: Chinese EFL students; personality and general anxiety; culture anxiety, foreign language anxiety

1. Introduction

Enrolment in an English class is an essential part of a university international students' program of study. Consequently, an influx of students with diverse backgrounds, interests and aspirations have enrolled in English courses in order to fulfill their degree requirements. According to the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA), China ranked the first sending countries, who sent 89,540 Chinese nationals to study in Britain in 2014. However, how will the students cope with their first few months of English study in this country? Will they experience any difficulties? If yes, what kind of difficulty will they encounter? According to Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986, p. 28), language learning is "a profoundly unsettling psychological proposition", which directly threatens an individual's self-concept and view of the world. Anxiety is often associated with it. Both teachers and students feel strongly that it is a major obstacle to be overcome in learning to speak another language. Second/foreign language researchers and theorists have long been aware of this (Horwitz et al., 1986). Yet, most of second/foreign language research has been limited to general and language anxiety, cultural anxiety tends to be less explored. MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) argued: "...to study anxiety is to study the interaction of the person

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in the situation producing that anxiety. Some situations arouse anxiety while others do not, so both the individual and the context must be taken into consideration (p. 42).” When students study their foreign/second language in the host country, cultural anxiety may also contribute an important factor that affects their language learning. This study attempts to identify which type of anxiety: general, cultural or foreign language anxiety, affected more to Chinese EFL students, and their relationships with gender, length of time living in the UK, and the age.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Anxiety

Anxiety is feelings of unpleasantness, something that makes one want to burst out, run away, or start shouting or crying (Sartorius, 1990, p. 7). There are two types of anxiety, state and trait anxiety (Eysneck, 1992; Spiellberger & Rickman, 1990). State anxiety is characterized by subjective, consciously perceived feelings of tension and apprehension, and heightened automatic nervous system activity. It is regarded as a transitory condition involving feelings of fear and apprehension (Eysneck, 1992; Spiellberger & Rickman, 1990). Trait anxiety, however, is multidimensional in nature with personality characters. It involves social evaluation, physical danger, ambiguity, and daily routine situations, indicating the predisposition to respond with state anxiety under stressful conditions. States last for comparatively short periods of time, it depends upon the current situation. Whereas traits remain relatively unchanged for considerably longer, they are assumed to stem from distant causal factors such as heredity or the experiences of early childhood (Eysneck, 1992; Spielberger & Rickman, 1990). In short, state anxiety refers to a temporary condition in response to some perceived threat, whereas trait anxiety describes a personality characteristic rather than a temporary feeling.

On the other hand, anxiety can be classified as debilitating anxiety and facilitating anxiety. Debilitating anxiety gets in the way, whereas facilitating anxiety helps people do better than they might otherwise do (Allwright & Bailey, 1996). One may do better if he/she realizes success is not guaranteed, but making a greater effort can make all the difference. However sometimes no matter how hard one tries, it makes no difference; one is nonetheless bound to fail. Under this circumstance, anxiety is likely to make it even more difficult for him/her to produce his/her best. The matter is not just removing anxiety, but identifying and minimizing the sources of debilitating anxiety and optimizing the sources of facilitating anxiety (Allwright & Bailey, 1996).

Research suggests that women experience a greater amount of daily stress and anxiety than men due to limited social power and competing social roles. Inglés et al. (2011) for instance, described a study consisting a sample of 2543 students aged between 12 and 17 from secondary schools. They reported girls presenting significantly higher levels of anxiety than boys. They advised that the result was in accordance with the findings of previous clinical studies. Likewise, Zhao and Zhang (2016) investigated different levels and types of anxiety among Chinese EFL learners studying at a public university in Malaysia. Fifty students participated in their study. They reported that female Chinese students experience a higher level anxiety than male participants on the whole and on each category of anxiety. Nonetheless, gender differences in anxiety can be artifact of reporting biases. According to this theory, men and women shares same rates of anxiety. Yet, men are less likely to report anxiety symptoms (Zalta & Chambless, 2012). Pierce and Kirkpatrick (1992), for example, reported that men tend to underreport anxiety symptoms.

Research also revealed relationships between age and anxiety. Christensen et al. (1999), for instance, assessed the effects of age on anxiety and depression. They examined whether age had direct effects on self-report

of individual symptoms on anxiety and depression. 2622 participants aged between 18 and 79 years from Canberra (Australia) took part in their study. They reported a negative correlation between age and anxiety.

2.2 Cultural Anxiety

2.2.1 Cultural Differences between Britain and China at Schools, Colleges and Universities

Culture is “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (Hofstede, 1997, p. 5). It is “a fuzzy set of attitudes, beliefs, behavioural conventions, and basic assumptions and values that are shared by a group of people, and that influence each member’s behaviour and each member’s interpretations of the ‘meaning’ of other people’s behavior.” (Spencer-Oatey, 2000, p. 4)

In his classic work *Cultures and Organisations*, Hofstede (1997) identifies five dimensions of cultural variance, namely: power distance, individualism–collectivism, femininity–masculinity, uncertainty avoidance and Confucian dynamism. According to Hofstede (1997), Britain is an individual and small power distance country. In a country like this, the educational process is student-centred, with a premium on student initiative. Teachers are supposed to treat all students as equals—treat each student as individual and treat them impartially, regardless of their backgrounds, and expect to be treated as equals by the students. Professors, lecturers and staff at universities are supposed to be called by their first name instead of their last name to show the informality and equality. Effective learning depends largely on whether the supposed two-way communication between students and teacher is established. As students proceed in their studies, they become more independent. The entire system is based on the students’ well-developed need for independence; the quality of learning is to a considerable extent determined by the excellence of students. Confrontations and open discussion of conflicts is often considered salutary, and face-consciousness is weak or even non-existent. The purpose of learning is to know how to learn, learning how to cope with new, unknown, unforeseen situations, instead of how to do (Hofstede, 1997, p. 34, p. 62).

However, like many other Asian countries, China is a collectivist and large power distance country. In a country like this, the education process is teacher-centred. Due to the pervasive influence of Confucian ideas, teachers are viewed as knowledge holders (Locastro, 2001). If teachers do not display their knowledge in lectures or if they play games with students or ask students to do role–play in class, then they are not doing their job. Teachers are highly respected and revered. Students never call their teachers’ first names — it suggests disrespect if they do so. Students late for class should have the teacher’s permission to enter the classroom. They sit quietly in rows that face the teacher, listen attentively, and take careful notes. Students raise their hands and stand at attention when they answer or when they want to ask questions. They turn not like discussion activities due to the “modesty custom” to avoid their peers criticism or isolation (Locastro, 2001). They tend to:

- not demonstrate verbal success in English in front of their peers.
- try to hesitate and show/pretend difficulty in arriving at an answer.
- try not answering the teacher voluntarily or enthusiastically in English.
- try not speaking fluent English.

As a result, when a teacher asks students questions, they tend to be quiet and not respond actively even if they know the answer. Most students tend to take turns to participate group activities (Locastro, 2001). In such a system the quality of one’s learning is virtually exclusively dependent on the excellence of one’s teachers (Hofstede, 1997, pp. 34, 62).

2.2.2 Culture Shock and Cultural Anxiety

When people migrate from one culture to another, they may experience culture shock (Furnham & Bochner, 1986; Juffer, 1993; Weaver, 1991; Anderson, 1994; Marx, 1999). Culture shock is “a state of distress following the transfer of a person to an unfamiliar cultural environment (Hofstede, 1997, p. 260). It is the psychological disorientation experienced by people who suddenly find themselves living and working in a radically different cultural environments” (Ferraro, p. 130).

In the past, “culture shock” has become a jargon. It is now commonly used to describe a phenomenon characterized by physical and psychological discomfort symptoms experienced by those adjusting to a new cultural background. Weaver (1991) argued that it is not a disease, rather, it is an unconscious phenomenon and it is a normal reaction to a new cultural or social environment, which does, in fact, end sooner or later by understanding the new cultural or social environment (p. 149). Weaver (1991) offered three causal explanations on “culture shock”: loss of cues or reinforcers, the breakdown of communication and an identity crisis. He viewed cues as signposts that guide people through their daily activities in an acceptable style consistent with their social environment, and cues serve behaviour as they signal if things are being done inappropriately. Words, gestures, facial expressions, postures or customs are all examples of cues. When people lose cues or reinforcers, they may lose focus and experience various stage of distress, which frequently results in depression or anxiety, and becomes extremely self-destructive. He considered a breakdown of communication, consciously and unconsciously, as a source of alienation from others and causes frustration and anxiety, which make people feel stressful and depressive. He argued that the most fascinating explanation of culture shock is that of an identity crisis, which implies that there is genuine psychological growth when one overcomes culture shock successfully. Identity crises are normally viewed as the more or fewer natural outcome of contact with an alien culture (Anderson, 1994). It is an identity crisis or a personality crisis rather than a disease or malaise that produces mental or physical disintegration. A modern variant of culture shock recuperation models has followed.

By contacting with the unfamiliar culture, one's entire familiar sense of self is torn away. A person's most familiar reference points, which provide the cues for their behaviour as well as the substrate for their sense of identity have been removed. It makes people feel like a fish out of water, and thus the feelings of anxiety and depression, even frustration inevitably show up (Anderson, 1994; Weaver, 1991). According to Hofstede (1997), there are generally four distinct phases of culture shock (pp. 209–211):

Phase 1: Honeymoon phase: usually it is a short period of euphoria — initial feelings are positive, marked by excitement. While preparing to relocate and during the first days or weeks in the new country, a person will experience a Honeymoon phase when he or she will feel extreme joy and enthusiasm. This period lasts a few days to a few weeks.

Phase 2: Disenchantment phase: feelings turn negative, culture shock arises when real life in different culture starts. This stage is marked by criticism, resentment, and anger.

Phase 3: Beginning resolution phase: acculturation arises when visitor has learnt to some degree to function under new conditions. Some values are accepted and self-confidence increases again. S/he becomes integrated into social systems.

Phase 4: Effective functioning phase: stable conditions, when feelings are again more positive, people become adapted to various degrees.

People who experience culture shock seem to adjust better to a new surrounding than those that do not experience it. In addition, according to Marx (1999), there is no “normal” curve, timing depends on “foreignness” of culture, social context (degree of support through co-nationals and foreigners) and personality of person involved.

2.3 Language Anxiety

Research (Krashen, 1985; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, 1991, 1994) has consistently revealed that anxiety can impede foreign language achievement. Language anxiety is experienced by both foreign and second language learners and poses potential problems because “it can interfere with the acquisition, retention and production of the new language” (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, p. 86).

2.3.1 Krashen's View on Anxiety

Krashen (1985) maintained that anxiety contributes to an affective filter, it inhibits the learner's ability to process incoming language and prevents students from receiving input and short-circuits the process of acquisition. An interaction is often found among anxiety, task difficulty, and ability, which interferes at the input, processing, retrieval, and at the output level. If anxiety impairs cognitive function, students who are anxious may learn fewer and also may not be able to demonstrate what they have learned.

Krashen suggests that an individual's degree of self-esteem is highly related to language anxiety: “...the more I think about self-esteem, the more impressed I am with its impact. This is what causes anxiety in a lot of people. People with high self-esteem worry about what their peers think. They are concerned with pleasing others. And that I think has to do a great degree with anxiety” (Young, 1991, p. 427). In Krashen's point of view, facilitative anxiety has a positive effect on language learning, rather than on language acquisition. It may have a positive effect on tasks that require conscious learning. Language acquisition can only work best when anxiety is zero (Young, 1991, p. 160). He argued that speaking is particularly anxiety provoking. When listening is incomprehensible, it is also anxiety provoking. Pleasure and silent reading is the least anxiety provoking. He suggests only when input is comprehensible and interesting, and only when students are not forced to speak before they are ready and are not asked to perform beyond their acquired competence, will this do a great deal toward reducing anxiety (Young, 1991, p. 164).

2.3.2 Previous Research on Foreign Language Anxiety

Language anxiety is the specific type of anxiety that is most closely related to the acquisition of a foreign language (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, 1991). The distinction between language anxiety and other forms of anxiety is that the anxiety experienced in the course of learning a foreign/second language is specific and unique. Horwitz et al. (1986) were the first to treat foreign language anxiety as a separate and distinct phenomenon peculiar to language learning. It is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon. It is the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with foreign language contexts including speaking, listening and learning (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 284). It occurs at each stage of the language learning process, i.e. input, processing and output.

According to the researchers, anxious students may underestimate their ability (MacIntyre, Noels & Clement, 1997). They may believe that they cannot learn or perform in a L2, which in turn lead to decreased effort and accomplishment. Some students with high levels of foreign language anxiety tend to have avoidance behaviours, such as mental block, missing class, and postponing homework (Horwitz et al., 1986). Foreign language anxiety hence acts as an affective filter that results in the student being unreceptive to language input (Krashen, 1980).

Bailey, Onwuegbuzie & Daley (2000) suggests that students with high levels of input anxiety may ask their language teachers to repeat sentences more often than do their low-anxious counterparts (p. 475). They may also have to reread material in the target language several times to compensate for missing or inadequate input (Bailey et al., 2000, p. 475).

When performing cognitive operations on new information, students may experience processing anxiety (ibid.). Anxiety at this stage can impede learning by reducing the efficiency with which memory processes are used to solve problems. Furthermore, high levels of processing anxiety may reduce a student's ability to understand messages or to learn new vocabulary items in the target language.

Anxiety at the output stage involves apprehension that students experience when required to demonstrate their ability to use previously learned material. High levels of output anxiety might hinder students' ability to speak or to write in the target language (ibid.). MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) suggest that the three stages of anxiety are somewhat interdependent. Each stage depends on the successful completion of the previous one.

In general, language anxiety is one of the best predictors of foreign/second language achievement. In the host country context, Chinese EFL students may experience general, cultural and language anxiety, the major factors that affect their language achievement.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Purpose of the Study and Research Question

From the literature review we know that Chinese students, as sojourners to study in the UK, may more or less experience some degree of culture shock and cultural anxiety. In addition, in order to fulfill British universities' degree requirements, they may have to take English courses before starting their degree studies. Therefore, they may also experience language anxiety. The purpose of this study is to identify which type of anxiety: general, cultural or foreign language anxiety, affected more to Chinese EFL students, and their relationships with gender, length of time living in the UK, and the age.

3.2 Research Methods

Questionnaire was used in this study to investigate the research question. Thirty five Chinese students who studied English as a Foreign Language at the University of Bedfordshire participated in the study. Their age ranged from 18 to 42: six under 20; 15 from 20 to 25; 8 between 25 to 30; and 6 were over 30. There were 20 male students and 15 female students. Thirteen of them have been living in the UK for less than 1 year, eleven less than 2 years, and another 11 over 2 years.

The questionnaire consisted of background information, a Personality and General Anxiety Scale, a Cultural Anxiety Scale and a Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale. The background information was designed to obtain demographic data about the participants. The Personality and General Anxiety Scale was adapted according to Byrne's study (2000). The Cultural Anxiety Scale was designed based on Paige's (1991) 10 intensity factors and 15 hypotheses. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale was adapted according to Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al., (1986).

The questionnaire was administered to Chinese EFL students at the end of the spring semester in 2014. All the participants were required to complete the questions as quickly as possible in order to make the answers accurate to the real situation. These participants were asked to recall their feelings and experiences of their first

three months' English study in the UK. The participants were not asked to identify themselves and therefore they will not be identifiable in any way. Descriptive analysis was used to describe the results obtained.

4. Research Results

4.1 Results of Comparing the Three Types of Anxiety according to Gender

The demographic information on the Personality and General Anxiety Scale suggested that 60% of the students were extrovert. They like talking and enjoy meeting new people (see Table 1). However, more male and female students felt stressful. They felt life at school and life in general was stressful and they often felt lonely. Eighty percent of female students had high self-respect. Compare to male students, more female students felt life at school and life in general was stressful.

Table 1 Results of Comparing Personality and General Anxiety According to Gender

| Questions | Agree (%) | | Neither agree nor disagree (%) | | Disagree (%) | |
|--|-----------|--------|--------------------------------|--------|--------------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| PG1. I find life at school fairly stressful. | 45 | 60 | 40 | 13.3 | 15 | 26.7 |
| PG2. I find life in general fairly stressful. | 40 | 53.5 | 35 | 40 | 25 | 6.7 |
| PG 3. I often feel lonely. | 45 | 46.7 | 30 | 20 | 25 | 33.3 |
| PG 4. I have high self-respect. | 45 | 80 | 40 | 13.3 | 15 | 6.7 |
| PG 5. My feelings don't change much from day to day. | 35 | 33.3 | 45 | 40 | 20 | 26.7 |
| PG 6. I like talking a lot. | 55 | 60 | 25 | 33.3 | 20 | 6.7 |
| PG 7. I enjoy meeting new people. | 65 | 60 | 25 | 26.7 | 10 | 13.3 |
| PG 8. I'm mostly quiet when I am with other people. | 45 | 40 | 40 | 26.7 | 15 | 33.3 |

With regard to cultural anxiety, as suggested in Table 2, more male and female students disagreed with C4–C8. For example, they did not agree with “I feel anxious because I am in a new culture”; “I feel anxious because I look different from Western people”; “I feel anxious because the teaching methods in the UK are so different from those in my culture”; “I feel anxious because I don't receive the respect that I deserve in Britain”; or “I feel anxious because I don't know enough about British culture”. More female students agreed with C2 “I feel anxious because I don't have any experience of living in a foreign country”.

Table 2 Results of Comparing Cultural Anxiety According to Gender

| Questions | Agree (%) | | Neither agree nor disagree (%) | | Disagree (%) | |
|--|-----------|--------|--------------------------------|--------|--------------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| C1. I feel anxious because British culture is so different from my culture. | 35 | 33.3 | 35 | 26.7 | 30 | 40 |
| C2. I feel anxious because I don't have any experience of living in a foreign country. | 35 | 46.7 | 30 | 20 | 35 | 33.3 |
| C3. I feel anxious because my English is not so good. | 15 | 26.7 | 50 | 53.3 | 35 | 20 |
| C4. I feel anxious because I am in a new culture. | 15 | 40 | 30 | 13.3 | 55 | 46.7 |
| C5. I feel anxious because I look different from Western people. | 5 | 20 | 40 | 26.7 | 55 | 53.3 |
| C6. I feel anxious because the teaching methods in the UK are so different from those in my culture. | 30 | 26.7 | 30 | 33.3 | 40 | 40 |
| C7. I feel anxious because I don't receive the respect that I deserve in Britain. | 15 | 26.7 | 25 | 26.7 | 60 | 46.7 |
| C8. I feel anxious because I don't know enough about British culture. | 25 | 33.3 | 25 | 33.3 | 50 | 33.3 |

Table 3 illustrates the responses to language anxiety. More students, both male and female students, disagreed with L3 “It worries me when I know that I have to speak in English class”, L8 “I worry about failing my English class”, and L10 “I often feel like not going to my English class”. More students, both male and female students, agreed with L2 “I don’t worry about making mistakes in English class” and L4 “It worries me when I don’t understand what the teacher is saying”. More female students, around 53%, agreed with L1 “I never feel quite sure of myself when I speak in my English class”; L6 “I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am”; and L9 “It embarrasses me to speak without being asked in my English class”.

Table 3 Results of Comparing Language Anxiety According to Gender

| Questions | Agree (%) | | Neither agree nor disagree (%) | | Disagree (%) | |
|--|-----------|--------|--------------------------------|--------|--------------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| L1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I speak in my English class. | 30 | 53.3 | 35 | 13.3 | 35 | 33.3 |
| L2. I don’t worry about making mistakes in English class. | 40 | 60 | 30 | 13.3 | 30 | 26.7 |
| L3. It worries me when I know that I have to speak in English class. | 25 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 45 | 40 |
| L4. It worries me when I don’t understand what the teacher is saying. | 45 | 53.3 | 15 | 20 | 40 | 26.7 |
| L5. During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course. | 20 | 46.7 | 35 | 6.7 | 45 | 46.7 |
| L6. I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am. | 20 | 53.3 | 30 | 20 | 50 | 20 |
| L7. English tests make me feel worried. | 40 | 46.7 | 25 | 6.7 | 35 | 46.7 |
| L8. I worry about failing my English class. | 35 | 33.3 | 25 | 26.7 | 40 | 40 |
| L9. It embarrasses me to speak without being asked in my English class. | 2 | 53. | 45 | 26.7 | 35 | 20 |
| L10. I often feel like not going to my English class. | 2 | 13.3 | 15 | 6.7 | 60 | 80 |

4.2 Results of Comparing the Three Types of Anxiety According to the Lengths of Time Living in the UK

In comparing personality and general anxiety according to the lengths of time living in the UK, Table 4 suggested that more students, no matter how long they had lived in the UK, agreed with PG1 “I find life at school fairly stressful”, PG2 “I find life in general fairly stressful”, PG4 “I have high self-respect”, PG5 “My feelings don’t change much from day to day”, PG6 “I like talking a lot”, PG7 “I enjoy meeting new people”, and PG8 “I’m mostly quiet when I am with other people”. However, an interesting phenomenon occurs: only 23% of students who had lived in the UK for less than one year agreed with PG3 “I often feel lonely”, whereas more students from the other two groups who had lived in the UK more than one year, agreed with it.

Table 4 Results of Comparing Personality and General Anxiety According to the Lengths of Time Living in the UK

| Questions | Agree (%) | | | Neither agree nor disagree (%) | | | Disagree (%) | | |
|-----------|-----------|------|------|--------------------------------|------|------|--------------|------|------|
| | < 1 | 1-2 | > 2 | < 1 | 1-2 | > 2 | < 1 | 1-2 | > 2 |
| PG1 | 38.5 | 63.6 | 54.5 | 30.8 | 18.2 | 36.4 | 30.8 | 18.2 | 9.1 |
| PG 2 | 38.5 | 63.6 | 36.4 | 46.2 | 27.3 | 36.4 | 15.4 | 9.1 | 27.3 |
| PG 3 | 23 | 45.5 | 72.7 | 46.2 | 18.2 | 9.1 | 30.8 | 36.4 | 18.2 |
| PG 4 | 46.2 | 54.5 | 81.8 | 30.8 | 36.4 | 18.2 | 23 | 9.1 | 0 |
| PG 5 | 30.8 | 36.4 | 36.4 | 38.5 | 54.5 | 36.4 | 30.8 | 9.1 | 27.3 |
| PG 6 | 61.5 | 54.5 | 45.5 | 30.8 | 27.3 | 36.4 | 8 | 18.2 | 18.2 |
| PG 7 | 69.2 | 63.6 | 54.5 | 15.4 | 36.4 | 27.3 | 15.4 | 0 | 18.2 |
| PG 8 | 38.5 | 45.5 | 45.5 | 38.5 | 36.4 | 27.3 | 23 | 18.2 | 27.3 |

PG1. I find life at school fairly stressful. PG2. I find life in general fairly stressful. PG 3. I often feel lonely. PG 4. I have high self-respect. PG 5. My feelings don’t change much from day to day. PG 6. I like talking a lot. PG 7. I enjoy meeting new people. PG 8. I’m mostly quiet when I am with other people.

In comparing cultural anxiety according to the lengths of time living in the UK, Table 5 suggested, in general, more students who lived in the UK for less than one year, disagreed with C1 to C8. However, more participants, in fact, more than 45.5% of the participants, no matter how long they lived in the UK, neither agreed nor disagreed with C3 "I feel anxious because my English is not so good". More students who lived in the UK for more than one year, agreed with C1 "I feel anxious because British culture is so different from my culture" and C2 "feel anxious because I don't have any experience of living in a foreign country". More students, no matter how long they lived in the UK, disagreed with C5 "I feel anxious because I look different from Western people". More students who lived in the UK for more than two years agreed with C6 "I feel anxious because the teaching methods in the UK are so different from those in my culture". More students who lived in the UK for less than two years disagreed with C7 "I feel anxious because I don't receive the respect that I deserve in Britain" and C8 "I feel anxious because I don't know enough about British culture". The students who lived in the UK for more than two years showed the same percentage, i.e., 36.4%, of agreeing and disagreeing with these two statements.

Table 5 Results of Comparing Cultural Anxiety According to Lengths of Time Living in the UK

| Questions | Agree (%) | | | Neither agree nor disagree (%) | | | Disagree (%) | | |
|-----------|-----------|------|------|--------------------------------|------|------|--------------|------|------|
| | < 1 | 1-2 | > 2 | < 1 | 1-2 | > 2 | < 1 | 1-2 | > 2 |
| C1 | 23 | 45.5 | 36.4 | 23 | 18.2 | 54.5 | 54 | 36.4 | 9.1 |
| C2 | 15.4 | 45.5 | 63.6 | 30.8 | 18.2 | 27.3 | 53.8 | 36.4 | 9.1 |
| C3 | 15.4 | 27.3 | 18.2 | 61.5 | 45.5 | 45.5 | 23 | 27.3 | 36.4 |
| C4 | 8 | 36.4 | 36.4 | 23 | 18.2 | 27.3 | 69.2 | 45.5 | 36.4 |
| C5 | 0 | 9.1 | 27.3 | 46.2 | 18.2 | 36.4 | 53.8 | 72.7 | 36.4 |
| C6 | 23 | 18.2 | 45.5 | 30.8 | 36.4 | 27.3 | 46.2 | 45.5 | 27.3 |
| C7 | 8 | 18.2 | 36.4 | 23 | 27.3 | 27.3 | 69.2 | 54.5 | 36.4 |
| C8 | 23 | 27.3 | 36.4 | 30.8 | 27.3 | 27.3 | 46.2 | 45.5 | 36.4 |

C1. I feel anxious because British culture is so different from my culture. C2. I feel anxious because I don't have any experience of living in a foreign country. C3. I feel anxious because my English is not so good. C4. I feel anxious because I am in a new culture. C5. I feel anxious because I look different from Western people. C6. I feel anxious because the teaching methods in the UK are so different from those in my culture. C7. I feel anxious because I don't receive the respect that I deserve in Britain. C8. I feel anxious because I don't know enough about British culture.

In comparing language anxiety according to the lengths of time living in the UK, Table 6 suggested that more students from each group agreed with L4 "It worries me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying". More students from each group, i.e., no matter how long they lived in the UK, disagreed with C10 "I often feel like not going to my English class". More students who lived in the UK for less than two years disagreed with L3 "It worries me when I know that I have to speak in English class" and L5 "During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course". Same percentages of students who lived in the UK for more than two years disagreed with these two statements. More students who lived in the UK for over 2 years agreed with L1 "I never feel quite sure of myself when I speak in my English class" and L7 "English tests make me feel worried". More students who lived in the UK for more than one year agreed with L9 "It embarrasses me to speak without being asked in my English class".

Table 6 Results of Comparing Language Anxiety According to Lengths of Time Living in the UK

| Questions | Agree (%) | | | Neither agree nor disagree (%) | | | Disagree (%) | | |
|-----------|-----------|------|------|--------------------------------|------|------|--------------|------|------|
| | <1 | 1-2 | >2 | <1 | 1-2 | >2 | <1 | 1-2 | >2 |
| L1 | 15.4 | 45.5 | 63.6 | 61.5 | 0 | 9.1 | 23 | 54.5 | 27.3 |
| L2 | 38.5 | 54.5 | 54.5 | 23 | 27.3 | 18.2 | 38.5 | 18.2 | 27.3 |
| L3 | 30.8 | 9.1 | 27.3 | 30.8 | 27.3 | 45.5 | 38.5 | 63.6 | 27.3 |
| L4 | 46.2 | 45.5 | 54.5 | 23 | 18.2 | 9.1 | 30.8 | 36.4 | 36.4 |
| L5 | 23 | 27.3 | 45.5 | 30.8 | 27.3 | 9.1 | 46.2 | 45.5 | 45.5 |
| L6 | 23 | 36.4 | 45.5 | 38.5 | 36.4 | 0 | 38.5 | 27.3 | 54.5 |
| L7 | 38.5 | 36.4 | 54.5 | 15.4 | 27.3 | 9.1 | 46.2 | 36.4 | 36.4 |
| L8 | 23 | 36.4 | 45.5 | 23 | 45.5 | 9.1 | 53.8 | 18.2 | 45.5 |
| L9 | 23 | 36.4 | 45.5 | 46.2 | 36.4 | 27.3 | 30.8 | 27.3 | 27.3 |
| L10 | 15.4 | 9.1 | 36.4 | 15.4 | 9.1 | 9.1 | 69.2 | 81.8 | 54.5 |

L1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I speak in my English class. L2. I don't worry about making mistakes in English class. L3. It worries me when I know that I have to speak in English class. L4. It worries me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying. L5. During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course. L6. I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am. L7. English tests make me feel worried. L8. I worry about failing my English class. L9. It embarrasses me to speak without being asked in my English class. L10. I often feel like not going to my English class.

4.3 Results of Comparing the Three Types of Anxiety according to the Age Groups

In comparing personality and general anxiety according to the age groups, Table 7 illustrates that a greater (or an equal) percentage of participants from each group agreed with the PG1 "I find life at school fairly stressful", PG2 "I find life in general fairly stressful", PG4 "I have high self-respect", PG6 "I like talking a lot" and PG7 "I enjoy meeting new people". Apart from the oldest group, more students agreed with PG3 "I often feel lonely". More students from the two older groups agreed with the statement 5 "My feelings don't change much from day to day". More students from younger than 20 group and between 25–30 years old group agreed with the PG8 "I'm mostly quiet when I am with other people".

Table 7 Results of Comparing Personality and General Anxiety According to the Age Groups

| Questions | Agree (%) | | | | Neither agree nor disagree (%) | | | | Disagree (%) | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-------|-------|------|--------------------------------|-------|-------|------|--------------|-------|-------|------|
| | < 20 | 20-25 | 25-30 | > 30 | < 20 | 20-25 | 25-30 | > 30 | < 20 | 20-25 | 25-30 | > 30 |
| PG1 | 66.7 | 46.7 | 62.5 | 33.3 | 16.7 | 20 | 37.5 | 50 | 16.7 | 33.3 | 0 | 16.7 |
| PG 2 | 66.7 | 40 | 50 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 46.7 | 12.5 | 50 | 0 | 13.3 | 37.5 | 16.7 |
| PG 3 | 33.3 | 40 | 87.5 | 16.7 | 33.3 | 26.7 | 0 | 50 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 12.5 | 33.3 |
| PG 4 | 33.3 | 66.7 | 62.5 | 66.7 | 33.3 | 26.7 | 37.5 | 16.7 | 33.3 | 6.7 | 0 | 16.7 |
| PG 5 | 16.7 | 13.3 | 75 | 50 | 50 | 66.7 | 12.5 | 16.7 | 33.3 | 20 | 12.5 | 33.3 |
| PG 6 | 66.7 | 46.7 | 62.5 | 66.7 | 16.7 | 40 | 12.5 | 33.3 | 16.7 | 13.3 | 25 | 0 |
| PG 7 | 50 | 60 | 50 | 83.3 | 50 | 33.3 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 6.7 | 25 | 16.7 |
| PG 8 | 50 | 20 | 87.5 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 46.7 | 12.5 | 33.3 | 16.7 | 33.3 | 0 | 33.3 |

PG1. I find life at school fairly stressful. PG2. I find life in general fairly stressful. PG 3. I often feel lonely. PG 4. I have high self-respect. PG 5. My feelings don't change much from day to day. PG 6. I like talking a lot. PG 7. I enjoy meeting new people. PG 8. I'm mostly quiet when I am with other people.

In comparing cultural anxiety according to the age groups, Table 8 shows that, apart from 25–30 age group, more students from the other groups disagreed with C4 "I feel anxious because I am in a new culture", C5 "I feel

anxious because I look different from Western people” and C7 “I feel anxious because I don’t receive the respect that I deserve in Britain”. This group students had the same percentage of agreeing and disagreeing with these statements. More participants from the oldest age group disagreed with the statements C1 “I feel anxious because British culture is so different from my culture” and C2 “I feel anxious because I don’t have any experience of living in a foreign country”. However, a half of the students from this group agreed with C3 “I feel anxious because my English is not so good”. With regard to L6 and L8, apart from the students from 25–30 years of age group, more students from the other three groups disagreed with L6 “I feel anxious because the teaching methods in the UK are so different from those in my culture”, and L8 “I feel anxious because I don’t know enough about British culture”.

Table 8 Results of Comparing Cultural Anxiety According to the Age Groups

| Questions | Agree (%) | | | | Neither agree nor disagree (%) | | | | Disagree (%) | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-------|-------|------|--------------------------------|-------|-------|------|--------------|-------|-------|------|
| | < 20 | 20-25 | 25-30 | > 30 | < 20 | 20-25 | 25-30 | > 30 | < 20 | 20-25 | 25-30 | > 30 |
| C1 | 50 | 40 | 37.5 | 0 | 16.7 | 33.3 | 25 | 50 | 33.3 | 26.7 | 37.5 | 50 |
| C2 | 33.3 | 53.3 | 50 | 0 | 33.3 | 20 | 25 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 26.7 | 25 | 66.7 |
| C3 | 16.7 | 6.7 | 25 | 50 | 66.7 | 60 | 37.5 | 33.3 | 16.7 | 33.3 | 37.5 | 16.7 |
| C4 | 16.7 | 40 | 25 | 0 | 16.7 | 13.3 | 50 | 16.7 | 66.7 | 46.7 | 25 | 83.3 |
| C5 | 16.7 | 6.7 | 25 | 0 | 16.7 | 40 | 50 | 33.3 | 66.7 | 53.3 | 25 | 66.7 |
| C6 | 33.3 | 26.7 | 37.5 | 16.7 | 16.7 | 40 | 37.5 | 33.3 | 50 | 33.3 | 25 | 50 |
| C7 | 33.3 | 13.3 | 37.5 | 0 | 0 | 40 | 25 | 16.7 | 66.7 | 46.7 | 37.5 | 83.3 |
| C8 | 16.7 | 40 | 37.5 | 0 | 33.3 | 20 | 37.5 | 33.3 | 50 | 40 | 25 | 66.7 |

C1. I feel anxious because British culture is so different from my culture. C2. I feel anxious because I don't have any experience of living in a foreign country. C3. I feel anxious because my English is not so good. C4. I feel anxious because I am in a new culture. C5. I feel anxious because I look different from Western people. C6. I feel anxious because the teaching methods in the UK are so different from those in my culture. C7. I feel anxious because I don't receive the respect that I deserve in Britain. C8. I feel anxious because I don't know enough about British culture.

In comparing language anxiety according to the age groups, Table 9 tells us that the participants who were under 20 years' old age, disagreed with L1 “I never feel quite sure of myself when I speak in my English class”; L3 “It worries me when I know that I have to speak in English class”; L6 “I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am”; and L10 “I often feel like not going to my English class”. More students from 20 to 30 years old groups agreed with L2 “I don’t worry about making mistakes in English class”, a half of the students from the other two groups, i.e., younger than 20 group and older than 30 group, agreed with L2. More than a half students from each group disagreed with L10 “I often feel like not going to my English class”. In fact, no one from the youngest group agreed with this statement. In addition, none of the students from the youngest group agreed with L3 “It worries me when I know that I have to speak in English class”. For L4, half of the students, apart from the 20–25 age group, felt “It worries me when I don’t understand what the teacher is saying”. In answering L1, the older students from 25–30 and above 30 age group agreed with “I never feel quite sure of myself when I speak in my English class”. With regard to L5, half of the youngest student felt “During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course”. In answering L6, half or more than a half of the student from the youngest group and from the oldest group disagreed with “I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am”. In answering L7, more students, apart from 20–25 age group, agreed with “English tests make me feel worried”. As to L8, more students from 20–25 age group and above 30

age group disagreed with “I worry about failing my English class”. For L9, apart from the oldest age group, more students agreed with “It embarrasses me to speak without being asked in my English class”.

Table 9 Results of Comparing Language Anxiety According to the Age Groups

| Questions | Agree (%) | | | | Neither agree nor disagree (%) | | | | Disagree (%) | | | |
|------------|-----------|-------|-------|------|--------------------------------|-------|-------|------|--------------|-------|-------|------|
| | < 20 | 20–25 | 25–30 | > 30 | < 20 | 20–25 | 25–30 | > 30 | < 20 | 20–25 | 25–30 | > 30 |
| L1 | 33.3 | 26.7 | 75 | 33.3 | 0 | 33.3 | 12.5 | 50 | 66.7 | 40 | 12.5 | 16.7 |
| L2 | 50 | 53.3 | 37.5 | 50 | 0 | 33.3 | 37.5 | 0 | 50 | 13.3 | 25 | 50 |
| L3 | 0 | 20 | 25 | 50 | 33.3 | 26.7 | 62.5 | 16.7 | 66.7 | 53.3 | 12.5 | 33.3 |
| L4 | 50 | 40 | 50 | 50 | 0 | 20 | 25 | 33.3 | 50 | 40 | 25 | 16.7 |
| L5 | 50 | 26.7 | 37.5 | 16.7 | 33.3 | 20 | 25 | 16.7 | 16.7 | 53.3 | 37.5 | 66.7 |
| L6 | 33.3 | 40 | 37.5 | 16.7 | 16.7 | 33.3 | 25 | 16.7 | 50 | 26.7 | 37.5 | 66.7 |
| L7 | 50 | 40 | 37.5 | 50 | 33.3 | 6.7 | 37.5 | 0 | 16.7 | 53.3 | 25 | 50 |
| L8 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 50 | 16.7 | 50 | 20 | 25 | 16.7 | 16.7 | 46.7 | 25 | 66.7 |
| L9 | 33.3 | 40 | 37.5 | 16. | 33.3 | 26.7 | 50 | 50 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 12.5 | 33.3 |
| L10 | 0 | 26.7 | 25 | 16.7 | 16.7 | 6.7 | 25 | 0 | 83.3 | 66.7 | 50 | 83.3 |

L1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I speak in my English class. L2. I don't worry about making mistakes in English class. L3. It worries me when I know that I have to speak in English class. L4. It worries me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying. L5. During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course. L6. I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am. L7. English tests make me feel worried. L8. I worry about failing my English class. L9. It embarrasses me to speak without being asked in my English class. L10. I often feel like not going to my English class.

5. Discussion

Research suggests that the greater the degree of cultural differences between the two countries, the more and the longer time the sojourner will suffer from anxiety. Paige (1991, p. 5) argued: “The greater the degree of cultural difference between the sojourners' own and the target culture, the greater the degree of psychological intensity.” The lower level of cultural anxiety shown in this study seems to be inconsistent with previous research findings. This study suggested that more participants, both male and female, disagreed with C4, C5, C6, C7 and C8. They did not agree with “I feel anxious because I am in a new culture”; “I feel anxious because I look different from Western people”; “I feel anxious because the teaching methods in the UK are so different from those in my culture”; “I feel anxious because I don't receive the respect that I deserve in Britain”; or “I feel anxious because I don't know enough about British culture”. Apart from 25–30 age group (this group students had the same percentage of agreeing and disagreeing with the following statements), more students from the other groups disagreed with C4 “I feel anxious because I am in a new culture”, C5 “I feel anxious because I look different from Western people” and C7 “I feel anxious because I don't receive the respect that I deserve in Britain”. These may be due to the participants' extrovert personality tendencies. This study suggested more than a half of the participants had extrovert personality characteristics. They like talking and enjoy meeting new people. Psychological research indicates that an open-minded or extrovert person has lower anxiety level and will be expected to facilitate his/her coping with new situation (Tsang, 2001). More male and female students, no matter how long they lived in the UK, did not worry about their different appearance to western people, and they did not feel anxious about respect. The reason could be that in general British people are friendly and equal opportunities are always advocated.

With regard to C3 “I feel anxious because my English is not so good”, 50% of the participants who were

older than 30 years old agreed with it. However, more than a half of male and female students, and more than 45.5% of the participants, no matter how long they lived in the UK, responded neither agree nor disagree. This is an interesting finding, as it differs with China's traditional cultural value. Generally speaking, Chinese people have higher face value, and China's more traditional society places a great deal of importance on "face". In China and much of Asia, "face" represents a person's reputation and feelings of prestige. People do not want to lose "face" within school, workplace, the family, personal friends, and society at large. Therefore it would reflect Chinese culture customs and traditions if the participants felt anxious because his/her English is not so good in order not to lose face in front of others. The reason for this result could be that they regarded it normal if one makes mistakes in class, as it is a part of the learning process.

Another interestingly phenomenon is: more students who lived in the UK for less than one year, disagreed with C1 to C8. One cannot help suspecting that they were still in their Honeymoon phase, when their initial feelings were positive. Although the participants were asked to recall their feelings and experiences of their first three months' English study in the UK, unfortunately, this study did not design to detect how long exactly the participants had been living in the UK. This is an unforeseen shortcoming. It should be improved in the related future studies.

With regard to foreign language anxiety, it is a complex phenomenon. Foreign language anxiety acts as an affective filter that results in the student being unreceptive to language input (Krashen, 1980). Three components were found to be components of foreign language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986): communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Communication in a foreign language requires a great amount of risk-taking, inasmuch as uncertain and unknown linguistic rules prevail. However this study shows that this is not always the case. For example, the participants who were under 20 year's old age, disagreed with L1 "I never feel quite sure of myself when I speak in my English class"; L3 "It worries me when I know that I have to speak in English class"; L6 "I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am"; and L10 "I often feel like not going to my English class". In addition, more male and female participants, no matter how long they lived in the UK, and no matter at what age, agreed with L2 "I don't worry about making mistakes in English class" and L4 "It worries me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying". As stated above, they understood, as a part of the learning process it is normal to make mistakes. However, many participants did confessed they worried about exams, and they worried about failing English class.

Furthermore, compare to male students, more female students felt life at school and life in general was stressful; more female students agreed with C2 "I feel anxious because I don't have any experience of living in a foreign country"; and more female students, around 53%, agreed with L1 "I never feel quite sure of myself when I speak in my English class"; L6 "I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am"; and L9 "It embarrasses me to speak without being asked in my English class". This could be due to their high self-respect: eighty percent of female students claimed that they had high self-respect. This coincides with Krashen's view: an individual's degree of self-esteem is highly related to language anxiety (Krashen, 1985). It might be also due to that, in general, female students tend to feel more insecure in an unfamiliar situation, and they were more verbally expressive of fear and anxious than male students. Countless studies reveal that women are twice as prone to anxiety as men (Clark).

6. Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

The current study suggests that compare to cultural anxiety, Chinese students suffered more from foreign language anxiety. Anxiety affects learning and performance. As a complex phenomenon, researchers have found foreign language anxiety to be a predictor of foreign language achievement (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey & Daley, 1999). As a result, educators should turn students' debilitating anxiety to facilitating anxiety in order to enhance their learning.

There are many good suggestions offered by language experts (Young, 1991; Koba, Ogawa & Wilkinson, 2000; Nascente, 2001). Based on this study, we suggest:

- Due to the big influx of Chinese students in the UK, sometimes it is difficult to mix them with students from other countries. But in order to let students have a better chance to know as much about other culture as possible, we can try our best. At the same time, teachers should explain the situation and get the students understanding and support. In addition teachers should not only teach students language skills, more importantly, should put cultural issue into teaching. Anyhow, language learning is not just learning language itself; it is more about how to use it pragmatically. Teachers also need to encourage students to immerse themselves into the host culture. Campus classroom is limited, social classroom is limitless. We should combine both to maximize our educational achievement;
- As China's economic dramatically improves, many ordinary Chinese parents can send their children to study abroad. This is a remarkable progress. However as the educational systems are different, it takes quite a long time for Chinese students to get use to the host country's educational systems and teaching methodologies. In order for the students to be able to adjust to the host culture easily and smoothly, we suggest Chinese educators to introduce some of the western educational systems and teaching methods, in the meantime, enhance students' critical thinking skills through social activities.

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