



How Linguistically Anxious Are Chinese EFL Students? A Case Study of Some Migrant Students in Xijiao School, Ningbo, China

*Zhang Jianmin**

Department of English, School of International Studies, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China
Email: jianminzhang57@126.com

Ma Cheng

Shanghai Caohejing Innovation Center, Shanghai, China
Email: mcthere@163.com

Abstract

Studies of foreign language anxiety normally focus on either students at college or high schools, but this investigation concentrated on two junior schools: one consisting of migrant students; the other of urban students. It is intended to compare hypothesized differences between the two types of students concerning language anxiety. The research used the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to measure the level of language anxiety of all the participants. Using the same procedures and standards to collect data from two schools, it investigated whether EFL migrant students experience a higher degree of language anxiety than their urban peers. After looking at the three main components of foreign language anxiety-communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation, it is concluded that foreign language anxiety of migrant students was more significantly experienced by most of the migrant students in question as compared with their peers. The study went a step further to investigate the possible factors leading to language anxiety among migrant students. The data from interviews and the questionnaire conducted on these students showed that lack of continued and coherent instruction, teachers' unawareness, parents' inadequate attention, and stress from peers are found to be the major factors. New geographical and social surroundings were additional factors leading to a higher level of language anxiety which aggravates their low self-esteem and poor language performance. The study is of practical significance to language teachers as they might use the findings to guide their daily teaching.

Keywords: Foreign language anxiety, Geographical and social surroundings, Migrant students, Peer stress, Unawareness

1. Introduction

Along with the reform and opening-up in the late 1980s in China, a considerable number of migrant workers swarm into big coastal cities in the hope of seeking jobs and better lives. These workers normally take along with their families including school kids who are on the constant migration from one place to another. It was estimated by the national census that there were nearly 260 million of such people nationwide by the end of 2010. The children of this shifting population (hereafter referred to as migrant children) are either in fifth or sixth grade in primary schools or the first or second graders in middle schools. They faced with quite a number of tough situations so far as their schooling is concerned. They study in one city for a year or so, then move to a different location and study there for another year. They have to adapt to new surroundings all the time: teachers, classmates, external learning conditions, and even textbooks.

In China, the education of such migrant children and their well-being have attracted attention from government officials, educators, and researchers. Aiming to dissect current academic performances of migrant children and contribute to studies on the relevant area, this study is to investigate the foreign language anxiety level of migrant students at a junior school. Taking into account all the physical, social, and psychological factors, we hypothesized that their language anxiety level would be higher than that of their peers. To verify our hypothesis, we selected two groups of students as our subjects from the city of Ningbo, a southeastern coastal city in China. One group is from a normal local school in the city. These students are all local residents. The other group is from a special school in the same city, the so-called school for migrant children.

2. Review of Literature

Rural school children now living and studying in urban areas are a special group of students in the Reform and Opening-up Policy in the 1980s in China. Chinese researchers focused their research attention on them from the mid-1990s. During the past decade, they

have probed into education conditions from various perspectives. Many educators have advocated improving education equality by making new and flexible policies and systems (Huang, 2006; Liang, 2006; Zhou, 2007). In terms of their psychological status, anxiety is considered the most important factor affecting students' psychological well being (Wang & Fan, 2006). Their psychological well being mainly concerns the following factors: social identity, sense of acceptance, self-esteem, and happiness. Some researchers argue that lack of family education, inconsistency and discontinuity of their schooling aggravate the migrant children's personality disturbance (Ying & Zhou, 2008).

Foreign language anxiety belongs to situation-specific anxiety (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). There have been huge amounts of literature in this area or relevant fields both in China and the West over the past two decades. In order to identify and measure foreign language anxiety, Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), in which 33 question items are prepared for participants to respond to situations specific to foreign language learning anxiety mainly in three areas: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (Ganschow & Sparks, 1996). For its reported success on construct validation and reliability, FLCAS has been widely adopted by researchers to explore learners' foreign language anxiety (Aida, 1994; Chang, 1999; Ganschow et al., 1994; Ganschow & Sparks, 1996;).

It is generally believed that the high level of language anxiety produces negative effects in most cases. In their study on the relationship between language anxiety and motivation of learning, Nishitani and Matsuda (2011) claimed that learners with high intrinsic motivation are more likely to recognize the benefits that can come from failure while learners with high language anxiety are more likely to attribute failure to anxiety. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991b) even suggest that anxiety has been proved to negatively affect performance in the second language. Horwitz (1991) supports a significantly negative correlation between anxiety and foreign language achievement. Noormohamadi (2009) studied the relationship between language anxiety and learning strategies in which he

reported that anxiety was negatively correlated with the level of strategy use. In addition, several studies revealed that language anxiety was negatively correlated with students' performances in terms of standardized tests (Gardner, et al., 1987), course grades (Aida, 1994; Chang, 1996; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986;), and the grades in mid-term exams (Chang, 1996; Liao, 1999).

To explain the negative correlations between language classroom anxiety and second language proficiency, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991b) pointed out that as experience and proficiency increase, anxiety declines in a fairly consistent manner. On the contrary, foreign language anxiety develops if the student's later experiences with foreign language are not positive. Poor foreign language performance, in turn, reinforces foreign language anxiety. Consequently, these two variables affect each other constantly. On the whole, researchers agree that language anxiety plays a significant causal role in learning a foreign language.

The research questions we attempt to explore here are: Why are migrant students' language anxiety levels are higher than their urban peers? What are the major factors conducive to this?

3. Methodology

3.1 Design and Context of the Study

To prove our hypothesis that migrant students experience a higher level of language anxiety, a comparison is made of two groups of students in the same grade. They are from two schools, Xi Jiao Central School and Dong En Middle School, the former, a normal public school recruiting local kids, and the later, a school specially set up for migrant kids.

FLCAS questionnaires were administered to the two groups of students, 71 students from Xi Jiao and 52 students from Dong En. Six of the high scorers on FLCAS were interviewed for further information. Besides, two English teachers of migrant students were interviewed to crosscheck the anxiety level of those students in question.

3.2 Instruments

The instruments used in this study are the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) together with interviews, classroom observations, and collection of other data such as their performances on other subjects apart from English. Considering junior students' English level, the questionnaires were done in Mandarin Chinese while the interviews were conducted in English.

The questionnaires fall into two parts. The first part of the questionnaire was to elicit background information of the students concerning their experiences such as times of school transfer, family background, etc. The second part used FLCAS (translated into Chinese) developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) plus five more researcher-made statements.

As a supplementary survey to FLCAS, interviews with some migrant students and their two teachers were organized to explore possible anxiety-provoking sources. The interviewer followed the interviewing framework and used open-ended questions to capture the complexities of the respondents' perceptions and experiences toward English learning.

Classroom observations focused on the teacher-students' interactions. The students' behaviors reflecting their participation, initiation, and motivation in the class were observed. The teacher's classroom practices including their attitudes to their students, interpersonal relations, classroom atmosphere, the teaching techniques were also observed.

When interviewing with the two English teachers, semi-structured interview techniques were used (see Appendix C). These pre-fabricated questions center on the research questions of this study and were not asked in a fixed order. The modification was made according to the actual situation during the interview. Just as Patton (1990) suggested that the participants' response format should be open-ended, the interviewer did not supply and predetermine the phrases or categories that must be used by respondents to express themselves. The use of open-ended responses could help collect more detailed and comprehensive information from the respondents.

3.3. Data Collection Procedure

It is generally believed that data obtained from multiple sources could help present a more comprehensive and accurate picture of the research topic. The data collected and analyzed in this study include scores of two groups of the subjects from FLCAS questionnaires, interviews, observations, and other information.

In total, 121 questionnaires were distributed and 112 valid questionnaires were collected. For Xi Jiao School, 71 questionnaires were distributed and 67 were selected. At Dong En School, 50 questionnaires were distributed and 45 were selected as a reliable sample. 6 migrant students (3 boys and 3 girls) from the same class and two English teachers of Xi Jiao School were interviewed.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The scores on FLCAS questionnaire taken by the two groups of students were calculated by the methods of Aida (1994). For each subject, an anxiety level was calculated by adding his or her answers to all the 33 items. When the statements in the FLCAS (in Mandarin Chinese) were negative, points assigned to the concerned statements were such arranged that in all instances, a high score represents a high level of anxiety. The theoretical range of this scale was between 33 and 198. To ensure that the results are reliable, we input statistics into SPSS 16.0 and had Cronbach's Alpha reliability results of both schools.

4. Results

The results from the first part of the questionnaire depicted a general picture of students' English learning background. Students were asked about their years of English learning, the times of school transfer, and their general scores of English tests as shown in Table 1.

Table.1

School Transfer and English Test Scores

School	5 or more years of English learning	School Transfer	English Test Scores	
			below 60	between 60-65
Xi Jiao	61.2% (41)	68.7 % (46) 1 or above times	28.4% (19)	35.8% (24)
Dong En	80%(45)	11.1% (5) once	2%(38)below70	82.6% (38) between 85-90

Note: the numbers in brackets in Tab.1 indicate the number of students.

Table 1 indicates the distinct difference between the students from the two schools concerning times of school transfer and English test scores. Here, it is necessary to notice that the tests taken by the students in the study are parallel.

4.1 FLCAS Results

The FLCAS reliability of Xi Jiao was 0.989 while that of Dong En was 0.849, showing sufficient internal reliability. Table 2 shows the minimum, maximum, and mean scores of both groups.

Table 2

Minimum, Maximum and Mean Scores in the FLCAS

Scores in FLCAS	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Xi Jiao	61	145	104.5
Dong En	41	130	89.7

Clear differences among language anxiety levels can be noticed here. The minimum and maximum scores of Xi Jiao School were 61 and 145 respectively while scores of Dong En School were 41 and 130, significantly lower than the former. Moreover, the mean score

104.5 of the former is much higher than the 89.7 of the latter, indicating a remarkably higher level. In other words, language anxiety among migrant students is more highly felt.

Detailed comparisons regarding all the FLCAS items of both groups are reported in Appendix A. Each number in the column is the mean score of students' ratings respectively.

Sharp differences can be easily perceived from Appendix B. Scores of migrant children were considerably higher than that of urban students on most of the items (29 items). The smallest difference was the 0.1point difference (2.3:2.2) on Item 6. Meanwhile, the most distinct comparison was on Item 14 where the difference is nearly 1.1 (3.52:2.47). Bigger differences suggest a larger gap in language anxiety. Secondly, results from Appendix B show that both the schools' students have a tendency toward language anxiety, however, urban students' scores were in most cases much lower. Exceptions are seen from Items 4, 7, 11, 13, 15 (highlighted in boldface), where urban students obtained slightly higher scores however small the differences are. Explanations on the exceptions shall be discussed in 4.5 Effect of Language Anxiety section.

From Appendix A, it can be generalized that migrant students are having a notably higher language anxiety in English as foreign language learning with an average score of 3.16 over 2.71. It is safe to say that language anxiety is strongly present among these students.

4.2 Identification of Language Anxiety

The general tendency of the migrant students used in this study is reflected in Appendix B. We concentrated on three areas of language anxiety as indicated on the FLCAS scale.

The items presented in Appendix 2 indicate communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation in the foreign language classroom. All percentages refer to the number of students who agreed or strongly agreed (or disagreed and strongly

disagreed) with the corresponding statements. (Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.) From the average score for each statement, 25 items are found to be above 3.0, the midpoint of the five-point Likert scale. Nearly half of the participants (31) also score higher than the overall anxiety score (104.5). This suggests once again that foreign language anxiety is high among the participants in this study.

4.3. Communication Apprehension

Students who are high on anxiety report that they are afraid to speak in English. This is indicative of speech anxiety on FLCAS such as “I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class” (53%); “I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class” (46%); “I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of others” (32%). They also reject the statement like “I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English” (68%); “I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers” (75%); “I feel confident when I speak in English class” (56%). Anxious students feel very much self-conscious when asked to talk about themselves in English in the presence of other people.

The fact that anxious students fear that they will not understand all language input is also consistent with communication apprehension. 43% of the students agree with statements like “I get nervous when I don’t understand every word the English teacher says”; 46% of them with “I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class”. They believe that comprehend the target language message they must understand every word spoken.

4.4 Test Anxiety

According to Sarason(1984), test anxiety is the tendency to become alarmed about the consequences of inadequate performance on a test or other evaluation. Students with test anxiety frequently experience cognitive interference (Sarason, 1984) and have a difficult time focusing on the task at hand (Aida, 1994)

Notable anxiety on the English test is suggested from the results. Students go along with the statement “I worry about the consequences of failing my English tests” (61%) while dissenting from the statements on English test with majority popularity “I am usually at ease during my English tests” (64%). Reference to their low test scores indicates that their fear of test probably originates from unsatisfactory test grades and that in turn aggravating their bad academic performance.

4.5 Fear of Negative Evaluation

Anxious students also fear to be less competent than other students or being negatively evaluated by them. They report “I keep thinking other students are better at English than I am” (43%); “I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do” (34%); “I can feel my heart pounding when I’m going to be called on in my English class” (55%).

Anxious students are also afraid of making mistakes in English. They disagree with statements “I don’t worry about making mistakes in English class” (59%); “I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class” (56%) while approving statement such as “I get upset when I don’t understand what the teacher is correcting” (37%). These students seem to perceive every correction by the teacher as a failure.

Students responses to the three FLCAS items “I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes” (46%); “I often feel like not going to English class” (43%); “I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English” (30%) lend further support to the view that foreign language anxiety is a distinct set of beliefs, perceptions, and feelings in response to foreign language learning in the classroom and not merely a composite of other anxieties. The former item was found to be the single best discriminator of anxiety on the FLCAS as measured by its correlation with the total score. Furthermore, students disapprove of statements such as “It won’t bother me at all to take more English classes” (54%). “I don’t understand why some people get so upset over English class” (37%). These results suggested that anxious students feel uniquely unable to deal with the task of language learning.

Our findings suggest that significant foreign language anxiety is experienced by many migrant students in response to at least some aspects of foreign language learning. A majority (85%) of the statements reflective of foreign language anxiety (28 items) were supported by a third or more of the students surveyed, and fifteen items were agreed by over half the students.

The results showed that test anxiety, fear of being less competent, and being afraid to speak in English were the three main constructs of students' anxiety. This finding corresponds with the three components of FLCAS. Besides, we found that inadequate preparation, speaking English with native English speakers, and fear of making mistakes resulted in language anxiety. At this point, we can infer that language anxiety is common among EFL migrant students.

4.6 Sources of Foreign Language Anxiety

Since foreign language anxiety debilitates language learning, it is necessary to reduce it. To reduce it, we need to find out the sources first. Based on the data collected and analyzed in this study, we found the sources of language anxiety fall into four types; (a) lack of continuity in instruction, (b) teachers' unawareness, (c) teachers' maltreatment toward students, and (d) peer pressure.

4.7 Discontinuity in Instruction

From face-to-face interviews and questionnaires, we learned that the lack of continuity in instruction is the first and foremost source of language anxiety. Migrant children move from place to place with their parents. Frequent transfer contributes to discontinuity in instruction, reflected by unfamiliarity with the mode of instructions, new teachers, new textbooks, and new peers.

From our questionnaires, it is calculated that nearly 68.7% of the migrant students have transferred more than once. And 35.8% (24) of the students admitted that "my English

learning would be much smoother if I had not transferred here”; 62.7% (42) of the students go against the sentence “I found myself more confident at English learning since transferred here”. The most convincing evidence is that a majority of 67.2% (45) of the students agree with the statement “differences in schools, textbooks, and teachers have played a negative influence on my English learning.”

During the interviews, we heard students complain about their ill adaptation to the new learning environment on arriving in Ningbo. Their complaints go to new textbooks, new teachers, and the new mode of instructions in English classes. Such complaints were echoed by their teachers. When asked “what do you think is the major cause of their poor English proficiency, the teachers said it was mainly due to student’s transfer of schools. One of the teachers also mentioned that some students were laughed at because of their “broken English”.

4.8 Teachers’ Unawareness

This noticeable tendency of language anxiety among EFL migrant students did not seem to attract the teachers’ attention. When the teachers were asked, “Have you ever heard the issue of foreign language anxiety?”, most of them answer “No”. When it was explained to them, some quickly responded: “I don’t think there is anxiety at all in my class.” When asked about the students’ classroom performance, the teachers said that students were not active enough. They were unwilling to volunteer in class. Some were easily absent-minded. They were hopeless. Although the teachers realized the students’ poor performance in class, we noticed that they did not do much to tackle the problem.

This was supported by the complaints from the students interviewed: “our teacher is not patient at all.” “She gets angry easily when we don’t know the answer to her question.” “One of our teacher’s pet phrase is: ‘Is your head filled with crap?’” “I sometimes doubt whether I am really that stupid.”

4.9 Parents' Lack of Care

The parents of such students are usually employed in heavy manual work in cities. They are so busily occupied in their life-earning business that they could hardly show concern about their kids' study at school. One of the teachers reported that when he called the parents, asking them to attend a parent-teaching meeting, they would say they were busy. They could not come.

The interviews with the students showed a different picture. The students said their parents were strict with their English grades. Nearly 68.7% (46) of the students said: "my parents always blame me for having bad English test scores". One student said that "my father says English is really important"; another student reported "my parents bought me a bunch of English books.

Some parents do care about students' English performance, but their lack of appropriate encouragement and instruction does not help reduce the students' language anxiety. Emotional and educational support is thought to be the best encouragement from parents (Jane Arnold, 1999), but neither support is found in this study.

4.10 Pressure from Peers

According to Walqui (2000), "teenagers tend to be heavily influenced by their peer groups...in second language learning, peer pressure often undermines the goals set by parents and teachers..."Migrant students in Xi Jiao School come from different areas across China, mainly from less developed North West, rendering their education backgrounds varied. As a consequence, their English proficiency is polarized. This is acknowledged by their teachers:

"Good students are excellent, while poor ones are terrible at English. The gap is wide. The classroom atmosphere isn't encouraging."

Those poor learners admit:

"English learning isn't interesting to me. I can never catch up with our monitor."

The good ones present an entirely different picture:

“Learning English is interesting and relaxing. I don’t understand why some of my classmates complain about learning English. As far as I am concerned, it is quite easy.”

This polarization in English proficiency and learning attitudes existing among the migrant students naturally produces two results: covert pressure on the part of poor learners; the baffling situation for the language teacher. Peer pressure effects personal confidence and motivation, two qualities highly necessary for successful language learning. Gradually, those under-achievers lose their confidence in English learning.

5. Discussion

Situation-specific as proposed by Horwitz and Cope (1986), in most cases, language anxiety is believed to produce negative results. Our research investigated some migrant students in a specially established school on the outskirts of Ningbo, China. We collected data mainly by using FLCAS, interviews with both the students and teachers concerned, and classroom observations. Analysis of the data confirmed our hypothesis that these migrant students experience a higher level of language anxiety as compared with their peers, at least with the students from a normal school in the city of Ningbo. The major factors leading to this level of language anxiety are basically social and psychological. They are discontinuity in instruction, teacher’s unawareness, parents’ lack of care, and peer pressure. In addition, we also found that the negative effects of foreign language anxiety among these migrant students debilitated in a large measure their confidence and motivation to learn English.

5.1 Implications

Having found the major factors conducive to language anxiety, we believe that corresponding measures can be taken to reduce to a large extent, which is a mainly psychological inhibitor in learning English as a foreign language. Firstly, teachers need to be aware of foreign language anxiety existing among migrant students. If they do not have this

awareness, they may not do something to tackle this inhibiting factor. Interviewing the teachers revealed they habitually attributed students' poor performance to their lack of effort and diligence. Secondly, the identification of foreign language anxiety on the part of the students in question could remind the teachers of their responsibility to do something. Accordingly, instead of blaming their students for not being hardworking, they can encourage and motivate them. Such students need special care and attention from the teachers as well as their parents and classmates. Some relaxation exercises, advice on effective language learning strategies, behavioral contracting, and journal keeping as suggested by McCoy (1979) might reduce the students' anxiety.

On the part of the students, however, we would suggest that they adjust and learn to adapt to new surroundings as hard as they could along with the guidance they can obtain from their schools. It is highly recommended the teachers provide an atmosphere that allows the students to freely talk about their anxiety with their peers. To speak out, as Horwitz (1999) indicated, "Many students are relieved to learn that they are not the only ones experiencing anxiety about learning and using a foreign language".

6. Conclusion

As has been mentioned previously, the number of migrant workers in China is huge and our sample of the migrant students is so limited, so this study could only reflect a very limited picture of such students at large so far as their foreign language anxiety is concerned. The situations they may encounter could be very much varied. Conducting this study would be both time consuming and resource-consuming if we want to make an appropriate sample size, which was beyond our capacity. A large-scale research project, perhaps on a national basis, might produce more convincing results.

It is known to all that the students' principal task at school is to do their studies as best as they could. Yet sometimes, such external factors like social and economic backgrounds need to be considered. Suppose that students themselves do want to do their studies well,

they are sometimes adversely affected by many external factors. Moving from one location to another with their parents, particularly when they are in secondary schools is just one example. Based on the Chinese educational system, the secondary school graduates need to take part in the entrance exam before they can enter senior high schools. While they need to prepare themselves for the exams, they have to constantly adapt themselves to the new school environment. This situation produces a high level of anxiety, not necessarily language anxiety. Therefore, it is very important to give adequate attention and care to such special kinds of students in specially and separately established schools in metropolitan cities. For this reason, our research effort is worthwhile. Yet more studies and bigger efforts are needed.

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Appendix A

Mean Score of Each Item in FLCAS of the Two Schools

Items	Xi Jiao	Dong En
1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English class.	3.08	2.27
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in English class.	3.48	2.78
3. I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in English class.	2.57	2.22
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	2.88	3.33
5. It won't bother me at all to take more English classes.	3.48	2.47
6. During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	2.30	2.20
7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.	3.30	3.44
8. I am usually at ease during my English tests.	3.55	2.91
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.	3.43	2.87
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my English tests.	3.63	2.60
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over the English class.	2.93	3.20
12. In English class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	2.99	2.84
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class.	2.19	2.49
14. I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers.	3.94	2.84
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	3.27	3.96
16. Even if I am well prepared for a language class, I feel anxious about it.	3.36	2.69
17. I often feel like not going to English class.	3.21	2.18
18. I feel confident when I speak in a foreign language class.	3.52	2.47
19. I am afraid my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	2.70	2.27
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in my English class.	3.49	3.09
21. The more I study for the English test, the more confused I get.	2.97	2.31
22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for English class.	2.63	2.31
23. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	3.07	2.73
24. I feel very self-conscious when speaking English in front of other students.	2.82	2.56
25. English class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	3.07	2.82
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes.	3.16	2.33
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class.	3.27	2.71
28. When I am on my way to English class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	3.30	2.58
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says.	3.25	3.07
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English.	2.97	2.36

31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	3.03	2.58
32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English.	3.85	3.02
33. I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	3.55	2.89
Average	3.16	2.71

Appendix B

FLCAS Items with Percentages of Migrant Students Selecting Each Alternative

SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; N=Neither Agree nor Disagree; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly

Disagree; M=Mean

Item	SA	A	N	D	SD	M
1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in English class.	17	25	18	28	11	3.08
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in English class.	9	16	15	37	22	3.48
3. I tremble when I know that I am going to be called on in English class.	10	13	21	33	22	2.57
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	9	25	22	31	12	2.88
5. It won't bother me at all to take more English classes.	6	21	18	27	27	3.48
6. During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	3	9	30	31	27	2.30
7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.	24	19	27	22	7	3.30
8. I am usually at ease during my English tests.	9	15	12	40	24	3.55
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.	22	31	19	21	6	3.43
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my English tests.	30	31	18	13	7	3.63
11. I don't understand why some people get so upset over the English class.	15	19	28	18	19	2.93
12. In English class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	19	18	18	31	13	2.99
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class.	0	11	29	29	32	2.19
14. I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers.	7	7	10	33	42	3.94
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	19	18	36	24	3	3.27
16. Even if I am well prepared for a language class, I feel anxious about it.	27	19	27	16	10	3.36
17. I often feel like not going to English class.	24	19	22	22	12	3.21
18. I feel confident when I speak in a foreign language class.	9	12	22	31	25	3.52

19. I am afraid my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	12	15	22	33	18	2.70
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in my English class.	31	24	16	19	9	3.49
21. The more I study for the English test, the more confused I get.	12	21	30	27	10	2.97
22. I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for English class.	23	29	22	14	12	2.63
23. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	16	18	31	25	9	3.07
24. I feel very self-conscious when speaking English in front of other students.	10	22	25	22	19	2.82
25. English class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	16	18	31	25	9	3.07
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes.	24	22	18	18	18	3.16
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class.	24	22	24	16	13	3.27
28. When I am on my way to English class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	9	19	27	22	22	3.30
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says.	18	25	28	21	7	3.25
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English.	9	21	37	24	9	2.97
31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	15	24	22	27	12	3.03
32. I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English.	4	12	15	31	37	3.85
33. I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	24	31	27	12	6	3.55
Average Mean	3.16					

Appendix C

Interviews Transcripts

(interviews were conducted individually and in English)

1. Interview with Teachers

I=interviewer T1=teacher 1, T2=teacher 2

I: Have you heard of the concept of "foreign language anxiety"?

T1: I do not sense any anxiety about my English class.

I: Could you describe students' classroom performance? And their scores?

T1: They are unwilling to volunteer answers in my class. Some students are easily absent-minded. I have given up trying. They are hopeless.

I: What do you think is the reason for that?

T1: They are stupid. Sometimes we call their parents, asking them to attend a parent-teacher meeting talking about their kid's academic performance, they would say they are so busy that they cannot come. It seems that the parents are not paying much attention to students' studies. It isn't enough only to have the teachers worry about students.

I: Have you taught another group of students? What's the difference between these students?

T1: Not yet.

I: Have you heard of the concept of "foreign language anxiety"?

T2: What is foreign language anxiety? ... I don't think there is anxiety at all in my class.

I: Could you describe students' classroom performance? And their scores?

T2: It is vexing to see some of them talking to each other, even taking snaps. You saw those two girls chatting? I could stand any longer. That's why I yelled at them just now.

I: What do you think is the reason for that?

T2: They transferred in the middle of the semester. That makes them lagged behind from

the start. Those two girls transferred last semester. One of them was laughed at when first transferred here.

I: Have you taught another group of students? What's the difference between these students?

T2: I taught English to urban primary students. They were totally different. They care about their English scores.

2. Interview with Students

I=Interviewer; S1=Student 1; S2=Student 2; S3=Student 3; S4=Student 4; S5=Student 5; S6=Student 6

I: Is learning English fun? Is learning English easy?

S1: Not that fun.

I: Why?

S1: I am not good at English. It's my worst subject.

I: What is the rank of English among all your subjects?

S1: Last, I suppose. It's a compulsory subject. Otherwise, I don't think English is relevant. I prefer PE classes.

I: Do you think English classes are more difficult here than in your previous school?

S1: I found myself confused by the textbooks and teachers' instructions in English classes. Because I don't understand grammar and new words.

I: What's your English teacher's attitude in class?

S1: Our teacher is not patient at all. I do not like her. She is grumpy, and she curses at us a lot.

I: That bad?

S1: Yeah. I miss our previous teacher, who was nice to us and encouraged us all the time. Sadly, she had taught us for only one semester.

I: Does your teacher's attitude affect your English learning?

S1: I am extremely unconfident right now.

I: Do you feel nervous when being called upon in class?

S1: Yes, sometimes I can feel my legs trembling.

I: Do your parents urge you to study English hard?

S1: My father keeps telling me that English is important. But my English is poor.

I: Is learning English easy? Is learning English fun?

S2: Not much.

I: What is the rank of English among all your subjects?

S2: Behind Chinese and math. It's a compulsory course, I don't actually have other choices.

I: Do you think English classes are more difficult here than in your previous school?

S2: I took English lessons back in my hometown. Since I moved here, I found my language proficiency is worse than my classmates.

I: What did you do? Did you try to improve your English?

S2: I was nervous back then and really wanted to improve it. But I was too poor to catch up with my classmates. Besides, our teacher does not call my name now. It seems that I have nothing to do with the English class.

I: Do you feel nervous when being called upon in class?

S2: I would tremble.

I: Why would you tremble?

S2: She always gets angry when we don't know the answer to her question. And she would call us idiots.

I: Do your parents urge you to study English hard?

S2: My father bought me a bunch of English books, but I never read them. I know it's a pity.

I: Do you think English classes are more difficult here than in your previous school?

S3: Textbooks here is more difficult than I used to learn.

I: What's your English teacher's attitude in class?

S3: One of our teacher's pet phrase is "Is your head filled with crap?" I sometimes doubt whether I am really that stupid or not.

I: Do you feel nervous when being called upon in class?

S3: Yes, absolutely. My mind went blank when I was called. So I decided to improve it. I was nervous when asked to answer questions in English class. That's why I decided to work hard in English. Now I am not that afraid.

I: Does your effort work?

S3: Yes. My English is much better. It's happy to see my efforts paid off. Now I am not that afraid.

I: Is learning English easy?

S4: Of course not easy. But I have a weak foundation. Therefore, I don't care anymore.

I: Do you think English classes are more difficult here than in your previous school?

S4: Textbooks here are a little more difficult than textbooks back in my hometown. I thought of improving my English. But our classmates came and went, it affected my initiative.

I: What's your English teacher's attitude in class?

S4: Our teacher is not enthusiastic.

I: Do you feel nervous when being called upon in class?

S4: I was nervous at first. Not now.

I: Why?

S4: I do not know the answer anyway.

I: Do your parents urge you to study English hard?

S4: My father emphasizes that English is important.

I: Is learning English easy? Is learning English fun?

S5: Yes, definitely fun. Learning English is pleasant. It is interesting and relaxing. Vocabulary is not difficult at all.

I: What is the rank of English among all your subjects?

S5: Right behind my Chinese class.

I: Do you think English classes are more difficult here than in your previous school?

S5: No, I can understand English class here, and it makes me confident.

I: What's your English teacher's attitude in class?

S5: Our teacher is kind to me. I am the representative of the English class. I don't understand why some of my classmates complaining about learning English. As far as I am concerned, it is quite easy.

I: Is learning English easy?

S6: Not easy. Much harder than Chinese and Math.

I: What is the rank of English among all your subjects?

S6: PE class. I love sports.

I: Do you think English classes are more difficult here than in your previous school?

S6: Yes. I could not catch up with my classmates for a long time.

I: What's your English teacher's attitude in class?

S6: My confidence was damaged by our teachers' negative attitude.

I: Do you feel nervous when being called upon in class?

S6: Yes, nervous at first. Now she does not call my name.

I: What did you do? Did you try to foster your English acquisition?

S6: I took extra-curriculum lessons in order to catch up with my classmates. I memorize new words and phrases before English class. It makes English learning relaxing.

I: Do your parents urge you to study English hard?

S6: My aunt is a manager at a foreign company. She told me that English is extremely important.