



香港城市大学

# 文化认同与语言焦虑

*Cultural Identity and Language Anxiety*

Edited by Cheng Peikai & Jackie Xiu Yan

郑培凯 鄢秀

主 编



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Preface

## **Learning is Fun, Except for the Anxiety**

Peikai Cheng and Jackie Xiu Yan

City University of Hong Kong

Learning, according to Confucius, is fun. Throughout the two millennia after the expression was stipulated by his disciples as the beginning statement in the *Analects*, traditional Chinese scholars had cultivated the learning process as a passage to spiritual joy. Fun or not, as Confucius thoughtfully reflects, learning takes practice. For Confucian followers, consequently, practice becomes a keyword equating with a learning process full of joy. The great Southern Song scholar Zhu Xi (1130–1200) makes it quite clear that practice brings forth a state of higher understanding and, therefore, the learning process leads the learner into a realm of spiritual enlightenment. Learning in this sense entails spiritual learning of moral cultivation, and no wonder, it can be a passage to spiritual joy. It seems that traditional Chinese scholars invest their faith in the ultimate outcome of learning process and are not bothered by the concrete issues involved in the process, such as learner's anxiety.

In our modern times, learning is perceived differently and the

learning process is deemed as a tough travail labored through by learners with mental anxiety. Learning is not fun as Confucius promised, but an ordeal filled with anxieties. Modern scholars are no longer as optimistic as their traditional Confucian counterparts with the golden future of joy in mind, but are more realistic in dealing with the concrete issues involved in the learning process. The issues include learning anxiety, cultural identity, language acquisition, and the complicated correlations among these issues.

This book is the culmination of scholarly efforts on these issues by specialists in language acquisition and learning anxiety. Most of the papers included here were first presented in an international conference held at City University of Hong Kong in 2007, as the extended part of a research project funded by the university. The original project, in fact, started specifically as a study of the pedagogical model experimented at Chinese Civilization Center of City University of Hong Kong since 1998, gradually grew into a research project on the more general topic of teaching Chinese civilization and Putonghua in Hong Kong where the local dialect Cantonese is the daily language, and finally developed into the multifaceted approaches to the understanding of various issues involving language acquisition and learning anxiety.

In “Chinese Culture, Identity and Language Anxiety: An Investigation of Putonghua Learners in Hong Kong,” Jackie Xiu Yan, Peikai Cheng and Shen Yuan, study the interplay between students’ cultural learning, cultural identity and language anxiety in Hong Kong, where the government since 1997 adopted the language policy of “Trilingualism (Cantonese, Putonghua and English) and

Biliteracy (Chinese and English)". By comparing the inter-relationships among students' sense of self-identity, Chinese culture learning and Putonghua learning anxiety in Hong Kong to those in the Chinese Mainland, the study shows significant correlations between Chinese cultural knowledge, self-sense of Chinese identity, Putonghua learning anxiety and self-perceived Putonghua proficiency. Differences are also found among gender, grade level and regional groups; and so socio-cultural influences on Chinese cultural learning, identity, Putonghua learning and language anxiety are identified.

"Embracing affective ambivalence: A research agenda for understanding the interdependent processes of language anxiety and motivation," by Peter D. MacIntyre, Sean P. MacKinnon, and Richard Clément, studies the phenomenon that a learner may feel both debilitating levels of anxiety about speaking and yet still feel a strong motivation to learn. This ambivalent state of mind arises from the culmination of converging and conflicting cognitive and emotional processes. These processes lead to both approach and avoidance tendencies, operating simultaneously, waxing and waning in salience from moment to moment. This research deals with the psychology of second language communication with the intent to understand the dynamic changes in motivation throughout a communication task. The study also lies in the integration of many of the individual difference concepts that have been reported in the literature (for example, language anxiety and motivation). As well, the integration of brain-based neurological processes that drive basic emotions with higher-order cognitive and interpersonal

motives holds strong explanatory potential.

“English Classroom Anxiety in Taiwanese Students from Grades Three to Nine,” by Yuh-show Cheng, is a case study of anxiety in second language learning. The study examined grade-level differences in magnitude and predictors of English classroom anxiety from elementary school level (Grades 3 to 6) to junior high school level (Grades 7 to 9), when English education is part of the compulsory education in Taiwan. It was found that grade-level did not have a significant effect on reported level of anxiety. However, when stepwise multiple regression analyses were conducted for each grade, different combinations of the personal and interpersonal variables emerged as the significant predictors of English classroom anxiety, indicating important grade-level changes in the relationship between language anxiety and the personal and interpersonal variables under study.

Elaine K. Horwitz’s “Cultural Identity and Language Anxiety: How Self-Concept and Cultural Expectations Interact with Performance in a Second Language” points out that many language learners feel uncomfortable when they are unable to express their individuality in the new language or are required to employ “strange” cultural behaviors. Thus, the simple communication of information is an overly limited view of what language learners must accomplish. Learners must be able to “be themselves” when speaking the language. Moreover, people’s comfort levels in self-expression in their first language can influence feelings of anxiety when communicating in a second language. It is also likely that feelings of discomfort when communicating in a new language

would be exacerbated, when there are feelings of cultural demarcation between the target and learning group. The paper offers an overview of the literature on foreign language anxiety with a focus on cultural sources of anxiety. It traces how cultural contexts can influence learners' feelings of foreign language anxiety. It is also argued that the feelings of the learner toward language learning in general and to the specific target language in particular play large roles in the development of foreign language anxiety.

In the second part of the book, " Culture, Identity and Language Learning," Gao Yihong and Liu Lu's paper "English Learning Motivation and Self-Identity Development: The first two years of English majors in a Chinese comprehensive university" reports partial results from a four-year longitudinal study on Chinese university students' EFL learning motivation and self-identity development. The findings in general suggest the following: 1) There was a general move from "learning for others" to "learning for myself," and the gradual emergence of critical learners. 2) As cultural identity changes became increasingly noticeable, identity conflict and ambivalent feelings toward English learning deepened.

Qu Weiguo's "Identity Politics and Re-politicization of English Learning," indicates that with the successful rise of China as an international power, there emerges a trend of cultural nationalism which deplores the marginalization of the Chinese tradition in the process of modernization. These cultural nationalists attempt to restore the Chinese tradition to check the ongoing identification with values foreign and dis-identification from the Chinese tradition so as to secure an identity for China that befits its rising status. One

immediate outcome of this identity politics is the politicization or re-politicization of English and English learning. English has been singled out as one of the key factors that lead to the crises in the tradition, the Chinese language, the discursive power, and the national identity. The paper discusses the main contentions of the identity politics powered up by the cultural nationalists, looks into its accusations of English learning, examines its impact on the status of English, and explores its consequences.

William Littlewood's "Participation-based Pedagogy: How Congruent is it with Chinese Cultures of Learning?" uses three surveys of, particularly Chinese, tertiary students learning English in Asian contexts to argue that most students expressed positive attitudes towards exploring knowledge and working purposefully, in groups, towards common goals. They also like to be stimulated to develop active interest, to think creatively and to work independently. In one survey, students indicate that active participation is hindered mainly by tiredness, shyness, fear of being wrong, insufficient interest or knowledge in the subject, and insufficient time to formulate what they want to say. Participation is facilitated when teachers give priority to creating an informal atmosphere, giving encouraging responses and ensuring that topics engage students' knowledge and interest. These studies highlight the role of the specific learning context in either discouraging or encouraging students' readiness to participate and indicate that most Chinese students welcome participation-based classroom learning if it is implemented in supportive ways.

David Leiwei Li in his "*Crazy English* with a Chinese Face:

A Nationalist Enterprise of Global Capitalism” interprets a contemporary Chinese film, *Crazy English* (2000). The subject of the documentary biography, Li Yang, is a self-taught student of English who has embarked on a mission to convert a billion Chinese into an English speaking folk so that they become competitive on the global market. The paper follows Li’s pedagogical and entrepreneurial venture to highlight the twin domination of English and capitalism in our time, and probes the cultural contradiction of their global spread.

The third part of the book contains six articles in Chinese, roughly translated as follows:

Zhou Zhenhe, “From Dialect Identity, Ethnic Identity, to the *Lingua franca* Identity”;

Deng Xiaohua, “A Simulative Projection on the Diminishing Pace and Direction of Endangered Languages in Southern China: The Case of She Language”;

Shu Dingfang, “An Investigation and Analysis of the Use of Local Dialect Among Middle School and Elementary School Students in Shanghai”;

You Rujie, “Language Competitions in Contemporary Shanghai”;

P.K. Wong, “Social Environment and Language Identity in Hong Kong”;

Chih-ping Chou, “The Reform of Chinese Writing in Modern Chinese Intellectual History: A Defense for Chinese Characters”.

All these articles in Chinese deal with the issues of cultural

identity and language acquisition in China, specifically on the interface of learning a national lingua franca and the use of local dialects. Some articles, with the diminishing situation of specific local cultures and dialects in mind, study the paradoxical conflict of the emerging uniform national cultural identity and the endangered situation of local dialects.

For the publication of this book, the following colleagues are to be acknowledged with gratitude: Dr. W.K. Pok, Dr. Ma Kafai, Ms. Irene Cheng, Ms. Flora Tam, Ms. Florence Chan, and Ms. Li Danjie. Without their support and patient endeavors in the editing process, this book would not appear in time.

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## **Part I**

### **Anxiety, Identity and Language Learning**



# Embracing Affective Ambivalence:

## A research agenda for understanding the interdependent processes of language anxiety and motivation

Peter D. MacIntyre, Sean P. MacKinnon,  
Richard Clément

### Abstract

At any moment, a learner may feel both debilitating levels of anxiety about speaking and yet still feel a strong motivation to learn. This ambivalent state of mind arises from the culmination of converging and conflicting cognitive and emotional processes. These processes lead to both approach and avoidance tendencies, operating simultaneously, waxing and waning in salience from moment to moment. Much of the SLA literature on language anxiety and motivation reflects trait-level processes where generalizations are the goal, and exceptions to the rule are set aside. As a complement to the focus on generalizations, research on the psychology of second language communication would benefit a great deal from studying the dynamic changes in motivation throughout a