

Quotes from students



'Because I come from Inner Mongolia, our class in high school just have reading and writing tasks. So, we hardly have the time to practise our listening and spoken English . . . I think traditional Chinese classrooms are teacher-centred. We just listen to our teacher talk and we just write some notes. We don't have a talk about anything together or have any practical method to practice . . . and I think there is very weak interaction and critical thinking in our high school.' – U5-S9

'Before, I just learnt the Gaokao . . . but now in the EAP classes, you should write in a more formal way, but for me I don't have that . . . I might be confused which kinds of words are formal and which kinds of words are informal and what kind of style is formal and what kind of style is informal.' – U4-S1

'Adhering to standardised writing poses a new challenge. Apart from clear structure and logical language expression, proper citation formats from reading related literature differ significantly from the writing style taught in Chinese high schools.' – U5-S119

'In school, teacher will tell us what to do to get good grades and pass tests. Here, I think it's too difficult to pass tests. I don't know how to review by myself. In school, the teacher gave us similar tests to practice. Gaokao is always similar. Teachers here expect me to self-study and learn by myself but I never have done this. It's too difficult.' – U7-S4

'Fear to make mistake . . . In Chinese culture, do all things perfectly is our purpose and we pursue perfection. We want to speak perfectly . . . I think this is also my situation. I'm always afraid to speak because I want to be a good person, a powerful person, an awesome person because I want to show the best side, to all the people, to the foreign people, to my teacher, to my classmates. So, I'm shy to talk because I don't want people to see my mistakes. I just want to make a good impression to everyone.' – U14-S1

'For Chinese students, especially for me, I think I'm very afraid to make a mistake in class because many English words I don't know how to pronounce . . . Maybe I'll be laughed at by someone else. So, I'm afraid to speak, afraid to make mistakes. We, Chinese students, always want to be perfect . . . I want to be. I don't want to make mistakes.' – U7-S4

'There is a strong accent contempt chain in China. People would laugh at those people who have a Chinese accent . . . Sometimes in social media, like Tiktok or Instagram, there's always some people who always judge people's accent. Especially it's Chinese accent, so it will make Chinese people afraid of speak English freely . . . It is not a peer pressure, is not only from the classmates, it's also from the society.' – U5-S117

'The teacher might be a white man and he . . . looks different from ourselves. So, the students may be afraid of them, and they don't want to speak . . . because the teacher looks different from us and that is the basic reason I don't want to talk to them.' – U1-S1

'Due to the differences between Chinese and English, especially in the use of verbs, problems arise. Chinese does not have tenses . . . Chinese does not require a verb in every sentence. E.g. Chinese people can say '这树很高 zhe shu hen gao (The tree very tall)', but it makes a mistake, English speakers say the tree is very tall.' – U5-S58

'My classmates write something . . . in Chinese, most people understand it . . . I think it translates into English but the teacher can't understand it . . . she cannot understand our Chinglish, cannot understand what we mean . . . The vocabulary and the structure, the organisation, all different. English has many transition words. I don't understand how to use them. We don't have them as much in Chinese.' – U7-S4

'I think the biggest problem is people from different countries, they have different ideas for one topic. So, maybe, when I ask questions to my teachers, if they can understand Chinese, they can have the same mind or idea of what I'm focusing on . . . I tried to follow the teachers' mind to write the essay, but I still don't know what they prefer in this essay.' – U4-S1

'Different organisational logic between languages. For example, in English we tend to put the emphasis at the beginning . . . while in Chinese it is at the end.' – U1-S26