

Speaking Anxiety and the Effects of Previous Overseas Experience in an English Intensive Program before Study Abroad

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Abstract

Many studies on foreign language (FL) anxiety have been conducted, but there are few studies to investigate FL anxiety of university students in Japan who are required to study abroad for a year. This study addressed three questions: (1) what kind of FL anxiety do pre-departure university students in the study abroad program have? (2) does previous overseas experience influence factors of FL anxiety? (3) what variables of FL anxiety, including previous overseas experience, influence L2 speaking proficiencies? A total of 81 Japanese second-year female students participated in this study. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) was administered to identify FL anxieties of these students. The participants were divided into three groups: those with no experience abroad, those with a short-term experience abroad (less than 6 months), and those with a long-term experience abroad (more than 6 months). The results revealed three factors of FL: Lack of Speaking Confidence (LSC), Classroom Anxiety (CA), and Comparison with Peers (CP). They also clarified that previous overseas experience before enrolling in university contributes only to LSC. Finally, the study found that LSC and CP were predictors of actual speaking proficiency. This study suggests that (1) enhancing self-perception by giving many opportunities to practicing

speaking English and (2) making the classroom relationships are important in FL learning.

Introduction

The number of university English language programs that require all students in a department to study abroad has been increasing in Japan. However, there has not been a study to examine the effect of the program itself. This study aimed at clarifying how preparation for a two-semester compulsory study abroad program at a Kansai-area university contributed to students' affective domains to learn English. In particular, the study clarified FL anxiety of students who have to study abroad and the relationship among FL anxiety, overseas experience, and speaking ability in the pre-study abroad program. This study was significant in that, to the best of our knowledge, no study has examined FL anxiety of such students. While anxiety is generally defined as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (Spielberger, Gorsuch, Luchene, Vagg, & Jacobs, 1983, as cited in Horwitz, et al., 1986, p. 125), Horwitz et al. (1986) interpreted FL anxiety as a specific apprehension of language learning situations and distinguished it from other anxieties. Their definition of FL anxiety is "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, benefits, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p. 128). Following Horwitz et al. (1986), FL anxiety was defined as a fear arising from L2 learning in this study.

Background

Many researchers identified speaking in the L2 as the most anxiety-provoking activity (e.g., Ely, 1986; Horwitz et al., 1986; Koch & Terrell, 1991; Phillips, 1992; Price, 1991; Young, 1986). Speaking proficiency is relatively easy to compare with other proficiencies and to be evaluated by a teacher or other students (Price, 1991). In today's L2 learning, however, the importance of communication in the L2 has been emphasized (Horai, 2012; Yashima, 2002), and language learners may be asked to use the L2 more than ever. If a

teacher asks students to speak in the L2 in the classroom without taking anxiety into consideration, some of them will be too anxious or frustrated to perform well. More studies on anxiety in L2 acquisition, therefore, will be needed from now on. Specifically, students in a pre-study abroad program need to control FL anxiety because they will have to use English during study abroad. While major studies have explored a relationship between anxiety and other variables such as L2 proficiency, motivation, and individual variables (Aida, 1994; Ganschow et al., 1994; MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2002; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; Saito & Samimy, 1996; Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2008), there is little research investigating the detailed characteristics of anxiety in L2 learning (Motoda, 2005). In particular, there has been no study to examine FL anxiety of university students in an intensive English program before study abroad.

Influence of Overseas Experience on L2 Proficiency

There are many studies investigating the influence of overseas experience on FL anxiety and L2 achievement. Many of them argued that having a lot of opportunities to use and listen to the target language (TL) decreases anxiety and improves L2 proficiency (Aida, 1994; Clément & Kruidenier, 1985; Matusda & Gobel, 2004; Tadokoro, 2001; Yashima, 2009). In addition, anecdotal evidence suggests that there are positive effects of overseas experience. For instance, some students who have been to or lived in TL-speaking countries seem to be accustomed to and to enjoy using the TL. However, previous studies have not revealed what kinds of anxieties in L2 learning are related to overseas experience. Therefore, our speculation was that to identify these anxieties might be a key to understanding the detailed traits of FL anxiety. Also it will contribute to English language education at university, in particular in study abroad programs that send all the students of a department to a university in a TL-speaking country. In this study, the terms L2, FL, and TL all represent the language that students learn as a second language.

Components of Foreign Language Anxiety

Researchers investigated categories of FL anxiety. In the Horwitz et al. (1986) classification of FL anxiety measured by the FLCAS, there are three components: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension is a fear of communicating with people in the TL. Horwitz et al. (1986) stated that communication apprehension is influential in FL anxiety. Test anxiety occurs when students are afraid of failing an exam or a course. Anxious students believe that they must perform perfectly, otherwise they will fail. They usually tend to set unachievable goals, and these expectations tend to cause this type of anxiety. Fear of negative evaluation is generated when students are afraid that they will be evaluated negatively by the teacher or peers. However, assessments from others are inevitable because language learners must perform in front of them. In this way, students may confront a variety of anxieties in the FL classroom. MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) found that two components, communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation, are related to communication anxiety, while test anxiety is connected with general anxiety. They reported that general anxiety covers apprehension in a wide of variety of situations, including trait anxiety defined as “a constant personal inclination to feel anxiety” (Spielberger et al., 1983).

Moreover, many researchers have investigated components of the FLCAS (Aida, 1994; Kondo & Yang, 2003; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004; Motoda, 2005) and the sources of anxiety in L2 learning using qualitative methods (Katalin, 2006; Price, 1991; Young, 1990, 1991). Matsuda and Gobel (2004) found two components of the FLCAS: general English classroom performance and low self-confidence in speaking in English. Motoda (2005) reported that FL anxiety is composed of five components: speech anxiety, tolerance of ambiguity, comparison with others, attitudes to the class, and anxiety about conversation with native speakers. Other studies also showed that anxiety about speaking is also identified as one of the components of the FLCAS (Aida, 1994; Kondo & Yan, 2003; Yashima et al., 2008). It can be included in the communication apprehension aspect of Horwitz et al.'s (1986) conception that insecurity about communication accounts for a

large portion of FL anxiety, because language learners are always forced to speak their undeveloped TL in the classroom to communicate and study with other people. Aida (1994) noted that the FLCAS is a scale mostly related to anxiety about speaking. Based on these studies, it could be said that speaking anxiety has a great influence on FL anxiety. Moreover, Ely (1986) reported that highly-anxious learners tend not to speak willingly.

Another source of anxiety in the FL classroom is comparison with others (Baily, 1983; Foss & Reitzel, 1988; Price, 1991; Yan & Horwitz, 2008; Young, 1990). For example, when students compare themselves with others and perceive that their own performance is poorer than other students', their anxiety might increase. Baily (1983) suggested that the spirit of competition arouses learners' anxiety. Price's (1991) interview study demonstrated that anxious learners tend to believe that their performance and achievement are worse than others. Yan and Horwitz (2008), on the other hand, suggested that comparison with other learners could become motivation for learning. Furthermore, Kitano (2001) noted that self-perception strongly influences the levels of students' anxiety (e.g., Horwitz et al., 1986; Price, 1991). Yet other studies demonstrated that anxiety impacts on low self-perception (Andrew & Williams, 2009; Hashimoto, 2000; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre, Noels, & Clément, 1997; MacIntyre et al., 2002).

Other researchers also demonstrated that anxiety about FL classrooms in general has effects on students' FL anxiety (Katalin, 2006; Yashima, et al., 2008). Young (1990) revealed that making mistakes and being corrected by a teacher invites students' anxiety. In addition, the role of teachers is important for language learners. Price (1991) indicated that the existence of a teacher is one of the sources of anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986; Katalin, 2006; Kitano, 2001; Young, 1990). Moreover, as Matsuda and Gobel's (2004) study showed, self-confidence could be a variable related to FL anxiety (Yashima et al., 2008). There is a significant negative correlation between self-confidence and anxiety (Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997), and it was reported that self-confidence is one of components of FL anxiety and self-evaluation (Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels 1994; MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998). Clément, Gardner, & Smythe (1980) discussed that self-confidence increases learners' motivation, and their study was

supported by Lalonde and Gardner (1984). Yashima (2002), in addition, considered that self-confidence helps to promote communication.

The Relationship between Foreign Language Anxiety and L2 Proficiency

Much research has reported a negative relationship between anxiety and L2 proficiency (Horwitz, 2001). High-level anxious students tend to get lower grades than low-level anxious students do (Aida, 1994; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Young (1986) found that there is a negative correlation between anxiety and oral performance (Ganschow et al., 1994; Phillips, 1992). Krashen (1985), who proposed the Affective Filter Hypothesis, indicated that anxiety works as “a mental block” (p. 35) on language acquisition. Tobias (1986) revealed that anxiety has debilitating effects on the input, processing, and output stages. Tobias’s findings were confirmed by MacIntyre and Gardner (1989), and they concluded that anxiety makes students focus on themselves rather than on the task itself. According to them, this recognition might disturb the L2 performance of the learners. In addition, they noted that FL anxiety is a predictor of L2 achievement. Matsuda and Gobel (2004), moreover, showed that low self-confidence in speaking English influences L2 proficiency. The influence of self-confidence on L2 proficiency was also reported in past studies (Clément et al., 1980; Yashima, 2002), while Gardner et al. (1997) claimed that proficiency has an impact on self-confidence.

Although there are studies identifying the debilitating effects of anxiety on L2 proficiency and the negative relationship between anxiety and L2 proficiency, the causality between these variables has not been clearly established yet (Ganschow et al., 1994). While one interpretation is that anxiety causes poor L2 achievement and performance (Andrade & Williams, 2009; MacIntyre, 1995; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Horwitz, 2001; Horwitz et al., 1986; Steinberg & Horwitz, 1986; Yan & Horwitz, 2008), the other is that anxiety is a consequence of L2 proficiency (Argaman & Abu-Rabia, 2002; Ganschow et al., 1994; Sparks & Ganschow, 1991, 1995). Motoda (2005) suggested that they might influence each other, and Trang (2012) considered that it is difficult to decide the direction of the causality. Horwitz (2001) concluded, however, that studies examining the cause of

poor performance brought on by anxiety are needed in order to ascertain the characteristics of FL anxiety. In this study, therefore, we regarded the level of L2 proficiency as the result of anxiety in L2 learning, and explored what kinds of anxiety predict L2 proficiency. Although Horwitz and Young (1991) noted how anxiety affects language acquisition and performance in the L2, it has not been established yet. Thus, it should be investigated.

Overseas Experience

Some studies have attempted to examine the influence of overseas experience on FL anxiety, claiming the positive effects of going overseas on L2 learning. Motoda (2005) stated that to enjoy speaking in the TL and to increase the frequency of contact with the TL lowers the learners' anxiety, and asserted the importance of interchanges in the TL for language acquisition. Tadokoro's (2001) review concluded that language learning in TL countries is an effective way of doing this. Aida (1994) and Yashima (2009) reported that the level of FL anxiety of the learners who have stayed in TL countries is lower than the level of FL anxiety of those who have not. Yashima (2009) also stated that the Japanese participants in international volunteer projects in her study decreased their language anxiety after the projects. These studies suggest that the FL anxiety of such language learners would be less as they have more opportunities to contact the TL.

Some studies reported that there is a positive relationship between self-confidence and overseas experience. Matsuda and Gobel (2004) found that there was a significant difference in anxiety associated with low self-confidence in speaking in the TL between subjects with overseas experience and those without overseas experience, while there was no difference in general classroom performance anxiety between the two groups. They considered that overseas experience, in other words, the amount of communication in the TL and the experience of coming in contact with its culture, might influence variables such as self-confidence, and as a result, L2 proficiency would improve (Clément & Kruidenier, 1985).

Although overseas experience seems to influence anxiety as the above studies indicate, Kitano (2001) found that the level of anxiety of students learning Japanese who

have experience in Japan is higher than that of those who have no experience. He suggested that the students who had overseas experience might be under pressure, thinking that they are required to speak the L2 as native speakers do because they directly observed native speakers in Japan. Moreover, Tadokoro (2001) pointed out that some people remain highly anxious even if they have stayed in TL countries. She suggested that FL anxiety includes personality traits or anxiety that cannot be decreased by the experience of contact with the TL. It has not yet, however, been revealed what they are in detail. That is, detailed studies exploring what kinds of anxieties are influenced by overseas experience have not been sufficient. This perhaps indicates that to clarify these anxieties and the anxiety that Tadokoro indicates would help to find the detailed characteristics of FL anxiety. Research into specific characteristics of FL anxiety seemed to be needed.

Research Questions

This study aimed at clarifying how a two-semester compulsory study abroad program at a Kansai-area university in Japan contributed to pre-departure students' affective domains. In particular, the study was intended to clarify the FL anxiety of students who have to study abroad and the relationship among FL anxiety, overseas experience, and speaking ability in the pre-study abroad program. Although the number of university English language programs that require all students in a department to study abroad is increasing in Japan, there have not been any studies to examine the FL anxiety of students in the program. The following three research questions were investigated:

- (1) What kind of FL anxiety do pre-departure university students have?
- (2) Does previous overseas experience influence factors of FL anxiety?
- (3) What variables of FL anxiety, including previous overseas experience, influence L2 speaking proficiency?

Method

Participants

Japanese second-year female students in an English intensive program before study abroad participated in this study ($N = 81$), excluding three students who did not complete the questionnaire and three students who had lived overseas more than 10 years. Their ages ranged from 19 to 21. The students were supposed to study abroad in English-speaking universities for a year as a compulsory requirement of their department. Some students had overseas experience before the one-year program of studying abroad at this university. To see differences caused by the length of previous overseas experience, the participants were divided into three groups: 36 students (44%) who had no overseas experience, 29 students (36%) who had short-term overseas experience (less than 6 months), and 16 students who had long-term overseas experience (more than 6 months). When enrolling in this department, the students were divided into small classes called English Skill Classes consisting of about 10 students each grouped according to their level of English ability based on the results of a placement test. In the pre-study abroad English program, students took seven English skill classes, which were held twice in a week. In total, they studied English about 300 hours at school. All students enrolled in this department because they wanted to study at an English-speaking university. Almost all students were motivated to study English. However, most students had studied English mainly in Japanese high schools where oral communication skills were not focused on or developed in the classroom. Therefore, it was expected that most students had some anxiety about speaking English. We conducted this survey three months before they left Japan.

Materials

A questionnaire of 44-items was used in the present study. It contained two sections, a background questionnaire and the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS; Horwitz et al., 1986). The background questionnaire had 11 items: (a) ID number, (b) name, (c) age, (d) grade, (e) first-year class number, (f) TOEFL iBT

Speaking score, (g) length of previous stay abroad, (h) the place of previous stay abroad, (i) the reason for previous stay abroad, (j) the content of classes when they were high school students, and (k) the reasons for and frequency of using English in general. TOEFL iBT speaking scores were employed to measure the actual speaking ability of the participants. The original FLCAS comprises 33 items with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from five points (strongly agree) to one point (strongly disagree). We translated it from English into Japanese and modified some parts to adjust it to the Japanese participants. Our colleagues checked the revised version of the FLCAS, and then we administered a pilot study to test the reliability of the questionnaire. It had a high-level Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = .95$), which showed the questionnaire was reliable.

Procedure

The questionnaire was administered on May 14th, May 21st, June 11th, and June 25th, 2013 in four classes. Each class had about 22 students. We visited the classes to obtain the participants' consent and to explain the procedure of the questionnaire. The participants answered it in 15 minutes before the end of the class.

Analyses

After collecting the data, we analyzed them with SPSS 21.0. First, a reliability analysis of the questionnaire and a descriptive analysis were calculated. Second, for research question 1, a major factor method was performed with a varimax rotation. Research question 2 was examined by one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Finally, to address research question 3, a multiple regression analysis was conducted with a forced entry.

Results

Internal consistency of the FLCAS was estimated in Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$ ($N = 81$, $M = 100.70$, and $SD = 20.33$). The results showed that the questionnaire used in this study was reliable. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for this study.

A major factor analysis with a varimax rotation was employed to investigate factors of

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Participants with Different Terms of Overseas Experience

Variables	NE <i>n</i> = 36		SE <i>n</i> = 29		LE <i>n</i> = 16		All <i>N</i> = 81	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
OE	(null)	(null)	.73	.71	17.88	13.74	3.75	9.18
			(months)		(months)		(months)	
S	15.52	2.67	17.76	3.36	19.25	1.96	17.05	3.15
FLA	110.97	19.11	93.72	18.92	90.25	14.81	100.70	20.33

Note. OE = overseas experience; S = iBT speaking score; FLA = foreign language anxiety; NE = the group with no overseas experience; SE = the group with short-term overseas experience; LE = the group with long-term overseas experience

the FLCAS. The reason why we employed the varimax rotation was that the factors we found in this study subsequently had no correlation among them. It produced nine factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 and factor loadings ($> |.35|$). However, because a scree test showed that three factors were appropriate, we determined that the number of factors of the FLCAS was three (see Tables 2 & 3). First, Factor 1 was defined by 15 items, items 1, 18, 9, 8, 14, 27, 24, 28, 13, 3, 33, 26, 32, 12, and 17. This factor accounted for 34 % of the total variance. For instance, “I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class” (item 1), “I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class” (item 18), and “I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class” (item 27). These items were related to anxiety and low confidence when learners speak in English in the classroom. For this reason, Factor 1 was represented by “Lack of Speaking Confidence (LSC).” Second, Factor 2 obtained 11 items (items 20, 4, 15, 22, 11, 2, 16, 21, 29, 31, & 19), accounting for 6 % of the variance. It included the following items: “I can feel my heart pounding when I’m going to be called on in language class” (item 20), “I get upset when I don’t understand what the teacher is correcting” (item 15), “I don’t worry about making mistakes in language class” (item 2), and “I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language” (item 31). Because these items referred to anxiety and fear of the language classroom and of teachers and other

Table 2. Explanatory Factor Analysis for a Major Factor Method with Varimax Rotation

No.	Items	Factors			h ²
		1	2	3	
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.	.795			.784
18	I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class.	-.764			.713
9	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language classes.	.740			.619
8	I am usually at ease during tests in my language class.	-.666			.529
14	I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers.	-.647			.459
27	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	.632			.630
24	I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.	.587			.527
28	When I'm on my way to language class, I feel very sure and relaxed.	-.572			.535
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	.565			.438
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.	.565			.435
33	I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	.543			.434
26	I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes.	.536			.537
32	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the foreign language.	-.522			.319
12	In language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	.467			.368
17	I often feel like not going to my language class.	.428			.282
20	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class.	.608			.695
4	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language.	.599			.455
15	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	.565			.349
22	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class.	-.546			.355
11	I don't understand why some people get so upset over foreign language classes.	-.499			.470
2	I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.	-.496			.435
16	Even if I am well prepared for language class, I feel anxious about it.	.462			.381
21	The more I study for a language test, the more confused I get.	.455			.233
29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	.450			.265
31	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language.	.392			.298
19	I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	.385			.193
25	Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	.717			.743
23	I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	.667			.492
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am.	.663			.459

Note. $N = 81$; Factor loadings $> .35$; Factor 1 = Lack of Speaking Confidence; Factor 2 = Classroom Anxiety; Factor 3 = Comparison with Peers

Table 3. Factor Analysis of the FLCAS

Factor	Name	Acronym	Items	Percentage of Variance	Cronbach's α
Factor 1	Lack of Speaking Confidence	LSC	15	34.62	.93
Factor 2	Classroom Anxiety	CA	11	6.80	.84
Factor 3	Comparison with Peers	CP	3	6.53	.79
Unclassified			4		
All			33	47.95	.94

Note. $N = 81$

students, Factor 2 was named “Classroom Anxiety (CA).” Factor 3 with three items (items 25, 23, & 7) accounted for 6 % of the variance. The items were “I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do” (item 23) and “I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am” (item 7). We labeled this factor “Comparison with Peers (CP).” Finally, unclassified items (items 5, 6, 10, & 30) were eliminated because these factor loadings were lower than $> |.35|$. Each Cronbach's α for Factors 1, 2, and 3 was .93, .84, and .79, respectively.

To examine the influence of previous overseas experience on factors of FL anxiety, a one-way ANOVA was performed among the three groups divided by length of overseas experience. Length of overseas experience was used as an independent variable, and LSC, CA, and CP were used as dependent variables. Table 4 shows that LSC is significantly different among the groups: $F(2, 80) = 12.51, p < .001, \eta^2 = .06$. Subsequently, to see differences in LSC among these groups that were set for independent variables, multiple comparisons of LSC were computed by using Fisher's LSD test (see Table 5). The results showed that there were significant differences between the group of no overseas experience and that of short-term experience ($p = .001$) and between the group of no overseas experience and of long-term experience ($p < .001$). To summarize results of research question 2, there were significant differences in LSC between the group of no overseas experience and that of overseas experience. These results are represented by factor scores in Figure 1.

Table 4. One-Way ANOVA

Independent Variable: OE					
Dependent Variables	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Squares	<i>F</i>	Significance of <i>F</i>
LSC	17.634	2	8.817	12.507	.000***
CA	.756	2	.378	.440	.646
CP	4.017	2	2.008	2.515	.087

Note. OE = overseas experience; LSC = Lack of Speaking Confidence; CA = Classroom Anxiety; CP = Comparison with Peers

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 5. Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: LSC				
OE		Differences	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
NE	SE	.749*	.210	.001**
NE	LE	1.154*	.252	.000***

Note. OE = overseas experience; LSC = Lack of Speaking Confidence; NE = the group with no overseas experience; SE = the group with short-term overseas experience; LE = the group with long-term overseas experience

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

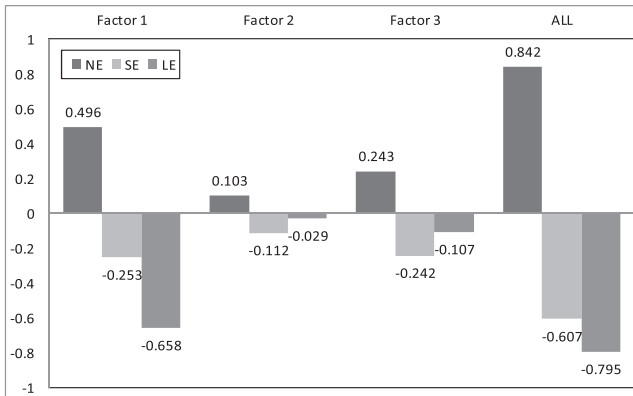


Figure 1. Factor scores of each factor and the overall anxiety in each group
 Each abbreviation means the following: NE = the group with no overseas experience, SE = the group with short-term overseas experience, and LE = the group with long-term overseas experience.

Table 6. Multiple Regression Analysis (Forced Entry Procedure)

Dependent Variable: TOEFL iBT Speaking Scores					
Independent Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	Significance of <i>t</i>
OE	.073	.046	.165	1.597	.116
LSC	-1.722	.345	-.516	-4.996	.000***
CA	-.101	.306	-.030	-.331	.740
CP	-1.299	.324	-.362	-4.016	.000***
(constant)	16.782	.320		52.494	
					<i>R</i> square: .572

Note. *N* = 60; OE = overseas experience; LSC = Lack of Speaking Confidence; CA = Classroom Anxiety; CP = Comparison with Peers

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

To find appropriate predictors of the actual speaking proficiency, a forced entry procedure of multiple regression analysis was conducted. A dependent variable was TOEFL iBT speaking scores and independent variables were the Length of Overseas Experience, CA and CP. The result showed that LSC and CP were significant predictors of the dependent variable. These two variables explained 54 % of the total variance in this study (see Table 6).

Discussion

This study found three factors of FL anxiety of students who would leave Japan in a few months: LSC, CA, and CP. LSC accounted for 34% of the total balance of FL anxiety. CA and CP were the second and third factors of FL anxiety of pre-study-abroad students, respectively. However, their total variances of these factors were only 6%. The results seem to reflect both characteristics of typical Japanese university students and those who had intensive training in English before study abroad.

First, the students in the pre-study-abroad English program seemed to have general FL anxiety as most Japanese students have. Most students in the present study did not practice speaking sufficiently when they were in high school, although they had overseas

experiences to some extent. The results generally coincided with Matsuda and Gobel's (2004) classification on the FLCAS of low self-confidence in speaking in English and general English classroom performance. As shown in the results, LSC was mixed with anxiety and self-confidence of speaking. This finding supports the view that speaking and self-confidence are influential in language learners' anxiety (Aida, 1994; Gardner et al., 1997; Kondo & Yan, 2003; Motoda, 2005; Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al., 2008). The result also suggests that although they feel CA, the amount of anxiety is less than LSC. This finding seems to be related to one of Katalin's (2006) two causes: general classroom anxiety. She described general classroom anxiety as "the unsure posture, the feeling of discomfort arising at the idea of having to sit through more lessons, the understanding of lessons as something to be afraid of and nervous about". (p. 54) Although the last factor, CP, does not accord with Horwitz et al.'s (1986) and Matsuda and Gobel's (2004) categorizations, this finding supports other studies that found that comparing oneself with other classmates is a source of anxiety (e.g., Foss & Reitzel, 1988; Motoda, 2005; Price, 1991; Yan & Horwitz, 2008; Young, 1990). Second, unlike Horwitz et al. (1986), this study did not find test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. This might be caused by the intensive English program before study abroad. These students studied English intensively in the classroom to study at an English-speaking university. They practiced English speaking and listening in the courses such as Public Speaking, Integrative Speaking, Intensive Listening, and Pronunciation & Presentation for two semesters in the first year. They were studying Integrative Speaking in the second year when they replied to the questionnaire. They took TOEFL iBT, TOEFL ITP, or IELTS every month when they were in the first year. Because the students studied English in small classes with the ambition to study abroad, almost all students cooperated each other to study English. Students in each small class not only had high motivation to study English, but also a cooperative attitude toward classmates. Such a classroom atmosphere might have influenced students' FL anxiety. This will be discussed later in this section.

Next, the present study found that there was a significant difference in LSC between the group having overseas experience and that having no overseas experience. This

finding replicated Matsuda and Gobel's (2004) study that showed there is a significant difference in self-confidence of speaking English, not in general FL classroom anxiety, between the group with overseas experience and that with no overseas experience. It might be concluded that there is a relationship between overseas experience and self-confidence of speaking. As Clément and Kruidenier (1985) and Matsuda and Gobel (2004) suggested, to get accustomed to using and listening to the TL might enhance a kind of motivation and self-confidence to decrease anxiety and improve L2 proficiency. Conversely, there were no significant differences in CA and CP between students with previous overseas experiences and those without them. The result suggests that these anxieties cannot be reduced by overseas experience for two reasons. The first reason might be that this anxiety is not related to the quantity of communication in the TL but to learners' personality traits. MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) pointed out that test anxiety is associated with general anxiety including trait anxiety. According to Vaidya, Gray, Haig, and Watson (2002), personality characteristics are difficult to change. Therefore, there was no difference among the groups divided by the terms of overseas experience in this study. The other possible reason might be that this factor is impacted by the people or the environment around students, not by overseas experience itself. This suggestion proceeded from the specificity of the participants of this study. Because of study abroad, they have studied English more intensively than other language learners have. In addition, the participants were divided into small classes depending on the students' levels of L2 proficiency. They have studied together in these classes every day since they were first-year students. For them, the members of class were good classmates because they supported each other, felt comfortable, and had the same goal of studying abroad. The good relationship of the class seems to successfully control anxiety about comparison with peers. Yan and Horwitz (2008) also suggested, "In order to reduce pressure from comparison with peers, students of similar levels could be grouped together" (p. 175). This statement supports an advantage of the skill classes in the present study because students were placed according to results of a placement test. In addition to this, Yan and Horwitz indicated that peers would become better motivated for studying. In the

FL classroom, classmates studying together have both good and bad influences on anxiety.

Finally, the study discovered that significant predictors were the two factors of anxiety: LSC and CP. One of the reasons for this might be that we used the TOEFL iBT speaking test in this study. Because the test assesses academic English proficiency, it might not have evaluated students' conversational fluency, which might be raised by overseas experiences. Cummins (2008) distinguishes basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) from cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Conversational fluency can be different from academic language proficiency. On the other hand, the result that the two anxiety factors of LSC and CP predicted proficiency of speaking English implies that language learners need to decrease these anxieties in order to increase their L2 speaking proficiency. The two anxieties might be related to how the students perceive their own L2 ability. Some studies reported that self-perception has an effect on anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986; Kitano, 2001; Price, 1991), and the self-perception about one's own ability could be considered as a predictor of success in L2 learning. This study also supports previous studies insisting that anxiety and self-confidence influence L2 proficiency (Clément et al., 1980; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004; Yashima, 2002). The fact that CA does not predict L2 proficiency suggests that students have a cooperative attitude toward classmates, which we mentioned earlier. Such an attitude is closely related to collaborative learning, which is defined as an educational principle and method to enhance the efficiency of learning to the utmost and to expand the achievement and interpersonal ability of every student (Erikawa, 2012). This idea makes a point of the students' learning a L2 cooperatively, which aims to keep their motivation for studying by building a constructive relationship among the peers. Erikwa (2012) said that language learning in the classroom should be rather cooperative rather than competitive because helping each other would be a key to enhance L2 proficiency. A good relationship among peers would lead to overcoming language anxiety. Since all students share the same goal to study English, they study English intensively with cooperative attitude.

Conclusion

This study revealed that students in the pre-study abroad program had three factors in common: LSC, CA, and CP. Because LSC had the largest portion of the FLCAS, it was confirmed that speaking is an anxiety-provoking activity. In addition, among the three factors, a significant difference between the groups of having overseas experience and the group not having such experience can be found only in LSC. This reveals that overseas experience successfully plays a large role in self-confidence of speaking English. That is, getting accustomed to use and comprehend the TL could decrease FL anxiety. Moreover, because the two factors of LSC and CP related to self-perception were significant predictors of proficiency of speaking English, this study shed light on the importance of language anxiety in L2 learning. To improve L2 proficiency, language learners must deal with the above anxieties.

As pedagogical implications, first, teachers should give the students many chances to practice speaking the TL in the classroom to enhance their self-confidence and self-perception of L2 speaking proficiency. Second, because teachers influence the anxiety of the students, they should endeavor to make the atmosphere of the FL classroom comfortable for the students when teaching a foreign language. In addition to that, the relationship between peers should be considered. Because the existence of peers is inevitable in the classroom, a cooperative classroom must be created.

In this study, there are several limitations. First, although the participants were divided into three groups according to the terms of overseas experience, there were large differences in the lengths and the quality of the experience within the two experienced groups. This study accepted the differences because of the lack of the participants. For clearer findings, these groups should be divided more precisely. The second limitation was the relatively small number of participants. To generalize the results of this study, more participants are needed. Although 81 students participated in this study, there were only a few members in each group divided by the lengths of overseas experience. This lack should be improved in the next study. Third, this study did not reveal the statistical directions among the overall variables. Based on the above, future studies should repli-

cate this study with more participants to obtain more precise results, and to examine the overall relationships among the variables by using other statistic methods such as a covariance structure analysis. In addition to these limitations, because FL anxiety is extremely complicated, quantitative research alone is not sufficient to reveal its nature. In future studies, more qualitative research should be conducted to investigate it more deeply.

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