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Towards the Alleviation of Language Anxiety: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

Language anxiety is known as one of the affective factors which troubles learners in second or foreign language learning situations. Over the last few decades, previous studies have revealed that language anxiety negatively impacts the language learning and performance of learners. In order to deal with its negative effects, it is imperative to find ways of alleviating language anxiety of learners. The current study employed semi-structured interviews to both high-anxious and low-anxious Japanese EFL learners after 15 weeks of interventions. This study aimed to investigate: 1) the sources of language anxiety among high-anxious students, 2) the reactions of high-anxious students to anxiety-reducing strategies, and 3) the reactions of low-anxious students to anxiety-reducing strategies. Participants of this study were 7 high-anxious and 4 low-anxious students extracted from a total of 48 students. From the qualitative analysis of the interview data, student anxiety sources were found to be: fear of negative evaluation from others, underestimation of one's ability, and fear of interacting with others. This study also attempted to understand the perceived effectiveness of multiple anxiety-reducing strategies. Although cooperation with others was perceived positively in both groups of students, doing pair work and group work was perceived differently. Low-anxious students mostly mentioned the superiority of pair work and group work over individual work, but high-anxious students mentioned that it was rather the cause of their language anxiety. Findings of the current study showed a clear gap between the reactions of high-anxious and low-anxious learners to the anxiety-reducing strategies.

Keywords: foreign language anxiety; anxiety-reducing strategies; student perceptions; EFL in Japan; qualitative study

Introduction

It has been over three decades since the term “foreign language anxiety” was first coined by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Since then, studies on foreign language anxiety have been conducted by researchers all over the world. According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1994), language anxiety is defined as “the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning” (p.284). To date, studies on language anxiety mostly have dealt with: the construct of language anxiety (e.g., Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991), sources of language anxiety (e.g., Price, 1991; Young, 1991), effects of language anxiety (e.g., Aida, 1994; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Sparks & Ganschow, 2007) and ways of coping with language anxiety (e.g., Fujii, 2015; Kondo & Yang, 2004; Tsui, 1996). Through these accumulated studies on language anxiety, the debilitating aspect of this construct has been substantiated. Even though spirited discussion on the conceptions of facilitative (i.e., helpful) and debilitating (i.e., unhelpful) language anxiety remains, Horwitz (2017) insists that the idea of facilitating language anxiety is a huge step backwards. Although facilitative anxiety might be attractive to teachers when students are perceived to be unmotivated, those students, in fact, are sometimes really anxious about language learning, and that “offering these students more anxiety would be truly sad, ... and unethical” (Horwitz, 2017; p.40). Related to this, MacIntyre (2017) also contends, “(e)xperimental evidence shows that anxiety arousal causes declines in performance” (p.27). As many researchers in this field largely view language anxiety as a negative emotion, it seems quite meaningful to reduce its impact on language learners.

According to Horwitz et al. (1986), significant foreign language anxiety is experienced by many students in response to at least some aspects of foreign language learning. Given that many students suffer from anxiety while learning a foreign language, it is very important for teachers to recognize the anxiousness of students and to conduct classes in a less stressful manner. In recent years, studies which sought to clarify possible strategies for alleviating language anxiety have received increased attention. As one of such studies, Fujii (2015) developed the anxiety-reducing strategy scale (ARSS) in order to find ways of alleviating student language anxiety. The scale was developed based on empirical research proposals for reducing student language anxiety chosen from several previous studies (Crookall & Oxford, 1991; Oxford, 1999; Phillips, 1999; Young, 1999). As a follow-up study, these anxiety-reducing strategies were implemented in an experimental class, and the results were compared with the control class as an experimental treatment (Fujii, 2017). Results indicate that the effectiveness of the strategies was ascertained as an overall tendency, but there is still room for investigation on how these effects would vary due to learners’ individuality. In order to understand individual differences between learners, it is important to listen to learner voices in detail, in addition to comparing the differences between high-anxious and low-anxious students. Therefore, this study will apply a qualitative approach to complement the findings of quantitative research findings.

Literature Review

As most of the previous studies show the negative correlation of language anxiety and language performance (e.g., Aida, 1994; Alrabai, 2014; Na, 2007; Saito & Samimy, 1996; Woodrow, 2006), it is essential to investigate in what ways we can alleviate student language anxiety, in addition to clarifying the sources of their anxiety. The following are examples of studies which investigated student language anxiety qualitatively.

Price (1991) carried out interviews with 10 high-anxious students. From the analysis of these interviews, the greatest source of anxiety was found to be having to speak the target language. For example, students in her study mentioned having concern over making errors and worrying about ineffective communication or mispronunciation using the target language. She suggests that the two personality variables which may be closely related to language anxiety are perfectionism and fear of public speaking. Students were mostly very anxious about public speaking and became overly perfectionistic about using the foreign language. In addition, negative learner beliefs and stressful classroom experiences in the past were also causes of their anxiety. Price emphasizes that “students’ fears of public embarrassment must be taken seriously when planning activities” (p. 107) for the foreign language classes in any cases.

Yan & Horwitz (2008) also conducted an interview study targeting Chinese students of English with varying levels of anxiety, comprised of high-, moderate-, and low-anxious students. They examined anxiety from the learner’s perspectives as empirical research. As a result, they identified 12 major variables related to anxiety, including regional differences, language aptitude, gender, motivation, and language learning strategies. From their analyses, they showed the interrelationship among these 12 variables and created the grounded-theory model of affinities for student language anxiety. They confirmed the previously reported findings on the negative impact of language anxiety on second language achievement through their qualitative analyses.

Şimşek & Dörnyei (2017) conducted interviews and anxiety questionnaires with Turkish learners of English at an intermediate level. Based on the research aims, they asked students about the anxiety-provoking situations, behaviors and thoughts while feeling anxious, describing anxiety, and differences of language anxiety and general anxiety. Data were analyzed based on McAdams’s (2006) Personality Model as a theoretical paradigm, including dispositional traits, characteristic adaptations, and integrative life narratives. They described the concept of “anxious self” which emerged from their data and insist on the importance of learner narratives in dealing with language anxiety.

Gkonou (2017) collected weekly diary and interview data from seven high-anxious students who were studying English as a foreign language in Greece. She analyzed a range of aspects that influence learner language anxiety in relation to ecosystems model, including the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems. Results indicated that anxiety of Greek EFL learners was influenced by factors such as speaking anxiety, peer pressure, significant others, negative self-beliefs, and past EFL

learning experiences. From the findings of her study, Gkonou concludes that “acknowledging prior experience as an influence on how language anxiety develops is a perspective that should be taken into account when attempting to conceptualize anxiety” (p.150).

The above mentioned are the four major studies which investigated student language anxiety using qualitative methodologies. In these previous studies, however, the main purpose was to clarify the sources of language anxiety among learners, and there were no statements on how to deal with those anxiety sources. Therefore, it can be said that it is surely necessary to investigate effective strategies for dealing with language anxiety in addition to clarifying its sources. Thus, the current study investigates the sources of language anxiety and effective strategies to reduce learner language anxiety by analyzing the interview data qualitatively. Accordingly, the research questions for this study are the following:

RQ1. What are the sources of language anxiety among high-anxious students?

RQ2. How do high-anxious students perceive the anxiety-reducing strategies?

RQ3. How do low-anxious students perceive the anxiety-reducing strategies?

Method

Participants. Seven high-anxious and four low-anxious students extracted from a total of 48 students participated in this study. These students were taking the required elective class of English at a national university in Hokkaido. Of the participants, six were male and five were female (N=11), ranging in age from 18 to 19 years old. The anxiety scores of students were calculated using the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, the FLCAS from Horwitz et al. (1986). The FLCAS consists of 33 items to be answered on a 5-point Likert Scale; therefore, the anxiety scores range from the minimum of 33 to the maximum of 165. In this study, high-anxious students had scores over 120 and the low-anxious students had scores under 70. As a reference, Alrabai (2014) rates the FLCAS scores of 109 to 165 as high anxiety and of 33 to 82 as very low anxiety; thus, the current study is consistent with this previous research.

Procedure. The FLCAS was given to students in the first class of the fall semester, 2017. In this study, 15 classes of intervention for reducing anxiety were carried out. The intervention included: 1) pair work and group work, 2) student discussion and cooperation, 3) student preparation before presentations, 4) presentations in pairs, and 5) giving advice to students individually. All of these were adapted from anxiety-reducing strategies that were introduced in Fujii (2015). After the final class period, a semi-structured interview was conducted targeting 7 high-anxious and 4 low-anxious students (N=11). Each interview lasted approximately 10 to 15 minutes.

Data analysis. For the qualitative data analysis, Steps for Coding and Theorization, SCAT, in Otani (2007) was utilized. SCAT consists of four coding procedures. After transcribing the interview data, first is to pick up noteworthy words or phrases from the text, then write down the paraphrases of the first phase, and then think of concepts from out of the text that account for the second phase, and finally consider the themes and constructs in considerations of context.

Results and Discussion

Student anxiety scores. To differentiate the students from high-anxious and low-anxious groups, the scores of the FLCAS were examined. Table 1 shows the student anxiety scores based on the FLCAS. The scores of high-anxious students and low-anxious students are shown in the lists. FLCAS scores range from the minimum of 33 to the maximum of 165; thus, the clear differences between these two groups of students can be seen. From these results, 7 students were labeled as high-anxious and 4 as low-anxious students in this study.

Table 1

List of Student Anxiety Scores based on the FLCAS

High-anxious students		Low-anxious students	
Student H	137	Student MR	67
Student K	131	Student B	65
Student S	137	Student Y	58
Student M	128	Student TS	57
Student KY	122		
Student T	131		
Student N	121		

Note. FLCAS scores range from the minimum of 33 to the maximum of 165.

Anxiety sources of high-anxious students. Anxiety sources of the students with high anxiety are explained below. Narratives of seven high-anxious students, Student H, Student K, Student S, Student M, Student KY, Student T, and Student N were qualitatively analyzed and are displayed as a *Story Line* in the following paragraphs using the method of SCAT from Otani (2007). These narratives were gathered during the semi-structured interview after the final class period.

Student H is accustomed to individual learning, but when it comes to presentations in front of people, she becomes strongly reluctant, feeling ashamed and worrying about others' evaluations and her poor perceived speaking ability. It seems her strong fear of failing in front of people is one of the reasons for this. The following excerpt is from her interview:

I am not very much accustomed to speaking in English...so I feel stressed when I have to speak in front of the class. I am not good at speaking in front of people, especially in English.
(Student H)

As a background, in her previous language learning environment, there was a lack of opportunities to use English; therefore, she loses confidence because of vocabulary shortage. There are student-soluble problems and teacher-soluble problems underlying this student's case, but teacher's facilitation seems to be needed in order to increase English use and provide step by step learning methods for this student.

Student K feels anxious about building relationships with others and has strong nervousness in having interactions with others. Since he feels communication apprehension in addition to perceived low English ability, he shows reluctance toward pair work. He explains:

I don't have enough English skills, so I always worry that I might be bothering my partner. That's why I become anxious in pair works. (Student K)

He tends to judge his own English ability to be very low, and attaches importance to others' evaluation; therefore, he feels anxiety arising from others' evaluation. He prefers self-resolution instead of teacher's support, and he is trying to make an individual approach toward lessening anxiety by having sufficient rehearsal and making improvement through practice.

Student S fears being questioned suddenly because she has concern over making mistakes. Her fear of experiencing humiliation seems to be caused by her anxiety arising from others' evaluation. It may be because she does not have enough experience in speaking English and considers English as a weak subject. She explains her anxiousness as follows:

I am bad at English...so my biggest concern is being called on to speak in front of the class. Most of the times, I am not sure of the answers to the teacher's questions, so I don't want to be called on. (Student S)

She often has difficulty in comprehending the classroom activities and tends to fall behind the class. These tendencies seem to be influenced by a strong dislike of English due to past English learning experiences and previous unsuccessful experiences, and she has been continuously feeling difficulty in studying English. She tries to make use of anxiety-coping strategies by having an individual rehearsal before the class, such as preparation before pair work or checking pronunciation of vocabulary beforehand.

Student M tends to feel concern over making mistakes and persists in correctness. She has negative self-reflection due to her lack of confidence. When interviewed, she answered:

I always become anxious when I don't know the right answer. And..., I can't speak English well, so I feel anxious when I have to do pair work with classmates. (Student M)

She feels deficient in her English proficiency in addition to difficulty in having interpersonal communication, so she feels interaction anxiety in doing pair work as a result. In order to overcome communication apprehension, she aims to show clear intention and increase English utterances in class.

Student KY has an apprehension of pair work due to a sense of inferiority by comparing himself with his partner in addition to being highly sensitive to others' evaluation. As a reason for this, he cites his embarrassment of inadequate English skills and his lack of confidence:

When doing pair work, there are many unfamiliar vocabularies, and I feel worried about my partner's reactions when I make mistakes. And, I start comparing my English skills with my partner's. (Student KY)

He mentions the advantages of interaction while engaging in sports activities as there is active communication followed by increased performances. Similarly, he considers that a cheerful atmosphere and positive thinking may lead to enjoyable interaction in the English classroom as well.

Student T tends to feel uneasy in having conversations because of incompatibility with the partner and insufficient mutual understandings. She regards correct interpretation of messages as important, but she has hesitation in having clarification request, so she often feels irritation with the communication gap. The excerpt below comes from her interview:

Since we are using language, miscommunication, or lack of understandings of each other's words, makes me feel very stressed. When I can't comprehend my partner's words, I feel anxious. (Student T)

She wishes to solve this problem by improving her English proficiency, but she has a strong sense of belonging with her peers of equivalent English level, so she justifies her inadequacy of English proficiency. She also feels difficulty in listening activities, therefore she wants to feel reassured by visualization and simultaneity of visual and audial aids in listening activities.

Student N feels uneasy discussing in pair work since he does not want to trouble others. He mentions in his interview as follows:

When my comprehension of the contents of pair work is not enough, I feel worried about troubling my partner. I feel anxious when I am not confident with my English skills. (Student N)

Incomplete understanding of pair work activities and lack of confidence leads to anxiety concerning the partner's reaction. Therefore, he considers his anxiety will decrease if he builds confidence through prior learning activities and if there is a gradual learning process before doing pair work.

As a whole, anxiety sources of high-anxious students can be broadly summarized into three types. There were students feeling fear of failing or fear of experiencing humiliation in front of peers. These students seemed to have concern over making mistakes in front of the class. Thus, the first type of anxiety sources is: *fear of negative evaluation from others*. In addition, students seem to worry about their inadequate English skills or one's poor speaking ability, and also mentioned their lack of confidence. Therefore, the second type of anxiety sources can be: *underestimation of one's ability*. Students also mentioned uneasiness having conversations or interacting with partners while doing pair work and seemed to be feeling reluctance to pair work. Some even felt incompatibility with the partner. Thus, the third type of anxiety sources is: *fear of interacting with peers*. The first type of anxiety sources, fear of negative evaluation from others, is very close to Price's (1991) results, and the third type, fear of interacting with peers, share common aspects with Gkonou's (2017) results. These findings may add to the literature of the language anxiety sources which can be seen in the Japanese EFL classroom contexts, as in what ways students perceive their anxious feelings and how they try to cope with their existing anxiety.

Student perceptions of the anxiety-reducing strategies. Below are the student perceptions of the anxiety-reducing strategies utilized as a classroom intervention for a total of 15 weeks. Differences between the high-anxious and low-anxious students were quite noticeable in their reactions to these strategies. Some strategies were very effective for low-anxious students, while on the other hand, high-anxious students did not feel their helpfulness at times.

Pair work and group work. Among the high-anxious students, some were feeling high anxiety when doing pair work and group work. They mentioned feeling fear of being troublesome, pre-task anxiety, interpersonal anxiety, and speaking anxiety. Others said that anxiety level is dependent on group size or that anxiety level is stable, neither increasing nor decreasing during group work. However, these students recognized the necessity of pair work and group work in class, such as building ideas through pair work and sharing responsibilities by doing the common task. In spite of their bashfulness and perceived lack of English ability, some students felt their partners' consideration, cooperative atmosphere and sense of not being alone and could become free of the fear of making mistakes when they realized that their partners possessed similar English abilities. Eventually, they could find the feeling of security and interpersonal adaptation as the advantages of communication in group work and pair work.

Low-anxious students all mentioned the superiority of group work and pair work over individual work by having enjoyable communication, cooperative relationships, and positive interconnections. Such mutual communication enables them to reveal their weak points, and they could understand various perspectives by building social relationships. Doing group rehearsal before presentations led to confidence building. However, there might be individual differences in feeling the positive effect of group work and pair work, as it may sometimes be situation-dependent.

Cooperation with others. High-anxious students all mentioned the advantage of peer-support and the importance of cooperation, such as sharing ideas, being aware of different perspectives, attaining new knowledge, and experiencing cooperative accomplishments. There seems to be a superiority of collaborative work over individual work in that self-learning causes anxiety and puzzlement through overthinking and being unclear about some questions. While some of the students felt somewhat stressful at first, eventually they understood the merits of working together and became accustomed to the cooperative atmosphere. Students could feel relief by receiving peer advice, gained confidence, and felt less stress by helping each other. Being aware of others' mistakes and learning from such mistakes are also some of the advantages of collaborative work.

Low-anxious students felt the necessity of working together since the partner can be a helper and by building mutual relationships, exchanging opinions and having discussions as a means of

performance improvement. When working individually, students felt the difficulty of self-resolution and mistakes occurred frequently. By discussing with classmates, students could have peer-confirmation and feel reassured in a relaxing atmosphere.

Preparation before presentations. By having time to prepare beforehand, high-anxious students could feel a reduction in speaking anxiety and the helpfulness of having a rehearsal. Most students mentioned it was better than presenting without preparation, and their anxiety decreased since they could memorize the speech and could have speech scripts with them. However, for some students, presentations in front of a large audience caused high anxiety even with preparation because of the underestimation of their own English ability, in addition to fear of speaking in front of the class. Although anxiety remains to some extent, preparation time makes it possible to receive help from peers and become conscious of what to say, so it seems that the presentation becomes less stressful by having preparation time.

By having ample opportunity for rehearsal, low-anxious students could become ready for the presentation and be accustomed to speaking; therefore, they felt no speaking anxiety, and it was less-stressful than off-the-cuff presentations. One of the students was originally low-anxious, with no anxiety at all, saying all we needed was just to read the script. Other students felt the helpfulness of having practice time to reduce the stress of speaking.

Presentations in pairs. High-anxious students mentioned the merits of having a co-presenter to share responsibilities, to feel a sense of oneness, and to have mutual support and feel at ease. For most students, pair-presentations were preferable to solitary presentations in front of the audience since individual presentations are very stressful, and having a partner reduces stress, making it is easier to speak. However, one student felt constant anxiety and felt that it makes little difference in single or pair presentations. Since making a presentation causes nervousness and fearfulness, it is important to share concerns and discuss actively in pairs. In order to diminish remaining anxiety, such use of interpersonal communication may help obtain readiness for the presentation.

Low-anxious students felt superiority of pair presentations over individual presentations, in that they could feel a sense of not being alone or feeling safe with the existence of a partner. They said it was better than individual presentations because by taking turns, they can be ready and can feel a sense of relief. By having cooperative presentations, students could feel less stressful and become more at ease. For extremely low-anxious students, on the other hand, there seemed to be no difference with individual speeches as they had no anxiety at all.

Asking the teacher. Student perceptions of receiving teacher support are as follows. High-anxious students recognized the merit of asking the teacher directly to receive appropriate guidance and promote understanding. Although most students felt the necessity of having a chance to ask questions, some felt confusion over choosing appropriate questions or concern over asking simple questions and therefore struggled to ask the teacher. One student rejected the opportunity to ask and kept questions unsolved because of nervousness. Asking for help or receiving teacher support is a challenging action for students with a shy personality, and they become reluctant to ask questions directly. Nevertheless, when students have a problem and find difficulty with self-resolution, asking for the teacher's help becomes a positive action for them.

Low-anxious students felt the helpfulness of asking questions, such as comprehending classroom activities, building confidence, and confirming one's correctness. Students mentioned the importance of the teacher's role as a mentor and learning the correct English is needed for speaking English accurately. When students feel uncertainty, having an opportunity to ask and to receive teacher support is necessary for them.

Overall findings. The student perceptions of anxiety-reducing strategies can be generally summarized as the following. First, pair work and group work were perceived differently to an extreme among high-anxious and low-anxious students. For high-anxious students, pair work and group work were mostly anxiety-evoking, but low-anxious students all felt these were superior to individual work. Second, as for cooperation with others, both high-anxious students and low-anxious students mentioned the positive aspects, such as reduced anxiety or relief through helping each other. Third, preparation before presentations depended on the individuals. High-anxious students mostly felt it was helpful having a rehearsal, but some still felt high anxiety; on the other hand, low-anxious students felt less stressful and could get ready for the presentation. Fourth was pair-presentations. Both high-anxious students and low-anxious students mostly felt relief having a co-presenter, except for a minority of opinions that it made little difference. Fifth, receiving teacher support was perceived positively for the most part. Both high-anxious students and low-anxious students felt the helpfulness of asking questions to the teacher, but some high-anxious students felt concern over asking questions, worrying over choosing appropriate questions. Depending on the anxiety levels, effective strategies for language anxiety differed somewhat. It is therefore essential to consider what best suits the students in our classes by conducting several strategies as a trial.

Conclusions

The present study investigated the sources of language anxiety in EFL learners in the Japanese context, as well as the learner reactions to the anxiety-reducing strategies utilized as an intervention. Findings indicate that student anxiety came from fear of negative evaluation from others, underestimation of one's ability, and fear of interacting with peers. It seems that student anxiety is

highly relevant to significant others, being consistent with the case of Gkonou (2017), stating that significant others' feedback and appraisals influence students' present degree of in-class language anxiety. Students in the current study worried about being humiliated in front of others to a large extent and became less confident in their English proficiency. According to Yan and Horwitz (2008), "(i)n order to reduce pressure from comparison with peers, students of similar levels could be grouped together and offered appropriate materials for their level of language competence" (p.175). It is thus important for us teachers to help students obtain successful learning experiences to build their confidence as much as possible.

As for the strategies utilized in this study, although pair work and group work were likely to be the cause of anxiety, cooperation with others was perceived positively in both high-anxious and low-anxious students. These results demonstrate the fact that pair work and group work activities sometimes involved evaluative or competitive aspects, while student discussions and cooperation tasks were mostly done in a more collaborative manner. Students might have felt they had to completely accomplish pair or group work activities, which led to their anxious feelings during such tasks. However, cooperating and discussing with classmates was considered to be important and effective among both high-anxious and low-anxious students, which may alleviate their language anxiety as a result. If there is a supportive and cooperative relationship among all the students, they might not become overly anxious about working together in pairs or groups. Pair presentations were also mostly effective for students. Working and helping each other in classroom activities is surely important for reducing student language anxiety. Moreover, teacher's individual support for students was also mostly effective for these students, as Horwitz (2017) mentions that lower levels of anxiety are associated with higher levels of teacher support, in addition to higher levels of student involvement with the class and with each other. Due to this fact, Horwitz suggests that the levels of anxiety can be attenuated to some extent by creating a positive learning environment. Therefore, it can be said that having students cooperate in classroom activities in a relaxed atmosphere is especially necessary.

According to Şimşek & Dörnyei (2017), recognizing learner narratives has a broad significance in language anxiety research. In other words, listening to student voices in the classroom is imperative for teachers to acknowledge students' anxious feelings. As Horwitz (2017) states, teachers should change the nature of English classrooms to make the learning context as supportive as possible in order to alleviate language anxiety among high-anxious students.

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減輕語言焦慮:定性研究

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摘要

語言焦慮被認為是在第二語言或外語學習情境中困擾學習者的因素之一。在過去的幾十年中,先前的研究指出,語言焦慮會對學習者的語言學習和表現產生負面影響。為了處理面對其負面影響,必須找到減輕學習者語言焦慮的方法。目前的研究是在介入 15 週研究後,採用半結構式訪談那些高焦慮和低焦慮的日本學習者(以英語為第二語言者)。本研究旨在調查:1) 高焦慮學生語言焦慮的來源,2) 高焦慮學生對降低焦慮策略的反應,以及 3) 低焦慮學生對減少焦慮策略的反應。這項研究的參與者是從 48 名學生中選取的 7 名高焦慮和 4 名低焦慮學生。從訪談數據的質性分析來看,學生的焦慮來源是害怕他人的負面評價、低估一個人的能力、以及害怕與他人互動。此研究還試圖了解多種減少焦慮策略的感知有效性。儘管在兩組學生中都認為與他人的合作是正面的,但成對合作和團體合作的方式卻有所不同。低焦慮的學生大多提到成對合作和團體合作優於獨自作業,但高焦慮的學生提到這是他們語言焦慮的原因。目前研究的結果顯示,高焦慮和低焦慮學習者的反應與減少焦慮的策略之間存在明顯的差異。

關鍵字：外語焦慮、減少焦慮的策略、學生的看法、在日本的外語學習第二語言(English as a Foreign Language)、定性研究