



Culture, beliefs and anxiety: A study of university-level Japanese learners of English

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine learner beliefs and anxiety among young adult Japanese EFL learners at a university in Tokyo. It discusses the findings from a set of self-report questionnaires and compares the results with those obtained in an earlier study of Japanese, Chinese and Swiss English language learners studying abroad. The findings from the Japanese respondents (ESL and EFL) in the two studies were remarkably similar overall, and relatively high levels of classroom anxiety and fear of negative evaluation were evident among the participants, as well as some indications of social anxiety. The findings provide a picture of foreign language anxiety in a broader socio-cultural context and have the potential to influence the design of approaches to its management. It is concluded that addressing negative learner beliefs and empowering individual learners to understand and take control of their own anxiety may lead to more successful language learning outcomes.

Keywords: foreign language anxiety, learner beliefs, university students, Japan

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Introduction and Literature Review

The importance of anxiety as a factor that can have a significant and measurable impact on the learning of a foreign language is well documented (Brown, 2004b; Dörnyei, 2005; Doyon, 2000; Imamura, 1978; Markee, 1986; Nonaka, 1990; Scovel, 1991). Language anxiety is often regarded as a distinctive form of anxiety (Gardner, 1985; Horwitz et al., 1986; Horwitz, 1986; Kondo & Yang, 2004; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Matsuda, 2001; Young, 1990). One of the reasons for this is that learning and using a foreign language can impact upon an individual's sense of identity in relation to themselves and others. Language anxiety has been defined as "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language contexts, including speaking, listening, and learning" (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 284). Some researchers have examined anxiety as an independent variable in its own right in the language learning process, while others have seen it as one component of larger constructs (Dörnyei, 2005).

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) first proposed the specific 'language anxiety' construct and outlined why they believed it to be a prevalent factor in the success (or lack of success) of many students struggling to learn another language. This led them to develop the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) consisting of 33 items which they felt were "reflective of communication apprehension, test-anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation in the foreign language classroom" (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 129). Although it was developed more than 25 years ago, the FLCAS remains a frequently used tool in language anxiety research today (e.g. Na, 2007; Wu, 2011).

Fear of Negative Evaluation

A component of the anxiety picture that is particularly relevant to L2 learning and use is fear of negative evaluation (FNE). FNE is defined as "apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively" (Watson & Friend, 1969, p. 449). Horwitz et al (1986, p. 128) point out that although FNE is related to test anxiety, "...it is not limited to test-taking situations; rather, it may occur in any social, evaluative situation such as interviewing for a job or speaking in foreign language

class." Even social situations where there is no obvious evaluative element can still trigger a fear in learners that their less-than-perfect L2 performance may elicit negative evaluations (expressed or not) from their interlocutors. Whatever the psychological makeup of individual learners, the potential to trigger FNE is inherent in the language learning process. According to Kitano (2001) many students fear making mistakes when speaking in class, regardless of whether or not a more general fear of negative evaluation is part of their personalities.

Social Anxiety

A closely related form of anxiety is social phobia. According to Noyes and Hoehn-Saric (1998, p. 158), "social phobia is an unreasonable fear of embarrassing oneself in social performance situations." Such situations can include eating in public, meeting new people and, of course, speaking and communicating with others in any number of everyday encounters. Most people experience this form of anxiety to some degree, and it is only when it reaches higher levels, and starts to affect an individual's behaviour, that it becomes a concern. Social anxiety is closely linked with other forms of anxiety and "results from an interplay between fear of negative evaluation (FNE) and excessive self-directed attention" and "in short, socially anxious persons are preoccupied with being negatively evaluated by others, and this causes them to become anxious" (Fay, Page, Serfaty, Tai, & Winkler, 2008, p. 1160). The possible negative effects of such an anxiety on students learning another language are obvious. As Brown (2004a, p. 9) suggests, "for some students, a particular component (fear of negative evaluation) of a particular type of anxiety (social anxiety) can have a deleterious effect on particular learning outcomes, if it interferes with their participation in essential learning activities."

The Japanese context

It has been noted that Japanese learners appear to be one group that experiences levels of anxiety that often disrupt their development in the English language (Kitano, 2001; Mastuda & Gobel, 2004; Pite, 1996; Sim, 2004; Takanashi, 2004). It has been suggested that many Japanese learners of English (JLE) have a fear of making mistakes (Murphey, 1996; Nonaka, 1990), and

there are those who argue that Japanese students are affected by a high degree of learner and classroom anxiety (Anzai & Paik, 2000; Masataka, 2002; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004; McDowell & Yotsuyanagi, 1996; Pite, 1996; Takada, 2003) and that some suffer from inhibiting levels of language anxiety (Isselbaecher, 2004; Kitano, 2001; Kondo & Yang, 2004; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004).

Research has examined some of the underlying sociocultural elements that may have an impact on foreign language learning in Japan and by Japanese learners living or studying in other parts of the world. One such factor is a belief system on cultural and communicative norms that seeks to protect the Japanese identity (LoCastro, 2001). LoCastro illustrates the latter further by explaining that "many favour retaining their own identities as Japanese, suggesting it as inappropriate for them to accommodate to the L2 pragmatic norms" (p. 83). A related factor known as 'ethnospecificity' is examined by Hinenoya and Gatbonton (2000) in their study of Japanese adults living in Canada. This involves a sense that one's own national and cultural identity is distinct and unique, without necessarily being superior or inferior to that of other groups. They found significant negative effects for 'language ethnospecificity' and 'Japanese ethnospecificity' on English learning outcomes among some participant groups.

Some of the commentary involving Japanese learners has centred on purported cultural tendencies towards traits that may predispose individuals to anxiety, such as introversion and shyness. According to Zimbardo (1981, p. 9, as cited in Doyon, 2000), shyness is "mental attitude that predisposes people to be extremely concerned about the social evaluation of them by others" and "involves keeping a low profile by holding back from initiating actions that might call attention to one's self". While shyness in itself is not a 'negative' personality trait, it can hinder free engagement in events and situations that would normally assist in the development of proficiency in a second or foreign language. For instance, Hinenoya and Gatbonton (2000) found that shyness scores were significantly negatively correlated with English language performance scores among groups of Japanese adults living abroad.

Japanese learners of English (JLE) tend to have expectations of their language classroom performance which prioritise accuracy and correctness of form. In Japan, Brown (2004b, p. 16) comments that students tend to be much more accepting of negative evaluation in the form of low grades for attendance or class participation, than risk the negative evaluation of their peers

for making mistakes in front of others. Nonaka (1990) claims that some learners are also reluctant to speak because they are afraid of sounding “silly” in English. They may also fear being seen as show-offs if they display significant levels of aptitude or skill. Brown (2004b) elaborates on the ‘double-bind’ facing English learners in Japan, who risk ridicule if they make a mistake, and risk social rejection if they answer correctly. Further to this is evidence of negative attitudes among Japanese towards other Japanese who can speak English well. The Japanese word *eigo-zukai* (English user) is used to describe Japanese who are fluent English users. According to Nakai (2005), the word is "loaded with negative connotations and implies a loss of identity" and also suggests "an ability to make a display in the language that is of no substance or value beyond its effect of drawing attention to the speaker" (p. 18). This means that those students who have the ability and desire to succeed in foreign language study can be held back from achieving their potential.

Previous Comparative Research

The initial stimulus for the current research came from the findings of a comparative investigation by Sim (2004) exploring the cultural traits and beliefs of young adult Japanese ESL learners studying in Australia, and comparing these traits and beliefs to those of their Chinese and Swiss peers also studying in Australia. The majority of the participants were recruited from private language schools across Australia, and a smaller number came from more intensive university and higher education programs. The 2004 study employed a self-report questionnaire (translated for each of the three nationalities) made up of four different measures, two psychological in nature and two related directly to language teaching. The measures, in order, were (a) The Fear of Appearing Incompetent Scale (FAIS) by Good & Good (1971) (b) The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986) (c) Targeted Beliefs Set (TBS) by Murphey (1996) (d) The Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (FNE) by Leary (1983). The returned questionnaires collected for analysis consisted of 101 Chinese, 52 Swiss, and 101 Japanese. Following statistical analysis of the data from the scored sections of the questionnaire (Sections A, B, & D), the numerical findings are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1*Comparative overall scores on three anxiety scales (from Sim, 2004)*

Questionnaire Section:	Nationality		
	Chinese	Swiss	<i>Japanese</i>
(A) FAIS (Fear of Appearing Incompetent Scale).	11.66	10.46	<i>17.09</i>
(B) FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale).	54.91	47.61	<i>66.71</i>
(D) FNE (Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale).	30.22	29.53	<i>37.77</i>

As a group, the Japanese respondents, when compared to the other groups (Swiss respondents and Chinese respondents), reported significantly higher levels of fear of appearing incompetent, a much higher level of anxiety in the foreign language classroom, and a higher level of fear of negative evaluation. Overall, the influence of these three anxiety measures was significantly more prevalent among the Japanese population in the study, suggesting the importance and influence of anxiety factors within this particular learner group.

Section C, the Targeted Beliefs Set (TBS) by Murphey (1996) could not be scored numerically as it was only an instrument for the exploration of a small set of learner beliefs. However, the results for one item, in particular, stood out. Item 7, “I don’t feel confident when I speak English” received a very strong response in the affirmative from the Japanese participants but a much more negative response from the Chinese and Swiss (Figure 1).

Statistics : % within Nationality of Respondent

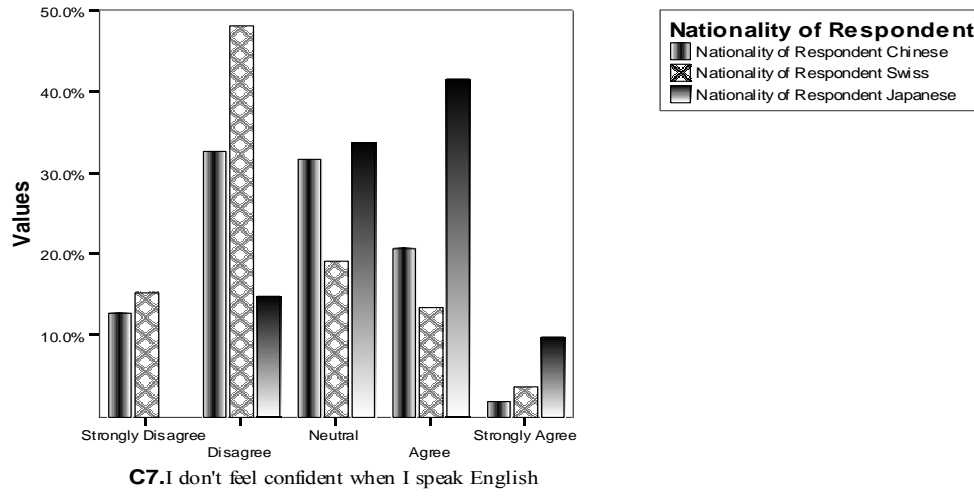


Figure 1: Responses to 'I don't feel confident when I speak English'

The Japanese respondents, when compared to the other English language learner groups involved in the study, scored higher across most items in each of the four sections (FAIS, FLCAS, TBS & FNE). While they shared language learning traits with the other groups, such as feeling the need to use correct grammar, they were quite distinctive. This was especially evident when focusing on their anxiety levels and their levels of fear with regard to what others thought of them.

The conclusions of the research by Sim (2004) and the work of others covered in this review highlighted the need for complementary investigation of Japanese learners studying English in their native country of Japan. This current study thus sought to determine whether or not the findings of Sim (2004) would be confirmed by a similar study of university-age language learners in Japan. As Johnson and deHaan (2011) illustrate, strategies that enable learners of English in Japan to move towards greater self-regulation of their language learning and are likely to be associated with proficiency gains. Understanding the specific elements of anxiety among JLE is an important step to the design of programs that aim to empower these learners by helping them to understand and take control of their foreign language anxiety.

Research Questions

The present study used a similar instrument (translated four-section questionnaire) to the earlier investigation by Sim (2004), in the EFL setting of Japan. The study aimed to address the following four research questions:

1. How do Japanese EFL students assess their confidence and anxiety with respect to learning and using English?
2. What major language learning beliefs characterise these Japanese EFL students?
3. To what extent are the beliefs and anxiety levels expressed by these Japanese EFL learners different from those reported by their Japanese ESL counterparts?
4. Is there evidence to suggest that the learning context (ESL VS. EFL) influences learner beliefs and the prevalence of anxiety among Japanese learners of English?

METHODS

Data Collection

Three classes of Japanese university students were sourced as the candidates for the self-report questionnaires used in this study. This was possible due to an academic contact of the first author agreeing to provide access to his classes at this university. As a result, three instances of data collection took place at the university on the same day from three different classes. Formal approval of the ethical aspects of the study was obtained from the relevant university committee. It was made clear to potential participants that their participation was completely voluntary by the academic in charge. In addition, the questionnaire also included a participant information statement (translated into Japanese) on the front page that was brought to their express notice. Fortunately, the students were very accustomed to completing surveys and all students present on the day in the classes completed the questionnaire. The anonymity of participating students was preserved in an effort to elicit frank responses to the items in the questionnaire.

Participants

A suitable cohort of participants was identified through a professional academic connection of the first author at a major Japanese university in Tokyo. The three classes targeted were standard Japanese university English classes, both elective and compulsory. The participants consisted of fifty-eight males and forty-three females with an average age of approximately 20 years. A total of 101 fully completed questionnaires (Appendix I) were collected.

Instruments

Despite the many disadvantages and limitations, which include simplicity of and superficiality of answers, unreliable and unmotivated respondents, prestige and acquiescence bias, self-deception, and the fatigue effect (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010), the chosen instrument for data collection was a questionnaire. This anonymous self-report questionnaire (Appendix I), was originally chosen by Sim (2004) for a variety of reasons, despite the aforementioned disadvantages. Firstly, questionnaires enable large quantities of data to be gathered in a relatively short amount of time and contain the potential for researchers to draw conclusions about the pattern of responses for particular groups (as opposed to individuals). It was also felt that a questionnaire was the most appropriate instrument for the current study given that “the essential characteristic of quantitative research is that it employs categories, viewpoints, and models that have been precisely defined by the researcher in advance, the numerical or directly quantifiable data are collected to determine the relationship between these categories and to test the research hypotheses” (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p. 9). Also, questionnaires can offer anonymity, which was an important factor considering the desire for frank responses to the somewhat personal area of individual feelings and anxieties. Next, in order to be able to make a valid comparison between an ESL (Sim, 2004) and EFL cohort of Japanese learners, the questionnaire was again chosen for this follow-up Japan-based study. Finally, the researcher simply could not physically visit the seventeen data collection points that ultimately spanned the continent of Australia for the ESL study (Sim, 2004) nor were the researchers able to travel to Japan to gather data for the

current study. This further highlights the choice of questionnaires due to their “unprecedented efficiency in terms of (a) researcher time, (b) researcher effort, and (c) financial resources” (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010, p. 6).

The final 74 item questionnaire was made up of four components:

Section A: The Fear of Appearing Incompetent Scale (FAIS) by Good and Good (1971).

Section B: The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz,
Horwitz, and Cope (1986).

Section C: Targeted Beliefs Set (TBS) by Murphey (1996).

Section D: The brief Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) scale by Leary (1983).

The selection of the four scales aimed for a mix of psychological measures (Sections A & D) and measures related to language learning beliefs and experiences (Sections B & C). The selection of this combination of scales was motivated by a desire to understand language anxiety in a broader social context, hence the inclusion of learner beliefs and more general measures of anxiety in social settings. The original 36 item FAIS, according to Good and Good (1971), possessed a reliability coefficient of .89 (KR-20) and Sim (2004) achieved a similar reliability score of .87 (Alpha) for a reduced number of 27 dichotomous data items (true or false = 1 or 0). This comparison was deemed acceptable since according to Siegle (2013, para. 9) “although alpha is usually used for scores which fall along a continuum, it will produce the same results as KR-20 with dichotomous data (0 or 1).” Similar to the FAIS, the original 33 item FLCAS (Horwitz et al., 1986) possessed a published reliability coefficient of .93 (Alpha) and in its reduced 22 item form (Sim, 2004) produced a reliability score of .92 (Alpha). Both original scales in section A and B had their items totals reduced largely in an effort to reduce repetition and the collective number of items across the four sections in the final questionnaire. The 13 item TBS scored a reliability coefficient of .65 (Alpha) for Sim (2004), however this section was not a ‘scale’ intended to measure an overall construct (such as those in section A, B, and D) but rather a collection of learner beliefs targeted for investigation. The brief FNE contained 12 items

and recorded a reliability coefficient of .87 by Sim (2004) and this compared favourably with the established reliability score of .90 (Alpha) by Leary (1983). All items were translated into Japanese in order to reduce misunderstandings and eliminate the variable of English reading comprehension levels from the exercise. Since the questionnaire was anonymous, participants were informed that by returning the questionnaire they were consenting to the use of the information for the research project.

Analysis

Only questionnaires that were fully completed (no missing answers or sections left incomplete) were included for the purposes of analysis. In addition, questionnaires submitted after achieving the target total of 101 complete questionnaires were excluded. A final complete sample of 101 respondents was eventually obtained out of 109 questionnaires that were originally taken by students; five being submitted incomplete and three excluded. The responses were analysed using SPSS Version 15.0 (2007), and items for which statistically significant differences between the EFL and ESL cohorts were identified. The first part of the analysis took the form of an average derived from the answers to all of the questions contained in each of the three main scales used in the study. For example, the highest possible score from section A (FAIS) was 27 (a true or false response to each of the 27 items providing a respective item score of 1 or 0). For section B (FLCAS) the highest possible sentiment total was 110 (22 items on a scale from 1 to 5). Section D (FNE) was scored the same as the FLCAS for each of its 12 items giving it a highest possible FNE sentiment score of 60 (12 items scored from 1 to 5). Averages were then compared between groups using independent samples T-tests in order to identify any instances of significant difference between the ESL and EFL cohorts.

Results

In terms of the aggregate scores on each of the questionnaire components, the results from the current in Japan-based study were very similar to the earlier results of the Australia-based ESL study of Sim (2004). However, some notable differences emerged on individual

items. As noted above, in order to allow for comparisons between the two studies, every attempt was made to match the current study's Japan-based Japanese EFL (JEFL) population to the earlier Australia-based Japanese ESL (JESL) respondents. The final comparison of respondents (Table 2) shows that the two groups were very similar except that the JEFL group were slightly younger and contained a higher ratio of males to females.

Table 2

Age and gender distribution in the two studies

	<i>Average Age</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
JESL Australia	23 years	40	61	101
JEFL Japan	20 years	58	43	101

The p-values for individual items on the questionnaire were calculated in order to assess the statistical significance of the findings. Results with p-values *less* than .05 were considered strong enough to reject the idea that the observed result could have occurred by chance and was therefore statistically significant. However, this did not mean that those items with p-values greater than .05 were discounted altogether; although their individual statistical power was diminished, many of these results still provided valuable insights.

Table 3

Questionnaire reliability score (Alpha) comparison between EFL and ESL cohorts

α	<i>Section A: FAIS</i>	<i>Section B: FLCAS</i>	<i>Section C: TBS</i>	<i>Section D: FNE</i>
JESL Australia	.87	.92	.65	.87
JEFL Japan	.82	.87	.64	.75

There was a universal fall in the reliability scores for all four sections of the questionnaire. Section D (FNE), the final section of the questionnaire, suffered the greatest

reduction in reliability. Items chosen for display in the following tables (4, 5, 6 and 7) were selected based on a value judgment and with a mind to space and word-limit constraints. This value judgment was largely made considering (1) an interesting comparison between JEFL and JESL, and (2) either a close similarity or a stark difference between the JEFL and JESL scores.

Table 4 shows the overall results obtained on the ‘Fear of Appearing Incompetent’ scale, as well as the comparative score of the JEFL and JESL groups on selected items. The JEFL group returned a slightly higher aggregate score (17.98) when compared with the JESL group (17.09). This compared with aggregate scores of 11.66 for the Chinese group, and 10.46 for the Swiss group.

Table 4*Scores on the Fear of Appearing Incompetent Scale*

JESL Australia (2004) Overall score = **17.09** (Chinese = 11.66 & Swiss = 10.46)

JEFL Japan (2005) Overall score = **17.98**

Section A: Fear of Appearing Incompetent Scale (FAIS) ($\alpha = .82$)	<i>n</i> True/ <i>n</i> False		Mean (SD)		<i>p</i> -value
	JEFL	JESL	JEFL	JESL	
3. After having a conversation with someone, I have a tendency to worry about having said something that was inappropriate.	81/20	66/35	.80(.400)	.65(.478)	.018*
6. I am frequently prone to take actions to counteract previous bad impressions which I believe I have made.	56/45	41/60	.55(.500)	.41(.494)	.035*
7. After completing an assignment or task, I am prone to have doubts about whether I did it correctly.	81/20	70/31	.80(.400)	.69(.464)	.075
9. I have a tendency to worry that others will consider my behaviour in some activities to be inappropriate or tactless.	66/35	46/55	.65(.478)	.46(.500)	.005*
16. I am prone to worry that others may regard my beliefs and opinions as incorrect or funny.	65/36	56/45	.64(.481)	.55(.500)	.196
17. I am prone to worry about my adequacy in classroom work or activities.	55/46	75/26	.54(.500)	.74(.439)	.003*
18. I would never worry about the possibility of saying something inappropriate in a new social situation.	3/98	5/96	.03(.171)	.05(.218)	.471
20. I have a tendency to worry that others will laugh at my ideas.	52/49	58/43	.51(.502)	.57(.497)	.397

26. I tend to fear what others, even if they are complete strangers, may think of my actions or behaviour.	61/40	50/51	.60(.492)	.50(.502)	.119
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*Statistically significant at the 5% level. Shaded = opposing/contrasting JEFL/JESL results.

JEFL respondents

Overall, JEFL participants did report significant levels of fear when it came to appearing incompetent. The responses of the JEFL respondents suggested that they were very conscious of their interactions with others, especially with regard to their performance. For example, item 3 illustrates how lacking in communicative self-confidence many of the respondents appear to be, and this post-activity self-doubt is evident again in item 7. The JEFL participants also appear to place a very high value on what others think of them according to many of the questionnaire items (# 6, 9, 16, 20 and 26). This appears to manifest itself as a distinct worry or concern, with the potential to impact upon their communicative interactions with others.

JEFL VS. JESL respondents

Some points of difference were noted when comparing the JEFL results with the Australian JESL study. On items 3, 6 and 9, the JEFL participants (as a group) reported a significantly higher ‘fear of appearing incompetent’ than did the JESL participants. By contrast, item 17 "*I am prone to worry about my adequacy in classroom work or activities*" stood out as an item in which the JESL group (75) scored higher in agreement than the JEFL respondents (55). Item 18 clearly showed that both groups expressed a strong potential for "*worry about the possibility of saying something inappropriate in a new social situation*" with scores of 98 and 96 respectively; however, the inclusion of the word *never* in the full statement was perhaps largely responsible for this result. After all, it would be a rare person who *never* worried about this possibility. Finally, the overall comparison between JEFL and JESL (Sim, 2004) demonstrated that, despite four individual JEFL items yielding results that contrasted with those obtained in the

earlier study (items 6, 9, 24 & 26), the majority of responses (23 out of the 27 items) produced very similar results.

Table 5 shows the overall results obtained on the 'Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale' (FLCAS), as well as the comparative score of the JEFL and JESL groups on selected items. Once again, the overall scores of the JESL (66.71) and JEFL (66.00) group on the FLCAS were very similar. These scores contrasted with those obtained from the Chinese group (54.91) and Swiss group (47.67) in the earlier Australia-based study.

Table 5

Scores on the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale:

JESL Australia (2004) Overall score = 66.71 (Chinese = 54.91 & Swiss = 47.67)

JEFL Japan (2005) Overall score = 66.00

Section B: Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) ($\alpha = .87$)	<i>n</i> Agree/ <i>n</i> Disagree (neutral responses excluded))		Mean (SD)		<i>p</i> -value
	JEFL	JESL	JEFL	JESL	
Item #					
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.	48/25	30/41	3.31(1.21)	2.82(1.06)	.006*
5. I keep thinking the other students are better at languages than I am.	55/17	61/11	3.55(1.11)	3.71(.993)	.718
6. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my language class.	68/20	54/25	3.79(1.15)	3.46(1.12)	.162
7. I worry about the consequences of failing my language class.	78/13	53/38	4.04(1.19)	3.24(1.37)	.000*
9. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.	64/18	28/36	3.64(1.15)	2.88(1.08)	.000*
15. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do.	48/23	53/15	3.38(1.06)	3.57(.973)	.365
16. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students.	57/23	41/30	3.45(1.05)	3.15(1.02)	.243
19. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	53/22	35/33	3.39(1.01)	3.03(1.06)	.123
20. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says.	28/46	54/26	2.74(1.07)	3.27(.979)	.004*
22. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared for in advance.	74/12	43/29	3.82(.994)	3.11(.989)	.000*

*Statistically significant at the 5% level. Shaded = opposing/contrasting JEFL/JESL results.

JEFL respondents

The results from the FLCAS section of the questionnaire indicate that many of the JEFL respondents experience anxiety in a range of language classroom situations. Nearly half of the respondents (48, #3) reported trembling when they were about to be called upon to perform in their language classes, while even higher numbers of participants tended to panic when they had to speak without preparation (68, #6), found it embarrassing to volunteer answers (64, #9), and became nervous when they felt unprepared for questions from their teacher (74, #22). A large proportion of JEFL participants (78, #7) worried about failing their language classes. Conversely, only 28 (#20) reported feeling nervous about not understanding every word spoken by their teacher.

JEFL vs JESL respondents

Out of the 22 items in this section, JESL and JEFL response patterns were only opposing on six occasions (items 2, 3, 9, 14, 18, 20). The response patterns in the case of the other items were not opposing, although for some items (e.g. item 7) there were significant differences between the JESL and JEFL cohorts. The remainder of responses in a similar range. However, while it at first appeared that overall the JESL participants scored higher for many FLCAS items than their JEFL counterparts, there were a number of items with significant opposing results which influenced the final score. It appears that many participants in both groups lack self-confidence in their language abilities and feel that other students are better at languages than themselves (55 & 61, #5).

Contrasting findings were obtained in response to item 9, with JEFL respondents reporting embarrassment when volunteering answers in class (64) while their JESL counterparts were not as concerned (28). It is quite possible that this item reflects a difference in the makeup of the language classrooms between the two groups. The JEFL group were sourced from a Japanese university with classes of 30 or more students, while the Australian JESL respondent classes had a usual maximum size of 20. Also, it is likely that the classroom cultures and behavioural norms were different; volunteering answers may well have been an established norm in the mixed-nationality classes in Australia, to which the Japanese students had become accustomed. A similarly contrasting response pattern was seen in participants' reported levels of

nervousness when they felt unprepared to answer a question from their teacher (74 for the JEFL group vs 43 for the JESL group, #22), which once again seems likely to reflect a different classroom culture. While concerns about the consequences of language class failure were prevalent among both populations, the JEFL group led the way with 78 in agreement compared with 53 for the JESL group (#7).

Table 6 contains the results obtained on the Targeted Beliefs Set (Murphey, 1996) questionnaire items. The responses to Section C could not be 'scored' like the other measures employed in the questionnaire as it was not an overall measure of a defined construct but rather an investigative tool with the purpose of exploring a variety of potential beliefs of language learners.

Table 6*Responses to the Targeted Belief Set Questions:*

Section C: Targeted Beliefs Set (TBS) ($\alpha = .64$)	<i>n</i> Agree/ <i>n</i> Disagree (neutral responses excluded)		Mean (SD)		<i>p</i> -value
	JEFL	JESL	JEFL	JESL	
1. I must speak in grammatically complete sentences to be understood.	15/70	28/50	2.35(.889)	2.72(1.05)	.057
4. I am afraid of making mistakes in English.	30/54	29/51	2.76(1.09)	2.74(1.10)	.838
5. To improve my English I must speak with native speakers of English.	87/2	78/9	4.21(.725)	4.07(1.00)	.132
7. I don't feel confident when I speak English.	58/14	52/15	3.58(.908)	3.47(.867)	.695
8. Speaking English with other Japanese does not improve my English.	11/67	22/51	2.27(.915)	2.65(1.12)	.067
10. I speak in complete sentences in Japanese.	6/70	17/70	1.93(.962)	2.13(1.23)	.028*
11. Making mistakes in English can help you learn faster.	80/3	85/4	3.92(.674)	4.09(.750)	.131
12. I feel foolish when I speak incorrectly in English	26/48	25/52	2.69(.987)	2.62(1.09)	.503
13. If I make mistakes in English my fellow students will lose respect for me.	8/77	1/77	2.01(.889)	1.93(.765)	.081

*Statistically significant at the 5% level.

JEFL respondents

The findings reported in Table 6 reflect a general awareness that ‘mistakes’ are an inevitable part of learning a foreign language, and that only a minority (30) report being afraid of making mistakes (#4) or feeling foolish when doing so (26, #12). This was consistent with a general belief (80) that making errors facilitates language learning (#11). However, a majority of respondents expressed the belief that to improve their English they required native speakers to communicate/practise with (87, #5).

JEFL vs JESL respondents

Looking at the selected example results in the above table, it can be stated that the learner belief responses obtained from the two groups were similar. A slightly smaller number of JESL respondents (78 vs 87) believed that speaking with native speakers of English was necessary in order to improve their own proficiency. This (once again) may reflect the experiences of the JESL participants who were studying in mixed-nationality classes and communicating in English with learners from other first language backgrounds. However, in this instance it is not the difference that is striking, but rather the pervasiveness of this belief across both groups.

Table 7 displays the group scores on the on the ‘Fear of Negative Evaluation’ (FNE) scale (Leary, 1983). As can be seen in the table, the mean overall score for the JEFL group (41.73) was higher than for the JESL group (37.77), which in turn was higher than the mean overall score for the Chinese and Swiss groups (30.22 and 29.53 respectively).

Table 7*Scores on the Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale:*JESL Australia (2004) Overall score = 37.77 (Chinese = 30.22 & Swiss = 29.53)JEFL Japan (2005) Overall score = 41.73

Section D: Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) ($\alpha = .75$)	<i>n</i> Characteristic/ <i>n</i> Not so Characteristic (moderate responses excluded)		Mean (SD)		<i>p</i> -value
	JEFL	JESL	JEFL	JESL	
Item #					
1. I worry about what other people will think of me even when I know it doesn't make any difference.	77/11	57/24	3.84(.891)	3.30(1.05)	.002*
3. I am frequently afraid of other people noticing my shortcomings.	61/14	41/38	3.58(.941)	3.02(1.16)	.003*
4. I rarely worry about what kind of impression I am making on someone.	7/84	12/74	1.89(.847)	2.14(.959)	.376
5. I am afraid others will not approve of me.	67/9	47/24	3.67(.884)	3.23(1.06)	.028*
6. I am afraid that people will find fault with me.	57/19	39/36	3.49(.986)	2.98(1.09)	.017*
8. When I am talking to someone, I worry about what they may be thinking about me.	74/11	57/17	3.80(.928)	3.48(.965)	.118
9. I am usually worried about what kind of impression I make.	84/7	71/12	3.99(.781)	3.68(.948)	.070
11. Sometimes I think I am too concerned with what other people think of me.	65/21	55/31	3.69(1.23)	3.33(1.42)	.187
12. I often worry that I will say or do the wrong things.	61/17	50/24	3.27(1.05)	3.27(1.05)	.389

*Statistically significant at the 5% level.

JEFL respondents

77 of the JEFL respondents worried about what others thought of them even when they knew it didn't make any difference (#1). A majority feared disapproval from those around them (67, #5), were fearful of others finding fault with them (57, #6), and wanted to make good impressions (84, #9). These fears even occurred during actual communication with others (74, #8) and in the time before interactions (61, #12).

JEFL vs JESL respondents

Again, for this section no opposing/contrasting patterns of results were recorded between the JEFL and JESL respondents, with no stark points of difference between the two. The only noticeable variation was the degree of FNE recorded for each item (the JEFL participants generally recorded higher levels across the entire section). Looking at the nine examples given in Table 7 above it is clear that the local JEFL grouping appear to report higher levels of FNE than the international JESL students involved in this study and the final scores were evidence of this.

Discussion

Summary of Findings

Given the results collected from the JEFL participants on the four sections of the questionnaire (A, B, C & D), a number of conclusions can be proposed regarding their overall profile. Generally, the JEFL respondents:

- reported high levels of self-doubt and insecurity (A3, A7, A20, B5, B16, C7, D3, D6);
- reported being worried about what others think about them and having high levels of FNE (A9, A16, A27, D1, D3, D5, D8);
- expressed low levels of confidence in themselves and their abilities (A6, A7, A17, B5, B9, B15, C7, D9, D12);

- reported experiencing high levels of not only language anxiety but what could be social anxiety, especially in relation to performance situations involving others (A9, A26, B6, B19, B22, C4, C12, D12).

Foreign language anxiety among JEFL participants

The FAIS (Good & Good, 1971) produced results that highlighted that many of the respondents did indeed experience a fear of appearing incompetent in a range of situations. One of the most interesting FAIS results was item 3, "after having a conversation with someone, I have a tendency to worry about having said something that was inappropriate", which returned an acceptance score of 81 ($p = .018$). This result and many others verifiably showed that the 'fear of appearing incompetent' very likely does have an effect the communication processes of the respondents in the study. These fears about how others perceive one's words, behaviours and general identity are not an uncommon trait among many Japanese learners of English (Burden, 2002; Isselbaecher, 2004; Kondo & Yang; 2003; Masataka, 2002; Nakai, 2005; Nonaka, 1990). It follows that if an individual experiences anxieties like these then their levels of self-confidence must also be negatively affected. This complex mix of fear, doubt and self-questioning which occurs before, during and even after specific activities and events appears to be a solid component of the average JEFL profile. Matsuda & Gobel (2004), in a study involving 252 Japanese university students, highlighted the importance of fostering student self-confidence in the classroom, with the implication that "teachers need to reduce anxiety and enhance self-confidence by encouraging students' involvement in classroom activities and creating a comfortable atmosphere" (p. 32).

Anxiety in the English language classroom also appears to be a major component of the JEFL picture. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz et al (1986) produced results that showed the respondents often felt nervous and self-conscious in the classroom, particularly when faced with performance activities. This was highlighted by the result that 74 of the JEFL candidates became nervous when asked questions without advance warning and 68 reported that they felt like panicking when they had to speak without preparation. This not only illustrates the passive nature of a good many of classes in Japan but also hints at deeper issues within (and among) students themselves. Burden (2002, p. 1) cites a

belief in the wider Japanese culture which is termed the "I'm poor at English syndrome" in which university students describe the English language as "beyond them". Given results and findings such as these, there needs to be further investigation as to why students are reporting these feelings.

The results of the JEFL from the Targeted Beliefs Set (Murphey, 1996) provided further information about the study participants. Firstly, nearly all of them (87) felt that practising with a native speaker/expert speaker was required to improve their English ability. This is an established and widely held belief among Japanese learners of English which may account for why many students in Japan see their English language learning situation as something of a lost cause (Burden, 2002) partly due to their limited exposure to native speakers/expert speakers of English within Japan. However, this could also be a symptom of subtle undertones of social anxiety present in the population that results in a fatalistic attitude that resolves itself into an excuse. Attributing the fault to the environment is perhaps a convenient coping measure that could be masking anxieties that lead to resistance to engage in acts of communication in a foreign language. As Noyes & Hoehn-Saric (1998, p. 158) state, social phobia "is perhaps the most prevalent and disabling of the anxiety disorders yet is responsive to treatment" but "few persons seek this treatment, viewing their problem as a form of shyness or inherent weakness to be endured". Could it be that some individuals, believing that they are simply shy, are actually experiencing a form of social anxiety brought about by a range of (often conflicting) factors including contemporary social and cultural norms? Combined with this is the fact that many Japanese aspire to 'mastering' English as opposed to learning it, and as a result often setting self-defeating (unattainable) performance targets (Nishino & Watanabe, 2008; Takanashi, 2004).

Self-confidence was also lacking among the JEFL participants, with over half (58) reporting that they did not feel confident when speaking English. However, a majority of respondents (80) realised that making mistakes was an important part of faster learning. Despite knowing that mistakes were crucial to their progress, a quarter (26) felt foolish when speaking incorrectly and almost a third (30) expressed a fear of making mistakes in English. Although these figures do represent a significant minority of participants, it is interesting that a majority of participants did not associate feelings of fear and foolishness with 'mistakes'. This suggests that expectations of accuracy and error-free production reported in the literature can at best explain

only part of the anxiety picture. Nonaka (1990), in an examination of Japanese learners of English, found that many fear that they may sound silly when speaking in English. It seems likely that, for some learners, fears of ‘sounding silly’ in a foreign language may have roots that are deeper than a simple fear of grammatical, lexical or pronunciation errors.

A fear of negative evaluation (FNE) was prevalent among the survey respondents, many of whom indicated that they worried about what others thought of them. FNE among Japanese learners of English appears to be quite evident (Kitano, 2001; Brown, 2004b) and it is apparent that this presents as a major factor affecting the English language development of many students. For example, almost three quarters (74) of JEFL reported that they worried about what others were thinking of them even when they were engaged in a conversation with that person. This, together with concerns about what impressions they make on others (84), and fears of others finding fault with them (57) or noticing their shortcomings (61), clearly has the potential to influence the performance aspects of learning a foreign language.

Finally, despite the fall in reliability observed in all sections of the questionnaire (Table 3, p. 11) the results were still considered to be in the universally acceptable range with values of .7 to .8 (Field, 2009, p. 675). In fact, Kline (1999) points out that psychological measures (such as those employed in this paper) attempt to gauge such diverse constructs that scores *less* than .7 should not be unexpected. Potential explanations for the variance in reliability could potentially lie with the difference in how the JESL and JEFL cohorts were sourced. The JESL cohort of Sim (2004) were sourced from a wide range of institutions (17 schools across Australia) whereas the JEFL cohort in the later study were homogenous, all coming from a single university. However, section D (FNE) suffered a more marked decrease in reliability when compared to the earlier Sim (2004) ESL study (.87 → .75). Possible reasons for this could be the homogenous group characteristics of the EFL cohort coupled with what Dörnyei and Taguchi (2010) describe as ‘fatigue effect’ that “is obviously more likely to influence responses toward the end of the questionnaire” (p. 9). Perhaps the EFL cohort were simply less interested in the issues canvassed in the questionnaire compared to the diverse range of students in the earlier ESL cohort.

JEFL and JESL comparisons

It is evident from the collected data and the subsequent results that the EFL (Japan) students' responses to most of the items closely followed those of their ESL (Australia) counterparts in the earlier study. This was further highlighted by the close collective scores for each of the scored sections of the questionnaire (A, B & D). This effectively meant that both the EFL and ESL respondent populations delivered results which appeared largely unaffected by the location of the students involved. However, there were some interesting variations and contrasts observed among particular questionnaire items. Graphs of these items are available in Appendix II.

- *Item A9 "I have a tendency to worry that others will consider my behaviour in some activities to be inappropriate or tactless".*

This item, with a statistically significant p-value of .005, demonstrated the finding that JEFL respondents, with a majority acceptance (true) response of 66, were considerably more worried about the considerations of others than the JESL, with a minority acceptance score of 46. In this instance it appears that perhaps there exists an increased level of worry of this type in Japan when compared to the levels experienced overseas. One possible explanation for this difference is that the JESL participants were studying in mixed-nationality language classes, meaning that the awkwardness that can arise when using English with other Japanese speakers was less evident in this learning context.

- *Item A17 "I am prone to worry about my adequacy in classroom work or activities".*

On this item there was a large difference between the two populations. The JEFL students recorded an acceptance (true) score of 55 but their JESL counterparts recorded 75 ($p = .003$). In other words, the JEFL participants appeared (as a group) to be less worried about meeting their classroom expectations than their JESL counterparts. This finding suggests that ESL students perhaps have a higher investment in their success/failure; after all, they are living and studying away from home, which involves substantial financial costs and (for some) the pressures of meeting language proficiency requirements for Australian university entrance. Another explanation could be that, for EFL students based in Japan, the language classroom is not the

focus of the anxiety, which stems instead from *the act of communicating* in English. The JESL presented somewhat differently, with the classroom stressing them more but actual communication in English worrying them slightly less. This is not surprising, given that many of them would have become accustomed to communicating with their international classmates in English.

- *Item A18 “I would never worry about the possibility of saying something inappropriate in a new social situation.”*

This item, in contrast to item A17, highlights a key similarity between the two respondent populations. The agreement levels of JEFL (3 → 2.97%) and JESL (5 → 4.95%) suggest that a clear majority of both populations believe that they could worry about the possibility of saying something inappropriate in a new social situation. These figures compare starkly with the earlier Australia-based study (Sim, 2004) which revealed agreement levels of 19% from the 52 Swiss participants and 37% from the 101 Chinese participants. This is significant since it clearly highlights the involvement of social and communicative factors that are all combined with an obvious link to language anxiety for both Japanese groups when interacting with others. The inclusion of the word *never* in the item is probably a factor in the response patterns across all groups.

- *Item A26 “I tend to fear what others, even if they are complete strangers, may think of my actions or behaviour.”*

The results reveal a higher level of agreement from the JEFL (61) compared to the JESL (50). This may be due to the fact JESL students (studying in mixed nationality classes) have experienced higher levels of exposure to people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and have had to develop better survival mechanisms to cope with their new environments. A simpler explanation may be that JESL students (who have chosen to study overseas) are by their 'international' nature more resistant to fear of what others think of them; however, the responses on other items in the section do not appear to support this.

- *Item B9 “It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.”*

It is evident from this item that the JEFL respondents have a much higher level of agreement (64) in comparison to the JESL group (28). It seems likely that differences in class environments and norms in Japan and Australia are a contributor to this result. As noted above, university language classes in Japan tend not to be places where students are eager to volunteer responses, even when teachers attempt to promote such a classroom culture. The mixed nationality learner groups in Australia may make it easier to establish volunteering answers as a 'normal' and thus an unremarkable feature of classroom interaction. When volunteering answers becomes an everyday occurrence, it loses its anxiety-producing power.

- *Item B22 "I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance."*

It is clear from the results that the JEFL respondents had a significantly lower disagreement when compared with their JESL counterparts (12 VS. 29) and much higher agreement (74 VS. 43) with this item. Here again, perhaps the cultural expectations and social norms in the Japanese environment serve to increase the threat value of such a situation for Japanese learners. This could also be evidence of the different teaching styles, with ESL students more experienced with communicative styles of learning and teaching.

Another possible explanation for the differing results seen in both items B9 and B22 is the phenomenon of 'grade entitlement' attitudes seen in English programs at some Japanese universities. Apparently, some students believe that simply attending and making an effort in their classes is enough to guarantee them passing grades (and beyond) and that actual results (the measures used to assess their increased skills and knowledge) are less important (Quinn & Matsuura, 2010). According to Quinn and Matsuura (2010), performance/ability targets need to be codified into basic standards and "without these standards, it is most likely that students will continue to view attendance and effort as more important than proficiency" (p. 17). Some of the differences observed between the JEFL and JESL may be attributable to this phenomenon, as progression in Australian language institutions is predominantly performance and proficiency

based. This is particularly true for the pre-university language courses, where only a small part (if any) of the final grade is generally given for attendance, and effort is not explicitly rewarded.

- *Item C5 “To improve my English I must speak with native speakers of English.”*

This item is of particular interest because the responses from both groups were very clear and uniform. Both ESL and EFL groups displayed strong agreement (78 and 87 respectively). However, a small number of the JESL respondents (9) did express disagreement with this statement, compared with only 2 of the JEFL cohort. It seems likely that some of the ESL students had realised through experience that their English can be practised effectively with other L2 speakers, and a small but significant number of them had come to the view that practice with native speakers was not, in fact, essential. Japanese students studying English in Australia are often in the minority in their classes in terms of the nationality mix, and would (as noted above) need to use their English regularly with other non-native English speakers. In addition, a proportion of those students who choose to study overseas in the first place may have a more ‘international outlook’ and may see English in its role as a lingua franca as a means of communicating with people from a range of countries.

- *Item D5 “I am afraid others will not approve of me.”*

Responses to this item revealed some interesting differences between the two groups. While 67 of the JEFL group expressed agreement, a little less than half (47) of the JESL group did so. Only 9 of the JEFL group disagreed with the statement, compared to 24 of the JESL participants. Again, perhaps the JEFL students feel a stronger burden operating in a culturally homogeneous environment when compared with the JESL students living and studying overseas. It stands to reason that increased mixing with people who tend to be less concerned about seeking approval of others may ‘rub off’ on the students, causing them to relax more in this regard.

- *Item D8 “When I am talking to someone, I worry about what they may be thinking of me.”*

Almost three-quarters (74) of JEFLL respondents felt this item was characteristic of them. These high levels of affinity suggest that, for many of these participants, it would be difficult to engage in a care-free in-depth conversation with others if they are experiencing stressful thoughts at the same time. The JESL were also a majority in leaning towards this characteristic but with a lower number (57) in agreement. The disparity observed between the two groups may reflect higher self-confidence levels among JESL and their increased level of interaction experiences in English, hence the lower 'care factor'.

Finally, as noted earlier, the individual item results for all four sections in the questionnaire displayed a close correlation in findings between the two studies. This was also reflected in the final scores for the three scoring sections (FAIS, FLCAS, and FNE) with only very small variations in evidence. The JEFLL group scored slightly higher in FAIS (17.98) to the JESL (17.09). This suggests that JEFLL students (as a group) were slightly more concerned about what others thought of them and hence were slightly more concerned about appearing incompetent. However, on the FLCAS the JESL group scored slightly higher (66.71) compared to the JEFLL respondents (66.00), although these overall mean scores were remarkably close. Responses to individual items suggested that the language classroom was still quite an intense and challenging environment for the JESL despite their comparatively higher self-confidence results in other sections. Lastly, the JEFLL participants scored significantly higher on the FNE scale (41.73) against the JESL (37.77), highlighting the very real fears that many of them have about what others think of them. Putting these results further into perspective were the FNE results for both the Chinese (30.22) and the Swiss (29.53) participants (Sim, 2004).

Conclusions

This study, and its comparisons with the earlier work of Sim (2004), suggests that the Japanese university student respondents appeared to share many characteristics with their Japanese counterparts studying abroad. The results showed that while there are small differences in responses attributable to the differences in the language learning context (university in Japan and language institutes in Australia) the prevalence of foreign language anxiety among both groups of Japanese learners of English was remarkably similar. When both of the Japanese

cohorts (JEFL & JESL) were compared with the Chinese and Swiss cohorts, differences were apparent in the overall scores on the various scales contained within the questionnaire. The learning context (EFL versus ESL setting) also did not appear to greatly affect their language learning beliefs. The findings reported here enable some tentative conclusions to be drawn on the research questions.

1. How do Japanese EFL students assess their confidence and anxiety with respect to learning and using English?

The findings indicate that JEFL respondents (as a group) tended to lack confidence in their English abilities. A high prevalence of language anxiety was also evident and, in the case of some individuals, this may include an element of social anxiety.

2. What major language learning beliefs characterise these Japanese EFL students?

The major language learning beliefs arising out of this study that characterise Japanese EFL students are that, despite reporting that they know making mistakes in English helps them learn faster, almost a third of them confess to being afraid of making mistakes in English. Given the patterns of responses on other sections of the questionnaire, it appears that a fear of ‘mistakes’ is only one component of the foreign language-associated anxiety that was reported by the group. In addition, even though 67 of the respondents agree that speaking English with other Japanese will improve their English, 87 believe that to improve their English they *must* speak with native speakers of English. There appear to be competing and perhaps contradicting forces at work here in terms of beliefs. Finally, many participants express anxiety about how they are viewed by others, which influences not only how they think but also how they act, both in the language classroom and in situations where they need to use English outside the classroom.

3. To what extent are the beliefs and language anxiety levels expressed by these Japanese different from those reported by their Japanese ESL counterparts?

For the explicit beliefs measured in the study in the Targeted Belief Set (Section C of the questionnaire) the two respondent groups did not present a single opposing or contrary result out of the total of 13 items. However, when we look at the issue of language anxiety, some

interesting differences emerge. Language anxiety levels for the JEFL group appear, at first, to be very slightly lower overall than the JESL cohort. This can be evidenced by the scoring in the FLCAS, with a mean aggregate score 66.00 for the JEFL group and with and 66.71 for the JESL group. However, the JEFL scores for the FAIS and FNE measures were higher than their JESL counterparts (17.98 vs 17.09 and 41.73 vs 37.77 respectively). Despite the variation, these scores are also very close. Strictly speaking, the FAIS and FNE are not explicit measures of language anxiety *per se*, but (as noted earlier) were used in this research in order to obtain a picture of language anxiety in a broader social context. Some items in these instruments do potentially relate to language anxiety while others are more closely related to the construct of social anxiety. Examples of those that could include an element of language anxiety include:

- *A3. After having a conversation with someone, I have a tendency to worry about having said something that was inappropriate.*
- *A18. I would never worry about the possibility of saying something inappropriate in a new social situation.*
- *A20. I have a tendency to worry that others will laugh at my ideas.*
- *D8. "When I am talking to someone, I worry about what they may be thinking of me."*

These items clearly indicate the involvement of anxieties related to language and verbal communication. However, looking at all the results, it might be worthwhile to ask *how do individuals actually go about registering/recording their stress levels* in the sorts of situations included on the FAIS and FNE scales? In many cases, the 'endpoint' is a form of communicative interaction with others, and it is what the individual says (or does not say) that actually triggers any fear that is experienced. Therefore, language anxiety is undeniably a significant factor in many of the items.

4. Is there evidence to suggest that the learning context (ESL VS. EFL) influences learner beliefs and the prevalence of anxiety among Japanese learners of English?

Overall, there appears to be little evidence to suggest that the learning context is a major contributing factor to the patterns of results seen in this study. As discussed earlier, both groups scored very similarly in the three scoring sections of the questionnaire with only a few individual

items displaying any significant disparity. The beliefs section of the questionnaire (Section C, TBS) also displayed close levels of similarity with no item returning an opposing/contrary result. Looking at the study as a whole, the only result that did not follow this analysis was the strong inference that, despite the JESL group's responses suggesting higher levels of anxiety in the language classroom than those of the JEFL students (perhaps due to higher class performance expectations), the JEFL cohort still tended to be slightly more anxious than the JESL students.

Limitations

A number of limitations must be acknowledged, relating to (a) the participants who took part in the study, and (b) the questionnaire itself. The potential limitations involving the participants include inexperience of the respondents with introspection and self-reporting, a possible lack of interest on the part of some participants in the questionnaires, as well as possible resistance among potential respondents sensitive to the nature of the study. It was also difficult to source 'equivalent' JESL and JEFL student populations. There was a thus a small difference in average age (3 years) between the two cohorts, and the JESL group (from the previous comparative study) was made up of students from many different language schools across Australia, whereas the JEFL participants were all from the same Japanese university.

The potential limitations involving the questionnaire included the large number of items which could have resulted in participant fatigue in some cases, as well as a likelihood of biased sampling due to non-respondents differing from the respondents. As mentioned earlier, the reduced reliability (alpha) scores of the JEFL study compared to the earlier Sim (2004) JESL research could have resulted (at least partly) from this. Although translations of the items were provided to improve comprehension among participants, some translated questionnaire items may still have been misunderstood.

Finally, one difficulty when using self-report measures to investigate the prevalence and effects of various types of fear and anxiety is whether or not participants feel able and willing to provide an accurate account of their true feelings and experiences.

Implications and Future Research Directions

The research project demonstrably emphasizes the prevalence of anxiety (in many of its forms) among this group of young adult Japanese English language learners. On many of the measures of anxiety used in this study, the JEFL and JESL groups aligned in the patterns of responses that they provided. While anxiety associated with foreign language learning is a universal phenomenon, comparisons with the Swiss and Chinese cohorts in the earlier Australia-based study suggest that it may be a more salient factor overall for the Japanese learner groups.

From the findings reported here, it seems clear that further research focusing on the management of anxiety and the development of learner beliefs that facilitate language acquisition may well assist young Japanese learners of English to reach their full potential. While the current study has obvious implications for language teachers making decisions about how to plan and manage their classes, it also highlights the fact that individual learners are diverse in terms of the situations that tend to induce this anxiety. The current study thus points to the value of future research that focuses on the individual learner as opposed to "the classroom" as a whole. Such research will inform new approaches to help learners understand and take control of their own language anxiety and to reach their true potential.

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3. Appendix I

...Cultural Questionnaire...

The original version of this questionnaire contained Japanese translations that were omitted in this publication due to space and word constraints.

(A) Please write down your nationality:

I am _____.

(B) Please write down your age:

I am _____ years old.

(C) Please circle:

I am male/female.

Please follow instructions.

Please complete all sections and respond to all items.

Be advised that this questionnaire is anonymous and all information obtained will be confidential.

The return of this questionnaire will be regarded as consent to use the information for research purposes.

Please remember that all questions relate to what you believe you would really do in any given situation....not what you wish you would do!

Items in this questionnaire have been acquired from the following authors: Good & Good (1971), Horwitz (1986), Murphey (1996), and Leary (1995).

Thank you for taking part in this research.

Section A:

Read each item carefully. There are no correct answers.

- T F 1. I would never worry about the possibility of being judged a fool in some activities.
- T F 2. I would very much like to be less apprehensive about my capabilities.
- T F 3. After having a conversation with someone, I have a tendency to worry about having said something that was inappropriate.
- T F 4. I am not prone to be apprehensive or worried about my ability to do a task well.
- T F 5. I am prone to worry sometimes that others may think I am not intelligent enough for my current job or occupation.
- T F 6. I am frequently prone to take actions to counteract previous bad impressions which I believe I have made.
- T F 7. After completing an assignment or task, I am prone to have doubts about whether I did it correctly.
- T F 8. I am never concerned about the possibility that others may regard me as being somewhat odd or strange.
- T F 9. I have a tendency to worry that others will consider my behaviour in some activities to be inappropriate or tactless.
- T F 10. I am almost never concerned about the possibility of being regarded as silly or clumsy around others.
- T F 11. I have a tendency to worry that others may regard me as not knowing what is really going on in the

immediate social situation.

T F 12. I tend to worry about the possibility of displaying in appropriate etiquette at a formal social event.

T F 13. I might be inclined to avoid criticizing someone else's judgement for fear of appearing to be in the wrong.

T F 14. I tend to worry that others will think I am not keeping up with work.

T F 15. If I were functioning in a professional field, I would not worry about my relationships with fellow professionals.

T F 16. I am prone to worry that others may regard my beliefs and opinions as incorrect or funny.

T F 17. I am prone to worry about my adequacy in classroom work or activities.

T F 18. I would never worry about the possibility of saying something inappropriate in a new social situation.

T F 19. I tend to worry that others may think I don't know what I'm doing.

T F 20. I have a tendency to worry that others will laugh at my ideas.

T F 21. I am rarely concerned about whether others will take me seriously enough.

T F 22. I am prone to worry that my parents or friends may regard me as irresponsible or undependable.

T F 23. I tend to fear that others may see me as not sufficiently self-disciplined.

T F 24. I tend to worry that others may think I am not devoting enough energy or enthusiasm to my work.

T F 25. I would never worry about the possibility that others might feel I have poor judgement in some situations.

T F 26. I tend to fear what others, even if they are complete strangers, may think of my actions or behaviour.

T F 27. I am prone to worry what others will think of me and as a result I regularly modify my behaviour to avoid possible embarrassment in front of others.

Section B:

For each item, indicate your response from the following options:

SA

A

N

D

SD

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my foreign language class.(____)
2. I don't worry about making mistakes in language class.(____)
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in language class.(____)
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in the foreign language. (____)
5. I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am. (____)
6. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my language class. (____)
7. I worry about the consequences of failing my language class. (____)
8. In language class, I can get so nervous that I forget things I know. (____)
9. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class. (____)
10. I would not be nervous speaking the foreign language with native speakers. (____)

11. Even if I am well-prepared for class, I feel anxious about it. (____)
12. I feel confident when I speak in foreign language class. (____)
13. I am afraid that my language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make. (____)
14. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in language class. (____)
15. I always feel that the other students speak the foreign language better than I do. (____)
16. I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students. (____)
17. Language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind. (____)
18. I feel more tense and nervous in my language class than in my other classes. (____)
19. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class. (____)
20. I get nervous when I don't understand every word the language teacher says. (____)
21. I am afraid the other students will laugh at me when I speak the foreign language. (____)
22. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance. (____)

Section C:

For each item, indicate your response from the following options:

1. I must speak in grammatically complete sentences to be understood. (____)
2. Native speakers of English speak English correctly. (____)
3. I must not make mistakes when I speak English. (____)
4. I am afraid of making mistakes in English. (____)

5. To improve my English I must speak with native speakers of English. (____)
6. The main job of a teacher is to correct your English. (____)
7. I don't feel confident when I speak English. (____)
8. Speaking English with other Japanese does not improve my English. (____)
9. I make no errors when I speak Japanese. (____)
10. I speak in complete sentences in Japanese. (____)
11. Making mistakes in English can help you to learn faster. (____)
12. I feel foolish when I speak incorrectly in English. (____)
13. If I make mistakes in English my fellow students will lose respect for me. (____)

Section D: Read each of the following statements carefully and indicate how characteristic it is of you according to the following scale:

- 1 = Not at all characteristic of me
- 2 = Slightly characteristic of me
- 3 = Moderately characteristic of me
- 4 = Very characteristic of me
- 5 = Extremely characteristic of me

1. I worry about what other people will think of me even when I know it doesn't make any difference. (____)
2. I am unconcerned even if I know people are forming an unfavorable impression of me. (____)
3. I am frequently afraid of other people noticing my shortcomings. (____)
4. I rarely worry about what kind of impression I am making on someone. (____)
5. I am afraid others will not approve of me. (____)
6. I am afraid that people will find fault with me. (____)
7. Other people's opinions of me do not bother me. (____)

8. When I am talking to someone, I worry about what they may be thinking about me. (____)
9. I am usually worried about what kind of impression I make. (____)
10. If I know someone is judging me, it has little effect on me. (____)
11. Sometimes I think I am too concerned with what other people think of me. (____)
12. often worry that I will say or do the wrong things. (____)

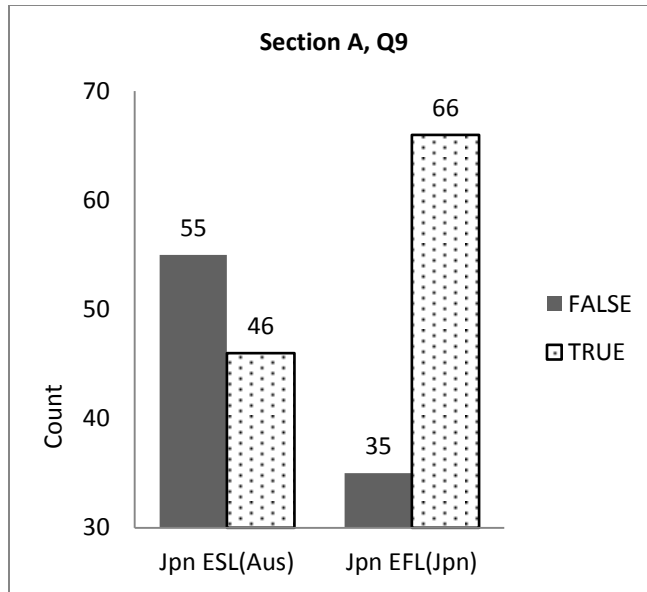
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End of Questionnaire.

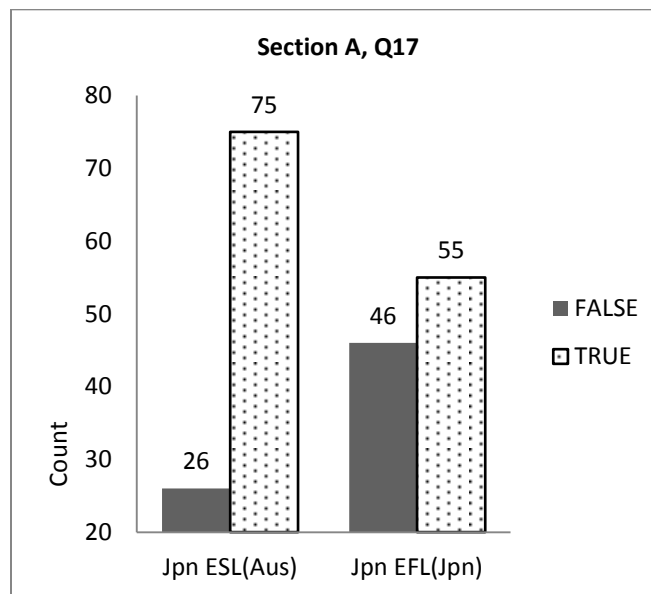
Thank you for taking part!

Appendix II

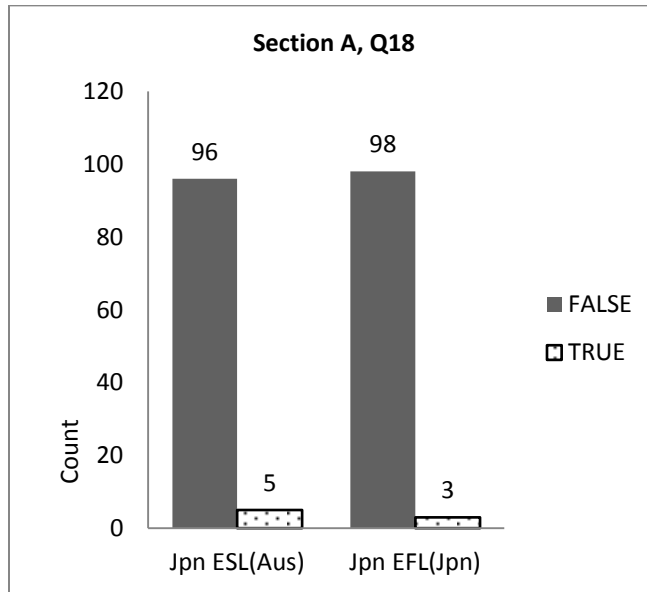
Section A Examples:



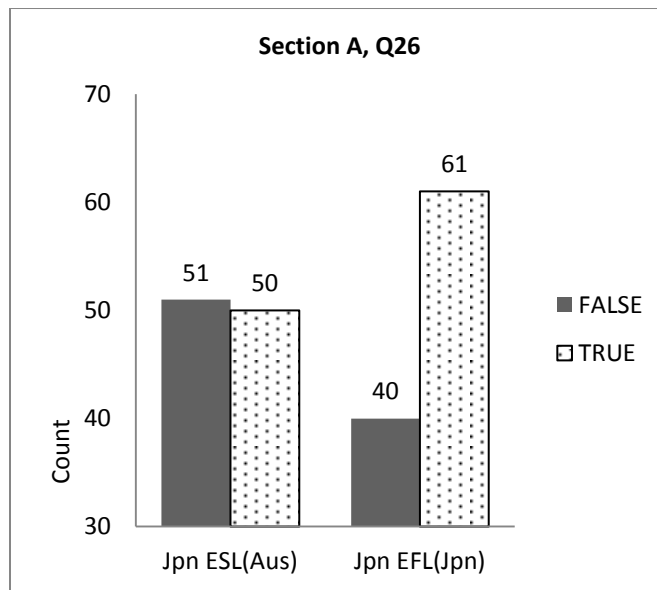
A9. I have a tendency to worry that others will consider my behaviour
in some activities to be inappropriate or tactless.



A17. I am prone to worry about my adequacy in classroom work or activities.

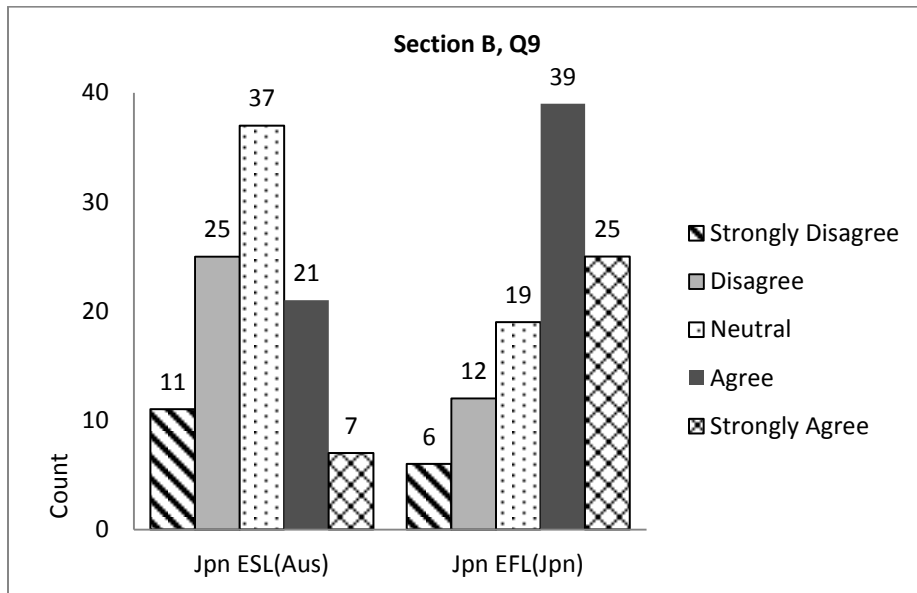


A18. I would never worry about the possibility of saying something inappropriate in a new social situation.

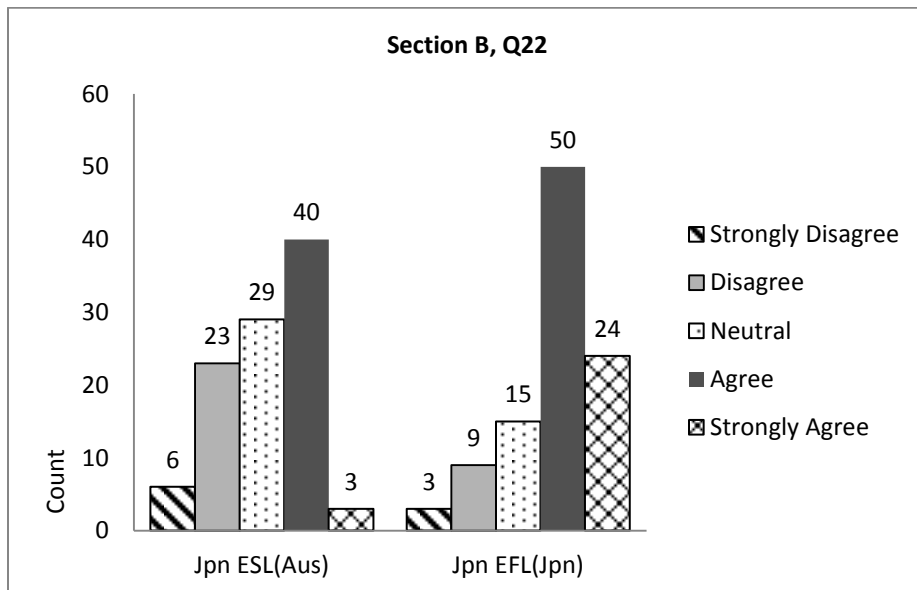


A26. I tend to fear what others, even if they are complete strangers, may think of my actions or behaviour.

Section B Examples (SD→SA, left to right):

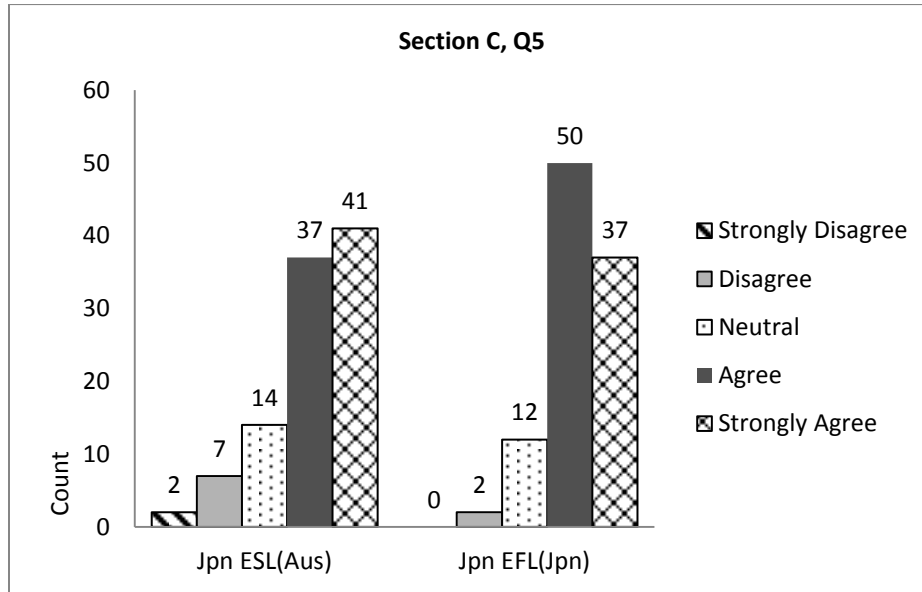


B9. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my language class.

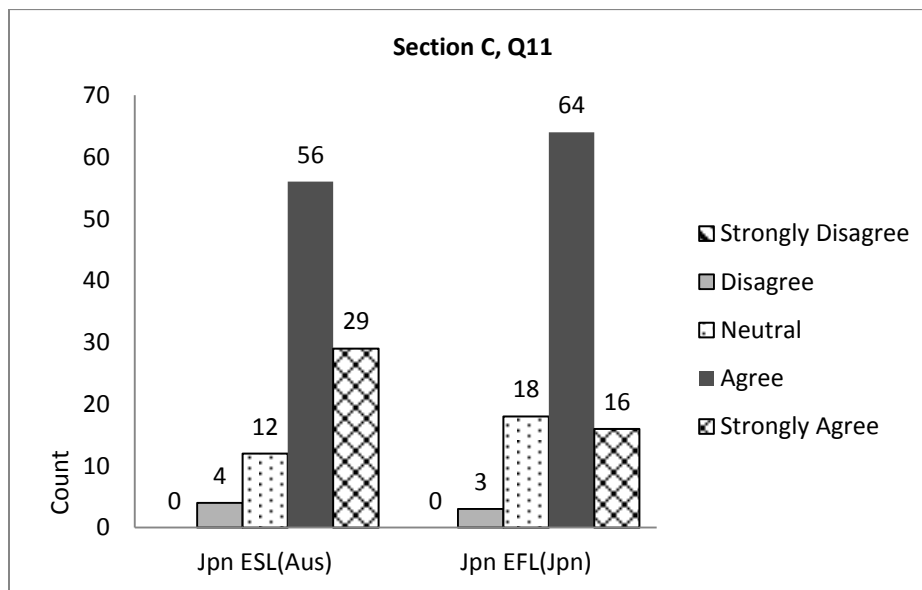


B22. I get nervous when the language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.

Section C Examples (SD→SA, left to right):



C5. To improve my English I must speak with native speakers of English.

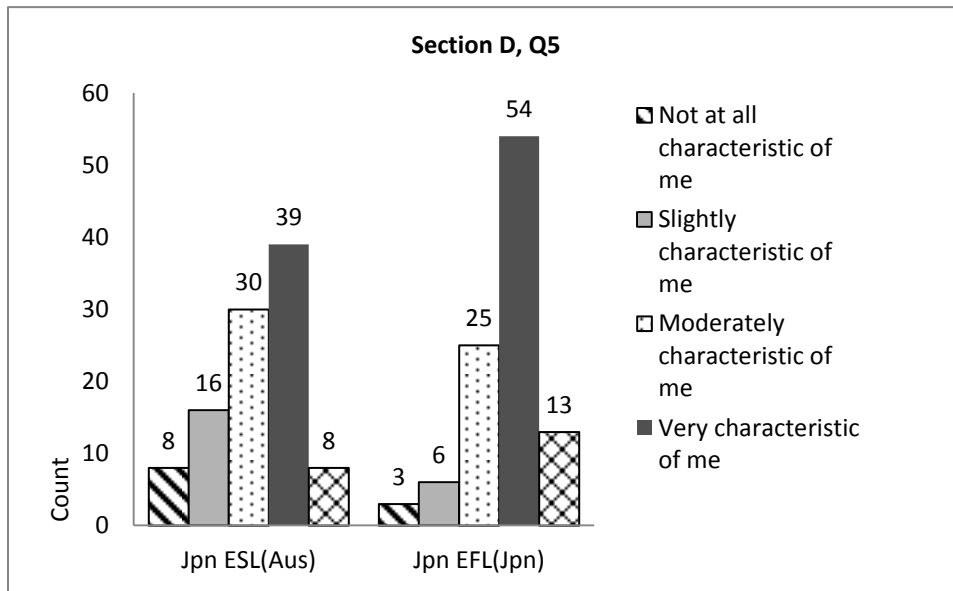


C11. Making mistakes in English can help you to learn faster.

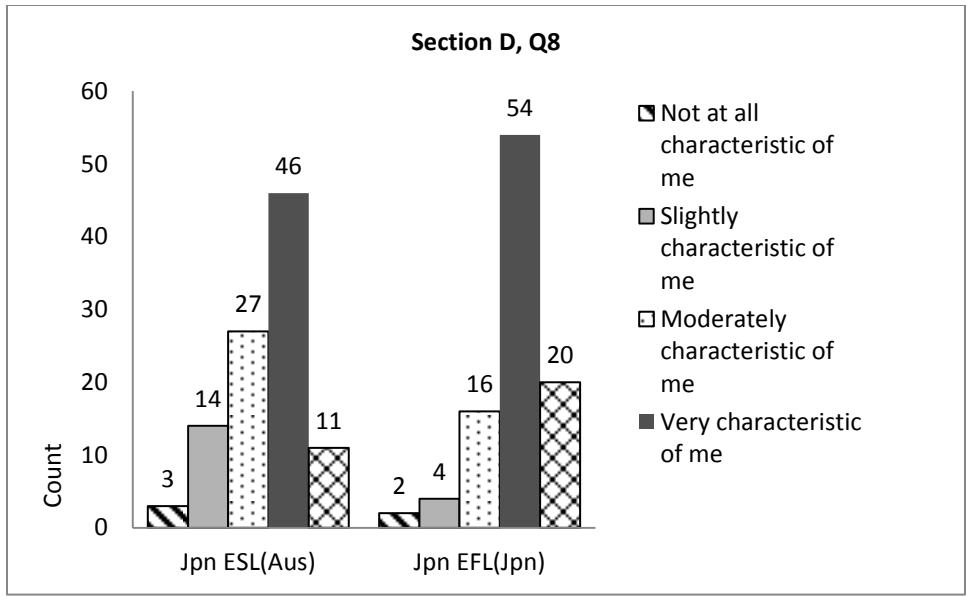
Section D Examples (1 → 5, left to right):

Response Key:

- 1 = Not at all characteristic of me.**
- 2 = Slightly characteristic of me.**
- 3 = Moderately characteristic of me.**
- 4 = Very characteristic of me.**
- 5 = Extremely characteristic of me.**



D5. I am afraid others will not approve of me.



D8. When I am talking to someone, I worry about what they may be thinking about m