

Exploring the Effect of Anxiety Through Narrative Inquiry

Miori Shimada

Shibaura Institute of Technology

Introduction

The demand to improve Japanese young students' English language has recently been increasing due to the rapid growth of foreign visitors to Japan and the increase in demand for the English language as a tool for international business and communication. This trend has pushed Japanese students to strengthen their English language skills. At the same time, English teachers in Japanese institutions have encountered the fact that many of their students begin to lose confidence in learning English, and their levels may go down as they feel less passionate about studying. One of the salient factors is anxiety. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) define anxiety as an emotion such as nervousness, uneasiness, restlessness or irritation when one is in a highly wrought-up state. Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) point out, "there is no doubt anxiety affects L2 performance—most of us will have had the experience that in anxiety-provoking climate our L2 performance deteriorates" (p. 176). In other words, anxiety is likely one of the most important emotional issues that face learners, and research is needed to understand its impact. In this paper, I discuss how anxiety affects students' second language (L2) learning based on a double case study of two participants whose language skills and backgrounds were quite different.

Literature review

Anxiety features in a wide range of literature, suggesting that it is a complex issue. For example, Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) state that individual differences (IDs) are one of the key factors that influence foreign language learning attitudes in the field of second language acquisition, and within this field, affective factors, which include motivation, anxiety, personality, beliefs, are considered to be a significant and crucial part of our entire lives. Moreover, Dörnyei and Ryan (2015) also mention that anxiety manifests in many forms of fear. In other words, students become scared of speaking, making mistakes, causing misunderstandings and being laughed at by others when they study a foreign

language. Gkonou recalls in one interview that in her childhood she began to have "physiological symptoms of anxiety," including sweating and a pounding heart every time she had to give answers in front of the class (Morgan, 2016, p. 17). Gkonou (2011) also regards language anxiety as salient compared to other types of anxiety because apprehension emerges due to "negative self-related cognition" (p. 268). These findings suggest that anxiety might be a universal issue for learners and rapidly develops in a stressful atmosphere. In addition, the level of anxiety becomes especially high in an EFL environment where non-native students have to communicate using their non-native language.

Anxiety influences EFL learners around the world in various ways. In Gkonou's (2011) study with Greek EFL students she defines their "self-consciousness and anxiety about EFL speaking" (p. 276) as "a state of ongoing social comparisons among learners" (p. 276) and argues that students suffer from "a fear of negative evaluation" (p. 276) or "loss of face" (p. 276) due to making mistakes or poor achievement. Bashori, Van Hout, Strik and Cucchiaroni (2020) introduce several studies focused on speaking anxiety in EFL classrooms in Indonesian institutions. Their work emphasizes the necessity of media/technological support for students to foster their speaking skills. Finally, Cheng, Horwitz and Schallert's (1999) study argues that anxiety varies depending on each student learning a second language although there is a moderate correlation between anxiety and L2 performance. These findings reveal that students' speaking anxiety increases when students receive pressure to present individually within a limited time.

Many studies have attempted to understand language anxiety specifically within Japan. Kitano (2001) found that students' anxiety increased when their ability was lower than that of peers and native speakers. Shachter (2018) reported that the anxiety levels of his Japanese university students significantly decreased after a few weeks of oral lessons. In addition, the data demonstrated that "the number of

negative comments decreased” towards the end of the term (p. 6). Another study conducted by Otsuka and Negishi (2009) saw a decrease in anxiety levels of their college students when speaking English after they took a short-term study abroad program. Mochizuki (2008) discussed L2 anxiety with special reference to Japanese education in in-classroom and outside-the-classroom environments. The results showed that in-classroom anxiety is higher than outside-the-classroom anxiety. Mochizuki (2008) concluded that L2 anxiety remains present within language learners although its components vary as they take new language classes.

The studies here show that anxiety appears to relate to important factors such as the type of task being done, the amount of experience students have, and the location of their English use; however, the studies often lacked detail about the students’ backgrounds. A narrative-informed study may be useful in exploring this data in more depth. Thus, the current study adopts a narrative approach with two students of significantly different backgrounds.

Research questions

With these different views taken into consideration, the following three research questions were generated:

- RQ1.** What factors influenced the participants’ anxiety in language learning?
- RQ2.** Is there a relationship between self-perceived successes/failures and anxiety in language learning?
- RQ3.** How have the participants overcome anxiety to become successful language learners?

Participants

In order to facilitate comparison and contrast, two participants with significantly different backgrounds were chosen for this study. Participant A was an international student at a Japanese university. I was introduced to her by a colleague who believed she would be a valuable participant for this study. According to this classmate, her attitude towards foreign language learning had always been positive. Her goal was to become a translator using Thai (her native tongue), English and Japanese. Overall, she was chosen because I felt she represented a successful example of a student who

has overcome language anxiety. In contrast, Participant B, my son, who was a Japanese university student at the time, had a negative attitude towards foreign language (particularly English) learning. Participant B had experience failing English tests many times during his junior/senior high school years. He considered himself a failure among other English language learners due to this stressful experience. He was chosen because I felt he represented an unsuccessful example of a student who has faced language anxiety.

Participants’ language learning histories

Participant A is a 26-year-old female student from Thailand majoring in English at a Japanese private university. She started learning English in kindergarten in Thailand and continued taking regular English classes in both primary and secondary school. She also took some extracurricular English classes during those school years. When she was in Grade 11, she also began learning the Japanese language. When she was in Grade 12, she applied for admission to a Japanese university and was accepted; however, she decided not to go because she did not feel confident about her success. She entered a Thai university instead and studied geology for four years. After her sophomore year, she decided to study abroad for the first time, going to New Zealand for three months of her summer vacation. During her stay, she lived with her host family with two other international students: one from Switzerland, and the other from China. By the time she was a junior in college, she had learned Japanese privately for two years. This experience made her decide to enroll in a Japanese university. At the time of this study, she had been majoring in English and working part-time in Western Japan for one year and nine months.

Participant B is a 23-year-old Japanese male student majoring in international business and economics in a Japanese private university in the Tokyo metropolitan area. He was exposed to English language from around the age of three. Because of his mother’s job as an English teacher for young learners, he was put in a children’s English class once per week (depending on his mood) until the age of eight. After that, he learned English in primary school classes four or five times a year. In his primary/secondary school years, he made some short trips to Australia (once, 6 years old), the United

States (twice, 11 & 14 years old) and Canada (once, 13 years old) with his family during summer vacations. His English studies continued in junior and senior high school and at university. In his junior year in high school, he stayed in Australia for two weeks on a farm stay program. In his university, he also studied the German language for one year.

Table 1 summarizes the background of each participant and their language learning history. The table enables readers to compare both participants and see the contrasts more clearly.

Data collection and analysis

Using narrative inquiry, a process of gathering information for the purpose of research through storytelling (Chataika, 2005, p. 2), as a primary data collection tool, I asked each participant to write their language learning history (LLH). Because LLHs “can reveal valuable insights about our learners’ needs, motivations, beliefs, goals and strategies” (Mercer, 2013, p. 164), using them enables the researcher to produce insights and assumptions regarding constructs and phenomena. Gkonou, who has paid a great deal of attention to language learner anxiety (LA) using learner diaries, emphasizes that they can offer “inside knowledge about the students”

(Morgan, 2016, p. 18). In sum, LLHs are a very useful tool for understanding individual differences.

As Participant A’s English proficiency was higher and her original language was Thai, which would not be understood by the author, she was asked to write her LLH in English (see Appendix A for the LLH instructions the author gave to each participant). She wrote approximately 1,000 words for English language learning and 800 words for Japanese language learning (see Appendix B). On the other hand, Participant B had a lower English proficiency level; therefore, he was asked to write his LLH in Japanese. He wrote approximately 1,700 Japanese characters for English language learning and 800 Japanese characters for German language learning (see Appendix C). As Holliday (2016) suggests, qualitative research (using qualitatively collected data such as students’ writing samples) often involves a research-then-theory approach. In other words, the variables are not usually decided on the basis of some theory but rather *emerge* as the research progresses. The author created questions based on the LLHs of both participants, conducted interviews with both in November 2018, and then asked further questions through email exchanges from mid-November to the end of November 2018

Criteria	Participant A	Participant B
Nationality	Thai	Japanese
Age	26	23
Gender	Female	Male
University major	Geology (for 4 years in Thailand), English (for 2 years in Japan)	Business/Economics (for 4 years in Japan)
Language background	English: approx. 20 years (as a school subject from kindergarten to present) Japanese: approx. 4 years (privately and at university)	English: approx. 20 years (10 years before junior high in elementary schools/mother’s class, and 10 years as a school subject from junior high to present) German: 1 year (in university)
Overseas experience	3-months homestay in New Zealand (in a Thai university), 2 years in Japan (up to present)	Family trips before junior high (USA once, Australia once), in junior high (USA once, Canada once), in senior high (Australia once)
Career goal	Translator	Not decided

Table 1. Participants’ Personal Histories and L2 Learning

in order to get more detailed information. As Participant B is my son, the interview with him was conducted from a neutral perspective (e.g., using formal language, providing an interview space and so on). The strength of this feature was likely that Participant B was able to speak in a relaxed atmosphere, so he could speak more openly without hiding his true feelings. Audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed, excluding hesitations, repetitions, non-lexical tokens and pauses.

A thematic analysis was then conducted descriptively using Saldaña's (2015) *eclectic coding*, involving "'first-impression' phrases from an open-ended process" (p. 40). Eclectic coding is considered to be appropriate for less experienced qualitative researchers to examine different types of data including interview transcripts, field notes, journals, documents, diaries, corresponded, artifacts and video, and to acquire the way to code data (Saldaña, 2015).

Findings and discussion

In response to RQ1, several anxiety factors became apparent at particular times according to the responses from both participants. In Participant A's childhood, she hid native-like pronunciation in her elementary school in Thailand and pretended to be like a non-native speaker because she believed she would have been teased if she had sounded like a foreigner. Her anxiety mostly appeared in the latter part of her life when she began to study overseas. For example, when she entered the university in Kyoto, she encountered a totally new environment and did not understand some lectures because they were not conducted in her native language. This gave her strong anxiety, as she wrote in Japanese to my follow-up question, "mochiron sutoresu ga arimasu" [Of course, I feel stress]. In her language school, which Participant A entered before starting classes at her Japanese university, she experienced no stress because the classes were rather relaxing with an easy teacher. However, she was upset at being placed in the beginner class. As she wrote in Japanese to my follow-up question, "I had studied Japanese for almost two years before this, and my parents knew that. It was a waste of money. I regretted it. I felt like apologizing to my parents." She was also depressed by the words from a senior colleague at her part-time workplace. Answering a follow-up question, she responded, "My senpai

[senior] at my job kept telling me that my Japanese was not good enough and that I was not trying hard enough.... I felt like, 'Yeah, that's true,'" and she resolved to try even harder.

Once Participant B started learning English in junior high school, he felt uneasy or puzzled. Unlike the way he was exposed to English in elementary school, junior high school English was to memorize vocabulary or learn grammar rules, not to enjoy learning the target language through games or songs. The English textbook also changed from something interesting to him into a more Japanese-type textbook, which he characterizes as "conservative." It looked unexciting, and he became bored. The only material and activity he enjoyed was singing western songs such as We Are the Champions and Dancing Queen and translating their lyrics. He wrote in his language learning history in Japanese: "When song lyrics appeared in the test, I felt happy and answered these questions with joy." To him song lyrics include simple and direct expressions, and they are completely different from the English sentences he saw in the regular tests in high school or entrance examinations. He did not have apprehension about answering lyrics questions, but rather felt refreshed because he was solving the questions while understanding and confirming the meaning. Later, the English textbooks he used in university were the same as the ones used in English-speaking countries. Therefore, he felt more relaxed just like he was studying together with American friends.

Another interesting thing he mentioned is that he feels more stress when speaking Japanese rather than English when he stutters. According to him, Japanese is more diverse in terms of contexts, Chinese characters, pronunciation and expressions. When he speaks in Japanese with Japanese friends, he becomes tense because they care about the details of the words and expressions he uses and the way he speaks. In reality, he is often given suggestions and criticized about his utterances. On the other hand, when he speaks English with non-Japanese friends, even with a limited vocabulary, they focus more on the *content*, not the way he speaks.

As we see in the answers of both participants, when students are put into a completely new environment and do not know what is happening, or are asked something beyond their understanding,

they feel anxiety. Therefore, the first anxiety factor that was seen in the data was *comprehension*, the ability to understand something they see or hear. The second factor that emerged from the participants' answers is *interest*. In the case of Participant B, as the class type and textbook stimulated his interest at university, so his learning attitudes became completely opposite of his in junior and senior high school. In the case of Participant A, she did not feel frustrated when communicating with people in English, because she is very fond of this communication. The third and the fourth factors, namely, *cultural aspects* and *more opportunities to speak in the L2*, also appeared in Participant A's and B's comments to my follow-up question. For example, Participant A said, "*Eigo no baai ha mou naretekita karatte itte mo ii kamoshiremasen*" [I can probably say that in the case of English, I've gotten used to it]. Additionally, she explained in her interview, "...I feel the difference in between like the foreign people and like social in Thai. We didn't speak straight...." Participant B shared a similar experience. When he spoke English with non-Japanese friends, even with limited vocabulary and his imperfect English, he was able to communicate with them without pressure, as his non-Japanese friends focused more on content than on the way he spoke. Throughout high school, he was disappointed with the fact that he had very few opportunities to learn English from a native-speaker teacher, although his high school had announced that they had begun to promote "internationalization" more strongly. These comments suggest that teachers try to provide more opportunities to speak the target language as well as to facilitate discussions on cultural aspects involved when speaking in one's L2.

In relation to RQ2, comments from both participants suggest that there is a relationship between self-perceived successes/failures and anxiety in language learning. According to Participant B, his university offered him an opportunity to learn different types of English from those with a much broader perspective. The hurdle to speak English was lower for him because he could make himself understood using very basic grammar and vocabulary. At the same time, he began to worry that he would not truly master English only by using these basic communication strategies. Therefore, the university EFL environment gave him a stimulus, and

he was motivated more to learn English. In addition, materials including textbooks and song lyrics eliminated his learning anxiety and made him feel like a successful learner with more confidence.

On the other hand, Participant A had anxiety when she realized her Japanese language level was not good enough according to her senior colleague. However, she turned this into positive action and felt more motivated to achieve success in the future. For Participant A, frequent use of L2, which she describes as "to go out from my safe zone," and a change in her studying environment pushed her language learning attitude upward.

The comments from both Participant A and Participant B explain a reverse situation in which anxiety works positively. This implies "facilitating anxiety," a positive force in the field of education generating a positive effect (Williams, 2008, p. 1). When Participant A's senior colleague made her realize that her Japanese language level was still insufficient, she took this pressure as a positive signal and tried harder to succeed in the future. In the case of Participant B, although he enjoyed his way of communicating using limited English with his non-Japanese friends in university, he also began to worry that he might not be able to reach a satisfactory level of English proficiency. Therefore, this apprehension triggered his learning attitude in a positive way. According to Scovel (1978), "Facilitating anxiety motivates the learner to 'fight' the new learning task; it gears the learner emotionally for approval behavior" (p. 139). These findings illustrate that there are different types of anxiety, and anxiety's relationship to internal and external factors is complex.

Finally with regard to RQ3, in her university classes, Participant A sometimes felt scared when the professor pointed at her and she could not answer. This suggests that students need to be ready to answer professors' questions in order to earn points and better grades. This may decrease the apprehension of students, or conversely, increase their confidence. In other words, based on Participant A's responses, it seems that students can facilitate and motivate their learning attitudes by themselves. Her experience also relates to the findings of Iimura's (2016) study, which showed that an oral presentation contest reduced the anxiety levels of Japanese university students due to the opportunity to do enough preparation to gain

confidence. In Participant A's part-time workplace, she got used to using English, so she lost her fear of making mistakes. On the other hand, she is still anxious when meeting Japanese customers. Compared to her feelings about English, she feels more ashamed and less confident using Japanese.

Another key seems to be increasing opportunities for students to interact with native speakers or people with different cultural backgrounds. It seems vital to be exposed to more varied use of the L2. As Participant B's comments indicated, he was disappointed when he had fewer opportunities to learn English from native-speaker teachers in high school. He also mentioned in the interview that he sometimes felt nervous when talking in English with Japanese students because they often pointed out the small mistakes he made. Whereas, with foreign students he had less stress, as they listened to him more and focused on the content of his speech. Participant A also responded in her interview, "But foreign people, US, like you, you speak straight. Yeah, so it's the first time that I like feel about the change between the culture. And I feel like now I can speak English, I like...the experience in New Zealand make me to not fear to speak to foreigner." These comments support Aida's (1994) insistence that active interaction with people from different cultural backgrounds will reduce anxiety when using the target language.

Another solution to overcome anxiety is that both teachers and students should be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the students. In the case of Participant B, he no longer felt anxiety although there were more group discussions and presentations at university. He said the joy of learning English returned, and he was proud of the pronunciation he acquired with his exposure to the English language in his childhood. Teachers should try to perceive students' socio-cultural backgrounds as well. According to Matsumoto (1991), compared with Western students such as Americans, Japanese tend to hide their emotionality. However, it may be difficult for teachers who do not share the same first language to recognize the emotional states (e.g., anxiety) of Japanese English language learners (Shachter, 2018). The implications of this finding are that we, as teachers, need to make sure students understand what they are doing and being asked to do, and that we should try to raise their motivation by discovering their strengths through various

assessments.

Conclusion

This case study focusing on two English language learners with different backgrounds studying in Japanese universities revealed several new results. The key factors to reduce anxiety levels in SLA that appeared in this study are: *adequate comprehension, interesting topics and materials, enough preparation and frequent interaction with different people*. It was also discovered that anxiety can work positively for learners depending on the situation. Finally, self-recognition can help learners overcome anxiety, and teachers can promote this self-understanding by increasing understanding of the students' weaknesses and strengths through efficient lesson plans.

Many researchers have begun to test various types of practical activities for students to overcome their foreign language anxiety. For example, Bashori et al. (2020) have recently incorporated web-based speaking practice. The results indicate that the Indonesian high school students in this study "felt less anxious when speaking to the machines" (p. 13) than when speaking to people; therefore, *web-based language learning* could be another way to overcome anxiety. Moreover, their findings suggest that *how* materials are introduced as well as *who* delivers the materials could also be a key to success. Manning (personal communication, February 21, 2021), recalling a student in his previous class, believes that *task-based language teaching* (TBLT) produces effective results for some anxious students. He observed that when he switched the regular tasks to more "input-heavy tasks" such as rearrangement or reconstruction for one extremely shy student, the student gradually built her confidence and overcame her constant apprehension. The student also began to realize that "English was not something to be anxious about." Finally, Anandari (2015) examined the effectiveness of *self-reflection* activities. Her findings suggest that such activities contribute to reducing anxiety among students and that students can learn how to make anxiety work positively for themselves. These studies make us realize that students' anxiety signals offer hints for teachers to produce ways to transform less confident students' learning attitudes from negative to positive.

As Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) explain, foreign language anxiety is "a distinct complex of

self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128). Cheng, Horwitz and Schallert (1999) also point out that students’ anxiety levels differ and that their perceptions of anxiety vary in their L2 studies. Teachers should keep these findings in mind whenever they encounter apprehensive students in their future teaching. Although some important results were obtained from this research, more studies should be done with different types of students to discover other factors affecting anxiety.

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Author bio

Miori Shimada has been teaching English in Japanese universities for 15 years both as a part-timer and a lecturer. Her research interests include English for young learners (application of picture books and songs), effects of anxiety on EFL students, and teacher education and professional development. She is a doctoral candidate at Anaheim University. mioshima1@gmail.com



Appendix A:
Language learning history (語学学習歴)

Please write the story of your foreign language learning experiences, from when you first started to learn a foreign language to today. Keep these questions in mind while writing:

自分自身の外国語(英語)学習歴について、始めた時から今日までについて記述して下さい。その時、以下の項目を思い浮かべながら書いて下さい。

- When and why did you start learning each language?
- How did you learn, including in school and out of school?
- How did you feel about learning each language?
- When and how do you think your learning was successful or unsuccessful?

- 外国語(英語)学習をどの時点でなぜ始めたのか。
- (英語を)どのように学習したのか、学内・学外を含めて。
- 外国語(英語)を学習した時の気持ちはどのようなものだったのか。
- 外国語(英語)学習が成功または失敗したのはいつの時点で、どのような状況だったのか。

Below are some examples of language learning histories. They are long, and you don't have to read everything, but perhaps you can get some ideas of what to write about.

以下に書き方の例を掲載してあります。長い文章ですが、全て読む必要はありません。ただ、読むことによって何を書けばよいかアイディアがわくと思います。

Appendix B:
Language learning history (Participant A)

When I write this document I did not read other paper yet, because I do not want to be convinced by other student experiences. So, I decided to write my real own experience here.

I started to study English alphabet since I was 2-3 years old at school, then started the real English class at 1 grade at school. During that time I also took special English class on Saturday and Sunday. I was like a normal student, no passion in English.

Anyway, my special English class had a vocabulary test everyday and students who get 10 points or did good job in class would get the 'wonderful card'. The card we collected could be changed to a 'present' such as, a pencil case, a cute pencil, or a cute little doll. I loved them, so it might be the really first time that I concentrated in English Subject. However, because I had no goal in learning English so I just studied what school had for me.

Thai schools usually teach about grammar, vocabulary, but have less communication. Even we had some foreigner English teachers in school, but we did not talk too much. I was also one of those shy students. In Thailand English learner usually was judged about accent and level. Example if you try to speak like foreigner you might be made fun about your accent by your friend or people around you. So, I just kept normal level or under normal level in any term of English.

At first, I could remember easy vocabulary and grammar, but when it went more complex I usually failed. So my confidence and my passion kept going down.

When I was in grade 12, I made a big mistake and it turned to be one of my turning point. I forgot to pay the fee for the university general test which students must use scores from this exam to apply to the university. So, I had to find another way to entrance the university without using that score. That was the first time I thought about going abroad.

I found that Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University was still available. But the applicant was asked to write the long essay, and we had to take a test, and an interview as well. My friend who had be an exchange student in US helped me to write essay, but for the exam I had to help myself.

I passed the exam and got a 50% tuition, but I feared to go there because I had no confidence in my English. So I decided to go to Thai university instead.

After finished the second year in university, I had 6 months for summer holidays because Thai education system condition. So, after finish final exam and fieldwork in the first three months I decided to go to New Zealand to study English. It was my first time to go aboard.

In New Zealand I stayed with host family who already took care of another 2 students from Switzerland and China. At that time, I was still a shy girl and did not talk a lot. But I had a chance to talk to Chinese housemate who had experienced in New Zealand for 3 months before I went there. I asked him about the way he became fluently in speaking. He said "Just speak out. Speak what you want." His answer might be an inspiration for me to go out from my safe zone. Because after that I started to talk with classmate and got more confidence.

For listening, my ear started to improve because the invitation from Switzerland housemate

who asked me to watch 'American pie' together, and usually encourage me to watch television by handed me a remote. He recommended me to watch TV series to improve English and after that night I was alway at the living room.

Life in New Zealand forced me to use English. Because the environment that had no mother language and I who decided to not be in Thai student group made me had to communicated only in English.

After I turned back to Thailand I felt I had more confident in speaking, listening, reading and writing English. Anyway, I still made a mistake but I did not care about it anymore. In that time I felt like just be able to communicate is enough.

However, when I came to Japan and start to learn Japanese, it affected too much to my English. The word did not come out when I spoke or wrote. I noticed that situation after 1 year had passed in Japan. So I had thought about the way to improve my English, and decided to study English in here.

The first semester I took class which leaded by foreigner teacher for giving myself a chance to communicate in English, and change the part-time job. I chose to be an interpreter staff at rental Kimono shop, where I can practice English and Japanese in the same time.

But during summer, after I started to read Asahi Weekly and found out that it helpful, I decided to decrease the class in the second semester. I use the free time to read English novel and English newspaper especially Asahi Weekly for practicing English.

I am not a person who like to remember vocabulary by writing or remember it word by word. So I still have a problem about vocabulary, but I think I found the interesting way to solve that problem after I took TOEIC class. In that class, students was required to take the quiz every week, and I was asked to write Japanese meaning same as other students. I found out that to remember the meaning of word in 2 languages is quite funny and helpful to me.

And most of all, now I have goal for my study. I want to get a job related to trading or shipping. After set a goal seem like everything went fluently because I know what I am doing for.

Language learning history (Japanese)

When I write this document I did not read other paper yet, because I do not want to be

convinced by other student experiences. So, I decided to write my real own experience here.

I started to study Japanese when I was in grade 11. It was like a special subject so I was not interested anymore. But after the new teacher who just came back from Japan took over the class, my feeling was changed. He got a scholarship and had a chance to study in Japan for 1 or 2 year. The way he achieved inspired me.

That time I had passion in Japanese but I hated to remember vocabulary. It's quite boring thing for me. So I just took the class and kept reading a book, but nothing left in my mind.

When I was in grade 12, I made a big mistake and it turned to be one of my turning point. I forgot to pay the fee for the university general test which students must use scores from this exam to apply to the university. So, I had to find another way to entrance the university without using that score. I found that Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, an international university in Japan, was still available.

I passed the exam and got a 50% tuition, but I feared to go there because I had no confidence in my English. So I decided to go to Thai university instead.

However a fear also decreased my confidence in studying Japanese. So I chose to take German class. But the environment in the university, and the fear to choose what I really want made me decide to quit the university.

I re-entrance in the year after, but I still feared to choose what I want. Finally, I ended up with geology department. 4 years in the university was really worse. I hated study, kept skipping the class, slept in the class, and cheated on exams.

I noticed that I cannot go well in what I had been studying, and after graduate it might be difficult for me to get a job. So, I decided to do something. I chose to turn back to Japanese, and took a personal class twice a week since I was in the 3rd year.

But because it was a personal class, I had no one to compare with, so I felt like I already succeeded even I did nothing useful for my Japanese. Anyway, I wanted to gain more skill so I decided to go abroad, because I had a good experience when I went to New Zealand. And just the first day that I arrived, I already knew that 2 years after taking personal Japanese class what level I am, BEGINNER ONE.

In the previous, I just enjoyed to finish textbooks. I did homework by using dictionary app in my phone, did not remember any vocabulary or Kanji, did not revise after class, I did nothing.

To start in the beginner class again was really embarrassed for me, so I forced myself to try hard in Japanese. I always prepared myself before class, and revised after class. I wrote down the word to force myself to remember Kanji.

Study Japanese is like the final chance for me, if I fail again I will be a completely loser, and has nothing for my future, no jobs, no money, just nothing. So I cannot give up, only keep going on and do my best.

Anyway, when the time had passed, I was tired.

I'm kind of cannot keep continuing something for long time. So that why I hate to remember word, Kanji, and grammar. I stopped preparing and revising, and did only what teacher asked.

However, after I started my first part-time job, the situation at there forced me to try hard on my study. My senior who help me a lot at work made me think that it will be really ashamed if I made him upset with my improvement. So I just keep trying again and again. Then, when the result came out, the smile on his face and the congratulation message from my mom made me felt like I won a prize.

After I decided to go to the university in Japan, my life and the way to study was changed. The class was hold in Japanese which I could not understand clearly so I had to take a lot of time for preparing and revising.

I found out that after face the same word many times, I can remember it naturally. So I started to read a Japanese book I like and watched TV show I love. I think it like a condition between time and activity. The result cannot come out suddenly, but if we keep continuing to do something the result will come out someday.

I cannot say that I already succeed in Japanese. But if I was asked to compare between me after 2 years in Japan, and me after 2 years of taking personal Japanese class, I think I gained a lot.

Appendix C:

Language learning history (Participant B)

私が最初に英語に触れたきっかけは、母親の影響でした。両親と海外に行った時、母がネイティブスピーカーのように英語を話していたことに驚き、初めて生の英語に触れたような気がしました。また、

母が幼稚園で英語を教え始めたのをきっかけに、私も英語に興味を持ち、一緒にクラスに参加しました。そのクラスでは、それぞれの単語を何度も繰り返し、丁寧に教えてもらったように記憶しています。その影響で、児童英検などのテストも受け、英語への関心をより深めました。

その後、小学校で「総合学習の時間」に様々な国から来たALTの先生の英語に触れたことで、英語にも発音やイントネーションの違いがあることがわかりました。そして、英語を話すこと、聞くことの面白さを学びました。

しかし中学生になった途端、英語の授業が退屈になってしまいました。1つ目の理由は、授業が読み書き中心になったことです。また、中学校ではネイティブの先生に英語を教わることも少なくなりました。学習内容も、文法やリーディングが中心になっていったので、自分の中で、英語は「触れ合うもの」から「学習するもの」へと印象が変わっていききました。2つ目の理由は、長文読解が多くなり、今までにない量と専門的な内容の英文を理解しなくてはならなくなったことです。小学校までの英語は、自分にとって「コミュニケーションをとるためのもの」だったのに対し、中学校の英語は「受験に合格するためのもの」になり、英語を習っている事をより窮屈に感じるようになりました。唯一楽しめたのは、授業の中で洋楽に合わせて歌い、歌詞を訳したことです。テストに歌詞の問題が出題された時は、嬉しい気持ちになり、楽しく問題を解きました。

高校に入学し、英語の内容は、より複雑になり、高度になりました。高校英語は、更に「書くため・読むため」の要素が多くなり、「コミュニケーションをとるため」の英語を学ぶ機会は完全になりました。また、自分のコースにネイティブの先生が一人もいなくなったので、生きた英語の面白さを味わえる機会もなくなりました。高校で唯一生の英語に触れる事ができたのは、2年生最後に行ったオーストラリアのファームステイです。ファームで耳にした英語は、それまで高校の授業で習っていた複雑なものではなく、むしろ中学レベルの簡単なもののように感じました。また、英語で現地の人たちと触れ合うことにより、英語は本来もっと自由で楽しいものであったということを思い出しました。

大学に入学して英語の授業を受けた時、新鮮に感じたことがあります。それは、ネイティブスピーカー講師や、留学経験豊富な日本人講師が多くいるとい

うことです。また、使われているテキストも、英語圏で実際に使われているものだったので、より現地の空気を感じながら学習できました。

高校英語と大学英語の決定的な違いは、英語の「自由度」が大きくなったということです。そのため、大学の授業では、グループディスカッションや発表をする機会が増え、英語を話す面白さを少し取り戻すことができました。私の周りには、リーディングはできてもスピーキングが苦手な友人が何人かいます。彼らは、大学の授業で英文を読むことは容易であるが、先生や留学生と英語でコミュニケーションをとることが上手くいかないと嘆いていました。私自身は、大学で学んでいるスピーキング中心の英語を楽しんでおり、将来役に立つと感じています。

今振り返ってみると、自分自身の英語学習の大半は「読み・書き」中心でしたが、私が本来求めていたのは「話す・聞く」中心の英語でした。言語学習は、もっと自由で様々な形があっていいと思います。特に、中・高の英語の授業では「話す」英語をより多く取り入れるべきだと思います。また、テキストも英語圏で使われているものを導入した方がいいのではないのでしょうか。ネイティブスピーカーの先生の数ももっと増やすべきだと思います。

今後は、外国人の多い社交場にも積極的に出向き、彼らと英語でコミュニケーションをとり、ネットワークを広げていきたいと思っています。また、国際色豊かな職場で仕事ができるよう頑張ります。

私のドイツ語学習歴

私がドイツ語を学ぼうと思ったきっかけは、大学で出会ったO先生でした。もう一つの理由として、私の大学では英語以外にも別の外国語のクラスを取ることが義務付けられていました。ドイツ語は、読み方がほぼローマ字読みである以外文法などは英語に近く、日本人には少しハードルが高いイメージがありました。加えて、私には全く馴染みのない言語でした。ただ、O先生によると、授業は会話重視で、テキストも日常会話の範囲内の非常に易しい教材ということでした。

初回の授業では、基本的な発音や文法を学んだ他、簡単な自己紹介アクティビティーもやりました。また、このアクティビティーは、毎回授業に導入されました。自己紹介アクティビティーは、ドイツ語を話す楽しさを味わうことや、クラスメートとのコミュニティ形成を可能にしました。また、

そのアクティビティーを通して、私たちはコミュニケーションを活発にし、授業での連帯感を強めたので、クラスの雰囲気も活気づきました。

○氏の授業では、独文の文型を容易に理解することができました。例えば、1つの例文に対し、主語を入れ替えて言い直す、または様々なシチュエーションに合わせた表現を自分たちで考え、発表しました。そして、それらの文は、大半が日常生活で利用できる表現だったので、その状況を頭の中で容易にイメージできました。結果、私のドイツ語の語彙も増え、それが授業に参加する喜びにもつながりました。

授業では毎回小テストがありましたが、中・高で受けた英語の小テストと比べると印象が違いました。ドイツ語の授業の小テストは、日常生活に出てくるシンプルな表現や例文であったため、以前のような嫌悪感はありませんでした。

今後またドイツ語を習得にあたり、検定試験などにも挑戦し、ドイツに関連する行事や交流の場にも参加していきたいです。

