

# An Exploratory Statistical Quantification of Affective Dimensions Among Japanese University Students in Non-English Majors

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**Abstract:** In the global environment, being fluent in a foreign language, particularly English, has become more important than ever, but the anxiety that surrounds learning a foreign language acts as a barrier to entry for many people. Though some research has been conducted into what drives this foreign language learning anxiety, there are gaps in the data, particularly regarding the currentness of the research. In addition, many studies conflate university students whose majors involve studying a foreign language as a primary goal and those whose majors are not related to international studies but still must obtain foreign language fluency, though these two types of students have different motivations and may therefore experience the symptoms of anxiety and modify their behaviour due to its influence in different ways. Using a modified version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale to collect data from a pool of 94 university students all at approximately A level (A1 or A2) fluency in The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, this study aimed update some of the data regarding foreign language learning anxiety amongst Japanese students, clarify some of the characteristics surrounding such anxiety, and explore any possible relation between anxiety and classroom attendance. The findings indicate that although anxiety did

not seem to have a significant correlation with attendance rate, anxiety levels are correlated with levels of self-esteem, the sense of being judged or compared to others, the internal pressure of perfectionism, and other additional factors. Students' attendance rates and their levels of concentration in class were also found to be correlated. Further research is needed to better accommodate students' anxiety in the classroom, as well as to help teachers increase the levels of concentration amongst students and bridge the emotional gap between student and teacher.

## **1. Introduction**

The recent world seems to be globalised, and in such a circumstance, professionals have numerous opportunities to work with people from all over the world; furthermore, English is most commonly spoken as one of the shared languages in the world. In such a globalised world, it may be required for employees to have the ability to communicate with other people in English in order to conduct their jobs smoothly. Therefore, becoming fluent in English is becoming more and more significant not only for international students but also for individuals whose specializations in university do not seem to be directly related to foreign languages.

Moreover, based on this author's experience, teaching English seems to be completely different depending on who is being taught. In other words, many of the students who specialise in English or international subjects in higher education seem to be skilled at learning foreign languages and enjoy doing so, whilst individuals whose university

majors do not seem to be directly related to the English language do not necessarily excel at or enjoy such study; with this difference in mind, what is required of English language teachers differs depending on who they are attempting to educate.

Similar to how physical education teachers are often well-suited for sports and exercise, many English language instructors are well-suited to learning foreign languages and enjoy doing so. Naturally, others may not necessarily hold the same love for learning a foreign language, especially if their major is not directly related to foreign language learning. Because of this lack of enthusiasm, students focusing on other specializations and English teachers appear to have a gap between them, and it is therefore vital for instructors to attempt to understand the emotional aspects of learning that are affecting their students. It is vital for English teachers to consider that their feelings when learning a foreign language may differ greatly from the feelings of those who do not specialize in English at universities. Without learning to account for this emotional gap, a teacher's attempt to support a non-English specialized student in learning may not go smoothly.

In consideration for all of the above, this author has investigated the affective aspects of English learners whose university majors do not seem to be directly related to the English language. Various types of affective aspects exist amongst students, including but not limited to motivation and a willingness to speak. The subject of this research article is the anxiety experienced by English learners with the hypothesis being that teachers capable of reducing their students' negative emotions while learning English may be able to help their pupils enjoy lessons more.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 From a psychological standpoint**

What is anxiety? Anxiety is an emotion that almost every individual has experienced through his or her daily life; however, due to the fact that anxiety is an emotion and therefore not visible to the naked eye in and of itself, as explained by Aida (2022), it is not easily for even psychology specialists to provide a clear answer to the question “What is anxiety?” (Sidman 1964).

Although it is difficult to clearly give a complete and clear explanation regarding anxiety’s many forms, some researchers have provided some ideas that can help the layman better understand that emotion. Rachman (2013) emphasizes that “anxiety is a tense unsettling anticipation of a threatening but formless event; a feeling of uneasy suspense”.

According to Aida (2022), the characteristics of anxiety can be broken down into five key points, which are as follows: 1. Anxiety varies from person to person; 2. Anxiety is an ever-changing emotion; 3. Anxiety arises from associating oneself with possible future negative events; 4. Anxiety is triggered by anticipating possible future danger; and 5. Anxiety is a negative psychological state. This article will proceed under the assumption that anxiety possesses all five of these characteristics.

### **2.2 Situation-specific anxiety**

In fields such as foreign language education and second language acquisition, anxiety experienced by foreign language learners is often called “foreign language anxiety” (Horwitz and Cope, 1986) or called



anxiety in second language acquisition (SLA), i.e. “language anxiety” (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994). Although there seems to be no differences in the two phrases, in order to remain consistent, this paper uses only the former, “foreign language anxiety” (Horwitz and Cope, 1986).

How can one define foreign language anxiety? One of the characteristics of foreign language anxiety seems to be situation-specific anxiety; in other words, foreign language learners experience this anxiety only in circumstances in which they are studying and using their target languages. To use Motoda (2005) as example, she sees foreign language anxiety as a sense of haste that foreign language students feel only in the moments when they attempt to acquire a second language and utilize it, thus making this anxiety situation-specific. Foss and Reitzel (1988) similarly underline that learners feel foreign language anxiety when they learn a target language and perform in it. In accord with these authors, this research article will also view foreign language anxiety as situation-specific and will operate under Gregersen and MacIntyre’s (2012) definition of anxiety, which is “a term that encompasses the feelings of worry and negative, fear-related emotions associated with learning or using a language that is not an individual’s mother tongue” (p.103).

### **2.3 Foreign language anxiety experienced by foreign language learners from Japan**

Cutrone (2003) underlines that English language learners from Japan frequently experience foreign language anxiety in speaking classes; the reason is because students originating from Japan often struggle to get used to Western style teaching practices wherein a focus

is put on cultivating individualism, challenging the teacher, and providing original opinions.

In addition, Helgesen (1993) stresses five characteristics of Japanese university students, which are as follows: 1. Learners in Japan tend to avoid starting a conversation; 2. Japanese university students dislike being asked to volunteer answers; 3. Students at Japanese universities rarely ask questions in lessons; 4. Learners in Japan hardly ever challenge their teachers; and 5. Students from Japan tend to avoid bringing up new topics.

Those characteristics were highlighted more than twenty years ago. Considering the fact that English language education conducted at a junior high and high school level has changed over the last twenty years, it stands to reason that recent university students have gained different attitudes towards learning English as well. Correspondingly, foreign language anxiety has also been changing. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to conduct an exploratory study with the goal of clarifying the characteristics of foreign language anxiety experienced by Japanese university students and update the data regarding foreign language anxiety in Japan.

Secondly, although much foreign language anxiety research on English learners from Japan has been conducted, many of these studies seem to suffer from the same issue: the focus of these studies often seems treat students who specialize in English or international studies and students whose majors do not seem to relate to either English or international studies as identical subjects, in spite of earlier research proposing that these two groups experiences different characteristics of anxiety, as established in the first part of this paper. Treating the data

from both of these groups as identical and mixing them freely hinders a clear analysis of either distinct group. In short, it would be worthwhile to conduct an investigation focusing on only one of the two groups.

## **2.4 The impact of foreign language anxiety on learners**

When considering one's own experience regarding anxiety, he or she may suggest that anxiety may greatly prevent learners from studying foreign languages. This is partly true; however, foreign language anxiety seems to have both positive and negative impacts on learners.

Aida (2023) underlines that the positive effects of foreign language anxiety can be summarised in two points: 1. Foreign language anxiety helps students concentrate on their studies; and 2. Foreign language anxiety motivates learners in studying their target language more often.

In order to explain the effect of foreign language anxiety on learners, Motoda (2005)—in tandem with the theories posited by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) and Scarcella and Oxford (1992)—divided the negative impact of this anxiety into two categories. The first category is “making mistakes and getting confused,” which Motoda (2005) considered as a direct negative effect. She explains that there are eight types of impacts in this category: 1. Loss of concentration; 2. Forgetfulness; 3. Leaving the wrong answer on a test; 4. Repetition of careless mistakes; 5. Being very nervous in role-play activities; 6. Non-fluent pronunciation; 7. Tension, tremors, sweating, palpitation, dozing; and 8. Increasingly poor performance.

The second category is “avoidance,” and Motoda (2005) sees this as an indirect negative effect. There are eight types of impacts in this category: 1. Not preparing for classes; 2. Procrastinating on homework;

3. Feigning indifference; 4. Being absent from class; 5. Avoidance of studying; 6. Avoidance of expressing ideas spontaneously; 7. Being late; and 8. Over studying.

In regards to the fifth type of indirect negative effect, avoidance of studying, there seem to be two ways to interpret this behaviour. The first interpretation is that students are not studying much. Given the other type of avoidant effects, it can be assumed that when someone experiences too much foreign language anxiety, the student may avoid studying in order to also avoid the anxiety. As a result of this, the student may quit preparing for classes and doing homework altogether. Alternatively, the student may quit learning the foreign language altogether. This may be demonstrated by a drop in class attendance, though there have been few in-depth studies into the correlation between student anxiety and attendance in foreign language classes. Further research is required.

### **3. Aim of this study**

As the previous chapter delineates, there seems to be three types of gaps in previous foreign language anxiety studies: 1. Previous research regarding the characteristics of foreign language anxiety in Japanese students may not accurately reflect the mindset of students today; 2. Past research often seems to treat university students who specialize in English or international studies and individuals whose majors are not directly related to English as identical subjects, though they are not; and 3. Few in-depth research studies have been conducted on these two points.

In order to resolve these gaps, the research discussed in this article

was conducted with the three goals in mind: 1. To update the information regarding foreign language anxiety through an exploratory study aimed at clarifying the characteristics of foreign language anxiety experienced by Japanese university students in today's society; 2. To clarify the characteristics of foreign language anxiety experienced by individuals whose university majors do not seem to be directly related to English language; and 3. To clarify whether foreign language anxiety affects students' attendance rate.

#### **4. The importance of this study**

As mentioned previously, this research focuses on foreign language anxiety experienced by recent Japanese university students; hence, this research will provide the reader with more recent data than past studies may provide. Since this is exploratory research, this investigation may possibly propose new ideas that previous research has not yet suggested. Due to the fact this study focuses primarily on individuals whose university majors do not seem to be directly related to the English language, this research may provide clarifying information regarding the anxiety experienced by these students. This research may be able to help broaden discussions surrounding the field of foreign language education and second language acquisition.

Secondly, the social importance of this study will also be discussed. Since this investigation focuses on individuals whose university majors do not seem to be directly related to English language, this research provides specific educational suggestions for those who are involved in the foreign language education of those students. Generally speaking, many undergraduate courses in Japan require English language classes

as a compulsory class. Regardless of their success in other classes, if a student fails to pass a compulsory class, that student may be at risk of not graduating from university, possibly leading them to drop out altogether. This study was conducted in order to offer tips to avoid that outcome.

## 5. Research methods

### 5. 1 Participants

For the purpose of reducing unnecessary noise in the collected data and in order to reflect certain backgrounds in the data, the author created two criterions to select participants: 1. Participants who have experience in learning English at a junior high schools or high school level in Japan, excluding international schooling; and 2. Participants who are students whose university majors do not seem to be directly related to the English language. The author sought students who meet these criterions to participate in this study. As a result, 94 individuals participated. 75 participants were male, while 19 were female. Overall, 87 participants were freshman, whereas 7 participants were sophomore. A breakdown of this information can be seen in Table 1. The level of English fluency amongst all participants seemed to be A level (A1 or A2) in The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages/CEFR.

**Table 1   The detailed information of the participants in this study**

	Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior
Male	70 (.75)	5 (.05)	0 (.00)	0 (.00)
Female	17 (.18)	2 (.02)	0 (.00)	0 (.00)

(n=94)

Before collecting data, the author explained the following six points to all participants: 1. The purpose of this study; 2. The anonymity in this study; 3. Usage of collected data; 4. Participation requirements for this study; 5. Grades in the class; and 6. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale.

In regards to the purpose of this study, the author explained the following to potential participants: 1. That the purpose was the update the information regarding foreign language anxiety in Japan through an exploratory study aimed at clarifying the characteristics of foreign language anxiety experienced by recent Japanese university students; 2. That the purpose was to clarify the characteristics of foreign language anxiety experienced by individuals whose university majors do not seem to be directly related to English language; and 3. That the purpose was to clarify whether foreign language anxiety affects students' attendance rate.

For the second point, the author explained that the collected data would be anonymous and statistical information would only be submitted to research journals. In other words, no one except the author would be able to identify the participants.

For the third point, "Usage of collected data," the author informed participants that the collected data would be used in research papers and when giving research presentations at academic conferences.

For the fourth point, participants were informed that they had the right to quit cooperating in this study at any time before, during, or after the study was completed.

For the fifth point, participants were assured their participation in this study would not affect their academic standing, nor their grades in

class, as some students were attending the author's English classes at the time this study was conducted.

For the sixth point, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale, the author explained each question in this questionnaire to students without the background knowledge to better understand them.

## **5. 2 Data Collection**

In order to collect data for this study, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale/FLCAS was employed (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986). The reason why FLCAS was used is because this scale is the most common one used to measure the levels of foreign language anxiety in studies conducted all over the world; therefore, by using this scale, the results in this study can be easily compared with various research results in the world.

Some changes to the FLCAS were employed in this study's questionnaire in order to conduct the study smoothly. The first point is language. Since English fluency amongst all participants seemed to be A level (A1 or A2) in The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages/CEFR, the questionnaire was translated into Japanese. When the author translated the scale from English to Japanese, he referenced two Japanese language/English language bilingual people to see whether his translation held any mistake.

The second change was digitizing the scale. All of the required data was collected via an online questionnaire. Specifically, the data was collected using Google Forms. The questionnaire was digitized in order to, firstly, avoid mistakes in the process of transferring the data from paper to the computer and, secondly, to make participating easier due to



the abundance of smartphones in the modern world.

The FLCAS supplies five answer choices on a sliding scale to participants. The answer choices are 1. Strongly agree; 2. Agree; 3. Neither agree nor disagree; 4. Disagree, and 5. Strongly disagree. However, in this study, participants were asked to answer each question on a scale from one to seven, one meaning disagree and seven meaning agree. For the purposes of this study, the author changed the answer choices from the traditional FLCAS scale to a numbered scale in order to avoid participants being overly affected by the nuances in word choice.

The fourth and final change to the FLCAS utilized in this questionnaire regarded reversibility. The author revised some questions in order to signify that small numbers indicated disagreement amongst participants whilst bigger numbers meant agreement; in other words, small numbers indicate that the level of the participants' anxiety is low, whereas bigger numbers indicate a high level of anxiety.

## **6. Results and Discussion**

In this section, data is shown based on question numbers. The contents of each question are shown in Appendix, attached in the final part of this paper.

### **6.1 Exploratory Statistical Quantification**

#### **6.1.1 Overall responses**

First of all, all responses from all participants on each question will be listed in this paper. All responses from the participants are depicted in Table 2, 3, and 4. The tables show the number of answers, percentages,

standard deviation and mean of each question.

**Table 2 Overall responses from the participants (Q.1-11)**

	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Q.5	Q.6	Q.7	Q.8	Q.9	Q.10	Q.11
1 (Disagree)	20 (.213)	19 (.202)	19 (.202)	28 (.298)	24 (.255)	15 (.16)	20 (.213)	28 (.298)	28 (.298)	26 (.277)	12 (.128)
2	7 (.074)	12 (.128)	14 (.149)	17 (.181)	10 (.106)	10 (.106)	5 (.053)	11 (.117)	6 (.064)	9 (.096)	4 (.043)
3	9 (.096)	17 (.181)	13 (.138)	10 (.106)	12 (.128)	11 (.117)	8 (.085)	21 (.223)	13 (.138)	10 (.106)	12 (.128)
4	13 (.138)	11 (.117)	3 (.032)	8 (.085)	8 (.085)	8 (.085)	18 (.191)	12 (.128)	15 (.16)	14 (.149)	17 (.181)
5	15 (.16)	11 (.117)	13 (.138)	12 (.128)	15 (.16)	22 (.234)	11 (.117)	7 (.074)	10 (.106)	12 (.128)	8 (.085)
6	7 (.074)	7 (.074)	14 (.149)	7 (.074)	9 (.096)	10 (.106)	8 (.085)	7 (.074)	9 (.096)	8 (.085)	11 (.117)
7 (Agree)	23 (.245)	17 (.181)	18 (.191)	12 (.128)	16 (.17)	18 (.191)	24 (.255)	8 (.085)	13 (.138)	15 (.16)	30 (.319)
SD	2.24	2.13	2.25	2.15	2.22	2.09	2.23	1.95	2.16	2.19	2.11
Mean	4.16	3.77	3.97	3.3	3.76	4.21	4.22	3.13	3.55	3.65	4.68

(n=94)

**Table 3 Overall responses from the participants (Q.12-22)**

	Q.12	Q.13	Q.14	Q.15	Q.16	Q.17	Q.18	Q.19	Q.20	Q.21	Q.22
1 (Disagree)	25 (.266)	26 (.277)	20 (.213)	20 (.213)	28 (.298)	33 (.351)	19 (.202)	34 (.362)	26 (.277)	26 (.277)	14 (.149)
2	15 (.16)	11 (.117)	7 (.074)	9 (.096)	9 (.096)	11 (.117)	9 (.096)	8 (.085)	8 (.085)	12 (.128)	5 (.053)
3	11 (.117)	13 (.138)	13 (.138)	13 (.138)	17 (.181)	11 (.117)	10 (.106)	15 (.16)	12 (.128)	20 (.213)	7 (.074)
4	12 (.128)	11 (.117)	17 (.181)	18 (.191)	9 (.096)	12 (.128)	12 (.128)	11 (.117)	13 (.138)	7 (.074)	16 (.17)
5	10 (.106)	9 (.096)	10 (.106)	12 (.128)	10 (.106)	9 (.096)	10 (.106)	9 (.096)	7 (.074)	9 (.096)	21 (.223)
6	8 (.085)	11 (.117)	14 (.149)	6 (.064)	7 (.074)	5 (.053)	12 (.128)	5 (.053)	6 (.064)	5 (.053)	9 (.096)
7 (Agree)	13 (.138)	13 (.138)	13 (.138)	16 (.17)	14 (.149)	13 (.138)	22 (.234)	12 (.128)	22 (.234)	15 (.16)	22 (.234)
SD	2.14	2.18	2.08	2.09	2.17	2.17	2.25	2.14	2.32	2.15	2.04
Mean	3.46	3.54	3.89	3.8	3.44	3.21	4.16	3.17	3.78	3.38	4.49

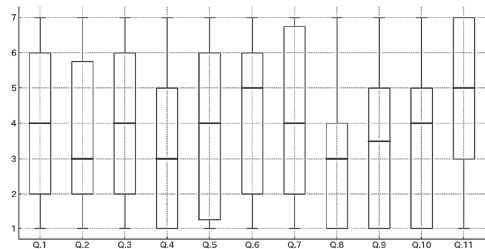
(n=94)

**Table 4 Overall responses from the participants (Q.23-33)**

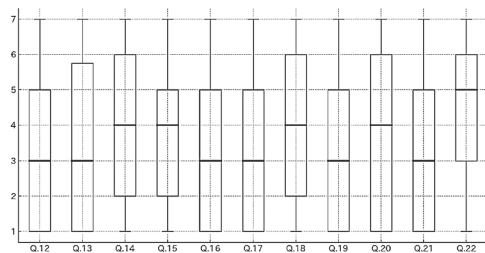
	Q.23	Q.24	Q.25	Q.26	Q.27	Q.28	Q.29	Q.30	Q.31	Q.32	Q.33
1 (Disagree)	17 (.181)	24 (.255)	20 (.213)	25 (.266)	25 (.266)	34 (.362)	27 (.287)	26 (.277)	37 (.394)	29 (.309)	26 (.277)
2	5 (.053)	10 (.106)	5 (.053)	10 (.106)	7 (.074)	12 (.128)	10 (.106)	9 (.096)	10 (.106)	10 (.106)	9 (.096)
3	8 (.085)	11 (.117)	17 (.181)	11 (.117)	13 (.138)	13 (.138)	14 (.149)	12 (.128)	10 (.106)	14 (.149)	10 (.106)
4	18 (.191)	17 (.181)	12 (.128)	16 (.17)	12 (.128)	10 (.106)	12 (.128)	10 (.106)	13 (.138)	16 (.17)	11 (.117)
5	10 (.106)	6 (.064)	14 (.149)	10 (.106)	15 (.16)	13 (.138)	13 (.138)	12 (.128)	7 (.074)	12 (.128)	11 (.117)
6	12 (.128)	10 (.106)	10 (.106)	9 (.096)	5 (.053)	4 (.043)	4 (.043)	9 (.096)	5 (.053)	2 (.021)	9 (.096)
7 (Agree)	24 (.255)	16 (.17)	16 (.17)	13 (.138)	17 (.181)	8 (.085)	14 (.149)	16 (.17)	12 (.128)	11 (.117)	18 (.191)
SD	2.18	2.19	2.11	2.13	2.19	2.01	2.13	2.23	2.16	2.02	2.28
Mean	4.39	3.69	3.95	3.59	3.72	3	3.45	3.68	3.06	3.23	3.76

(n=94)

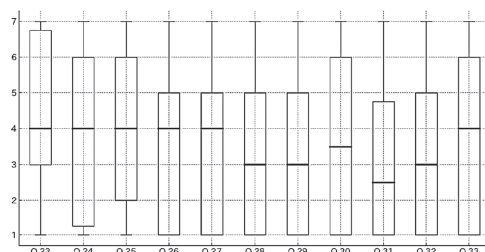
Next, data depicting the tendencies in the overall responses will be introduced. Figure 1, Figure 2, and Figure 3 (shown below) are box-and-whisker plots, which demonstrate the overall results. Each plot shows quantitative data including the maximum, minimum, and median.



**Figure 1** Box-and-whisker plots showing the overall results (Q.1-11)



**Figure 2** Box-and-whisker plots showing the overall results (Q.12-22)

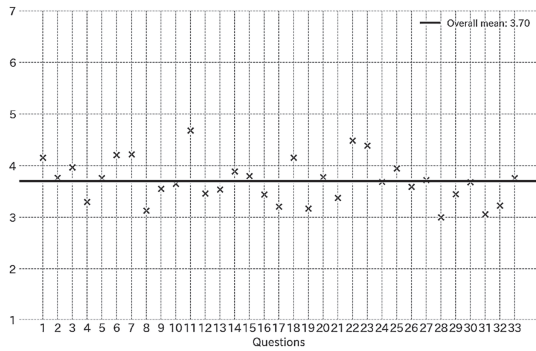


**Figure 3** Box-and-whisker plots showing the overall results (Q.23-33)

**6.1.2 Mean of overall responses**

Firstly, the data showing both mean of overall responses and answers on each question will be introduced. Figure 4 is the chart showing that data. The overall mean was 3.7 out of 7. Given the results,

it is possible to infer that the participants in this study were learners who experience neither anxiety too frequently nor hardly ever. Moreover, although the overall mean was 3.7 out of 7, this result does not seem to show the level of anxiety experienced by the participants was high.



**Figure 4 Mean of overall responses and answers on each question**

Secondly, this section will delineate the tendencies of the overall responses from the overall mean. Table 5 below shows the result of the overall responses divided into two categories based on the overall mean. In this case, the number of questions whose means were over 3.7 was 16 out of 33 (.48), whilst that of questions whose means were over 3.7 was 17 out of 33 (.52).

**Table 5 Two categories based on the overall mean**

Categories	Number	Questions
Over overall mean (3.7)	16 (.48)	Q.1 (4.16) Q.2 (3.77) Q.3 (3.97) Q.5 (3.76) Q.6 (4.21) Q.7 (4.22) Q.11 (4.68) Q.14 (3.89) Q.15 (3.8) Q.18 (4.16) Q.20 (3.78) Q.22 (4.49) Q.23 (4.39) Q.25 (3.95) Q.27 (3.72) Q.33 (3.76)
Under overall mean (3.7)	17 (.52)	Q.4 (3.3) Q.8 (3.13) Q.9 (3.55) Q.10 (3.65) Q.12 (3.46) Q.13 (3.54) Q.16 (3.44) Q.17 (3.21) Q.19 (3.17) Q.21 (3.38) Q.24 (3.69) Q.26 (3.59) Q.28 (3.0) Q.29 (3.45) Q.30 (3.68) Q.31 (3.06) Q.32 (3.73)

(n=33)

As the next step, in order to explore the tendencies in the participants' responses more concretely, the overall result from the participants was divided into three categories: 1. Questions whose means were over 4.0 out of 7; 2. Questions whose means were between 3.20 and 3.99; and Questions whose means were under 3.20. The first category has 7 questions (.21), whereas 22 questions (.67) were put in the second group. Moreover, the third group has 4 questions (.12). Detailed information is shown in Table 6 below.

**Table 6 Three categories based on means**

Categories	Number	Questions
Over 4.0	7 (.21)	Q.1 (4.16) Q.6 (4.21) Q.7 (4.22) Q.11 (4.68) Q.18 (4.16) Q.22 (4.49) Q.23 (4.39) Q.2 (3.77) Q.3 (3.97) Q.4 (3.3) Q.5 (3.76) Q.9 (3.55) Q.10 (3.65) Q.12 (3.46)
3.2-3.99	22 (.67)	Q.13 (3.54) Q.14 (3.89) Q.15 (3.8) Q.16 (3.44) Q.17 (3.21) Q.20 (3.78) Q.21 (3.38) Q.24 (3.69) Q.25 (3.95) Q.26 (3.59) Q.27 (3.72) Q.29 (3.45) Q.30 (3.68) Q.32 (3.23) Q.33 (3.76)
Under 3.2 (n=33)	4 (.12)	Q.8 (3.13) Q.19 (3.17) Q.28 (3.0) Q.31 (3.06)

### 6.1.3 Discussions based on the mean of each question

This section will focus on the first category in Table 6, which contains questions whose means were over 4.0 out of 7. Questions contained in this categories are: Q.1 [I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English class]; Q.6 [During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course]; Q.7 [I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am]; Q.11 [I understand why some people get so upset over English classes]; Q.18 [I feel do not confident when I speak in English class]; Q.22 [I feel pressure to prepare very well for English class]; and Q.23 [I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do].

Considering the contents of each question, three categories were created: 1. Self-esteem; 2. Feeling compared with others; and 3. Negative responses to classes. The first category, “self-esteem,” correlates to Q.1’s statement of [I never feel quite sure of myself] and Q.18’s statement of [I feel do not confident.] Moreover, the second category, “Feeling compared with others,” refers to Q.7’s statement that [the other students are better] and Q.23’s statement that [the other students speak English better.] The third category, “Negative responses to classes,” encompasses Q.6’s statement [thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course,] Q.11’s statement of some students [getting upset over English classes;] and Q.22’s statement [I feel pressure to prepare very well for English class.] It would be possible to infer that anxiety frequently experienced by the participants in this study is connected to the participant’s level of self-esteem, their level of feeling compared to others, and their negative responses to classes.

**Table 7 Factors related to frequently-experienced anxiety**

Categories	Questions		
Self-esteem	Q.1 (4.16)	Q.18 (4.16)	
Comparison with others	Q.7 (4.22)	Q.23 (4.39)	
Negative responses to classes	Q.6 (4.21)	Q.11 (4.68)	Q.22 (4.49)

Next, this section will focus on the third category in Table 6, which contains questions whose means were under 4.0 out of 7, including Q.8 [I am not usually at ease during tests in my English class]; Q.19 [I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make]; Q.28 [When I'm on my way to English class, I am not feeling

very sure and relaxed]; and Q.31 [I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English].

Considering the contents of each question, two categories were created: 1. Avoidance; and 2. Comparison with others. First category, “avoidance,” refers to Q.8’s statement [I am not usually at ease during tests in my English class] and Q.28’s statement [When I’m on my way to English class, I am not feeling very sure and relaxed;] moreover, these responses may show that specific situations such as exams and time spent traveling to English lessons do not cause the participants’ avoidance. The second category, “comparison with others,” refers to Q.19’s fearful statement that students may be [afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make;] and the fear posted in Q.31 that [the other students will laugh.] Considering those contents, it would be possible to infer that anxiety experienced by the participants in this study would not cause avoidance but would be caused by perceived negative evaluations from others.

**Table 8 Factors related to hardly-experienced anxiety**

Categories	Questions	
Avoidance	Q.8 (3.13)	Q.28 (3.0)
Negative evaluation from others	Q.19 (3.17)	Q.31 (3.06)

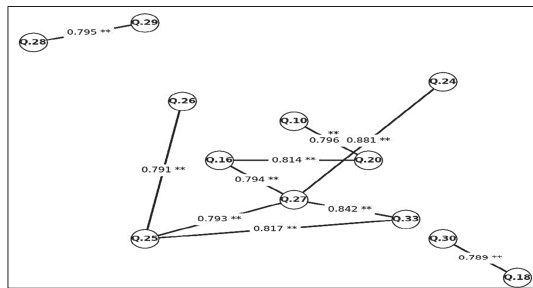
**6.1.4 Correlation Analysis**

This section will introduce the results from correlation analysis. The author conducted a correlation analysis to see the correlation coefficient amongst answers on all 33 questions. This section will discuss only the combinations with significant correlations—those

whose P-value were under 0.05. Moreover, this paper will discuss the ten combinations with the highest correlation coefficients. The ten combinations are shown in the Table 9. Also, Figure 5 shows how each question is connected.

**Table 9 The ten combinations with the highest correlation coefficients**

Combination	Correlation coefficient	P-value ( **: p<.01, *: p<.05)
Q.10 & Q.20	.796	**
Q.16 & Q.20	.814	**
Q.16 & Q.27	.794	**
Q.18 & Q.30	.789	**
Q.24 & Q.27	.881	**
Q.25 & Q.26	.791	**
Q.25 & Q.27	.793	**
Q.25 & Q.33	.817	**
Q.27 & Q.33	.842	**
Q.28 & Q.29	.795	**



**Figure 5 The ten combinations with the highest correlation coefficients**

### 6.1.5 Discussions based on the results from the correlation analysis

This section will discuss the results from the correlation analysis, as divided into three parts.

Firstly, this part will discuss the combination between Q.28 [When



I'm on my way to English class, I am not feeling very sure and relaxed] and Q.29 [I get nervous when I don't understand every word English teacher says]. These questions do not seem to have causational relationship. Furthermore, perfectionism might be a latent variable between these two questions. People with perfectionist tendencies may feel uneasy when they do not fully understand everything the teacher is saying, and they might also be reluctant to attend class if they feel they are not fully confident in their ability to perform up to a particular standard.

The second part is the combination between Q.18 [I feel do not confident when I speak in English class] and Q.30 [I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English]. These questions do not seem to have causational relationship. Moreover, there may be a latent variable that learners operate under the belief that, unless they remember a large number of words and grammar rules, they cannot speak well.

The third group contains Q.10 [I worry about the consequences of failing my English class]; Q.16 [Even if I am well prepared for English class, I feel anxious about it]; Q.20 [I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in English class]; Q.24 [I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students]; Q.25 [English class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind]; Q.26 [I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes]; Q.27 [I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class]; and Q.33 [I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance]. The content of these questions seems to contain self-consciousness as a latent variable. A

sense of self-consciousness amongst student may cause them to experience anxiety, which would not be lowered by their preparation for classes.

## 6.2 Comparison between foreign language anxiety and attendance rate

### 6.2.1 Overall attendance

Attendance rate among all participants are as shown in Table 10. The data is divided into categories based on attendance rate.

**Table 10 The ten combinations with the highest correlation coefficients**

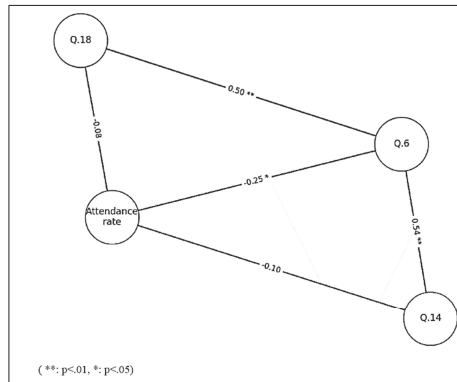
Categories	Number
1	33 (.35)
.99-.90	19 (.20)
.89-.80	25 (.27)
.79-.70	12 (.13)
.69-.60	4 (.04)
.59-.50	1 (.01)
SD	.112
Mean	.889

(n=94)

### 6.2.2 The results of the correlational analysis

Through correlational analysis, it was found out that only one combination had significant correlations, which was those whose P-value were under 0.05. The combination is between attendance rate and Q.6 [During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course]. The two factors do not seem to have causational relationship. It is more logical to simply think that motivation toward learning English exists as a latent variable; this

means that highly motivated students seriously attend classes and concentrate on classes well. Moreover, considering the point that there are significant correlations for points whose P-value were under 0.05, such as amongst Q.6 [During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course]; Q.14 [I would be nervous speaking the English with native speakers]; and Q.18 [I feel do not confident when I speak in English class], the level of concentration among the participants seemed to be related to their speaking skills.



**Figure 6 The combinations between attendance rate and Q.6**

### 6.2.3 Comparing two groups based on attendance rate

The author divided all participants into two categories based on the median value of attendance rate, which was 0.93. The number of individuals in each category and percentages are shown in Table 11. Moreover, the overall responses from the two groups are as shown in Table 12, Table 13, and Table 14.

**Table 11 Two categories based on the median value of attendance rate**

Categories	Number	Average attendance rate
.93 or higher	49 (.52)	.977
less than .93	45 (.48)	.793

(n=94)

**Table 12 Overall responses from the two groups (Q.1-11)**

	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Q.5	Q.6	Q.7	Q.8	Q.9	Q.10	Q.11
.93 or higher	4.04	3.63	4.16	3.22	3.78	3.71	4.33	3.1	3.65	3.53	4.65
less than .93	4.29	3.91	3.76	3.38	3.73	4.76	4.11	3.16	3.44	3.78	4.71

**Table 13 Overall responses from the two groups (Q.12-22)**

	Q.12	Q.13	Q.14	Q.15	Q.16	Q.17	Q.18	Q.19	Q.20	Q.21	Q.22
.93 or higher	3.53	3.35	3.69	3.61	3.41	2.96	4.04	3.02	3.69	3.35	4.61
less than .93	3.38	3.76	4.11	4	3.47	3.49	4.29	3.33	3.87	3.42	4.36

**Table 14 Overall responses from the two groups (Q.23-33)**

	Q.23	Q.24	Q.25	Q.26	Q.27	Q.28	Q.29	Q.30	Q.31	Q.32	Q.33
.93 or higher	4.55	3.39	3.8	3.47	3.53	2.73	3.31	3.67	2.71	3.16	3.71
less than .93	4.22	4.02	4.11	3.71	3.93	3.29	3.6	3.69	3.44	3.31	3.8

The author conducted T-tests on each question. As a result, it was found out that only one question (Q.6) has a significant difference. This data also indicates that only the participants' level of concentration in lessons has significant correlations with their attendance rate in English classes.

## 7. Conclusion

### 7.1 Summary of this study

This research investigated 94 non-English-major university students with three main aims: 1. To update the information regarding foreign language anxiety through an exploratory study aimed at clarifying the

characteristics of foreign language anxiety experienced by Japanese university students in today's society; 2. To clarify the characteristics of foreign language anxiety experienced by individuals whose university majors do not seem to be directly related to English language; and 3. To clarify whether foreign language anxiety affects students' attendance rate. The results indicate that the anxiety frequently experienced by the participants in this study are connected to self-esteem, feeling compared with others, and having negative responses to classes; whilst the types of anxiety experienced by the participants in this study would not cause avoidance behaviours but does seem to be influenced by a perceived negative evaluation from others. Moreover, the results from the correlational analysis demonstrates the possibility that perfectionism, learners' belief that unless they remember a large number of words and rules, they cannot speak well, and a high sense of self-consciousness affect the level of anxiety experienced by the participants in this research. Finally, a significant correlation was seen between the participants' attendance rate and their levels of concentration, while anxiety did not seem to have the significant correlation with the attendance rate.

## **7.2 Educational suggestions**

Firstly, based on the result that the anxiety frequently experienced by the participants in this study is connected to self-esteem, feeling compared with others and negative responses to classes, it would not be overstating to suggest that teachers and programme organisers who are expected to design learning situations should consider these three points when designing their classroom landscape in order to reduce the

level of foreign language anxiety experienced by students.

Secondly, considering the data that perfectionism, learners' belief that unless they remember a large number of words and rules, they cannot speak well, and a high level of self-consciousness affects the amount of anxiety experienced, the importance of focusing on the affective aspects of learners seem to be vital. Also, in order to care for the students' foreign language anxiety, teachers are expected to consider solutions related not only to anxiety but also other affective parts.

Thirdly, even though anxiety did not seem to have a significant correlation with attendance rate itself, given the apparent correlation between participants' attendance rate and their levels of concentration, the effective methods for improving students' attendance rate may be best improved by focusing on students' motivation rather than the anxiety itself.

### **7.3 Limitations in this study and future research suggestions**

Firstly, as mentioned in the section regarding research methods, English fluency amongst all participants seemed to be A level (A1 or A2) in The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages/CEFR. In order to generalise the findings of this study, additional data should be extracted from learners with different English fluency levels and the results of such studies compared.

Secondly, as mentioned in section 6.2.1 "Overall attendance," the average overall attendance rate among all participants was 0.889. In order to generalise the findings of this study, the data should be taken from learners with very low attendance rate and compare the results.

Thirdly, as mentioned above in this chapter, foreign language anxiety experienced by learners seems to be affected by self-esteem, feeling compared with others, and having negative responses to classes, perfectionism, learners' belief that unless they remember a large number of words and rules, they cannot speak well, and a high level of self-consciousness. In order to clarify factors affecting foreign language anxiety, the relationship between foreign language anxiety and these above listed factors should be further investigated.

When conducting research on the points suggested above, the author strongly desires to contribute ideas that help students cope with their students' foreign language anxiety to teachers and programme organisers.

### **Acknowledgement**

First of all, from the bottom of his heart, the author would like to show his deepest appreciation to the all participants in this study. Their kind cooperation made this research possible. In addition, he would like to show his gratitude the professors in Keiai University who organise this research journal. It is their kind support that created the opportunities to introduce this research, and he strongly desires to provide the students of Keiai University with great English language education by applying his findings in his teaching.

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## Appendix (The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale/FLCAS used in this study)

1. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English class.
2. I worry about making mistakes in English class.
3. I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.
4. It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.
5. It bother me at all to take more English classes.
6. During English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.
7. I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.
8. I am not usually at ease during tests in my English class.
9. I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English class.
10. I worry about the consequences of failing my English class.
11. I understand why some people get so upset over English classes.
12. In English class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.
13. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class.
14. I would be nervous speaking the English with native speakers.
15. I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting in my English class.
16. Even if I am well prepared for English class, I feel anxious about it.
17. I often feel like not going to my English class.
18. I feel do not confident when I speak in English class.
19. I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.
20. I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in English class.
21. The more I study for an English test, the more confused I get.
22. I feel pressure to prepare very well for English class.
23. I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.
24. I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.
25. English class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.
26. I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes.
27. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class.
28. When I'm on my way to English class, I am not feeling very sure and relaxed.
29. I get nervous when I don't understand every word English teacher says.
30. I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules I have to learn to speak English.
31. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.
32. I would not probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English.
33. I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.