Classroom Anxiety and Self-efficacy
among Learners of Japanese as a Foreign Language in Canada

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Abstract

The recent increase in international students has led to more attention to inclusive pedagogical methods in foreign language classrooms at Canadian universities. International students from Asia constitute a significant part of foreign language learners in Canadian universities (Statistics Canada, 2022b). In particular, Asian young adult learners have higher foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA) (Toyama & Yamazaki, 2022). In addition, it has been observed that East Asian learners’ self-efficacy (SE) affects their foreign/second language (L2) proficiency more than that of learners from Western cultures (Wang & Sun, 2020).

Specifically in reading, listening, and writing, foreign language anxiety (FLA) negatively correlates with SE (Reading and Listening: Mills et al., 2006; Writing: Woodrow, 2011).

The present study employed a mixed methods approach (survey and interviews) to investigate learners’ FLCA, speaking SE (SSE), oral proficiency, and attitudes toward classmates’ language proficiency among Asian international learners (AILs) and Canadian learners (CLs) of Japanese as a foreign language (JFL). Fifty-two individuals participated in the study, who attended elective Japanese language courses at a medium-sized university in Canada.

The quantitative instrument was a survey that contained questions about demographic information, FLCA, SSE, engagement, and motivation for Japanese learning. Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient demonstrated a medium negative correlation between FLCA and SSE among AILs. However, no significant correlations were confirmed among CLs. The short oral proficiency test (OPT) scores were negatively correlated with AILs’ FLCA and positively correlated with their SSE but not CLs’.

The qualitative approach employed a 30-minute-long semi-structured interview where the participants were asked mainly about their perception of their classmates’ Japanese proficiency
and the moments they felt anxious. A thematic analysis demonstrated that most AILs feared making mistakes during lectures in their Japanese classes and were self-conscious of their utterances in front of their classes. On the contrary, some CLs felt anxious when they were not well-prepared for class content. Still, most CLs rarely paid much attention to high achievers in their Japanese classes.

In conclusion, the study found that AILs were primarily concerned about making mistakes in their Japanese classes, whereas some CLs were not negatively affected by their classmates' presence.
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Dedication

To Asian university learners of foreign languages
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List of Abbreviations

AILs (Asian International Learners)
CLs (Canadian Learners)
EFL (English as a Foreign Language)
FL (Foreign Language)
FLA (Foreign Language Anxiety)
FLCA (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety)
FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale)
FLLA (Foreign Language Listening Anxiety)
FLRA (Foreign Language Reading Anxiety)
FLWA (Foreign Language Writing Anxiety)
JFL (Japanese as a Foreign Language)
L2 (Foreign/Second Language)
OPT (Oral Proficiency Test)
RQ (Research Question)
SE (Self-efficacy)
SSE (Speaking Self-efficacy)
SSES (Speaking Self-efficacy Scale)
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background

It is estimated that there are over 3.7 million learners of Japanese all around the world (Japan Foundation, 2023). The countries with the largest number of learners are China, Indonesia, Korea, Australia, Thailand, Vietnam, the United States, Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, and India. Over 78% of them are from Asian countries, while 4.7% are from North America.

Particularly in North American countries, Canada has about 18,000 Japanese learners, while the US has around 160,000, ranking 17th and 7th in the world, respectively (Japan Foundation, 2023). About 42% of North American learners learn Japanese at secondary school, while the other 39% take university-level Japanese courses or self-study (8%).

Japanese Canadians mainly reside in British Columbia (42.2%), Ontario (32.6%), and Alberta (14.4%) (Ohki, 2022). By contrast, the province of Saskatchewan, where this study was conducted, has only 1% population of Japanese individuals (Ohki, 2022). Therefore, in the latter province, Japanese language classes at secondary schools or universities may be the only venue to practice speaking for learners of Japanese in rural Canada. In Saskatchewan, Canada, the number of Japanese people is about 1,295 people of the whole population (0.17%), and only 490 are 1st generation (0.04%) (Statistics Canada, 2022a), who may speak Japanese as their first language as of 2021. Additionally, the number of Japanese language schools in Saskatchewan is limited. Therefore, there are limited opportunities to speak Japanese outside the class, and the classroom remains the major language exposure venue for most learners of Japanese as a foreign language (JFL).
Because of these reasons, Japanese language classes at the University of Saskatchewan are the places where they set goals or standards by comparing their Japanese proficiency to that of their classmates. In the domain of JFL research, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA) (Aida, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1986) (see Chapter 2) has been hotly debated as a prominent factor that negatively affects learners’ language learning and performance (Aida, 1994; Chanprasert & Wichadee, 2015; Kitano, 2001; Kuriyama, 2014; Machida, 2001; Saito & Samimy, 1996). However, Self-efficacy (SE) (Bandura, 1997) (see Chapter 2), which negatively correlates with learners’ Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) levels (Mills et al., 2006; Woodrow, 2011), has not gained much attention at all in JFL research. The research on learners’ perceived self-efficacy is more needed in JFL research.

Another issue would be the demographics and ethnic background of university students in Canada. As of 2020, about 17% of university students in Canada are international students from overseas (Statistics Canada, 2022b). Their countries of origin are mainly India (319,000), China (100,010), the Philippines (32,425), France, Nigeria, Iran, Korea (16,500), Vietnam (16,130), Mexico, and the US (Statista, 2022). With the increase in the number of Asian international learners (AILs), foreign language (FL) teachers and classrooms in Canada would be required to consider them for further improvements in their pedagogy.

Regarding the relationship between ethnic background and learners’ psychological experiences, recent meta-analysis studies reported that Asian young adults had higher FLCA (Toyama & Yamazaki, 2022), while East Asian learners’ SE significantly affected their foreign/second language (L2) proficiency more than learners from Western countries (Wang & Sun, 2020). However, it remains unknown whether AILs and Canadian learners (CLs) may have any differences in their FLCA and speaking SE (SSE) in the same JFL classrooms at universities.
in Canada. Additionally, there is little research on SSE and learners’ perception of their peer learners’ performance in JFL research.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Learners of Japanese in urban Canada may have access to a large community of Japanese people or the opportunity to practice their Japanese outside their JFL classrooms. However, having access to native speakers would be quite limited in rural Canada. Therefore, learners’ successful/unsuccessful experiences and attitudes toward L2 learning might be determined by what transpires in their JFL classrooms. In addition to that, the perceptions of the learning experiences may vary from AILs to CLs in the same JFL courses.

1.3 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The present study investigates the possible issues in JFL classrooms in Canadian universities by examining the differences in learners’ psychological experiences. To investigate the problems that may cause FLCA or reduce SSE, the researcher employed a mixed methods approach (survey and interviews) combined with some classroom observations in the university-level JFL courses at a medium-sized Canadian University. The main objectives of this study are (1) to investigate the difference in their self-estimates on FLCA and SSE across AILs and CLs and (2) to explore their perceptions toward their classmates between these two groups of learners in the same JFL classrooms.

Data were collected through a survey, interviews with each participant, and supplemental classroom observation (see Chapter 3). Those data were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed by SPSS and NVivo.
The study investigated the following research questions (RQ):

RQ 1: Are there any differences in the relationship between FLCA and SSE between AILs and CLs?

RQ 2: Are AILs of Japanese likely to have higher FLCA than CLs?

RQ 3: Are AILs of Japanese likely to have lower SSE than CLs?

RQ 4: Are there any differences in the attitudes toward their classmates between AILs and CLs?

By answering these RQs, the study aims to positively contribute to the JFL research area and produce possible pedagogical implications for both learners and teachers in Canadian JFL classrooms.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature on FLA and SE in the settings of L2 learning. Also, the review on ethnic backgrounds and gender differences will be explored.

2.1 Foreign Language Anxiety

Horwitz et al. (1986) defined FLA as “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). They described anxiety as comprising three interconnected factors: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. Communication apprehension is described as “a type of shyness characterized by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people” (p. 127). The second component, test anxiety, refers to “a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure” (p. 127). Finally, fear of negative evaluation concerns the “apprehension about others’ evaluation, avoidance of evaluation situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively” (p. 128).

FLA is originally generated from the feeling of apprehension, particularly in the settings of L2 learning, such as speaking and listening (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Among the four language skills, speaking activities are usually considered the most anxiety-inducing domain by FL learners (Horwitz et al., 1986). Also, Young (1991) reviewed research on FLA and concluded that there were six possible sources of second language anxiety: “1) personal and interpersonal anxieties; 2) learner beliefs about language learning; 3) instructor beliefs about language learning; 4) instructor-learner interactions; 5) classroom procedures; and 6) language testing” (p. 427).
2.1.1 Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety

FLCA has been proven to negatively affect learners’ achievement in their L2 learning (Aida, 1994; Horwitz, 2001; MacIntyre & Gardener, 1991). A study by Liu and Jackson (2008) reported that FLA had a negative impact on the willingness of Chinese university learners of English to communicate in their classrooms. The participants in their study preferred interpersonal communication to speaking up in their classes. In another study, Kitano (2001) investigated potential factors of anxiety among 212 university learners of Japanese in the US. It was found that participants were more anxious as they felt more fear of negative evaluation, particularly for advanced learners, than for introductory and intermediate-level learners. Additionally, participants’ anxiety was higher when they perceived their Japanese proficiency was lower than that of peer learners. The anxiety level among male participants rose when they perceived their speaking skills to be less competent, whereas female participants did not show anxiety under the same conditions. Similarly, Saito and Samimy (1996) conducted their study among 257 university learners of Japanese in the US. They observed that learners’ class language anxiety level was the best predictor of their final grades for advanced and intermediate-level learners, and advanced learners had the highest anxiety.

Aida (1994) reported that university learners of Japanese in the US who had been to Japan had lower anxiety than those who had not been to Japan. Similarly, Chanprasert and Wichadee (2015) conducted a study on 116 Taiwanese university learners of Japanese. They showed that learners who had talked with native speakers of Japanese in the target language or had been to Japan had lower anxiety levels than those without these experiences. In the English as a foreign language (EFL) setting, Matsuda and Gobel (2004) found that Japanese university
learners of English with overseas experience had lower anxiety in speaking English and had higher self-confidence.

One specific factor connected to FLA in university language courses is the presence of false-beginners who have already started learning a target language. Most learners in a language classroom are true-beginners who enroll in a language course without prior knowledge of a target language. Frantzen and Magnan (2005) investigated FLA levels among 480 university learners of French and Spanish in elementary courses in the US. They reported that true-beginners had significantly higher FLA than false beginners. In another study, Kuriyama (2014) recruited 513 university learners of Japanese in the US. The participants were true/false beginners in the first semester (Introductory level) of Japanese language courses. She reported that true-beginners had significantly higher FLCA than false-beginners. However, there were no significant differences between their final course grades or retention rates in the next semester.

Another factor in FLA levels is gender. Machida (2001) examined FLCA among 166 university learners of Japanese in Australia. Her study found that female students were more anxious than male counterparts. Park and French (2013) recruited 948 Korean university learners of English and reported that female L2 learners had higher FLCA than their male counterparts. However, more anxious learners and female students tended to have higher grades than less anxious learners and male students respectively.

### 2.1.2 Foreign Language Anxiety and Language Learning

Besides a fear of classroom interaction, many students develop FL writing anxiety (FLWA). Cheng (2002) investigated FLWA among 165 English major university students in Taiwan. The results showed that FLWA was completely different from their L1 writing anxiety.
Additionally, female learners had higher FLWA levels than male students. The more time they studied, the more anxious they got about their writing.

Reading skills can also become an object of anxiety among L2 learners. For example, Saito et al. (1999) explored the relationship between FLCA and FL reading anxiety (FLRA) among learners of French, Japanese, and Russian. They found that FLRA was related but distinguishable from general FLCA. The study also revealed that learners' FLRA levels increased as they perceived reading materials more difficult. Additionally, students who had higher FLRA had lower course grades. Matsuda and Gobel (2001) conducted a similar survey among 252 university learners of English at a Japanese university. They found that the FLCA and FLRA scales were measuring independent constructs respectively. Zhao et al. (2013) recruited 114 university learners of Chinese in the US and investigated their FLRA and their reading proficiency. They found a negative correlation between learners’ FLRA and their reading performance among introductory I level and intermediate level learners but not among introductory II level learners. Additionally, unfamiliar topics of scripts were the primary source of their FLRA.

Listening anxiety has also been said to affect FL learners, as shown in Elkhafaifi (2005), who investigated the listening skills of 233 postsecondary learners of Arabic. He found that FL listening anxiety (FLLA) negatively correlated with participants’ final listening grades in their courses. Kim (2000) found that 253 Korean learners’ FLLA strongly correlated with their FLCA, and there was a small negative correlation between FLLA and learners’ listening proficiency.

In the recent COVID-19 pandemic, online L2 learning has had some impacts on L2 learning (Resnik & Dewaele, 2021). It has been reported that online L2 learners feel more anxious due to the lack of interaction (Kaisar & Chowdhury, 2020), specifically at the beginning
of the semester (Russell, 2020). On the contrary, another study reported that online L2 learning reduced learners’ FLCA (Yaniafari & Rihardini, 2021).

2.2 Self-efficacy

As one of the cognitive and psychological components, SE has gained much attention in education domains (Usher & Pajares, 2008). Bandura (1997) defined SE as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the course of action required to produce given attainments” (p. 3). He suggested that there were four primary sources of SE: 1) mastery experience, 2) vicarious experience, 3) social persuasion, and 4) physiological and emotional states. Mastery experience is considered the most prominent factor among the four sources, and previous successful experiences raise one’s SE, while failure experiences may lower it. Observing others doing the same specific task, known as vicarious experience, also affects SE. Vicarious experience offers students opportunities to compare themselves to higher/lower-achieving learners. Social persuasion plays a vital role in the development of one’s SE. Encouragement and positive feedback from adults or teachers would strengthen one’s SE, while punishment and negative feedback may lower one’s SE. The final source of SE is physiological and emotional states. For example, one’s mood has a positive/negative impact by activating memories of past accomplishments or failures.

SE assists students to perform better in learning outcomes (Komarraju & Nadler, 2013; Pajares, 1996). For example, SE is a possible predictor of academic achievement among university students (Wilson & Narayan, 2016), and among primary/secondary students (Grigg et al., 2018). Also, SE was the only significant factor in predicting university students’ GPA, among other psychological elements (e.g., motivation and anxiety) (Komarraju & Nadler, 2013).
2.2.1 Self-efficacy and Language Learning

A particularly strong relationship between SE and English proficiency of L2 learners was found in Asian countries (e.g., China: Wang & Bai, 2016; Singapore: Liem et al., 2008; South Korea: Kim et al., 2015; Vietnam: Truong & Wang, 2019). SE was related to students’ learning beliefs (Sanders-Reio et al., 2014) and L2 learning strategies (Magogwe & Oliver, 2007; Kim et al., 2015; Wang & Bai, 2016). Bai et al. (2019) conducted a study among 1,092 EFL secondary school learners in Hong Kong and found that their SE was positively correlated with their English learning outcomes. In other studies, SE was found to be predictive of reading (Shang, 2010), writing (Woodrow, 2011), listening (Rahimi & Abedini, 2009), and speaking (Zhang et al., 2020) skills.

2.2.2 Self-efficacy and Gender

Some earlier evidence suggests women tend to have lower SE than men in male-dominated disciplines (e.g., science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) (Beyer, 2014). Similarly, it has been observed that women have higher math anxiety compared to their male counterparts, and this leads to a decrease in their mathematics performance (Dowker et al., 2016). Chaffee et al. (2020) surveyed 1,672 undergraduate students in Canada and found a stereotype of L2 learning being considered a female occupation. Previous studies showed that women consistently outperformed men in literature and foreign languages (Główka, 2014). Huang (2013) conducted a meta-analysis and demonstrated that male participants had higher SE in computer and mathematics, while female participants had higher SE in language arts. The most significant effect size was confirmed for respondents over 23 years old.
While gender stereotypes exist in academic settings, there are some studies which bring new insights into gender stereotypes studies. For example, Dewaele et al. (2016) surveyed 1,736 L2 learners worldwide to determine how female and male learners differed in their perspectives on enjoyment and anxiety. The results showed that although women enjoyed L2 learning more than men, they were still more anxious than their male counterparts. In another study, Mills et al. (2006) demonstrated that French listening SE positively related to listening proficiency only for female but not for male undergraduate students. Pajares and Valiante (2001) investigated gender differences in writing motivation and achievement among 497 middle school students. They reported that females had stronger writing SE and received higher grades in language arts. A literature review by Pajares (2003) examining gender differences in writing SE reported that females tended to exhibit greater confidence in their writing abilities than males during middle school. However, as students age, this gender disparity diminishes or even reverses. However, it is essential to note that how gender is perceived can vary across cultures, time, and communities (Schmenk, 2004).

2.3 Correlation between Foreign Language Anxiety and Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy has been said to play a vital role in the arousal of learners’ anxiety (Bandura, 1997). In the language learning domain, Woodrow (2011) investigated the correlation between English FLWA and writing SE among 738 university students in China. The study showed that their FLWA negatively correlated with their writing SE, which was positively connected to their writing performance. Mills et al. (2006) found a medium negative correlation between FLRA and reading SE and between FLLA and listening SE, respectively, among 95 university learners of French in the US.
2.4 Cultural and Ethnic Differences in Foreign Language Anxiety and Self-efficacy

Horwitz (2016) described that cultural differences may affect FLA because “anxiety specifically has been found to vary within different cultures” (p. 73). Al-Saraj (2014) suggested in his review that cultural norms dictate expected behaviour for students in a classroom and that FLA results from North America could differ from those in non-Western cultures. Similarly, Alnuzaili and Uddin (2020) stated that learners’ FLA would be triggered when the sociocultural background of L2 learners differed from that of the target language. Ohata (2005), for instance, interviewed five Japanese college learners who experienced studying abroad in the US. He found that Japanese cultural norms could influence the emotional difficulties of Japanese learners of English. When it comes to expressing ideas, Japanese learners were hesitant, and this tendency seemed to cause FLA in their communication with their peer learners and teachers. Another example is Yan and Horwitz (2008). They surveyed 532 Chinese university learners of English in Shanghai, China and qualitatively analyzed their language learning experiences and FLA. They found that regional differences within a country were related to differences in English proficiency, and the quality of English education they received led them to compare themselves to high-proficiency students.

A meta-analysis conducted by Toyama and Yamazaki (2022) showed that Asian learners (e.g., the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, India, Korea and China) had higher FLCA than North American learners (e.g., Canada and the US). Lim (2009) recruited 220 international teaching assistants at a university in the US and divided them into four groups: an Asian learner group (China, Hong Kong, Korea, Nepal, and Taiwan), another Asian learner group (India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Iran), a European learner group and a North/South American learner group. Results indicated that the Asian group (China, Hong Kong, Korea,
Nepal, and Taiwan) had the highest FLA among the four learner groups. Machida (2001) conducted a study among 161 1st-year students in Japanese language courses in Australia. The results showed native speakers of English and Chinese had higher FLCA levels than other groups of participants.

A previous study examining SE across countries indicated that Asian students had lower SE despite outperforming their counterparts in academic settings (Eaton & Dembo, 1997; Klassen, 2004). They have hypothesized that Asians’ thoughts on effort account for differences in learners’ perceived SE because hard work and effort are more highly valued than their ability in collectivist societies such as East Asian countries (e.g., China, Korea, and Japan). As a result, their SE tends to be lower in collectivist countries than in individualist countries. For example, Wang et al. (2013) reported that Chinese college students had lower SE in English learning than German college students. In another cross-cultural study, Singaporean secondary students had lower SE for self-regulation than Canadian secondary students (Klassen et al., 2009). A meta-analysis of the relationship between L2 SE and L2 proficiency showed that effect sizes reported in research with East Asian participants were larger than those with participants from Western culture (Wang & Sun, 2020).

2.5 Rationale of the Study

Based on the literature review, it has been reported that Asian L2 learners tended to have higher FLCA (Toyama & Yamazaki, 2022) and their SE significantly affected their L2 performance (Wang & Sun, 2020). However, it remains unknown whether AILs and CLs have any differences in their FLCA and SSE in the same FL classroom environments. Additionally, the relationship between FLCA and SSE has not been investigated before, whereas the
The correlation between FLA and SE (reading, listening and writing) was found by Mills et al. (2006) and Woodrow (2011). Thus, the present study quantitatively investigates the relationship between FLCA and SSE and the group difference between AILs and CLs to answer RQ 1 (Are there any differences in the relationship between FLCA and SSE between AILs and CLs?), RQ 2 (Are AILs of Japanese likely to have higher FLCA than CLs?) and RQ 3 (Are AILs of Japanese likely to have lower SSE than CLs?).

Since the number of AILs (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Indian, Pilipino and Vietnamese) is increasing in Canadian universities, the target participants mainly come from those Asian countries above and Canada in this study. To confirm the tendency between AILs and CLs, other variables (e.g., FL learning experience, major and gender) will also be included in the data analyses.

Although Machida (2001) reported that native speakers of English and Chinese had higher FLCA than other ethnic groups at an Australian university, the differences in the sources of FLCA between AILs and CLs have not been discussed in the previous studies. To find the differences in the source of FLCA between AILs and CLs in the same JFL classrooms, the qualitative approach was employed to answer RQ 4 (Are there any differences in the attitudes toward their classmates between AILs and CLs?).
Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter describes the instruments, procedures, recruitment strategies, participants’ demographics, data analyses and classroom observation in the study. The study employed a mixed methods approach (survey and interviews) using a questionnaire, an interview, and a short oral proficiency test (OPT) with university learners of Japanese in Canada.

3.1 Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

The present study employed a mixed methods approach because the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches enhances its value (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). One of the advantages is that qualitative data can validate the reliability of quantitative data (Fetters et al., 2013). Based on Fetters et al. (2013), there are three research design levels in the mixed methods approach: exploratory sequential, explanatory sequential and convergent (concurrent) designs. The present study employed a convergent design, since the quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (interviews) data collection occurred in parallel, and the data were separately analyzed and merged at the end.

3.1.1 Questionnaire

As previous studies revealed, the use of questionnaires helps researchers to obtain valuable quantitative data about FLCA and SE experienced by university learners of foreign languages (Aida, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1986; Mills et al., 2006; Woodrow, 2011).

The questionnaire was composed of questions about participants’ demographic information, Japanese language learning/FL learning experience, motivation, SSE, FLCA and engagement (see Appendix D). All the questions were asked online through SurveyMonkey and
linked to a researcher’s university account. The questionnaire was distributed via a URL sent to the university-specific course website that contained 57 questions.

The first section of the questionnaire contained nine multiple-choice/open-ended questions about participants’ demographics and backgrounds. Participants were asked about their Japanese course information (term/class), major, gender, age, birthplace, years of living in Canada, and the first language(s) they acquired from their parents.

The second section included 11 multiple-choice/open-ended questions about their language learning experiences. For example, there were questions about their first language(s), second language(s), Japanese language, and foreign language(s) learning experience in the past and how they learned by themselves or at institutions.

The third section was composed of 10 multiple-choice/open-ended questions about their motivation to study Japanese and their own learning styles. For instance, there were questions about their specific interests in learning Japanese, hours of study per day/week, studies for their personal interests other than class assignments, formats of taking their classes (online/in-person), and friends/partners with whom they studied in their classes.

The fourth section addressed the main theme of the research. Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Aida, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1986) was partially adapted to ask about the participants’ anxiety levels, mainly while speaking. Eight questions from the category of “Speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation” (Aida, 1994) were used, and the researcher added two questions to strengthen the scale. After that, the 10 questions were divided into two categories: 1) myself and 2) with classmates, so that the researcher could develop SSE scales (SSES) complying with the contents of FLCAS (see Tables 4, 5 and Appendix D). According to the SE scale guide by Bandura (2006), the questions for SE should be made based
on the specific tasks and ask whether the participants would be able to handle it “as of now.” Because of this, the researcher originally made the items about the SSES after the classroom observation and checking class materials/textbooks they used in their Japanese classes. FLCAS and SSES were asked with 5-point Likert scales.

The last section asked the participants about their engagement level with their Japanese learning (nine questions).

3.1.2 Interview and Short Oral Proficiency Test

Semi-structured interviews were employed as a data collection strategy for exploring how the university learners of Japanese saw active/competitive peers in their Japanese classes, their perceptions of classmates’ performance, and anxiety-inducing situations. The participants were asked to answer questions through semi-structured interviews, which contained close questions (yes/no questions with answering reasons) and open-ended questions (what/why questions). A semi-structured interview is suited for asking open-ended questions and eliciting each individual’s independent thoughts in a community (Adams, 2015). Also, the semi-structured interview has been evaluated to be successful in enabling reciprocity between the researcher and participant (Galletta, 2012), and assisting the interviewer in improvising additional questions based on participants’ responses (Polit & Beck, 2010).

Interviews and short OPT were conducted after the participants completed their online survey. As soon as they submitted their response through SurveyMonkey, the researcher contacted them via their email addresses with the four digits of the participants’ ID (e.g., AB12) they made up for the research. Forty-five out of 52 respondents to the questionnaire willingly joined the 30 to 40-minute-long interview and short OPT.
Before the interviews began, the researcher explained the purposes of the study and obtained consent forms from the participants. The interviews were recorded via Zoom, and the data were stored in the Zoom cloud.

The interview process consisted of 3 parts in total (see Appendix E for all the questions). Part 1 included general questions about their intrinsic/external motivation and participants’ way of learning Japanese. Part 2 was the main section, which had questions about how they perceived their active classmates during the lecture and group work, and classmates’ Japanese proficiency. Additionally, the researcher asked how they felt when they saw higher achievers in their Japanese classes. Part 3 dealt with how they perceived the class contents, anxiety, de/motivation, and their partners or friends in their Japanese classes.

Short OPTs were conducted in part 4 of the interview after the participants relaxed. Since the researcher asked all the different proficiency level students (Introductory I, Introductory II, Intermediate I, and Intermediate II), 10 questions in Japanese from Lesson 1, 2, and 3 of the GENKI I textbook were selected. Also, all the students were not used to improvising answers, so the researcher avoided using the validated standard tests (e.g., ACTFL’s oral proficiency interview). The researcher also asked them to do a free-style introduction in Japanese as long as they could (see Appendix E). After the interviews, the researcher only downloaded the audio data without their video and stored the data in a separate hard drive (USB).

3.2 Recruitment Strategies

3.2.1 Participants’ Recruitment and Eligibility Criteria

Participants’ eligibility criteria were as follows:

1) a student who registered in one of the Japanese courses at the University of
Saskatchewan in the Winter, Spring or Fall term in 2023.

There were four different levels of Japanese language courses in the year 2023:


2) Spring term: Japanese Introductory I

3) Fall term: Japanese Introductory I, and Intermediate I

The Japanese Introductory I course covered Lessons 1–5 of the GENKI textbook (Volume 1: Banno et al., 2020a; Volume 2: Banno et al., 2020b), the Introductory II covered Lessons 6–10, the Intermediate I covered Lessons 11–15, and the Intermediate II covered Lessons 16–20. Usually, all the students have to take the classes in order from Introductory I to II, then Intermediate I to II. However, a few students skipped the Introductory level classes as a prerequisite every year because they had self-study experience or learning experience in their secondary school before taking university Japanese courses. Those students who passed the placement interview tests conducted by the Japanese language lecturer would have the right to skip the Introductory class(es).

Japanese classes during the Winter term were offered in a hybrid (the lecturer was online, but teaching assistants were in person), the Spring class was taught fully online (the lecturer was from another university, but the same textbook was used), and the Fall term classes were offered in a hybrid mode with the teacher in person.

Participation in this research was completely voluntary. The researcher advertised the recruitment poster (see Appendix A) in the middle of each semester in 2023. The data collection started a month and a half after the class began. All the participants went through at least Lesson 1–3 to answer the short OPT (see Appendix E). The recruitment lasted for over a month each semester. With permission from the Japanese lecturer, the survey URL was pasted into the
announcement section of the University-specific course websites for the Japanese language classes.

3.2.2 Ethics Approval and Participant Consent Forms

Ethics approval (ID 3805) was issued on January 20, 2023, by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board.

Before taking a questionnaire, all the participants read and signed the consent form (see Appendix B) on page 1 of the online survey. For the interview process, the researcher read the consent form (see Appendix C) and asked all the participants to read and sign it before the recording of the interview. The consent forms informed the participants about their anonymity/confidentiality and the right to withdraw from the study at any point, even after completing their participation, by January 15, 2024. The participants who completed the survey and interview received a $50 Amazon gift card from the researcher as a remuneration.

3.3 Demographics of Participants

There were 52 participants in total in the study, and 45 of them joined the interview and short OPT. Table 1 shows the number of participants in Japanese classes in 2023, who answered the survey (52 participants in total). There were three classes (Introductory I, Introductory II and Intermediate II) in the Winter term, one class (Introductory I) in the Spring term, and two classes (Introductory I and Intermediate I) in the Fall term.
Table 1

*The Number of Participants from Japanese Classes in 2023*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Introductory I</th>
<th>Introductory II</th>
<th>Intermediate I</th>
<th>Intermediate II</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding their country of origin, 22 participants answered they were born in Canada, while others were born in Asian, European, and South American countries (Table 2). The average age upon their immigration was 11.5 years old, ranging from 0.5 to 19.

Table 2

*Country of Origin*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>Philippines</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Vietnam</th>
<th>Venezuela</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About half of the participants (27) speak English only as a native speaker for now, and 16 participants use English and other language(s) daily. Also, nine participants answered that their first native language(s) is/are other than English (Table 3).

Table 3

*Native Languages Other Than English*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Chinese</th>
<th>Mandarin</th>
<th>Cantonese</th>
<th>Korean</th>
<th>Tagalog</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>Hindi</th>
<th>Marathi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarati</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finnish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding their language background, 15 out of 52 participants had studied Japanese before taking university-level Japanese courses, and 31 of them answered that they had previously studied a foreign language(s).

The participant's average age was 21 years old (from 18 to 34). There were 1st-year students (22), 2nd-year students (12), 3rd-year students (8), 4th-year students (7), 5th-year students (2), and a 6th-year student (1). Regarding their gender, there were 29 males, 18 females, four non-binary, and one trans-woman. Since the Japanese classes were elective, their majors were diverse (e.g., Arts majors: Linguistics, Psychology, and Economics; Science majors: Computer Science, Agriculture, and Biomedical Science).

3.4 Data Analysis

3.4.1 Questionnaire

All the responses on SurveyMonkey were downloaded as numerical data from its website in Microsoft Excel sheet format, which helped the researcher code and obtain the demographic information. Using SPSS, Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient and Mann-Whitney U test were conducted. Besides the survey data, the manually calculated participant's OPT score data were added to the Excel sheet to determine their Japanese proficiency level and conduct the correlation coefficient between their FLCAS, SSES, and OPT scores based on individual variables.

For the interpretation of data results, Plonsky and Oswald’s (2014) suggestion was utilized for both Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient and Mann-Whitney U test’s effect size. They suggested the alternative effect size of correlation coefficients and mean differences for small ($r = .25, d = .40$), medium ($r = .40, d = .70$), and large ($r = .60, d = 1.00$) for L2 research.
domain, instead of using Cohen’s (1988) recommendation (small: 0.1/0.2; medium: 0.3/0.5; large: 0.5/0.8).

3.4.2 Interview and Short Oral Proficiency Test

The recording data obtained from Zoom was auto transcribed through Notta software (Notta, 2023), and the researcher checked and edited the details. NVivo 12 for Mac was used for the data coding process. The researcher categorized the transcription by thematic analysis. Regarding each participant's name, the researcher selected the semester, course level, ethnic background, and their moving-in age to Canada (e.g., Fall_Intro1_China_7).

Since some participants had one or two opinions on one question, the number of categorizations exceeded the number of participants (42) in some interview questions. In thematic analysis, some responses were labelled as “others” due to the participants’ responses to the researcher’s questions being off-topic or there being no answer given.

Regarding the short OPT, the researcher manually counted all the Japanese utterances (10 answers) from participants after the manual transcription of data. First, the comprehension (understanding level) scores and answer scores were calculated on a scale of 10, each question having 1 point. After the researcher checked the scoring, the numerical data were entered into the Excel sheet.

For the quality check of the interview data and short OPT scores, the researcher checked the categorization (thematic analysis) and OPT scoring three times for each.
3.5 Classroom Observation

After obtaining permission from the Japanese language lecturer and students, the researcher attended all the Japanese classes in the Winter and Spring terms of 2023 and one month in the Fall term of 2023.

There were three primary purposes of observation. It was (1) to understand the nature and dynamics of Japanese classes, (2) to examine how active students in the classes would be, and (3) to understand the class contents and the difficulties learners may face. In the domain of L2 learning, an active learner (student) is said to be “someone with more of a natural tendency toward active experimentation than toward reflective observation, and conversely for a reflective learner” (Felder & Henriques, 1995, p. 24). In the present research context, active students are the students who actively speak up, answer teachers’ questions, and participate in group work rather than quietly observing peer learners. During classroom observation, the researcher was quietly sitting at the corner of each class by taking notes of class activities, the flow of classes, how students reacted to the instructor, who spoke up the most, and what they struggled with the most in their classes. All the Japanese classes’ flow usually comprised three phases: review, lecture, and group work activity.

3.5.1 Introductory I

The Introductory I course is usually available in the fall and winter terms every year, and sometimes in the spring term, depending on the needs of students. The number of students is over 45-50 for Fall and Winter terms every year. The 2023 winter courses were hybrid courses with the instructor online. For the spring term, a Japanese lecturer from another Canadian University was invited to teach the Introductory I class with a 4-week intensive schedule, which
was fully online. In the 2023 fall term, the Japanese lecturer returned to the in-person class, but the class employed a hybrid form.

For the 2023 Winter term, due to audio technical difficulties regarding the zoom classes, this may have prevented participation in the class at the beginning of the courses. Half of them spoke up, but the other half mainly typed their answers in a chat box.

In the spring intensive course, there were around 40 students registered at the beginning of the course. However, about 25 students ended up completing the course, this may have been due to the fast pace of the class. The students had to memorize most of the basic Japanese alphabet in the first week of the class, which gave them less time to focus on memorization than fall or winter term classes. For group work, the lecturer randomly sent students to breakout rooms in every class, and all the students had chances to talk to new classmates. However, in every group, sometimes a few students kept silent throughout the group work.

In the 2023 fall term, most students came to campus with the Japanese lecturer in person, while fewer students attended online and typed answers in the chat box on Zoom. When it comes to breakout sessions, online students tended to leave their classes.

After one month of observation in the Winter and Fall terms in the year 2023, the researcher realized that where they sat at the beginning of the class was the most crucial factor in making friends or having language partners with whom they practice together in their classes. Students in the 2023 Winter and Fall terms usually sat at the same place for every class, and they befriended students around them and practiced with each other throughout their semesters. Students who could not find partners or had to talk to new friends every time ended up not coming to class in person. Additionally, the researcher had the impression that students sat with people with the same English proficiency. Of course, the classes had diversity in their ethnic
backgrounds and first language(s). However, there seemed to be no significant difference among ethnic backgrounds, languages, and other variables regarding their active level during lectures (even in Introductory II, Intermediate I, and Intermediate II classes).

### 3.5.2 Introductory II

The Introductory II course is only offered during the Winter term every year, and it was a hybrid course with an instructor online in 2023. The number of students is about 30-35 every year on average.

In the class of 2023, over half of the students were from the Introductory I class in the previous term of 2022. Groups of people who met up with each other in the previous term tended to sit close together from the beginning to the end of the semester. On the other hand, students who skipped the Introductory I class or took it one year before had to be paired up with random students, or they completely stopped coming to the in-person classes.

There was no large discrepancy in Japanese proficiency among learners. However, students’ English fluency was still essential.

### 3.5.3 Intermediate I

The Intermediate I course is available in the fall term every year. The average number of students is 15 every year, and around 10 students attended in person in 2023. The course in 2023 was a hybrid course with the teacher in person.

Since Japanese classes were elective for every student, students’ learning backgrounds were very diverse. Some students just finished the Introductory II class in the previous year or completed the Introductory classes one or two years before. A few students skipped taking
Introductory level classes with their self-study experience or learning experience at their secondary schools for several months/years.

In 2023, in-person students dominated in answering questions from the teacher, while online students struggled to some extent to answer the teacher’s questions smoothly.

Due to the disparity in learners’ Japanese proficiency, the lectures and group work were somewhat challenging for them. Unlike in Introductory-level courses, most of the teachers’ instructions were Japanese rather than English, and learners’ Japanese proficiency was much more important than their English skills during their whole class.

3.5.4 Intermediate II

Usually, the average number of registered students is around 10 students every year, and the class is offered in the Winter term. The Intermediate II course was available in a hybrid format during the Winter term of 2023. Three to four students attended in person, while the other half of the classmates attended online.

Most students had taken Intermediate I class in the previous term, so they seemed comfortable with the materials, the teacher’s speaking speed, and the familiar faces they already knew.

In the class, everyone could speak up equally because of its class size. In the review section at the beginning of the class, all the students were on the spot to make up a few sentences. During the lecture, of course, the most confident/active students were answering the teacher’s questions. However, quiet students also took part in responding to the teacher’s questions. In the group work, all students eagerly participated with their cameras on.
Chapter 4: Results

This chapter presents the results of quantitative (for RQs 1, 2, and 3) and qualitative (for RQ 4) data analyses.

4.1 Quantitative Analysis

4.1.1 Normality and Reliability Tests

After the normality test on FLCAS (10 questions) and SSES (8 questions), the data turned out to be non-parametric for all the questions ($p < .001$). Since the data obtained in this study were not normally distributed, the data were analyzed using Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient and Mann-Whitney U test. The software platform SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 28.00 was used to test the variables of demographic information, FLCAS, SSES and short OPT scores for their relationships. For the reliability test on the FLCAS and SSES, Cronbach’s alpha was calculated (see Tables 4 and 5).

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha for FLCAS (myself and with classmates)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my Japanese class.</td>
<td>.852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking Japanese in my Japanese class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking Japanese in my Japanese class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I start to panic when I have to speak Japanese without preparation in Japanese class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I get anxious when I am speaking Japanese in my Japanese class.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel very self-conscious about speaking Japanese in front of other students.</td>
<td>.874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak Japanese.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I keep thinking that the other students are better at speaking Japanese than I am.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I always feel that the other students speak Japanese better than I do.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I think that other students in my Japanese class are better at speaking Japanese than I am.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (10 questions)</td>
<td>.903</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5

Cronbach’s Alpha for SSES (myself and with classmates)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I can describe a situation in Japanese when I see pictures/charts in the textbook.</td>
<td>.795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I can read aloud a Japanese dialogue (long passage) in the textbook.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I can answer questions from the textbook in Japanese, based on the textbook information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I can talk in Japanese on a few topics covered in class/textbook, such as introducing myself, my family, and talking about my weekend plans.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. When I practice speaking Japanese with classmates, I can speak Japanese with no or just a few mistakes.</td>
<td>.688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When I practice speaking Japanese with classmates, I can speak Japanese fluently.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (8 questions)</td>
<td>.817</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.2 Spearman’s Rank Correlation Coefficient

This section will investigate the correlation among FLCAS (\(a = .903, M = 3.18, SD = 0.83\)), SSES (\(a = .817, M = 3.53, SD = 0.57\)) values and OPT scores (\(M = 8.51, SD = 1.91\)). For FLCAS and SSES, the mean score of each eight and 10 questions were used for this analysis.

Since the participants were asked to answer 10 questions in Japanese from the textbook for the short OPT test, the average score of comprehension (10 points max) and answer (10 points max) were used as a mean score for the short OPT score (e.g., \([10 + 9] \div 2 = 9.5\)) (See Appendix E).

For the Comprehension score of the OPT test, 0.3 was subtracted from 1 point when the participant asked the researcher to repeat a question (e.g., \(1 - 0.3 = 0.7\)), since most participants understood the researcher’s questions at least within three repetitions. When the researcher had to tell them in English, the score was calculated as 0 for each question. For the Answer score, 0.5 was subtracted from 1 point for each question when their Japanese sentence was incomplete. If the participants answered in English, it was considered as 0.
4.1.2.1 Correlation between FLCAS & SSES.

The variables used in these analyses were nationality, lingualism, Japanese learning experience, FL learning experience, and other demographic background information. The total number of participants in the survey was 52.

People born and raised in Canada and others who moved to Canada before age three were categorized as “CLs.” At the same time, participants who moved to Canada from Asian countries at or after the age of three were classified as “AILs (China: 7; India: 4; the Philippines: 10; Vietnam: 1).” For AILs, the moving-in age ranged from 3 to 19 years old, and the average/median age was 13.5/16 years old. The results showed that there was a medium negative correlation between FLCAS and SSES among AILs (n = 22, rho = –.526, p = .012), while there was no correlation among CLs (n = 22, rho = –.218, p = .329) (See Figure 1). However, there was no apparent visual difference between the two groups in the data plots.

Figure 1

Correlation between FLCAS (x) and SSES (y) among AILs and CLs
Secondly, the data were analyzed based on learners’ first language(s). Learners who speak only English were counted as “monolinguals,” while learners who primarily speak parents’ language(s) other than English or speak both languages as native speakers were categorized as “bilinguals.” The results reported that there was a medium negative correlation between FLCAS and SSES among bilingual learners \((n = 31, \rho = -0.423, p = 0.018)\), while there was no correlation among monolingual learners \((n = 21, \rho = -0.223, p = 0.331)\) (See Figure 2). There was no massive difference between Figures 1 and 2.

**Figure 2**
*Correlation between FLCAS \((x)\) and SSES \((y)\) among Bilinguals and Monolinguals*

Third, the Japanese language learning experience prior to taking a Japanese language course at the university was considered. Learners who had studied Japanese before taking university-level Japanese courses were classified as “false-beginners,” while the opposite was “true-beginners.” As a result, there was a slight negative correlation between FLCAS and SSES among true-beginners \((n = 37, \rho = -0.335, p = 0.043)\), while there was no correlation among false-beginners \((n = 15, \rho = -0.410, p = 0.129)\) (See Figure 3).
Fourth, FL learning experience before taking university-level Japanese language classes was considered. Learners who had learned a foreign language(s) before taking Japanese courses were classified as FL-experienced learners, while the opposite was non FL-experienced learners. As a result, there was a medium negative correlation between FLCAS and SSES among FL-experienced learners ($n = 31, \rho = -0.597, p < .001$). On the contrary, there was no correlation among non FL-experienced learners ($n = 21, \rho = 0.235, p = .306$) (See Figure 4).
The results for the rest of the variables are summarized in Table 6. There were significant results among science major students and male participants. Having the same language partner(s) in every Japanese class was also considered, but no significant results were observed.

Table 6
Correlations between FLCAS and SSES among Independent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>rho</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>rho</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>.652</td>
<td>.467</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>.412</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>.586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td>.317</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>.329</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.2.2 Correlation between FLCAS/SSES & Numerical Variables.

The correlation test was also conducted by age, learners’ motivation level (the number of multiple-choice out of 22 questions was calculated) (See Appendix D), and active participation level (5-point Likert scale; 1: I strongly disagree; 5: I strongly agree). The results are summarized below (see Table 7). There was only a slight positive correlation between learners’ active and SSE levels.

Table 7
Correlations between FLCAS and SSES among Numerical Variables (n = 52)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FLCAS</th>
<th>SSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rho</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active level</td>
<td>-.159</td>
<td>.259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>.765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>-.054</td>
<td>.702</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.1.2.3 Correlation between FLCAS/SSES & OPT.

Since the short OPT was conducted as a part of the interview session, the data of 45 participants who completed the survey and interview were selected for the data analyses in this section. The categorization criteria of each variable group are the same as in the above sections. Here are the results in Table 8.

Table 8

*Correlations between FLCAS/SSES & OPT among Independent Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FLCAS/OPT</th>
<th>SSES/OPT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( n )  ( \rho )  ( p )</td>
<td>( \rho )  ( p )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AILs</td>
<td>19  -0.483  0.036</td>
<td>0.580  0.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLs</td>
<td>19  -0.187  0.443</td>
<td>0.142  0.562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilinguals</td>
<td>26  -0.328  0.102</td>
<td>0.506  0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monolinguals</td>
<td>19  -0.245  0.311</td>
<td>0.128  0.601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>True-beginners</td>
<td>32  -0.373  0.036</td>
<td>0.456  0.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False-beginners</td>
<td>13  0.087   0.777</td>
<td>0.241  0.428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL-experienced</td>
<td>26  -0.397  0.045</td>
<td>0.334  0.095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non FL-experienced</td>
<td>19  -0.247  0.308</td>
<td>0.574  0.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>22  -0.184  0.414</td>
<td>0.327  0.137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>23  -0.058  0.792</td>
<td>-0.232 0.287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23  -0.058  0.793</td>
<td>0.217  0.321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18  -0.199  0.428</td>
<td>0.011  0.967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>11  0.030   0.930</td>
<td>0.054  0.874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Partner</td>
<td>34  -0.192  0.277</td>
<td>0.059  0.738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>45  -0.297  0.047</td>
<td>0.371  0.012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was statistically significant for AILs’ FLCAS/SSES and OPT scores compared to CLs. However, the distribution plots visually showed that there might not be massive differences between the two groups of learners (see Figures 5 and 6). Although true-beginners’ results were also significant, it may just have happened simply because of its relatively large sample size (\( n = 32 \)) within the present dataset since the overall results had statistically significant results.
Overall, there were correlations between FLCAS/OPT and SSES/OPT among all the participants ($n = 45$). AILs’ FLCAS negatively correlated with the OPT score and their SSE positively correlated with the OPT score, which stood out the most in the results of all the variable groups. Additionally, there were some statistically significant results with each variable. However, all the results were significantly affected by the sample size.
4.1.3 Mann-Whitney U test

For the Mann-Whitney U test, there were no statistically significant results for FLCAS and SSES among nationality, native languages, or other variables. Also, there was no significant difference in OPT scores among any categorical groups. However, there was a group difference between true-beginners and false-beginners (FLCAS) (see Table 9). The effect size was interpreted as less than small \((d = .30)\) based on Plonsky and Oswald’s (2014) suggestion (small: \(d = .40)\).

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>m</th>
<th>mean rank</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>True-beginners</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>29.41</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False-beginners</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>19.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the relations among AILs’ FLCAS, SSES and OPT scores were significantly connected and stood out the most among other variables. For the Mann-Whitney U test, it turned out that true-beginners had higher FLCAS than false beginners, but the effect size was less than small \((d = .30)\).
4.2 Qualitative Analysis

4.2.1 Thematic Analysis

The primary purpose of the interview is to explore how learners perceive their classmates’ presence and performance in their Japanese classes. The interview process comprised Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4 (OPT). Part 1 had questions about learners' motivation and the way to learn Japanese. Part 2 dealt with learners' perceptions of active students in their Japanese classes and classmates’ speaking performance. Part 3 was mainly about learners’ anxiety and motivation.

This section presents the most distinctive parts of the interview. Tables show the number of participants, and some excerpts will be used as examples in each section.

4.2.1.1 Active Students.

In this section, responses from Part 2/Question 1 (P2Q1), “What do you think about these (active) students? Are they the shield you can hide behind or are they preventing you and other students from participating?” will be summarized in Table 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They are a kind of shield</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are confident</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They help class to move forward</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are motivators</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They save quiet students</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No special feelings about them</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are a hindrance to classmates to participate</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10

About Active Students
Since some participants had two or more perspectives on the active students, the number of responses exceeded the number of participants (45). Also, some responses were categorized into “others” when some participants did not answer the question or those were off-topic. Most participants answered that active students in their classes are confident and helpful for their classes, whereas some of the participants mentioned them as a shield so that they do not have to be active in their Japanese classes. Here are some excerpts from the category of “They are a kind of shield” from AILs:

**[Spring_Intro1_Philippines_19]** I think that we equally get to participate if we wanted to, and I'm hiding by letting them participate more.

**[Spring_Intro1_Philippines_6]** It's nice having those people. I prefer kind of like, I don't like being called upon a lot because I'm really trying to figure out how to do it. So usually what happens is I usually just try to follow step of those type of people because they'll know the answer.

**If I'm called first, I will struggle.** I don't know. I'm okay, if after those guys answer, then it's my turn, and I'm like, yeah, okay, I can answer. I'm confident because I heard them talk first.

**[Winter_Intro1_Philippines_6]** Personally, I don't like to put my hands up or be called out in class. So yeah, I think they are like a shield because they're very active. So, I don't have to, because I don't like to do that. That's not how I learn, to put my hands up and stuff like that. But I like to listen. So, I like that they're there. It's very helpful that they're there.

**[Fall_Intro1_Philippines_11]** It's good that they're very confident. I could never be that confident. So having them like, step up and ask questions to the teacher, for me, as an introvert, I get so many. I don't know. I get knowledge that I am scared to ask, I guess. So they're there. Because I am very like wary. Like I have some sort of social anxiety and I'm scared to ask.

**[Winter_Intro1_Philippines_16]** No, they're not really doing anything wrong. It's just all on me. It's just me. I just freeze when I get put on the spot.
So when I was in high school and everything, I didn't raise my hands. I don't like participating in class. I get too anxious. I mean, whenever [teacher] would, if she did call on me or like the one time my friend suggested that I say something, I suddenly forgot everything. I didn't know any Japanese. It was like I wasn't here. So, I prefer not to participate. I still like, if we're repeating words out loud, I still do that and everything. I'll participate with the people around me, but I don't like actively raising my hand.

For AILs, the active students helped them to avoid being on the spot in their Japanese classes, since they did not want to raise their hands or be asked in their Japanese classes. Similarly, CLs, European-born and South American-born learners had also mentioned the active students as a shield they could hide behind:

I'd say that they're more of like the shield that I hide behind because, I don't know, I don't like speaking out in front of the class. So, I answer the question in my head, but then I always let someone else answer it out loud.

Because sometimes it feels like students can be like that, like to the shield, so that you don't get picked or whatnot, and you don't have to embarrass yourself in front of everybody else.

I'd say they're more like a shield. Definitely more like a shield. Yeah, that way. Like, oh crap, I got to look something up, and there's like, oh, someone else answered.

I am very nervous when it comes to talking out loud in front of people, so they are the perfect shield for me to hide behind. I just get very nervous when talking in front of people, especially if it's something I'm not confident in, like Japanese.
A few participants who speak Chinese or Korean as a native speaker but raised in South America or Canada said that they did not want to make mistakes in their classes:

[Winter_Intro1_Venezuela_16; Native languages: Cantonese and Spanish] Also, I think all the student on the class are really shy to speak, including me. Yes. Because this language is something that we never learned before. So we don't want to miss saying, let's say mispronounce it. Okay. So that's why probably but they see some students who are really smart.

[Fall_Intro1_Canada; Native languages: Korean and English] I do try to answer some questions because like, I don't want to get it wrong. It's like a good way to learn. And I think I have a little bit of an advantage because I speak Korean. And a lot of the words are similar, and like the grammar is similar.

They're definitely a shield. Because like, I think like, sometimes I don't know the answer. So, like, when someone else answers the question before she picks on people, it's like, oh, thank god someone else knew.

A few participants acknowledged the existence of quiet learners in their Japanese classes and active students might have saved them from their participation in their Japanese classes:

[Winter_Intro1_England_10] Yes. I think that they're good students. I respect the fact that they're willing to come out and say it because I know a lot of the students are like, they're kind of apprehensive about saying it. Not scared. It's kind of like anxious. You're talking in front of everybody, so people might get a little worried. So, for them to do it, I think it's just good for them.

[Winter_Intro1_Canada] I mean, I think it's good that they do that because then it kind of takes the heat off that people who don't want to do that. That and it is nice like having engagement to encourage other people to engage as well.

[Fall_Intro1_Canada] I guess like sometimes asking questions in front of the whole class can be nerve-wracking to some people, but to those who it's not that nerve-wracking to such as me and those other people, I feel like our personalities are like kind of more outgoing in that sense.
On the contrary, two quiet students answered active students may have prevented their participation in their Japanese classes:

[Winter_Inter2_Canada] Well, I like all of them. And no, I would say maybe they were preventing participation a little bit, but if I wanted to, I felt like I could have spoken up at any point. I'm just naturally a pretty quiet person. The fact that they were answering didn't bother me.

[Fall_Intro1_Canada] I think it's more important that more people get asked and called upon to answer because if those people were to answer every time, then obviously that would take away from a lot of other people. And like obviously, like me, I don't speak a lot. I still try to, but then those people who also don't and don't like to practice on their own, they wouldn't get the opportunity to practice like actual conversational skills.

There were some comments from AILs categorized in the “others” section about their participation style. They said they spoke up when they had to in their Japanese classes:

[Winter_Intro2_China_17] Because I only answers if there is no one answering. So, I'm kind of that person.

[Fall_Inter1_China_17] Yes, but if they don't, then that's probably when I need to say something.

[Spring_Intro1_India_17] No, because I am sort of introvert, so I just don't answer it. Whenever the teacher calls my name, only I would answer. Otherwise, I would just, I won't answer any questions.

[Winter_Intro2_China_1] I could speak up if I wanted to, but I feel like the pressure of the people I know probably, maybe probably, like, I would say, maybe deters me from doing so.
After the P2Q1, the interviewer asked them P2Q2: “Would you like to be more active in class?” and “What prevents you from being more active in class?” Since the latter question was optional and depended on their previous answer, not all participants answered it. In the former question, 20 students said they wanted to be more active, while nine participants said they would maintain their current active level. For the latter question, all the responses are summarized in Table 11.

**Table 11**

*What Prevents Them from Being More Active*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making mistakes</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of confidence</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpreparedness for new contents</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending classes online</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seven AILs, one European and one South American student, mentioned that their classmates’ judgements and making mistakes in their Japanese classes were factors that prevented them from being more active in their Japanese classes. Here are some excerpts:

[Spring_Intro1_Philippines_19] I'm a bit more comfortable now just because I know the people a bit more, but definitely, *when we were just starting out, it made me a little bit more nervous because there were people who are listening to me, and it just makes it a little more scary to make a mistake in front of other people.*

[Spring_Intro1_Philippines_6] When there's questions I don't know how to answer, *I get too nervous to try and speak up. I don't want to mess this up or anything.*
When [teacher] asks questions just to the class to answer the questions, I'd be like, sometimes I really do want to answer, but sometimes I'd be like, maybe what if I'm wrong? What if I'm wrong? Then she just corrects me. Then my confidence gets shut down. Like, I know it.

[Fall_Inter1_China_17] I am anxious that if I answered the wrong answer, that I provided the wrong answer, and I would also be anxious that if I speak too much, some other students would not have the same opportunity to ask their questions.

[Winter Intro1 Philippines_16] Yeah, like I said, I kind of hold back. Just because of like, maybe I'll get it wrong, or I'm just too hesitant to say it. I'm just shy, I guess.

[Winter Intro1 India_18] Yeah, like I want to be active, but I get shy a lot of the times because my pronunciation is horrible. Yeah, my pronunciation is like a little western, I would say. And I don't really like people listening to that.

[Winter Intro2 China 0.5] Um, I would, but I'm also scared of messing up a sentence or saying something weird. So yeah, usually I keep to myself, but in group work, sometimes if you don't know the person too well, it can get awkward if it's like a personal subject.

[Winter Intro1 Venezuela_16; Native languages: Cantonese and Spanish] Yes. When everyone listen to me. Yes, but I will want to talk like person one by one. No problem. I don't have no problem with that. I'm happy to participate, but it's like kind of like when everyone's listening to me, I kind of get nervous a little bit. It's like almost a presentation in front of the class, so I don't really enjoy those things. I just prefer, like, in-person privately or use a small group or something.

[Winter Intro1 England_10] Um, I think there is definitely kind of a factor where it's a little bit of worry, where it's like, oh, what if I don't know the question? What if I don't know if it's right? So, if I'm a little unsure, it might hold me back because I'm like, oh, I don't want to say the wrong answer.
Three CLs mentioned their unpreparedness for new class contents would be the leading cause of preventing them from being more active in their Japanese classes:

[Winter Intro1 Canada] *I guess my preparedness. If I have studied the lecture beforehand or the material beforehand, that makes me feel more confident in participating.* If I haven't, then I don't feel very confident. I'm a rather shy person generally, and learning a new language definitely is out of my comfort zone. So, it's a little bit challenging.

[Winter Intro2 Canada] *I usually don't know many of the vocabulary.* So then, making phrases sometimes can be difficult, and *I am worried about getting it wrong because it seems like the people who answer typically have the right answer.*

[Fall Inter1 Canada] *I think that's sort of what it is like the brand new spontaneous questions about things that we haven't had much practice on.* But if given time to sort of practice and understand it, that sort of goes away for me. So, just the new content.

Other four CLs and one AIL mentioned that they lacked confidence sometimes:

[Winter Intro2 Canada] *Sometimes, I lack self-confidence to actually do this.* Or sometimes I just think I'm not speaking it right. Or mostly self-doubt issues. Just sometimes.

[Fall Intro1 Canada] I'd say probably just like, *I said my unconfidence in my speaking ability* because generally on the answer if something is asked, but *it'll take me a while to form that into something I can say.*

[Fall Intro1 Canada] Um, *no confidence.*

[Interviewer: How do you think, how do you like gain that confidence?] Um, maybe speaking more Japanese out loud because *I don't speak very much out loud with other people, just by myself or in my head.*
I could see how being more active in class could be helpful, but I feel like I'm not missing out on that much by just like answering it in my head and kind of thinking about the questions instead of answering out loud.

If I had the confidence, I probably would. I mean, it'd be nice, I guess. If I became confident and asked the teacher the questions that I wanted to ask, then I would probably have a better understanding of everything.

A few participants reported attending their classes online may hinder them from being more active:

If I were to name just a few things, I only have two that come to mind. One is just when I'm unable to attend class, so I have to go on the Zoom. Like, online that would only prevent me cause like, I can't like raise my hand and ask questions. It feels more engaging to be in class rather than to type out a question on Zoom that could be missed.

Well, if I am not in-person in class, like, if I'm feeling sick or something and I've stayed away from everybody, it depends on where I'm at and whether or not I feel comfortable speaking up. So, that would be preventing me from participating online.

Additionally, learners’ personalities would be one of the causes that prevented them from being more active in their Japanese classes:

Just my personality. Like I said, I'm a quiet person. That's about it.

Probably more shy than anything else. I don't think that there is anything specific to the class that prevents me from it. More personal than anything else, I guess.
Maybe it's like, my character is like that. Maybe that's the reason. Not that introverted, but still, I don't know why.

Honestly, if I could, like, I just, **for like my personality, I'm just not that active in classes.** I just like to listen. I like to listen to the lecture. I don't really like the, like when we're asked questions.

Yeah, I want to be more because **I think I'm a shy person.** Yeah, but I want to be like more active in class to answer the questions for volunteer.

4.2.1.2 High Proficient Students.

In the question of P2Q3, the researcher asked them about high-proficiency classmates in their Japanese classes ("Does the performance of other students in the class affect you in any way? If some other students are doing better or much better than you, does it bother you in any way, or make you feel sad or demotivated? Or does it make you study harder and motivate you?"). Table 12 summarizes all the responses. About half of the students felt motivated, and the other half said they did not affect them. Seven students were negatively affected by highly proficient learners in their Japanese classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling motivated</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They don’t affect me</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe it affects me</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some students from the Introductory I courses felt anxious when they enrolled in their Japanese classes because of the presence of false-beginners:

[Spring_Intro1_Philippines_19] Yes. I feel like during the first week when I heard some classmates who can speak in straight Japanese, I was like, am I in the wrong class? I thought it was, how do they know so much already? I started looking through the book the first day of class, and they seem like they're doing so well that I started questioning if I was in the right class. Now I'm more comfortable about it.

[Spring_Intro1_India_17] Yeah, in the beginning, a little bit, because some people could grasp everything so quickly. I was thinking whether I was lagging behind, but I think I worked really hard, so that's fine for me.

[Fall_Intro1_India_3] Like with the active students who are like saying the answers, it's demoralizing when they know all the answers and you're like, I still don't know hiragana yet. Why are we going so crazy here? It makes you not really want to learn as well. Like, well, what's the point I'm already so behind?

4.2.1.3 Students Who Perform the Best.

In P2Q5, the researcher asked who would perform the best in their Japanese classes (“Have you noticed any group of students who are performing better in class than others? What can you say about the specifics of this group?”). Most students acknowledged active students or false-beginners who started learning Japanese (e.g., being familiar with Japanese characters, Chinese characters, manga and anime) before the university courses would speak better than others (see Table 13). Some students also mentioned learners’ first language backgrounds, while others did not pay attention to classmates in their Japanese classes.
Table 13

About Students Who Perform the Best

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active students</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False-beginners</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language similarity</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not pay attention to them</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some participants mentioned learners’ first language or FL learning experience as international students may be advantageous for them:

[Winter_Inter2_Canada] Also, **anyone who has a history with the language or a similar language is typically better.**

[Spring_Intro1_Philippines_6] Yes. I think he's Chinese, and he's really good already. He really knows how to speak the language and stuff, and I feel like that's a translation. **I feel like there's some similarities between the Chinese alphabet and the Japanese alphabet, so I feel like it's a little easier for them to learn it.**

[Winter_Intro1_England_10] **I think they're all not natively from Canada, which could help because they already had experience with having to learn English coming to Canada.** So having that experience, having to learn Japanese, it probably gives them benefit because they've already had to learn one language.

Despite AILs’ language similarity as an advantage, some of the classmates had impressions that there was no discrepancy between AILs and others:

[Winter_Intro1_Venezuela_16] **I think everyone in the class is in the same level.** Yeah, almost in the same level. **Let's say the students who are able to read and write in Chinese, they have a little advantage because it's kanji almost, but does not bother me, that impress me more than bother me.** Yeah, impress me more. So, I will try to talk more with them and learn more.
It seemed like it was a very, in our class, I feel like the higher-achieving students were diverse. There were some white students and there were some Asian students that were very engaged and sounded like they were fluent and proficient, and they were catching up on like they were picking up what was being put down really quickly.

But when it comes to race or ethnicity, I think, it has nothing to do with that. If someone's good, they're just good. Whatever. I wouldn't think, like, oh, they're Asian. They must know more. I don't think that. Yeah. Throughout the years, I've seen different kinds of people that are good.

Um, I think people who have, whose language have like Chinese characters, like maybe people who are familiar with like Mandarin or Cantonese, I think they had an easier time learning the kanji. Um, but other than that, I guess, I'm Korean, I have a little bit of an advantage for vocabulary and grammar. Um, yeah, I guess it's the languages that are closer to Japanese that maybe have an easier time understanding it. But like, I don't think it's because like, oh, it's because Chinese and Korean people are smarter than everyone else.

AILs may have advantages in memorizing Chinese characters and vocabulary and understanding grammar. However, when speaking, the classmates did not perceive AILs as having outstanding performance in their Japanese classes.

Eight participants said, “I did not even pay attention to them, so I do not know who would speak well.” Six respondents were Canadian, and two were originally from European countries. Here are some excerpts:

No. I don't notice that stuff, that stuff I don't pay attention to.

Not necessarily. I don't really get outside my little bubble, so I don't know how other people are doing.
I don't really pay too much attention to people who don't sit right beside me. I should pay more attention to that. I'm sorry, but I haven't noticed a specific group. I've noticed specific people, but not, like, a group of people that interact regularly or anything.

Have I noticed any, probably the people who talk the most or participate the most in the Zoom classes. I don't really, I don't again, I don't really pay attention to them that much. But one of the people that do participate a lot is my friend. So obviously I'll be a little bit biased when I talk towards him, but I don't know, apart from him, I'm really indifferent towards any of them because I haven't actually had a proper conversation.

4.2.1.4 Speaking Anxiety.

In question P3Q1, the researcher asked them whether they have speaking anxiety in their Japanese classes (“Do you have any anxiety about speaking Japanese in class? Why and when?”), and the responses were categorized (see Table 14). Five CLs and relatively highly proficient three AILs reported they did not have speaking anxiety in their Japanese classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anxiety-Inducing Factors</th>
<th>n</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making mistakes in front of classmates</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No anxiety</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpreparedness</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About half of the participants cared about making mistakes in front of their classmates. Those responses comprised 14 AILs’ reports, five CLs’, one European student's, and one South American student's. Here are some excerpts from the top anxiety-inducing factor category:
[Spring_Intro1_Philippines_19] Yes. When we have questions and answers that we have to fill out and I don't do them as fast as I should have done them, it makes me anxious when I get called out by the teacher and I'm not sure about my answer or haven't reached that part of it yeah.

[Winter_Intro2_China_17] Well, I do have because it makes me nervous to speak in front of people, like even through internet. And I'm afraid of to talk something wrong. But it's okay too, though. But it's still kind of make me anxiety.

[Winter_Intro2_India_19] And when in the breakout rooms, then when you have to speak. And I'm sometimes anxious that I might mess up or make some mistakes with the grammar. That's the only time I'm anxious.

[Fall_Inter1_China_17] Yes. I think I've said it before that I wasn't sure about my answer. And I fear that I am occupying others' time. I'm overspending others' time. And I just feel anxious in speaking in public in general.

[SpringIntro1_China_18] I definitely have anxiety speaking Japanese during the class right, I turn off camera because I got my phone here and my laptop, and my laptop and then also my iPad here. So, I need to check in the chart and then do a lot of stuff just in case they're practicing assignments or discussion group.

[Fall_Intro1_India_3] Yeah. I like, it's when I'm not prepared to be asked a question and I haven't been able to like figure it out. I, you know, I feel like very like disorganized. I'm like all over the place. My thoughts don't line up. I forget Japanese in total. And I, and then which makes it worse. It's like a, it's like a negative feedback loop, right? You don't know what you're doing. And then like, okay, I need to figure out something. And then the entire classroom goes silent. Everyone's looking at you. It's, it's not, it's very bad. It gets worse and worse.
Um, mainly answering or asking questions. So, if the teacher's like showing a new sentence format, maybe I would write a sentence and then send it into the chat, but then I'm scared to maybe make a mistake. Well, everyone would see it and then I wouldn't feel too good about making a mistake, but that's part of learning. So, sometimes I just make a sentence and send (type) it.

I feel like it's just because of my personality. I don't really like to speak, so I guess it's a little bit nerve-wracking just because what if I mess up? And then it's, like, embarrassing, right?

I had an anxiety about speaking Japanese in class because I feel like I'll say something wrong. Or I'll pronounce things wrong, and I get self-conscious about that.

I'd say I have some, and it's kind of like what I said previously, where it's just answering questions or saying something in front of the class. It's a little anxiety-inducing just because the fear of getting it wrong and being seen as, oh yeah, he got it wrong. That's kind of like not what you want to happen.

For a few learners, their anxiety may affect their confidence level:

Whenever we do the breakout sessions, I just kind of like, group work because, I don't know, I feel like I'm going to get the grammar wrong a lot of the time. It's mostly grammar work for me. I'm better at listening and hearing and understanding rather than actually speaking it. If someone told me a sentence and I know what it would mean or the gist of it, just kind of like what it means, but speaking it is just kind of I get too much in my head. Like I think too much about it rather than, yeah, I'm just not super confident.

Reading in general in Japanese is when I'm nervous. But if she's just repeating a question to me and I have to answer in Japanese, I'm more confident in it, way more confident in answering something like that. But if she told me to read a passage in Japanese, it'd take me forever, and I feel like that just kill my confidence.
However, when it comes to speaking up in front of close friends in their group work, their anxiety may be mitigated:

[Winter_Intro1_Philippines_16] [Interviewer: During the lecture or, like, mainly in a group activity?] **Kind of both, but mostly on lecture time. When I get asked, we're getting asked, and then I want to answer, but I couldn't. I can't.**

[Winter_Intro1_Canada] **In front of the whole class? Yes. In front of my group, not so much.** But I think it's just the fear of getting it wrong or not saying it in a way that is correct, I guess. **So, I get some anxiety with answering questions in front of the class.**

[Winter_Intro1_Philippines_6] **If I was called out in the middle of class, I'd have anxiety.** If the teacher told me to speak in the middle of class and from everybody, I'd have some anxiety. **But if it was just our group, no. Because if I mess up, they'll tell me that I messed up. It's fine, and I'll work on it. I do have anxiety if it is in the middle of the whole class. If I'm scared that I might mess up in front of the whole class.**

[Winter_Intro2_Canada] **I don't ever speak out in class. But like when we're in breakout rooms, I don't really have any anxiety about speaking Japanese at all.**

[Winter_Intro1_Venezuela_16; Native languages: Cantonese and Spanish] **I kind of get a little nervous that I have to speak to everyone, but use a small group or use a couple of people, I don't have any problem.** I will try my hardest to say everything right. Everything right.

[Winter_Intro1_Northern Ireland] **Whenever I attempt to speak Japanese, it's not really the speaking part. It's not really the pronunciation part that I'm anxious about. It's more of am I saying the right thing in the right order that's making me, like, I don't know, making me anxious. That's a big reason why I don't really talk to anyone else but my friend, especially in the workshops, because I feel comfortable with my friend pointing out, like, hey, I'm doing this wrong, or I'm saying it in the wrong order, or I'm not saying the right thing.**
Four CLs mentioned their unpreparedness for the class contents may be an anxiety-inducing factor:

**[Spring_Intro1_Canada]** Especially when I feel unprepared, I think especially when it's something new that we're learning, so we haven't had time to practice it. So, you have to look in the book and make sure you're double-checking it, and you're not prepared to what's actually being said. And it's not like. You're translating it before you have to say it, rather than just it coming out fluently.

**[Winter_Intro1_Canada]** Definitely. I think I'm just a relatively anxious person, to begin with, and if I'm not comfortable with the material that's being reviewed, I start getting more anxious. Like I've said before, if I don't feel prepared, I get very nervous, and but if I'm keeping up in my studies, I try to study as much as I can every day, but I have full load, so I've felt unprepared for a few classes and my anxiety definitely rises during those times.

**[Fall_Inter1_Canada]** I think it's a little bit about, you know, the new spontaneous material.

**[Spring_Intro1_Canada]** Just because especially with learning certain things that I haven't ever studied before with the conjugation, that was really complicated for me personally. And I felt like it was harder for me to say, speak when it was that just because I was more nervous because I've never studied that before.

A few participants mentioned that they are naturally quiet in their university classes in general:

**[WinterIntro2_Canada]** I would say yes, but I think that's more not so much specific to Japanese and more just to classes in general. I've never really been one that wants to speak up a whole lot in class.

**[WinterIntro2_Canada]** Not really. I guess I could say I don't like answering the questions that like, the teacher asks over Zoom, but that's not exclusive to Japanese. I just don't like doing that in any kind of class.
In the "others" category, there were some comments from two students in Intermediate II classes, who had taken four Japanese classes in the past. They reported they did not feel anxious that much in their Introductory level courses compared to Intermediate level ones:

[Winter_Inter2_Canada] Yes. Um, when [teacher] asks those questions at the beginning of class, and most of them I understand and can answer, but when there's one question, either I wasn't listening or I don't understand it, it's anxiety-inducing to have to answer those questions.

[Interviewer: OK, so did you feel the same amount of, same level of anxiety in the intro one class and also in Intermediate two class?] No, I would say it was worse for this last class, because for the Intermediate class, I feel like I should know what she's saying. While I was in the beginner classes, no one knew what she was saying. It was worse this in the Intermediate class.

[Winter_Inter2_Philippines_18] [Interviewer: And then the similar question, and did you feel in the same way in the other class, in the past class.] I think not so much in intro, because, again, I know I'm a beginner. I know I don't know anything, so it's okay for me to make mistakes and such, but I know later down the line. There's, like, this expectation that you should know the basics at that point. And so, of course, it gets more and more complicated. And with how busy I was getting, it was harder for me to study outside of class, and so I felt like I was falling behind. But in intro one, I didn't have as much anxiety.

4.2.1.5 Motivation and Classmates.

In this section, the answers to the question P3Q4, “Do your classmates influence your motivation in class?” were categorized (see Table 15). Regarding their motivation, most participants answered that their classmates positively motivated them, while seven students said their classmates did not significantly affect their motivation. Those who were not motivated were all composed of Canadian and European-born learners.
In the classroom setting, seven out of 33 participants were motivated by classmates within their group work rather than active students during lectures. Here are some excerpts:

[Winter_Intro1_Canada] I'd say so, yeah. Especially like my group, because we're like, we do definitely try to practice everything and make sure that we like, don't just understand how to say it, but we actually try to like understand why and like how the like structure works, which helps a lot.

[Winter_Intro2_India_19] Yeah, sometimes they do. When I see them that they are already prepared for class, they put a lot of hard work into learning it. It motivates me to do better.

[Interviewer: Do you feel motivated by the students who are active all the time during the lecture, or you feel motivated by the students who are in group work?] I feel motivated by the students who participate more in the breakout rooms.

[Fall_Intro1_Philippines_11] Yeah. Because like, I see them working on the exercises and it makes me want to do it too because I want to get on the same level as them.

[Interviewer: And when you think of your motivation, did you imagine that active students or like people in your group work?] People in my group.

[Winter_Intro2_Serbia_6] I'll say yes. For the most part, a little bit. It's not like I'm not exactly focused on them. It's just like, okay, let's study a little bit more, and then just like, oh, let's find this and whatnot.

[Interviewer: You feel motivated by classmates, and then those students are people who are active all the time or the partner or people in the group. Which one?] Mostly from the group, which I'm in, usually, those ones have a higher motivation level than just some random in the class.
Well, I think that like, as I mentioned before, if I see someone who's a lot better than me, it kind of like motivates me to try to get to their level to try to understand as much as they do.

[And then those students are like from active students during the lecture or the students in your like group or group activity.] I think more from the group activity, from like the breakout rooms.

In the “others” section, a few students felt obligated to take part in their classroom activity:

I feel like maybe a little bit cause like if they don't participate, it's like I have to participate kind of thing. So, I guess like that in that way.

Yes, especially if most of the students are quiet and silent, then I would feel, I would be less active because I don't want to be very different from the others. And if everyone is pretty quiet, then I would be quiet as well.

Here are some excerpts from CLs and European-born participants about not feeling motivated by their classmates:

I don't think anyone else has changed my motivation. It's kind of the same.

Not really. Honestly. Yeah, it's kind of more internal.

Um, not really. I show up the class because it's a class, you know, I take it serious enough like, I want to attend class. I don't let other people. I don't think other people really, I don't care if like, if no one's there, you know.
Not really, no. It's like oh, cool. They know how to do it. I don't care. Good for them. They know how to do it.

I think online, it's really easy not to get affected by everybody else. So, if somebody else is really down, you don't really have to bother, and you don't have to look at their camera if you don't want to. So, I don't really think so. I try not to get demotivated in class when people aren't talking and stuff, but for the most part, no, I don't think other people affect us online, especially, I don't know, in-person. In-person, it might be different, but online, I think it's easier to stay motivated on your own, I think.

Unlike in-person classes, students had the right to turn off their cameras during the classes. Since all the Japanese classes were computer-based, with some people in person, students taking classes from home may not have been influenced by classmates behind their cameras. Online L2 learning may increase or decrease students' anxiety with less interaction in language classes (Kaisar & Chowdhury, 2020; Yaniafari & Rihardini, 2021), turning off their cameras may have helped them feel comfortable speaking up in their Japanese classes, while active students who wanted to see classmates’ face may have been demotivated.

Overall, both AILs and CLs were afraid of making mistakes in their Japanese classes, but they felt comfortable when speaking with their close friends/partners during the practice session. However, some CLs were more anxious about the new class content or did not even pay attention to their classmates, whereas most AILs were primarily concerned about how they were perceived by their classmates and making mistakes. AILs and CLs did not find a notable difference among ethnic backgrounds regarding active students/high achievers.
Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Asian International Learners and Canadian Learners

Quantitative data analysis, qualitative data analysis and classroom observations were conducted to answer the four RQs (see Chapter 2). In this study, the AILs were originally from different countries (China, the Philippines, India and Vietnam). CLs were born and raised in Canada, including a few people whose parents speak the languages of their home countries.

To answer RQ 1 (Are there any differences in the relationship between FLCA and SSE between AILs and CLs?), Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient was employed. The results showed that there were medium negative correlations between their FLCA/SSE \((n = 22, \rho = –0.526, p = .012)\) and FLCA/OPT \((n = 19, \rho = –0.483, p = .036)\), and a medium positive correlation between their SSE/OPT \((n = 19, \rho = 0.580, p = .009)\) within the group of AILs. On the contrary, there were no correlations among those variables within the CLs’ group. As previous studies reported a negative correlation between FLA and SE (Reading and Listening: Mills et al., 2006; Writing: Woodrow, 2011), there may be a relation between FLA and SE in speaking skills, particularly for AILs in the present research design. Also, considering it was said that AILs tended to have higher FLCA than learners from non-Asian countries (Toyama & Yamazaki, 2022), and (east) AILs’ SE level significantly affected their L2 proficiency compared to learners from Western countries (Wang & Sun, 2020), AILs’ FLCA, SSE and OPT in the present study might be closely connected to each element. However, the results should be carefully interpreted since the sample size was relatively small and learners’ backgrounds were diverse.
For monolingual and bilingual learners’ data sets, similar results were obtained regarding FLCA/SSE and SSE/OPT. Although all the bilingual learners were included in the data, it was dominated by AILs. Because of this, the data quality of bilingual learners did not differ from that of AILs, ending up with identical results.

For RQs 2 and 3 (Are AILs of Japanese likely to have higher FLCA than CLs?; Are AILs of Japanese likely to have lower SSE than CLs?), the Mann-Whitney U test was conducted. However, there was no notable difference in their self-estimates on FLCA and SSE between CLs and AILs. Since the previous study by Machida (2001) revealed that native speakers of English and Chinese had higher FLCA, respectively, there might be no significant difference between the two groups of learners regardless of the sample size.

To answer the last RQ 4 (Are there any differences in the attitudes toward their classmates between AILs and CLs?), the researcher employed thematic analyses of interview data, which mainly dealt with four components (active students, the best performers, speaking anxiety, and motivation).

First, active students in their Japanese classes turned out to be shields for both AILs and CLs to hide behind. To delve into their thoughts on class participation, they answered additional questions about potential anxiety-inducing factors. It was found that AILs were primarily concerned with their classmates’ judgements and making mistakes in front of their Japanese classes. Additionally, some AILs mentioned that they might have willingly spoken up if no one had spoken up. On the contrary, unpreparedness for new class contents and lack of confidence were the main nerve-wracking factors for CLs.

Second, all the participants answered who was/were the best performer(s) in their Japanese classes. Some participants acknowledged that AILs may have advantages in
memorizing alphabets, reading, and writing. However, some students perceived no massive difference between AILs and CLs in terms of speaking skills. Besides, some CLs did not even pay attention to who would perform the best in their classes.

Third, it was reported that AILs were more likely to care about making mistakes in front of their classes than CLs regarding speaking. For CLs, learning brand new grammar and vocabulary could be prominent, as well as making mistakes in front of classmates.

Fourth, some CLs did not feel motivated by their classmates, whereas most participants felt motivated by them.

Through classroom observation, the researcher realized that there was no significant discrepancy between ethnic backgrounds regarding their speaking proficiency and active levels throughout three semesters.

In summary, Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient and thematic analysis results may shed light on RQs 1 and 4. For RQ 1, although the sample size was limited, there were statistically significant relationships between FLCA/SSE, FLCA/OP and SSE/OPT among AILs but not among CLs. Regarding RQ 4, the qualitative analysis showed that AILs were mainly concerned about making mistakes in front of the whole class, while CLs were worried about their unpreparedness for new class contents and lack of confidence. Furthermore, CLs did not pay attention to their classmates in their Japanese classes, unlike AILs participants.

5.2 True-beginners and False-beginners

Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient showed a small negative correlation between their FLCA/SSE \((n = 37, \rho = -.335, p = .043)\) and FLCA/OP \((n = 32, \rho = -.373, p = .045)\) and a medium positive correlation between their SSE/OPT \((n = 32, \rho = .456, p = .009)\) within
the group of true-beginners. On the other hand, there were no relationships among variables within false-beginners (n = 15/13). Additionally, the Mann-Whitney U test demonstrated that only true-beginners had higher FLCA than false-beginners, whereas the other variable groups (e.g., nationality, first language, major and gender) could not confirm the statistically significant mean rank difference between the two independent variables. These results were obtained probably because of the relatively large sample size for true-beginners (n = 37/32) and the small one for false-beginners (n = 15/13). Since all the participants’ data from different proficiency classes were used for the statistical analysis and the selection criteria were “a person who did/did not study Japanese before taking university-level Japanese class(es),” these results should be carefully interpreted. However, previous studies confirmed that true-beginners had higher FLCA than false-beginners (Frantzen & Magnan, 2005; Kuriyama, 2014), so the results in this study may slightly support their studies. Regarding their L2 learning experience other than the Japanese language may have also affected FL-experienced learners’ SSE and FLCA (n = 31, rho = −.597, p < .001). However, three participants reported English as a foreign language, and 12 participants learned French as a mandatory subject before going to the university, the results must be carefully interpreted.

In thematic analysis, a few participants in the interview session mentioned they were overwhelmed by highly proficient learners despite it being a beginner’s (Introductory I) class. Also, as the researcher witnessed through the observation in the Introductory I classes in three different terms, false-beginners led the classes from the beginning of their classes and dominated the opportunities to speak up. Although some students with high confidence and Japanese proficiency skipped Introductory-level classes and registered in Intermediate-level Japanese
classes, the presence of false-beginners might have been still threatening to true-beginners who had no prior Japanese learning experience in the Introductory I class.

5.3 Active Participation

Among numerical variables (active level, age and motivation), there was a small positive correlation only between learners’ active levels and their SSE \((n = 52, \rho = .306, p = .027)\). Additionally, 10 participants in the interviews acknowledged that active students in their Japanese classes had higher proficiency. Regardless of participants’ ethnicity, a few participants mentioned their personality (e.g., being quiet in their classes) as one of the factors which prevented them from being more active in their Japanese classes. Since the majority of AILs were concerned about making mistakes in their Japanese classes, it makes sense that their active levels affect their SSE.

5.4 Language Partners and Friends

Even though no statistically significant results were confirmed through the questionnaire, the interview data analysis found that six learners mentioned they felt less anxious in their group work than in lectures and felt motivated by friends with whom they sat together. Although Liu and Jackson (2008) reported that Chinese learners of English preferred interpersonal communication to speaking up in their classes, both AILs and CLs may have a preference for talking to a small number of people in their Japanese classes. Additionally, as the researcher observed Introductory-level courses with a large number of students (30 to 50), groups of students tended to sit together over the semester once they got to know each other at the beginning of their Japanese classes. Unfortunately, some students who could not find language
partners to practice with ended up not attending in-person Japanese classes. Since Intermediate-level classes had only 10 to 15 students in total and they knew each other well, they did not face issues finding friends to sit with throughout the semesters.

5.5 Gender and Major

There were medium negative correlations between FLCA and SSE among science major students \((n = 26, \rho = -.467, p = .016)\) and male participants \((n = 29, \rho = -.412, p = .026)\), while their counterparts did not show similar results (Arts major students: \(n = 26, \rho = -.093, p = .652\); Female participants: \(n = 18, \rho = -.138, p = .586\)). Based on previous studies, it was said that female L2 learners tended to have higher anxiety levels in their L2 learning (Dewaele et al., 2016; Machida, 2001), but they had higher self-efficacy (Huang, 2013) in language arts major areas, and they would outperform in L2 learning than male learners (Główka, 2014). However, no significant difference was confirmed between male and female participants for FLCA and SSE (Mann-Whitney U test).
Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Summary of the Study

The present study investigated the difference in FLCA, SSE, and OPT and the perception of active/highly proficient peer learners between AILs and CLs of Japanese at the University of Saskatchewan, Canada.

Quantitative analysis observed that AILs’ FLCA, SSE, and OPT had some connections. In contrast, CLs’ were not correlated with each variable. However, the results indicated no significant difference between ethnic backgrounds and the first languages they use in terms of FLCA, SSE, and OPT, with its small sample size and the presence of false-beginners.

Qualitative analysis found that AILs were primarily concerned about their classmates’ presence/judgements and making mistakes in their classes, whereas CLs cared more about their unpreparedness for class content and paid less attention to the people around them. Both groups of learners perceived no massive discrepancy between AILs and CLs in terms of their active participation and Japanese proficiency.

From the researcher’s perspective after the classroom observations, there was no noticeable difference between learners’ ethnic backgrounds, first languages and English proficiency regarding their active levels and speaking skills. However, some of them tended to sit with friends with the same English proficiency or close friends before/after their registration for Japanese classes.

Overall, it is not easy to conclude that either ethnic group has higher/lower FLCA, SSE and OPT scores, since participants’ backgrounds were diverse (e.g., years of living in Canada, their native languages and their Japanese language learning experience). However, within the
AILs group, there was a connection among their FLCA, SSE and OPT scores to some extent, and they had different perspectives on their anxiety and their peer learners in comparison with CLs.

6.2 Pedagogical Implications for Language Teachers and Learners

First, it is better for teachers to bear in mind that AILs’ FLCA mainly comes from their classroom environments, while CLs may be concerned about the new class contents (e.g., new grammar and vocabulary) rather than the presence of their classmates. AILs may speak up more when they feel comfortable with an FLCA-free atmosphere. For example, language teachers can make time (e.g., interactive sessions) at the beginning of the semester to let them make some friends in their FL classes. Since both AILs and CLs in the present study felt comfortable making mistakes in their group work and were mainly motivated by their close friends/language partners, it could be worth having friends or language partners to practice together in terms of their anxiety and motivation level.

Because of the existence of false-beginners, some AILs may even speak up confidently in their classes, and teachers may misunderstand that there is no significant difference among ethnic backgrounds. However, AILs’ FLCA and SSE may be closely connected, eventually affecting their Japanese (L2) proficiency.

Secondly, AILs will not have to be concerned about their lesser participation in their classes than CLs. Besides learners’ personalities or language learning experiences, AILs may be more self-conscious than CLs when asked to speak up in their language classes. The other AILs in their classes may have the same feelings in their minds.

Finally, it would be recommended that the language learners interact more with classmates to enhance their sense of SSE, which will improve their L2 proficiency.
6.3 Limitations of the Study

The biggest limitation of the study was that the number of participants was limited to the small sample size for statistical analyses (Mann-Whitney U test), and the data were mainly from Introductory-level Japanese courses. However, an arbitrary choice of participants was avoided because the participation was completely voluntary, and the qualitative approach was successful with sufficient participants.

Another limitation of the study was the variety of participants’ demographics. The study was initially planned to compare East Asian and native Canadian students for several variables. However, those criteria had to expand to some people from Asian (collectivist) countries and others born and raised in Canada. Also, for the statistical analyses, the moving-in age to Canada of AILs’ had to be widely ranged from 3 to 19.

Additionally, the University offered the Japanese language courses as elective credit courses. All the learners’ majors varied from individual to individual, which means their dedication (time) to Japanese learning, assignments and so forth may depend on their majors. If the data had been obtained from Asian studies, Japanese studies, or other Japanese-related major students, the results could have been different.

Since the interview time was 30 to 40-minutes-long on average, the short OPT included only 10 questions, originally made by the researcher, and picked up from the GENKI textbook the participants used in their Japanese classes. It only measured their comprehension level and their Japanese performance. Since all the participants were used to speaking Japanese by reading the textbook, one-on-one Japanese-speaking interviews without materials were entirely new to them. Additionally, the short OPT was initially planned to be conducted on Introductory I level
learners who had no Japanese learning experience before the university Japanese class. However, with its limited sample size, the data analyses had to be conducted with every participant’s data.

In this research, the data analyses had to rely on self-estimates of their FLCA, SSE, active level, and perceptions of their classmates since videotaping their behaviour in their Japanese courses was ethically unacceptable. Additionally, scoring their anxiety level through biometric measures (e.g., high blood pressure, and sweat on their hands) was not possible in classroom settings.

Finally, the present study mainly focused on their FLCA, SSE, OPT and their perception of their classmates’ speaking skills. Their reading, listening, and writing skills were not considered in the survey and interviews.

6.4 Directions for Further Investigations

Since the participants were recruited at a medium-sized University in rural Canada, the results obtained from the present study should not be overgeneralized in different contexts. For example, learners at large universities in city areas might be given more opportunities to practice speaking Japanese with native speakers outside their Japanese courses. Thus, those students may not be affected by competitive classmates with the chance to gain confidence outside their classes. Further investigation with a large sample size in the settings above is needed for a more decisive conclusion.

Also, it would be better to consider the impact of COVID and the post-COVID transition on learners’ FLA for hybrid (online and in-person) JFL courses in future studies since this present study had both online and in-person students.
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Appendix A

Recruitment Poster

Department of Linguistics
University of Saskatchewan

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH IN

Self-efficacy and Foreign Language Anxiety among University Learners of Japanese in Canada

I am looking for students who are taking the Japanese classes in the Uof S to participate in a study which investigates self-efficacy and foreign language anxiety.

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to:

* Fill in a survey online (10-15min),
* and participate in a virtual interview (30-40min).

You will answer questions about your background and factors in your language learning self-confidence and motivation.

All the participants will be given a remuneration ($50 Amazon e-gift card).

Each participant is encouraged to contact a researcher from an anonymous g-mail account, and to use a unique code (2 letters and 2 numbers) for self-identification, e.g. ASC2.

This research has nothing to do with participants’ academic standing or grades.

The survey starts from [___] and interview starts from [___] until [___].

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study, please contact:

Yuta Dobashi, Department of Linguistics
at
Email: op0043@usask.ca

This study has been approved by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board

This study has been funded by the Department of Linguistics

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Appendix B

Consent Form for the Questionnaire

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled:
Self-efficacy and Foreign Language Anxiety among University Learners of Japanese in Canada

Researcher:
Yuta Dobashi, MA Student, Department of Linguistics, University of Saskatchewan
Email address: ogi043@usask.ca

Principal Investigator/Supervisor:
Veronika Makarova

Potential Benefits:
We hope you would be interested in your speaking self-efficacy and Foreign Language Anxiety level in Japanese in the settings of Japanese classes.

Procedures:
You will be asked to fill in an online survey (SurveyMonkey) containing questions asking about your background (e.g., gender, ethnicity, country of birth, first language, self-taught years of Japanese), self-efficacy and foreign language anxiety. This will take approximately 15 to 20 minutes of your time. Each participant will use a unique code (2 letters and 2 numbers) for self-identification (e.g. A5C2) and an anonymous Gmail account.

Potential Risks:
There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Compensation:
Participants will be given a remuneration (a $50 Amazon e-gift card).

Confidentiality:
The collected data will be disseminated at research conferences and in research journals mostly in aggregated forms. Both the survey and interview data will be linked during the study through 2 letters, 2 numbers (e.g., BX35, YF14, etc.), identification code you provide. You are also encouraged to create an e-mail for the purposes of participation in the study. Any identifiable information in the project will be kept confidential and only known to the researchers for the purposes of data interpretation and analysis.
Storage of Data:
The data will be encrypted and saved to a local computer. The data will also be backed up on the PI’s OneDrive, and the graduate student will also have access to the data. To prevent data loss, data will also be copied on a hard drive with security protections. Participants’ unique codes will be stored together with your survey and interview data on the PI’s computer in a locked office, and it will be destroyed upon completion. After 5 years post-publication, all the data will be destroyed. Electronic data will be deleted with a program not allowing recovery.

Right to Withdraw:
Your participation is voluntary, and you can answer only those questions you are comfortable with. You may withdraw until January 15th, 2024, when the data will be summarized, incorporated into the researcher’s MA thesis and likely published.

After the data collection, you can withdraw by sending an email, calling, or writing a letter to the researcher with the code you selected so that all the data associated with this code could be deleted.

Participation or withdrawal has nothing to do with your grades, academic standing, or relationship with the researchers in any way.

Follow up:
If you wish to obtain results from the study, please follow the project description on the Department of Linguistics website after May 1, 2024.

You can also email the PI (v.makarova@usask.ca) to request a copy of the results.

* 1. Consent to Participate:
By agreeing to the consent statement below and completing the following survey, you indicate that you understand the above conditions and agree to participate in this study.

Do you agree to the above terms? By clicking Yes, you consent that you are willing to answer the questions in this survey.
Yes/No
Appendix C

Consent Form for the Interview

__________________________________________________________

University of Saskatchewan

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled:
Self-efficacy and Foreign Language Anxiety among University Learners of Japanese in Canada

Researcher:
Yuta Dobashi, MA Student, Department of Linguistics, University of Saskatchewan
Email address: ogi043@usask.ca

Principal Investigator/Supervisor:
Veronika Makarova

Purpose and Objective of the Research:
My MA research intent is to investigate self-efficacy and foreign language anxiety among university learners of Japanese and to explore their attitude toward peer learners in the settings of the Japanese language classroom.

Procedures:
During this interview, you will be asked to share your opinions on peer learners and how you perceive them in your Japanese classes. This study will take approximately 30 to 40 minutes of your time.

Your speech will be captured virtually using Zoom Video Conferencing. You may request that the recorder be turned off at any time without giving a reason. Transcripts of your audio recording will be made by the researcher and used for research purposes only. (Record audio only, not the video and name)

Potential Risks:
There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Potential Benefits:
We hope you would be interested in how you perceive peer learners around you and its potential impact on your motivation.

Compensation:
Participants will be given a remuneration ($50 Amazon e-gift card).
**Confidentiality:**
The collected data will be disseminated at research conferences and in research journals mostly in aggregated forms. Both the survey and interview data will be linked during the study through 2 letters, 2 numbers (e.g., BX35, YF14, etc.), and the identification code you provide. Any identifiable information in the project will be kept confidential and only known to the researchers for the purposes of data interpretation and analysis.

Zoom data will be stored on servers located in Canada but may be routed through international servers. So no guarantee of the privacy of data can be made with any of the platforms currently in use. The researcher will conduct the interview from a private personal location. It is preferred that you join zoom from a personal location or your home.

Here is the link to Zoom’s privacy policy for your review: https://explore.zoom.us/en/privacy/

Please put a checkmark on the corresponding line(s) to grant or deny your permission:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I grant permission to be audio recorded</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Note: The participants are requested not to make unauthorized recordings of the interview.

Please only select one option below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I wish for my identity to be confidential</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| I would like to be acknowledged for contributing to the research using my pseudonym. The pseudonym I choose for myself is: | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

| I would like to be acknowledged for contributing to the research using my name. My name is: | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Storage of Data:**
The recordings will be encrypted and saved to a local computer. The data will also be backed up on the PI’s OneDrive, and the graduate student will also have access to the data. To prevent data loss, data will also be copied on a hard drive with security protections. Participants’ unique codes will be stored together with your survey and interview data on the PI’s computer in a locked office, and it will be destroyed after the recordings are complete. After 5 years post-publication, all the data will be destroyed. Electronic data will be deleted with a program not allowing recovery.
**Right to Withdraw:**
Your participation is voluntary, and you can answer only those questions you are comfortable with. You may withdraw until January 15th, 2024, when the data will be summarized, incorporated into the researcher’s MA thesis and likely published.

After the data collection, you can withdraw by sending an email, calling, or writing a letter to the researcher with the code you receive from the researcher so that all the data associated with this code can be deleted.

Participation or withdrawal has nothing to do with your grades, academic standing, or relationship with the researchers in any way.

**Follow up:**
If you wish to obtain results from the study, please follow the project description on the Department of Linguistics website after May 1, 2024.

You can also email the PI (v.makarova@usask.ca) to request a copy of the results.

**Questions or Concerns:**
This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office: ethics.office@usask.ca; 306-966-2975; out-of-town participants may call toll-free 1-888-966-2975.

**Oral Consent:**
I have read and explained this consent form to the participant before receiving the participant’s consent, and the participant had knowledge of its contents and appeared to understand it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant code</th>
<th>Yuta Dobashi</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB12</td>
<td>Researcher’s Signature</td>
<td>2023/00/00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D

Items in the Questionnaire

**Demographic Information**
1. Which Japanese class are you taking now (term/class)?
2. What is your major?
3. What year of university studies are you in?
4. Which gender do you identify with?
5. How old are you?
6. Were you born in Canada? (Yes/No)
7. If you were not born in Canada, what was your country of origin? (Please insert N/A if you were born in Canada)
8. If you were not born in Canada, how old were you when you arrived in Canada? (Please insert N/A if you were born in Canada)
9. If you were not born in Canada, for how long have you resided in Canada? (Please insert N/A if you were born in Canada)

**Language Learning Experience**
1. What is/are your first language(s) that you acquired from your parents at home?
2. What language(s) do you speak as a native speaker now?
3. What other language(s) do you speak fluently?
4. Do you speak language(s) other than English on a daily basis? (5-point Likert scale)
5. Have you taken Japanese before taking the university course? (Yes/No)
6. If you did learn Japanese before taking your university class, please specify how (select all that apply). (Please select N/A if you did not learn Japanese before taking your university class) (Secondary school/Language center/Private lessons/Self-study/From a friend/Online/Other)
7. If you did learn Japanese before taking your university class, please specify for how long. (Please insert N/A if you did not learn Japanese before taking your university class)
8. Have you studied a foreign language other than Japanese at a secondary school or university? (Yes/No)
9. If you studied a foreign language other than Japanese at a secondary school or university, please specify which language(s). (Please insert N/A if you did not study a foreign language other than Japanese at a secondary school or university)
10. If you studied a foreign language other than Japanese at a secondary school or university, please specify where you studied (a) foreign language(s) other than Japanese. (Please insert N/A if you did not study a foreign language other than Japanese at a secondary school or university)
11. If you studied a foreign language other than Japanese at a secondary school or university, please specify for how long you studied (a) foreign language(s) other than Japanese. (Please insert N/A if you did not study a foreign language other than Japanese at a secondary school or university)
Motivation and Learning Style
1. What are the reasons you are interested in learning Japanese? Please select all that apply.
Japanese-speaking buddy on social media/Japanese culture/Japanese language/Japanese food/To travel to Japan as a tourist/To study abroad in Japan/It provides better job opportunities/I am of 
Japanese heritage/Japanese is similar to my home language/For foreign language requirements [credits]/I am taking it for 3 cu foreign language requirement/None of the above/Other reasons)
2. How many days per week do you spend studying Japanese for your class homework and assignments?
3. How many hours per day do you spend studying Japanese for your class homework and assignments?
4. How many days per week do you spend studying Japanese for fun or personal interest?
5. How many hours per day do you spend studying Japanese for fun or personal interest?
6. In what format are you mainly taking the Japanese class?
(Online/In-person/Hybrid [mix of online and in-person])
7. When you first got enrolled in the Japanese course, did you already know someone in the class or were you friends with other students in the class? (Yes/No)
8. If you already knew someone in the class or you were friends with another student(s) in the class, please specify. (Please select N/A if you did not know someone in the class or you were not friends with another student) (One student/Two students/More than 2 students)
9. After you got enrolled in the Japanese course, did you find a partner with whom you practice Japanese every class? (Yes/No)
10. If you found a partner with whom you practice Japanese every class, please specify how many different partners you had. (Please select N/A if you did not find a partner with whom you practice Japanese every class) (One student/Two students/More than 2 students)

Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (5-point Likert scale)
*Myself
1. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my Japanese class.
2. I get nervous and confused when I am speaking Japanese in my Japanese class.
3. I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking Japanese in my Japanese class.
4. I start to panic when I have to speak Japanese without preparation in Japanese class.
5. I get anxious when I am speaking Japanese in my Japanese class.

*With classmates
1. I feel very self-conscious about speaking Japanese in front of other students.
2. I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak Japanese.
3. I keep thinking that the other students are better at speaking Japanese than I am.
4. I always feel that the other students speak Japanese better than I do.
5. I think that other students in my Japanese class are better at speaking Japanese than I am.
Self-efficacy Scale (5-point Likert scale)
*Myself
1. I can describe a situation in Japanese when I see pictures/charts in the textbook.
2. I can read aloud a Japanese dialogue (long passage) in the textbook.
3. I can answer questions from the textbook in Japanese, based on the textbook information.
4. I can talk in Japanese on a few topics covered in class/textbook, such as introducing myself, my family, and talking about my weekend plans.
*With classmates
1. When I practice speaking Japanese with classmates, I can speak Japanese with no or just a few mistakes.
2. When I practice speaking Japanese with classmates, I can speak Japanese fluently.

Engagement (5-point Likert scale)
1. When I practice Japanese in class, I prefer talking with the same student.
2. When I practice Japanese in class, I prefer talking with many different students.
3. I have opportunities to communicate with Japanese speakers outside the class.
4. I try communicating with my classmates in Japanese outside of class time.
5. I am active in class and ask many questions to the teacher.
6. I am active in class and practice Japanese a lot with my classmates.
7. I try doing Japanese language and Japanese culture-related activities outside the class.
8. If you do any Japanese language or culture-related activities outside the class, please specify the activities. (Not applicable for me/Please specify: Open-ended question)
9. How often do you engage in Japanese language or culture-related activities outside the class? (Not applicable for me/Please specify: Open-ended question)
Appendix E

Items in the Interview and Short Oral Proficiency Test

Part 1 Questions about Why and How they Study Japanese
1. Why did you decide to study Japanese?
2. What is your own way of learning Japanese?
3. Are you trying to study Japanese on your own outside class time? And how?
4. Have you or other students tried to form a study group to use Japanese outside the class?

Part 2 Questions about Classmates and their Performance
1. Are there a few students who are active all the time, ask questions, and answer many of the teacher’s questions? What do you think about these students? Are they the shield you can hide behind, or are they preventing you and other students from participating?
2. Would you like to be more active in class? What prevents you from being more active in class?
3. Does the performance of other students in the class affect you in any way? If some other students are doing better or much better than you, does it bother you in any way, or make you feel sad or demotivated? Or does it make you study harder and motivate you?
4. When you have to work with some students who have lower proficiency in Japanese than you do, how does it make you feel? Do you think you are wasting your time? Or are you happy to practice more, or glad you are doing better?
5. Have you noticed any group of students who are performing better in class than others? What can you say about the specifics of this group? (e.g., gender, ethnicity, Canadian/international)

Part 3 Questions mainly about Anxiety or Motivational Things
1. Do you have any anxiety about speaking Japanese in class? Why and when?
2. What are your favourite activities in class?
3. What are the activities that you do not like very much in class?
4. Do your classmates influence your motivation in class?
5. Are there classmates with whom you talk to in every class? (What do you think of their impact on your motivation?)
6. Are there classmates in your class that you hang out with outside of class? (What do you think of their impact on your motivation?)
(Do you ever try talking with them in Japanese outside the class? Why?)
7. Have you had the experience of getting motivated or demotivated speaking Japanese because of your classmates?
8. Are there any students in class or outside the class who are your role models in terms of learning Japanese?
Part4 Short Oral Proficiency Test (from Lesson1, 2 and 3 of the GENKI textbook)

*Lesson1
1. Takeshi/Mary さんは何年生ですか。 (What year are you in?)
2. Takeshi/Mary さんは何さいですか。 (How old are you?)

*Lesson2
(For Q3 and Q4, the researcher pointed pen/clock over Zoom using stuff in his room)
3. これはなんですか。 (What is this?) （ペンです） (This is a pen.)
4. あれはなんですか。 (What is that?) （とけいです） (That is a clock.)

*Lesson3
5. Takeshi/Mary さんはアニメを見ますか。 (Do you watch anime?)
6. Takeshi/Mary さんは映画を見ますか。 (Do you watch movies?)
7. Takeshi/Mary さんはどこで勉強しますか。 (Where do you study?)
8. Takeshi/Mary さんは何時に大学に行きますか。 (When do you go to the university?)
9. Takeshi/Mary さんはときどきスポーツをしますか。 (Do you often play sports?)
10. 週末はどこに行きますか。 (Where do you go on weekends?)

*Freestyle introduction
11. Please talk about yourself in Japanese as long as you can.