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Language Learning Anxiety and Shadowing in a Japanese Classroom

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Abstract

Listening anxiety is a form of language learning anxiety which disrupts concentration and hinders the processing of language during listening tasks. It can incite a strong physiological and psychological response in the learner and is to the detriment of self-confidence and self-concept. This paper presents shadowing as a structured and purposeful listening activity that can help to alleviate listening anxiety by redressing listening skills deficiencies. It is of relevance to language teachers with an interest in the process and formation of listening anxiety and instructional methods that can be used to reduce it.

I. Introduction and Background

Early research on anxiety from learning a foreign language investigated the effects of anxiety on learning outcomes, but did not differentiate language learning anxiety from anxiety in general and failed to consider how language learning anxiety affected individual language learners. Due to the lack of a clear conceptual grounding, early research on language anxiety focused on general experiences of anxiety, and as a result has been called the Confounded Approach (MacIntyre, 2017). Later research identified language anxiety as a distinct construct and connected language learning experiences to language anxiety with greater theoretical precision, a research trend which is known as the Specialized Approach (MacIntyre, 2017). Horwitz et al. (1986) can be seen as the instigators of the Specialized Approach when they consulted learners firsthand about their personal experiences with language anxiety and developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety

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Scale. Horwitz et al. (1986) identified communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation as the conceptual foundations of the construct of foreign language anxiety and created the FLCAS as a scale to measure it. Test anxiety refers to an unrealistic perfectionist approach to taking tests which reflects a learner's deep fear of failure. Fear of negative evaluation was conceptualized as a fear and an expectation of being judged negatively in group learning situations by others, while communicative apprehension was conceived of as a threat to authentic self-presentation due to the limited range of expression available to immature learners in the L2 (Horwitz et al., 1986). Language anxiety was not conceived of simply as a combination of these three factors however, as Horwitz (2017) makes clear. Instead, test anxiety, fear of evaluation and communicative apprehension were meant to be seen as useful concepts to differentiate language anxiety from other kinds of anxiety and to clarify the connection between language anxiety and self-concept. In fact, Horwitz et al. (1986) conceived of language anxiety as 'a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom learning' (128). Further conceptual clarification of language anxiety was provided by MacIntyre and Gardner (1989). They used factor analysis to discriminate general anxiety from Communicative Anxiety. General anxiety was based on trait and state anxiety (the latter of which had previously been connected with language anxiety and performance). Results showed that general anxiety was not a reliable dimension of language anxiety, and that Communicative Anxiety (with three individual components of French class, French use and sensitivity to the audience) negatively correlated with performance in the vocabulary processing tasks used in the study (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1989). The dimension of Communicative Anxiety identified by MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) provided theoretical support for the factors of communicative apprehension and the socially grounded fear of being negatively evaluated by others identified by Horwitz et al. (1986). Further evidence in support of a distinct construct of language anxiety was provided by MacIntyre and Gardner's (1991) research on the effects of language learning anxiety on language processing and recall. Factor analysis showed language anxiety to be distinct from general and state anxiety, while results from the English and French versions of the short-term and long-term memory tasks revealed that language anxiety affected language processing only in the French tasks. Aida (1994) also identified a construct of language anxiety related to communication apprehension in her replication study of Horwitz et al. (1986). Factor analysis pointed to Speech Anxiety and Fear of Negative Evaluation as two components of language anxiety, but Aida (1994) also hypothesized that those two factors actually described a single phenomenon. Aida (1994) noted the similarity of her findings with those of MacIntyre and Gardner (1989, 1991) who loaded *sensitivity to the audience and*

French use onto a single factor of Communicative Anxiety, and likewise found no support for test anxiety being a component of language anxiety.

Aida (1994) identified two other distinct factors of language anxiety which were Fear of Failing the Class and Comfortableness in Speaking with Japanese People. Those factors focused on learners' feelings of anxiety connected with taking a university class (Horwitz, 2017) and support the contention of MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) that negative learning experiences can ultimately result in a negative disposition towards the class itself. Repeated experiences of anxiety in language learning contexts would seem to increase the amount of anxiety felt by learners and negatively affect learners' attitude towards the learning context. According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1989), the ongoing learning experience would also lead to a discrimination of both the anxiety felt (for instance, a feeling of communicative anxiety rather than fear of failure) and the source of the anxiety (for example, anxiety felt towards the Japanese language class rather than English class). Horwitz et al. (1986) further noted learners' tendency to avoid using challenging structures or personal language due to an anxiety regarding their ability to authentically present themselves. In this sense, communicative apprehension may well be said to overlap with fear of negative evaluation by others in the way MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) and Aida (1994) postulate.

II. Literature Review

1. Language Learning Anxiety: The Dynamic Approach

While current research offers qualified support for the existence of multiple factors of foreign language anxiety, evidence to show that it is a unitary construct is currently lacking (Horwitz, 2017). More recently, researchers have investigated differing sources of language learning anxiety in differing contexts originating from differing learning experiences. This most recent phase of research has been referred to as the Dynamic Approach and investigates anxiety, the learner, and the learning situation as well as 'other factors including linguistic abilities, physiological reactions, self-related appraisals, pragmatics, interpersonal relationships, specific topics being discussed, type of setting' and so on (MacIntyre, 2017: 25). Saito and Samimy (1996), for example, found that classroom anxiety decreased amongst intermediate learners of Japanese as their familiarity with language and classroom activities increased, but that learning anxiety subsequently increased amongst advanced learners due to a shift in the focus of the curriculum towards reading and writing. A curriculum change meant that there was a decrease in the more familiar classroom activities centered on speaking and listening, and as a result, advanced learners felt greater anxiety speaking Japanese in class and their mean anxiety level

scores increased (Saito and Samimy, 1996). Research has also focused on language learning anxiety associated with specific skills. Saito, Horwitz and Garza (1999) noted that most items on the FLCAS related to speaking and listening and investigated whether perceptions of reading in the target language affected anxiety levels. They found that reading in a target language can increase anxiety, that anxiety affects textual decoding and processing, and that reading anxiety can be clearly distinguished from oral anxiety. Elkhafaihi (2005) similarly found that listening anxiety can be differentiated from general foreign language learning anxiety, while Takahashi (2010) noted that writing apprehension was a writing-specific anxiety which negatively related to self-perceived ability, motivation, proficiency and achievement. Recent research has illuminated the relationship between anxiety and the learner, the learning context, specific skills and specific tasks and sheds new light on the pedagogical implications of language learning anxiety for educators.

2. The Negative Correlation Between Language Learning Anxiety and Proficiency

Numerous studies have found a negative correlation between levels of reported anxiety and proficiency in the target language. Early studies investigated the effect of anxiety on learning and processing vocabulary. MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) divided learners into low and high-anxiety groups and found that the high-anxiety group learned fewer words, had a lower level of recall and learned vocabulary items at a slower rate. In a subsequent study, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) found that anxiety negatively correlated with performance on two vocabulary tasks of memorizing numbers (a digit span test) and production of vocabulary (a Thing Category test). The authors argued that anxiety disrupts concentration and processing in short-term memory so that vocabulary cannot be learned effectively at the initial processing stage. Other studies utilizing tasks based on output and communication also support the negative correlation between anxiety and proficiency. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994 a) induced an anxious response in learners by filming learners with a video camera and informing them that they would have to utilize their learning in a later communicative task. Anxious learners had a clear performance deficit for tasks which required vocabulary processing, recall and communication. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994 b) investigated the effect of anxiety on a range of input and output tasks and found a negative correlation both with overall academic grade scores and scores for the objective tests used in the study. Using a similar research paradigm to MacIntyre and Gardner (1989), Aida (1994) classified students into two groups of low and high-anxiety, and final course grades negatively correlated with anxiety, with low-anxiety students likely to receive

an A while high-anxiety students were likely to receive a B or lower. Other studies have similarly found that anxiety is a reliable predictor of final grades (Ganshow and Sparks, 1996; Saito and Samimy, 1999; Saito, Horwitz and Garza, 1999) and that anxiety correlates negatively with objective tests to measure proficiency (Yamashiro and McLaughlin, 2001; Takahashi, 2010).

3. The Effects of Language Learning Anxiety

Research has consistently shown that anxiety has deleterious effects on the language learning process and can weaken the learner's sense of self-concept. Horwitz et al. (1986) note that learners may avoid using challenging structures or personal language due to the anxiety of failing to present themselves to others authentically, and this phenomenon has been reported in several other prominent studies on anxiety. In an output task of self-description, students gave shorter descriptions and refrained from using challenging grammatical structures to describe themselves in French (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991), mirroring results from Steinberg and Horwitz (1986) when learners who were treated coldly and videotaped to induce anxiety provided fewer and shorter interpretive comments on TAT pictures. Saito and Samimy (1999) evaluated the relationship between anxiety and Language Class Risk-taking and provided support for previous findings from MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) in that anxious students seem to be disinclined to use new grammatical patterns, avoid taking communicative risks, and find it difficult to concentrate. Embarrassment and lack of risk-taking may be traced to an unwillingness to make mistakes in front of others (Saito and Samimy, 1999), while anxious learners also tend to overestimate the seriousness of their language errors (Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002). The avoidance of using challenging structures which could lead to errors is a form of communicative apprehension arising from fear of negative evaluation by others, supporting MacIntyre and Gardner's (1991) and Aida's (1994) contention that the two factors may indeed be thought of as a single phenomenon. In fact, many anxious learners tend to have an embedded belief that they must understand everything perfectly, express ideas perfectly and pronounce words perfectly, which can in turn lead to negative self-comparisons with classmates (Horwitz et al., 1986; Vogely, 1998; Saito, Horwitz and Garza, 1999; Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002). The fear of classroom evaluations based on socio-cultural and linguistic standards that are not fully clear, and the learner belief that ideas must always be expressed correctly can arouse a strong physiological and psychological response which may include: sweating; forgetfulness; avoiding eye contact; passive withdrawal and a reluctance to initiate conversation; embarrassment to volunteer answers; heightened concern over errors; use of self-derogatory language; self-perceived low level of competence; procrastination; and missing

classes (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991; Gregersen and Horwitz, 2002; Elkhafafi, 2005; Yashima et al., 2009; Rubio-Alcalá, 2017).

Dörnyei and Simsek (2017) argue that such anxious physiological and psychological responses and behaviors are associated with an ‘anxious self’, an external manifestation of the learner’s feared linguistic performance in a social setting (p.53). The learner is apparently not in full control of the anxious self, and it instead exists as a somewhat independent dimension of the learner’s self-concept. According to Dörnyei and Simsek (2017), anxious behaviors belong to one of three distinct types of the anxious self (which were identified from the self-reports of anxious learners): ‘the fighter’ who resolves on a plan to actually process and reduce recurrent episodes of anxiety; ‘the safe player’ who uses strategies to reduce levels of language anxiety (such as giving short answers or showing unwillingness to start discussions); and ‘the quitter’ who engages in avoidance of situations that arouse language anxiety (for example, through lack of participation or by failing to attend class, p. 61). Communicative apprehension and the fear of negative evaluation can therefore be linked to Dörnyei and Simsek’s (2017) concept of the anxious self, and the use of avoidance strategies may be understood as an anxious learner’s psychological response to the L2 social and contextual threats posed to self-concept.

4. General Pedagogical Implications

Horwitz et al. (1986) suggest that educators should not only help students learn to cope with the anxiety provoked by the learning situation, but also find ways to help them reduce the stress engendered by the learning situation. To enable learners to cope with the anxiety of the learning context, researchers have suggested a range of strategies and advice. Young (1991) advises learners share their feelings and anxieties with each other. Saito et al. (1999) recommend positive self-talk as a panacea to derogatory self-talk, and that educators prepare anxious learners for the possibility that they may experience foreign language anxiety so that they will not feel isolated by their experience in the classroom. Dörnyei and Simsek (2017) believe that constructing a personal narrative about the anxious self could help process anxiety and reframe experiences of anxiety in a more positive way. Oxford (2017) recommends that learners repeatedly expose themselves to situations where they may experience anxiety due to language use and to learn suitable strategies to manage their cognitive and affective response. Oxford (2017) also suggests that learners view negative situations as changeable and associate both success and failure with the level of effort made. To reduce the level of stress induced by the learning situation as Horwitz et al. (1986) recommend, Young (1991) suggests that teachers use modelling instead of error correction because modelling is less

threatening to self-concept. Young (1991) also recommends rewarding learners' *attempts* to communicate rather than successful communication per se as part of formal assessment. Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1994) make a strong case for implementing group activities in the classroom to develop group cohesion which can negate the fear of negative evaluation associated with communication apprehension. King and Smith (2017) argue that nonjudgmental acceptance should be promoted by educators, especially at the start of a course, as this will decrease social anxiety contingent on the fear of negative evaluation. Saito et al. (1999) and Rubio-Alcala (2017) suggest bringing learners into a discussion on the process of language learning to make sure that the pace and goals of the course are set at an appropriate level and to make group decisions about some of the learning activities. Their advice aligns with Horwitz (2017) who believes that foreign language anxiety can be reduced by fostering autonomy and by giving learners greater control over their learning paths. On the other hand, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994 a) note that the language deficits created by anxiety and the disruption to concentration (such as vocabulary development) cannot be overcome by strategies to reduce anxiety alone, and that skills training and development are also necessary to increase language proficiency.

5. The Construct of Listening Anxiety

Lack of comprehension can increase levels of anxiety, and because comprehension is a precondition for communication, it can also stall verbal interaction (Vogely, 1998). Given that the experience of listening anxiety amongst learners is common, and that listening anxiety due to a lack of comprehension is debilitating, Vogely (1998) argues that language teachers have a responsibility to address it. Vogely (1998) carried out descriptive research to identify key sources of listening anxiety which included: the speed of the listening exercise; the difficulty in terms of the level of vocabulary; a lack of clarity about why learners were doing the listening task; a lack of visual support; only being able to listen to recordings twice; and not having enough time to process the content of the listening exercise. The wide range of potential sources of listening anxiety suggests that learners are highly likely to experience it. In fact, Vogely (1998) found that only 9% of the 140 learners in her study had not experienced listening anxiety.

The likely experience of listening anxiety amongst learners in the classroom was supported by Elkhafaifi's (2005) research on the link between the level of course difficulty and listening anxiety. Elkhafaifi (2005) replaced 'reading' with 'listening' in the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale developed by Saito et al. (1999) to create the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale, which she used to investigate listening anxiety amongst students of Arabic and university. Results

showed that learners with a high level of foreign language anxiety also tended to have a high level of listening anxiety, and that listening and foreign language anxiety correlated negatively with final grades as well as with the results of a listening test. Listening anxiety was particularly high amongst second year students, and Elkhafaifi (2005) infers that this was due to an increase in course difficulty as learners were exposed to more difficult syntax and morphology in their second year. Elkhafaifi's (2005) findings mirrored Saito and Samimy (1999), who similarly found that mean anxiety scores amongst learners increased as the curriculum became more demanding. Kimura (2008) also used the FLLAS in a study on Japanese university students' experiences of anxiety studying English and identified three factors of listening anxiety. The first factor, emotionality, reflected strong negative feelings of frustration and alienation amongst learners which reached the level of distress. Kimura (2008) suggests that emotionality is related to excessive memory loading which strains ongoing comprehension. The second factor was worry, which disrupted concentration and arose due to the difficulty of the vocabulary, the speed of the recording, and the limited time available for tasks. Interference from worry diminishes the amount of attention that can be given to linguistic stimuli so that information is neither encoded nor processed effectively. A third factor identified was anticipatory fear, a solidification of previous episodes of listening anxiety mediated by the lack of control over listening tasks that learners in the traditional classroom typically have, and the fear of negative evaluation which Kimura (2008) relates to the fear of 'loss of face' in a Japanese context. Bekleyen (2009) administered the FLLAS to English teacher candidates in Turkey and found that high levels of listening anxiety correlated negatively with course grades, giving further support to the findings of Elkhafaifi (2005). Two main sources of listening anxiety identified were: a lack of development of listening skills during high school education; and deficient bottom-up listening skills. The lack of development of listening skills through high would likely result in deficient bottom-up listening skills, and Bekleyen's (2009) finding proffers some support for MacIntyre and Gardner's (1994 a) contention that anxiety reduction requires not only useful anxiety management strategies but also specific language skills training.

Bekleyen (2009) highlights an important connection between listening anxiety and under-developed bottom-up listening skills. Teacher candidates in her study reported difficulties recognizing known words, weak forms of words and segments of language in connected speech, and due to the anxieties induced by these difficulties, they engaged in an avoidance strategy of abandoning listening activities altogether. Their difficulties were likely exacerbated by the difference between Turkish, which (like Japanese) is a syllable-timed language, and English, which is a stress-timed language (Bekleyen, 2009). This is because, learners with poor bottom-

up listening skills tend to make the mistake of instinctively applying the prosody of their L1 to the L2 (Vandergrift, 2011) making it even more difficult to decode connected speech. Ganschow and Sparks (1992) likewise found that learners with high anxiety did significantly worse on native language tests on phonology / orthography than learners with low anxiety and surmise that this was connected with difficulties in the holding and processing vocabulary in working memory. Citing Service's (1992) study on Finnish children's acquisition of English, they explain that the ability to hold and process phonological material in working memory makes vocabulary acquisition possible and that problems in processing language may therefore result in anxiety. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994 a) argue that anxiety can also *affect* vocabulary processing because it disrupts concentration so that fewer linguistic stimuli are available to be encoded, a perspective supported by Kimura (2008). Goh (2000) similarly found that the processing of language is affected by the inability to recognize specific words, the failure to segment connected speech and problems with concentration (cited by Vandergrift, 2007). Studies on listening and anxiety clearly show that bottom-up skills deficiencies of phoneme and word recognition, processing of linguistic stimuli and segmenting of prosody are associated with listening anxiety (Vogely, 1998; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Kimura, 2008; Bekleyen, 2009) and that anxiety may cause processing difficulties due to anticipatory fear, disruption to concentration and the onset of self-derogatory talk (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991, 1994 a, 1994 b; Kimura 2008).

6. Addressing Deficiencies in Bottom-Up Listening Skills and Reducing Listening Anxiety

Researchers have suggested that language teachers implement measures to reduce learners' levels of listening anxiety. These include: ensuring that there are sufficient opportunities to practice listening skills during each class; making input comprehensible by providing repeated listening practice; choosing appropriate exercises to develop specific skills (such as word recognition); giving students practice at breaking down connected speech into natural segments; doing exercises to pay attention to weak forms of words in connected speech; and giving learners more control over the stages of input and processing (Vogely, 1998; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Kimura, 2008; Bekleyen, 2009)

Yamauchi (2014) conducted an intervention study to assess whether challenging listening materials could be used to develop listening skills and mediate anxiety. Results of the listening anxiety survey developed by Yamauchi (2014) revealed significant reductions of anxiety associated with factors of text difficulty and bottom-up processing. Speed was reported as a significant source of concern, and the results suggest that incorporating anxiety factors, such as the speed of

spoken English or connected speech into classroom listening tasks, can help to reduce listening anxiety. Results also showed that addressing bottom-up listening skills deficiency through repeated tasks targeting key points and particular words was especially effective because levels of high and moderate anxiety amongst learners were reduced.

Incorporating a shadowing course into regular classes could therefore be an effective way of helping learners to acclimate to the speed of native speech, addressing listening skill deficiencies, and potentially reducing anxiety. Research has already shown that shadowing practice can help learners to build up and internalize phonetic and phonological representations of language (Shiki et al., 2010; Hamada, 2017; Sumiyoshi, 2019). This is because learners verbally rehearse the incoming stream of sound and become increasingly sensitized to phonetic and phonological representations of language until they internalize it. Repeated shadowing practice automatizes the decoding process and enhances the capacity of the phonological loop to store phonetic and phonological information in working memory (Shiki et al, 2010; Kadota, 2007; Hamada, 2011 b). And courses in shadowing have also been successful in enabling learners to improve their understanding of connected speech and make better sense of L2 prosody. Okada (2002), for instance, used prosody shadowing to help learners recognize intonation and rhythm in English. Torikai et al. (2003) found that shadowing practice increased learners' accuracy with reduced forms, prosody and connected speech. Mori (2011) combined shadowing with oral reading in a ten week prosody course, and learners improved intonation by lengthening the final segments of sentences and by enhancing the difference in intensity between stressed and unstressed syllables. And in Nakayama and Armstrong's (2015) study, learners who were primed with visual input for shadowing practice were better able to produce weak forms of function words. Shadowing provides the kind of listening practice to remedy deficient language skills that MacIntyre and Gardner (1994 a) argued was a necessity alongside the practice of anxiety reduction strategies.

Studies have also investigated the costs and anxiety associated with listening and shadowing. Hamada (2011 b) investigated the psychological costs involved with shadowing training and how those costs may affect learners' motivation to persevere in spite of obstacles, doubts or negative feelings. Costs were defined as the physical or psychological burden of a task or how much effort is required for the task (Hamada, 2011 b). Hamada administered a questionnaire to measure the costs of learning behaviors and to explore learners' impressions of shadowing. Results showed that learners believed in their ability to do shadowing and felt a sense of accomplishment from self-perceived improved sound recognition skills (Hamada, 2011 b). Hamada (2011 b) suggested that learners' newfound sense of

accomplishment would enhance their self-efficacy, and that a sense of achievement would have positive effect on learner anxiety. Teeter (2017) investigated the impact of shadowing on motivation and anxiety in an intervention study and administered a questionnaire at the beginning and end of the course to measure changes in learners' attitude towards English. Teeter (2017) found that students' anxiety levels decreased as they did more shadowing. There were also positive correlations between shadowing and interest in communicating using the L2, as well as slight reductions in anxiety related to communication with the teacher as well as other people from Japan in English. Teeter's (2017) results suggest that shadowing can help to alleviate communication apprehension and enhance students' image of learning English.

III. Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes, costs and anxieties related to shadowing practice and to compare learner's perceptions of costs with Hamada's (2011 b) original research and findings in this same area. Specifically, the study will address the following questions:

1. What psychological costs do learners associate with shadowing practice?
2. How do learners perceive shadowing practice?
3. What levels of anxiety do students report about shadowing practice?

IV. Methodology

1. Participants

The participants were 83 second-year university students enrolled in a 14-week English communication course of lessons of 100 minutes each. Two of the communication classes were intermediate level and comprised of 57 students. These students belonged to the Department of Informatics and the Department of Bioscience. The proficiency level of the third class was advanced and comprised of 26 students belonging to the Department of Informatics.

2. Materials

Textbook listening material from *Contemporary Topics 1: 21st Century Skills for Academic Success* was used to provide content for shadowing practice. A variety of content including interviews, lectures and discussions was adapted and used for shadowing. This approach aligned with Yamauchi (2014) and Oxford (2017) by utilizing content incorporating anxiety factors, such as speed and the processing of

connected speech, so that learners might acclimate to them through repeated exposure. Six shadowing activities were completed in a twelve-week period and learners submitted 2 shadowing recordings (spaced at least 24 hours apart) with a 75-word reflection about their shadowing performance to an online forum as part of their homework for each shadowing activity. The shadowing activity comprised of seven steps: 1) Listen to the whole recording and complete textbook comprehension exercises; 2) mumble shadow; 3) practice shadowing; 4) submit a first shadowing recording to an online forum; 5) wait at least 24 hours and submit a second shadowing recording with a 75-word reflection about the shadowing to the online forum (guidelines and sample reflective comments were provided); 6) listen to and respond with a positive 20 word comment to two postings from classmates (guidelines and sample comments were provided); 7) the following week, complete a partial dictation close of the shadowing with an incomplete transcript targeting weak forms of words as feedback. The seven steps adapted shadowing procedures recommended by Kadota and Tamai (2004), Shiki et al, (2010), Hamada (2011 b, 2014, 2017), and Langford (2021): using the textbook as a source of shadowing material; beginning with top-down listening comprehension activities; incorporating multiple stages of shadowing (including mumbling to help recognize intonation and reduce anxiety); limiting practice to a maximum of 5 shadowings due to a known ceiling-effect; and ending with tasks which allow for self-assessment and reflection. Listening, reading and responding to shadowing postings on the online forum from classmates also aligned with Young (1991) and Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1994) by providing an opportunity for learners to share feelings and develop group cohesion as a buffer against negative self-evaluation. Positive and encouraging critical feedback was also provided by the instructor to 3 of the learner's self-reflective comments each week in line with King and Smith's (2017) recommendation to foster nonjudgmental acceptance amongst class members.

3. Online Survey

A 23-item online survey was administered at the end of the course to measure the costs and anxiety associated with shadowing practice over the six sessions. Items were framed specifically to focus on shadowing activities. The items were adapted and modified from previously administered surveys by Ryan (2009), Hamada (2011 b) and Teeter (2017) and were related to costs, perceptions and anxiety connected with shadowing activities. The items were used with a 5-point Likert scale with 5 expressing strong agreement and 1 expressing strong disagreement. A translation of questions into Japanese was provided to ensure comprehension. Because this is a descriptive study, the survey was administered at the end of the course after 14 weeks and 51 responses were received. The number of items for learner views of

shadowing practice and costs of shadowing was 13 and the number of items for learner experiences of anxiety was 10.

V. Results

The data from the Likert items should be treated as ordinal data, hence descriptive statistics were used for analysis and the median and mode were used as measures of central tendency. Descriptive statistics of the learners' views of shadowing and the costs involved with completing an intensive shadowing course are shown in Table 1. The stacked bar chart for each question in Figure 1 also shows the frequency for each item expressed as a percentage. The mode for Question 11 ('My shadowing performance usually improved from the first shadowing practice to the second shadowing practice') was rated 5 (strongly agree) showing that learners recognized the benefit of repeating the shadowing task.

The same method was used to analyze the responses to the survey questions about learners' experience of anxiety while doing the shadowing course. Descriptive

Table 1 *Learner Views of Shadowing Practice and Costs of Shadowing With Descriptive Statistics*

Item	Median	Mode
1. Shadowing is interesting	Agree	Agree
2. I can start shadowing easily	Agree	Agree
3. I feel positive about doing shadowing practice	Agree	Agree
4. I can work on shadowing easily	Agree	Agree
5. It is difficult to motivate myself to practice shadowing	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
6. I cannot start working on shadowing easily	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree
7. My listening comprehension skills improved thanks to shadowing	Agree	Agree
8. It was useful to do shadowing tasks based on listenings from the textbooks	Agree	Agree
9. It was useful to complete listening comprehension exercises first and then do the shadowing task afterwards	Agree	Agree
10. I usually listened and compared my first shadowing performance with my second shadowing performance	Agree	Agree
11. My shadowing performance usually improved from the first shadowing practice to the second shadowing practice	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. My shadowing ability improved by the end of the fall semester	Agree	Agree
13. In the future, I want to use shadowing to study English	Agree	Agree

Note. Total $N = 51$, results shown as descriptive statistics of median and mode.

statistics of the learners’ experiences with anxiety connected with the shadowing course are shown in Table 2. The mode for Question 2 (‘I feel like other students in my class are better than me at English’), Question 9 (‘If I met an English speaker, I

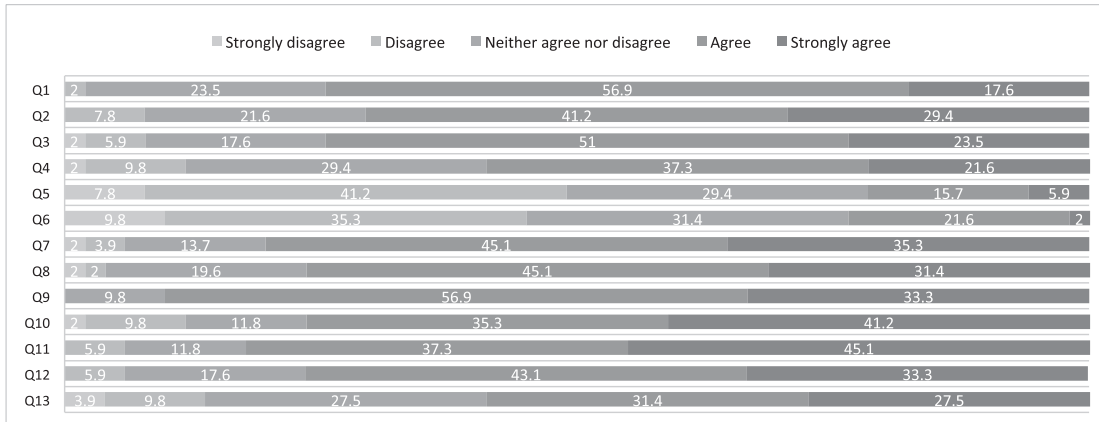


Figure 1 Learner Views of Shadowing Practice and the Costs of Shadowing

Note. Total N = 51, Likert scale responses to questions 1-13 in Table 1 are shown as percentages

Table 2 Learner Experiences of Anxiety With Descriptive Statistics

Item	Median	Mode
1. I feel uneasy when I do shadowing practice	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree / Agree
2. I feel like other students in my class are better than me at English	Agree	Strongly Agree
3. Doing shadowing made me feel that other students in my class are better than me at English	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree / Agree
4. Sharing recordings and comments on forums made me feel less anxious about shadowing	Agree	Agree
5. Listening to classmates’ shadowings made me feel uneasy	Neither Agree nor Disagree / Agree	Disagree
6. I felt uneasy doing the second shadowing recording	Neither Agree nor Disagree / Agree	Disagree
7. I felt more confident doing the second shadowing recording	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree / Agree
8. Listening to classmates’ shadowings gave me some self-confidence	Neither Agree nor Disagree / Agree	Disagree / Agree
9. If I met an English speaker, I would feel nervous	Agree	Strongly Agree
10. I am worried that other speakers of English would find my English strange	Agree	Strongly Agree

Note. Total N = 51, results shown as descriptive statistics of median and mode.

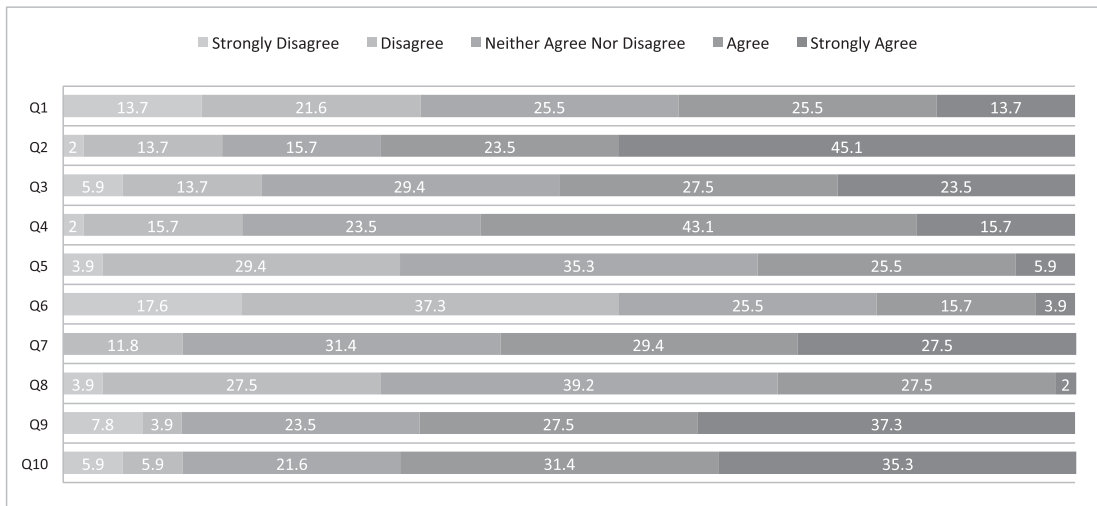


Figure 2 *Learner Experiences of Anxiety*

Note. Total $N = 51$, Likert scale responses to questions 1-10 in Table 2 are shown as percentages

would feel nervous’) and Question 10 (‘I am worried that other speakers of English would find my English strange’) were 5 (strongly agree) revealing the extent of learners’ anxiety in these areas.

VI. Discussion

1. Learner Views of Shadowing Practice and the Costs of Shadowing

Overall, the results show that learners see shadowing practice as a beneficial activity to develop their listening skills. Hamada (2011 b) found that there were both high and low costs associated with shadowing. Factor analysis linked low costs with having a positive attitude towards the materials used for shadowing and the practice of shadowing itself (Hamada, 2011 b). Answers to questions 1 to 6 in Table 1 align with Hamada (2011 b) and show that in general, learners found shadowing to be a positive and motivating activity which kept their interest. The answers provided were also slightly more positive than the median responses reported by Teeter (2017) which rated shadowing as less interesting overall. The answers to questions 5 and 6 in Table 1 were more equivocal however, with 49% reporting that they found it easy to motivate themselves to practice shadowing, and 45% reporting that they generally found it easy to begin shadowing, suggesting that some students may benefit from a motivation boost of teacher input about the value of shadowing before they begin the shadowing task. The answer to Question 13 in Table 1 shows that most students found shadowing stimulating enough that they would be interested in continuing with it in the future. While Hamada (2011 b) used authentic materials which learners found stimulating, Hamada (2011 a) found that using

challenging textbook content as shadowing material also helped learners to improve their listening skills. The answer to question 8 supports Hamada (2011 a) as learners tended to have a positive attitude towards shadowing activities using textbook materials. Questions 9, 10 and 11 in Table 1 relate to the process and procedures of shadowing practice. The answer to question 9 supports Hamada (2014) as top-down shadowing (beginning with comprehension exercises) was mostly evaluated positively by learners. Citing Bandura (1993), Hamada (2011 b) argues that self-comparison and a sense of accomplishment help to build self-efficacy which in-turn promotes academic achievement, and that the shadowing process may increase learner self-efficacy in this way. The positive answers generated to Questions 7, 10, 11, and 12 in Table 1 support Hamada (2011 b). The submission of two shadowing recordings provided a means for self-comparison and seemingly fostered a sense of accomplishment as the answers to questions 10 and 11 show. The mode of 'strongly agree' for the answer to Question 11 in particular shows that learners seemed interested in conducting a self-comparison based on progress from the first to the second shadowing recording, and that they gained a sense of accomplishment from doing so. Further, students typically gained a sense of accomplishment over the course of the twelve weeks as shown by the answers to Questions 7 and 12. The high costs associated with shadowing identified by Hamada (2011 b) due to the imperfect nature of shadowing performance, keeping up with the speed of the recording, and identifying sounds seem to have been somewhat negotiated here by the procedures and process of shadowing carried out by the learners. Learners likely valued the extra opportunities for listening practice based on textbook recordings that shadowing practice provided, as well as the extra processing time that the staged shadowing process afforded. Vogely (1998) and Elkhafaifi (2005) argue that language teachers should increase opportunities for listening in class, give learners more than the traditional two chances at listening, provide more time for learners to process the meaning, and guide learners to specific goals. Shadowing practice is the kind of clear and structured task that can provide these impactful listening opportunities to learners. It allows for an emphasis on strong and weak forms that tend to be unfamiliar to learners (Bekleyen, 2009) and with the appropriate guidance from a teacher, may help to alleviate the perfectionist need to understand everything (Elkhafaifi, 2005). The staged process of shadowing also helps to make input more comprehensible (Vogely, 1998), and as learners progress through the steps, they have a greater degree of control over the process-which Horwitz (2017) argues is a practical necessity to foster autonomy and interest. The steps of the shadowing process promote incremental understanding and recognition of sounds, and also allow for top-down and bottom-up processing, which together may foster a sense of progress and accomplishment.

2. Learner Experiences of Language Learning Anxiety

Learners expressed a generally neutral response to Question 1 in Table 2, showing that shadowing does not in itself provoke strong feelings of anxiety. As an emotionally neutral task which learners seemed to find beneficial (as the perceptions of shadowing in Table 1 seem to bear out), shadowing might therefore be a suitable activity to develop learners' listening skills without too much of an affective cost. Support for this contention is provided by Teeter (2017), who used shadowing in an intervention study and found that interpersonal anxiety (expressed by the feeling that others are better at English) was reduced. Levels of anxiety associated with speaking in English with the teacher and others from their own country were also reduced through her shadowing intervention (Teeter, 2017). In this study, 51% of students expressed the opinion that shadowing made them feel that other students in class were better at English, but this result may be due to a tendency that learners have of the proficiency level of fellow classmates (69% of students agreed that classmates were better at English in general as the answer to Question 2 in Table 2 shows). Further, listening to classmates' submissions neither induced much confidence nor provoked much anxiety as the answers to Questions 3, 5 and 8 in Table 2 show, so the effect on anxiety of listening to classmates' recordings may be best described as neutral. The answer to Question 4 in Table 2 shows that the majority of learners (59%) felt that sharing recordings and comments on forums generally did help to reduce anxiety, and this may be because the online forum offered an opportunity for learners to share their feelings, engage in positive self-talk and develop a group identity as a buffer against negative self-evaluation (Young, 1991; Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels, 1994; Saito, Horwitz and Garza, 1999). It is possible that the online forum also offered learners an opportunity to reframe their anxious selves within a non-threatening, group-cohesive learning context (Dörnyei and Simsek, 2017).

Carrying out two shadowing recordings also seemed to have a positive effect on reducing levels of anxiety and increasing confidence. 55% of students felt lower levels of anxiety doing the second recording, compared with 20% who felt a greater level of anxiety (see the answer to Question 6, Figure 2). And most students (approximately 57%) felt a greater sense of confidence when they did the second shadowing compared with 12% whose confidence was negatively affected as the answer to Question 7 in Figure 2 reveals. Since most students listened to and compared their first and second shadowings and felt a sense of progress due to a perceived improvement in performance (see the answers to Questions 10 and 11 in Table 1), this study supports the submission of two shadowing recordings as a feature of shadowing practice which may alleviate anxiety and foster a sense of progress.

Learners tended to have a strong sense of underlying anxiety related to

speaking with native speakers of other countries. As the answers to Questions 9 and 10 in Figure 2 show, 65% of learners would feel nervous speaking English to a native speaker while 67% worry that native speakers would find their English strange. These anxieties may be traced to communicative apprehension, fear of negative evaluation by others and a fear that everything needs to be understood or communication will be lost (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1989; Aida, 1994; Vogel, 1998; MacIntyre, 2017). Yashima et al. (2009) has noted that Japanese speakers may feel discomfort with speaking with native speakers due to the fear of not understanding everything. And in the Japanese context, this anxiety may also be linked to a cultural fear of loss of face due to negative evaluation (Kimura, 2008). Learners seem to have anxieties about their future imagined use of English and communicating with English speakers of other countries. It is therefore essential that opportunities are provided to voice such anxieties so that they can be tackled in a supportive environment where learners do not feel alone (Young, 1991; Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels, 1994; Saito et al 1999; Dörnyei and Simsek, 2017).

VII. Limitations

There are several limitations regarding the study that should be addressed. The study used descriptive statistics based on a limited number of participants who were of mixed levels of proficiency with no control group, hence results may not be generalizable. Future studies could differentiate between learners of differing levels of proficiency and employ an intervention approach to monitor changes in learner anxiety. A mixed methods approach could also be adopted to investigate learner perceptions about shadowing and learner anxiety in greater depth.

VIII. Conclusions

Numerous studies attest to the existence of listening anxiety as a distinct form of language anxiety and the need to address it. This study began with a review of previous research on the factors of language anxiety and listening anxiety and then investigated perceptions of second-year students at a university in Japan about an intensive shadowing course and anxieties associated with it. Descriptive statistics indicated that shadowing was widely viewed as a beneficial activity which had a positive impact on developing listening skills. The shadowing process followed seven interdependent steps and incorporated textbook listening, top-down and bottom-up listening skills as well as individual and group work. Results showed that the process was viewed favorably by the majority of students, and they generally felt a sense of accomplishment and progress. Although a slight majority of learners

felt that shadowing made them feel that classmates were better than them at English, the learners of this study seemingly had a propensity to overestimate the proficiency of classmates and overall, anxieties associated with listening and shadowing were mediated by sharing recordings and comments on an online forum. This suggests that the problem-solving approach of directly incorporating challenges and difficulties associated with listening skills and anxiety advocated by Yamauchi (2014) might be the best way to alleviate learner anxiety, and that a shadowing course which not only develops listening skills but also promotes group-cohesion by sharing learning experiences and feelings publicly can provide this kind of opportunity to learners (Young, 1991; Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels, 1994; Saito et al., 1999). Finally, reframing experiences through the group construction of self-narratives using an online forum or by talking through issues in class may also help learners to negotiate their fears and better manage their anxious selves (Dörnyei and Simsek, 2017).

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