

**Anxiety in English language learning: A case study of
Taiwanese university students on a study abroad
programme**

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ABSTRACT

This study explored Taiwanese university English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' feelings of anxiety during a short-term study abroad (SA) programme. It aimed to discern what causes anxiety, how anxiety affects students' English language learning while abroad, and students' perceptions of the impact of the SA experience on their later English language learning and anxiety. The background to this research is the Taiwanese university context in which most students' English proficiency is limited. They are usually anxious about English language learning and especially about being involved in verbal communication. Due to this limited English proficiency and anxiety, sending students to study English in an English-speaking country has been felt by some, to be a possible solution.

This was a qualitative case study involving eight participants. Data was generated through semi-structured interviews, observations in classroom and outside, and students' diary entries. Four of the eight participants were selected for the illustrative individual case studies in which their English language learning anxiety before, during, and after the trip was analysed and discussed in relation to the views on situated learning theory and poststructuralist approaches to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research.

The findings suggest that anxiety is a symptom of identity conflict, dependent on contextual factors and is always fluctuating. Such a view of anxiety is rarely present in existing literature. The findings also show that various social factors made the students experience identity conflict during the SA programme, which in turn caused anxiety and so impaired their access to social interactions in English, hindering their English language learning while abroad. Hence the SA trip has minimal impact on students' English language learning in general and on reducing their anxiety in particular. This contradicts the common belief that SA programmes provide an optimal language learning environment in which students have unlimited opportunities to practice the L2 with the native speakers. My study thus also raises questions in the field of SLA regarding the benefits of SA trips in enhancing language learning and / or how such trips may be improved to benefit students more. Such questions on the merits of SA programmes again have rarely been discussed in previous SLA research.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CoP	Communities of Practice
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELLs	English Language Learners
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESL	English as a Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
FLCAS	Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale
GEPT	General English Proficiency Test
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
LPP	Legitimate Peripheral Participation
LTTC	Language Training and Testing Centre
MOE	Ministry of Education
SA	Study Abroad
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SLT	Situated Learning Theory
WTC	Willingness to Communicate

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

My aim in this study was to explore the feelings of anxiety among a group of Taiwanese university English as a foreign language (hereafter EFL) learners who were studying English during a short-term study abroad (hereafter SA) programme in America. This study also aimed to investigate students' perceptions of the impact of the SA experience on their English language learning in general and anxiety in particular after they came back in Taiwan. In this study, anxiety is defined as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (Horwitz et al. 1986, p.125). Foreign language (hereafter FL) anxiety is defined as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviour related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (Horwitz et al. 1986, p.128). I will further explain the notion of anxiety and FL anxiety in the literature review chapter. To achieve the aim of the study, I posed five research questions:

1. What English language learning and use situations do participants find themselves in during the study abroad trip?
2. Do participants express anxiety in relation to these situations?
3. What reasons do participants give for their anxiety?
4. How does experienced anxiety, if any, during their study abroad trip, affect their overall study abroad English language learning experience?
5. In the perceptions of the participants, does this study abroad English language learning experience have any impact on their English language learning (including anxiety) once they are back in Taiwan?

This was a qualitative case study involving eight participants who were students of a vocational university in northern Taiwan. All of them joined a short-term (three-week) SA programme in America. Data was generated over five months using semi-structured interviews, observations, and students' diary entries. Data was presented as a cross-case analysis, followed by four individual in-depth case analyses. I then discussed the main findings presented in the individual case analyses.

The thesis is divided into ten chapters. In Chapter 1, I give a detailed description of the Taiwan context in terms of the education system, English language teaching and learning, anxiety in English language learning among university students, and short-term SA programmes in higher education. I also point out the issues that influenced my interest in the research topic. In Chapter 2, I first discuss the notion of anxiety in general and FL anxiety in particular, and then review research on FL anxiety and SA programmes. I also review the three approaches to research on FL anxiety and second language acquisition (SLA hereafter) – cognitive approaches, poststructuralist approaches, and sociocultural approaches. I conclude this chapter with the rationale for the study based on literature.

In Chapter 3, I present the methodology starting with an explanation of the research design, then highlighting the negotiation of access, sampling, ethical considerations, pilot study, data generation process and data analysis. I also explain what I did to enhance the trustworthiness in this study. In Chapter 4, I present a cross-case analysis of data from all eight participants, which highlights the major causes and effects of anxiety expressed by the participants during interviews while on the SA trip.

Chapters 5 to 8 offer in-depth single-case analyses of data from four students (Ryan, Sam, Christina, and Chocolate). Chapter 9 features a discussion of the findings presented in Chapters 5 to 8. The single-case analyses and the related discussion drawn in these chapters are grounded in views from situated learning theory and poststructuralist approaches to SLA research. In the last chapter, I make some general conclusions about the contributions, limitations and implications of the study, ending with suggestions for further research and a brief reflection on what I have learnt from doing this research.

1.2. THE TAIWAN CONTEXT

In the following subsections, I first explain the Taiwan education system, the status of English, and English language teaching and learning in Taiwan. Then I focus on English in higher education and university students' anxiety in English language learning, followed by research on anxiety of Taiwanese university EFL learners. I also talk about the short-term SA programmes for Taiwanese university students and

the relevant research on it. Finally I present the rationale for the study based on the Taiwan context.

1.2.1. Taiwan education system

Taiwan follows the 9-3-4 system of education where students receive nine years of compulsory education including six years in primary school and three years in junior high school. Those who proceed to senior high or senior vocational schools study for three years and those who proceed to university take four years in various professional courses. Those university students who are unable to fulfil their requirements within the designated time may be granted extensions, up to two years. After the nine-year compulsory education, students have to pass a national examination before they can proceed to the next level. Students with higher test marks go to senior high schools that offer courses in Chinese literature, Mathematics, English language, Chinese and world history, and Geography. Students with lower test marks go to senior vocational schools that focus on technical and vocational training in areas such as agriculture, industry, business, maritime studies, marine products, medicine, nursing, home economics, drama and art. The average percentage of junior high students getting higher test marks and therefore being admitted to senior high schools is 40%, while the remaining 60% go to senior vocational schools (MOE 2009).

Students who want to pursue university education have to pass the National Joint University Entrance Examination. There are two main systems in Taiwan higher education: comprehensive and vocational. Those who perform better in the university entrance examination go to comprehensive universities and they are usually from senior high schools. Vocational university students usually come from senior vocational schools and their test marks in the examination are relatively low. On average, the percentage of Taiwanese students scoring the required mark to be admitted to comprehensive universities is 36% and the other 56% enter vocational universities (the score of the remaining 8% is too low to be admitted to any universities) (MOE 2009).

1.2.2. English as a foreign language in Taiwan

English plays a significant role in Taiwan's economic, financial, and technological development and this role and function of English have generally been accepted by the Taiwanese public. Huang's (2005) study of Taiwanese students talking about English in Taiwan demonstrated their very positive attitudes towards English language, recognising not only the prevalence of English in the world, but also its importance in their access to information, employment opportunities and the link to the development of Taiwan. They embraced English for individual and national prestige and development and they all think getting good English skills is a good trend and something needed to be pursued rather than resisted.

However, the fact that English is a foreign instead of second language in Taiwan does not grant students many opportunities to use the language (Chen et al. 2005). A foreign language is "one that is learned in a place where the language is not typically used as the medium of ordinary communication" (Oxford and Shearin 1994, p.14). A second language is "one that is learned in a location where that language is typically used as the main vehicle of everyday communication for most people. The learner of a second language is surrounded by stimulation, both visual and auditory, in the target language and thus has many motivational and instrumental advantages" (Oxford and Shearin 1994, p.14). Backer and MacIntyre (2000) state:

Foreign language learners are at a disadvantage because they are surrounded by their own native language and must search for stimulation in the target language. The foreign language students typically receive input from the target language only in the classroom setting and lack the opportunities that a second language learner would have to practice the target language on a daily basis (p.67).

In Taiwan, English is mostly used in academic institutions, and most people do not have many chances or need to use English outside classrooms.

1.2.3. English language teaching and learning in Taiwan

English is the most commonly studied foreign language in Taiwan. Prior to the year 2000, English had been a compulsory course for students from the first year of junior high school (Grade 7) all the way to the first year of university. During those years, English was not studied at all in formal schooling in the earlier grades. Some students attended private English lessons in language centres during the primary

school years, while others did not. Therefore, the English proficiency among first-year junior high school students usually varied.

However, with Taiwan becoming a member of the World Trade Organization, the Taiwanese government has recognised English as a major tool for improving the country's status on the global stage. To cope with the demands that accompany internationalisation, awareness has been growing regarding the importance of English language teaching and learning for both social and economic mobility. As a result, English was officially implemented in the primary school curriculum for the fifth and sixth grades in 2001 (Yang 2000; Yeh and Shih 2000), and was extended to the third grade in 2005 (Chang 2003; Chang 2005). Meanwhile, according to *Challenge 2008: The Six-year National Development Plan (2002-2007)*, an official effort has been made to make English become a semi-official language of the nation (Executive Yuan 2003; Chang 2005) and to develop "an international living environment and enhancement of people's English proficiency" (Council for Economic Planning and Development 2002).

The attitudes of people in Taiwan towards English language learning have also been changing in the past few years with many parents wanting their children to begin learning English as early as possible, preferably at kindergarten (Chang 2003; Chang 2005). Therefore, in recent years, there have been a lot more primary school students attending English language schools outside formal schooling and many parents are sending their children to English-medium kindergartens (Taiwanheadlines 2000; Yang et al. 2008). Taiwanese students in this new generation are therefore learning English from an increasingly young age, knowing how important it is for their educational success (Krashen 2003). However, there are still problems in English language teaching (hereafter ELT) in the state system, which I identify below.

ELT in Taiwan emphasises grammar and translation and students use translation and the careful, often painstaking mastery of grammatical structures as their learning strategies (Liao 2006). The long history of exam orientation in English teaching and learning has resulted in even more emphasis on linguistic details due to the standard discrete-point, structurally based English examination in Taiwan (Su 2000; Thompson 2003 ; Chen et al. 2005). Tiangco (2005) also points out that ELT in

Taiwan tends to encourage students to memorise information without giving them adequate opportunities to use or apply the words or structures to form meaningful sentences. Taiwanese teachers are notorious for emphasising rote memorisation (Chen et al. 2005). Wang (2003) observes that some Taiwanese students memorise English words without even knowing how to pronounce them or understanding their meaning in different contexts. Such English language education is considered to provide little help with developing learners' proficiency because most university students cannot communicate in English language competently in spite of having had six years of English language learning (that is since Grade 7). While they can do grammar-based examinations relatively successfully, their overall English proficiency is not satisfactory (Wen and Clement 2003; Yiu 2003).

In order to overcome the limitations of ELT mentioned above, communicative language teaching (hereafter CLT) which emphasises learning to communicate through interaction in the target language was introduced in Taiwan for high school and university students in recent years (Yeh and Shih 2000). CLT is defined in ELT literature as an approach that regards communication both as a means and an aim of language learning. Its key concern is to develop a learner's communicative competence, which proponents define as the ability of the learner to use language in an accurate, fluent, coherent, appropriate and meaningful way (Savignon 2002). Most Taiwanese English teachers started to accept the importance of developing learners' listening and speaking skills (Yiu 2003). Nevertheless, there seem to be no fundamental changes from the grammar-translation approaches to the communicative approaches in English teachers' daily practices in the classrooms (Babcock 1993; Lin and Warden 1998; Tiangco 2005). Lin and Warden (1998) argue that English language teaching/learning theories, approaches or methodologies established in other contexts could not be easily applied in the Taiwan context. There are numerous reasons for this such as big class size, limited instructional hours per week, a lack of necessary resources, students' lack of motivation, teachers' lack of English proficiency and sociolinguistic competence, and examination pressure (Babcock 1993; Lin and Warden 1998; Tiangco 2005).

There are also some cultural reasons for the difficulties in introducing a more communicative approach in Taiwanese state school classrooms. Wen and Clement

(2003) examined the basic concept of Confucianism and the teaching of Confucian Classics and contend that cultural values are the dominant force shaping individuals' perception and way of L2 learning. Face protection; the value granted to effacement and silence; respect for authority of lecturers; desire to be right and perfect; the value ascribed to modesty are five major factors in Chinese culture and Confucianism (Flowerdew and Miller 1995; Liu and Littlewood 1997; Wen and Clement 2003; Woodrow 2006).

As mentioned earlier (see 1.2.2.), many Taiwanese students are aware of the need for better English language competence if they are to have better career opportunities. Therefore, many students are turning to privately owned language centres for their EFL needs, instead of the state owned schools. The presence of foreign native speakers and small classes are highly valued in those private language centres. A perception has been created that successful EFL learning cannot be achieved through formal schools but only in the private language centres (Tiangco 2005). This highlights the commonly perceived ineffectiveness of English education in the state system (Thompson 2003 ; Tiangco 2005).

Since my study is focused on Taiwanese university students, in the next section, I will generally explain English language teaching and learning in higher education with emphasis on existing problems, including students' language anxiety.

1.2.4. English language teaching and learning in higher education

As mentioned earlier (see 1.2.1.), comprehensive university students usually come from senior high schools where they have made efforts to study English in order to be admitted to comprehensive universities. They were taught more English and got better grades in English language than senior vocational school students. In helping them to prepare for these exams, those senior high school English teachers structure their lesson plans according to the content of the National Joint University Entrance Examination that does not test students' spoken abilities in English (Su 2000; Huang 2003). As a result, there is no time for oral English language teaching in senior high school classrooms and students receive instruction only in the areas of grammar, vocabulary, writing and reading (Tuan 1995).

The second group of students attend vocational universities. They usually have lower marks in junior high school and they come from senior vocational schools where the instruction is mainly about technical and vocational training and English is not seriously emphasised. They only receive two hours of English language teaching a week and their English proficiency is usually not as good as their counterparts in comprehensive universities. The participants of this study came from a vocational university in Northern Taiwan. Acknowledging that I am an English teacher from this university, I chose these vocational university students as my participants because naturally it was easier for me to gain access to and establish rapport with the students. Also the fact that vocational university students' English proficiency was lower than that of the comprehensive university students makes it likely that my participants would be more anxious about English language learning than their counterparts in comprehensive universities.

Prior to 1993, English language was a compulsory course for first-year students in both comprehensive and vocational universities. Since 1993, the syllabus of university first-year English language courses has become more flexible, but many universities in Taiwan still require students to take at least six credit hours of English language courses (Tien and Hou 2000; Chern 2002). Having gained more autonomy over their English language curricula, universities offer more courses to meet students' needs better, but the instructional focus is still on vocabulary and reading in many programmes. Only a few universities specify an English language programme focusing on skill integration. Generally, the 1993 mandate by the Ministry of Education (hereafter MOE) has enabled both students and teachers to enjoy more freedom in taking and offering courses in English language (Chern 2002). Besides general English language courses in the first-year curricula, elective courses in the second, third or fourth year are also offered by many universities to continue building up students' English proficiency (Huang 1997).

On the other hand, Taiwan is confronted with several major challenges resulting from the growing impact of globalisation. One of the major impacts of this globalised economy is the rapid expansion of higher education during the past ten years (Chiu 2003; Mok 2003; Law 2004). More than 60 institutes of technology were upgraded to vocational universities by the MOE in Taiwan from 1997 to 2000

(Lai 2001). There are currently 59 public universities and 89 private universities in Taiwan, including all the comprehensive and vocational universities. Over 90% of senior high and senior vocational school students are admitted to universities (MOE 2007; MOE 2009).

The rapid increase in the number of universities has posed challenges to both state and private universities since they require new students for their own economic survival. Universities, therefore, cannot put too much pressure on students in terms of their academic performance without risking attracting very few new students due to the high level of the standards set. There is a cause-effect relationship between setting high standards for students and the low number of new students enrolled (Chiu 2003). This situation has led to a general lowering of academic standards, causing concern for the quality of the education provided (Mok 2003; Thompson 2003) and resulting in a shortage of qualified manpower (Wang 2003; MOE 2009). An indicator of this is, for example, the disappointing general English proficiency of most Taiwanese university students that has alarmed academics and the MOE (Chiu 2003; Yiu 2003). For instance, Yiu (2003) states:

The English ability of Taiwan's university students is not good enough and they should be forced to study the language throughout their four years at college. There should be ways to measure how good a student's English is before graduating from college, as this measurement guides students and recruiting corporations in their hiring process" (p.2).

Accordingly, the comprehensive review of higher education system conducted by the MOE every four years since the mid-1990s has placed increasing emphasis on the evaluation of the effectiveness of English education in universities. An effort has been made by the Language Training and Testing Centre (hereafter LTTC) in Taiwan to set up criteria for judging university students' English proficiency (Chiu 2003). In January 2000, General English Proficiency Test (hereafter GEPT) developed by LTTC was first administered to university students. Since its first administration, it has gained overwhelming attention by students and teachers (Chern 2002). The test involves separate listening, reading, speaking and writing comprehension test components. As a university English teacher in Taiwan, I have seen that the new test has influenced the way English teachers teach in class, which is also addressed by Chang (2003). An increasing number of universities have made

passing GEPT a requirement for graduation (Chern 2002; Chiang 2008). Students are therefore under a great deal of pressure to do well in English at university. In the following two sections, I discuss Taiwanese university students' anxiety in the English language learning process and the relevant research on it.

1.2.5. Anxiety in English language learning among university students

According to my teaching experiences, a lot of Taiwan university students state that they are afraid of, or anxious about English language learning. Others have even expressed that they hate English. The fear and hate of English language learning come from negative language learning experiences common to many Taiwanese students during their time in high school. Literature also suggests that negative experiences in early stage language learning can be a source of students' anxiety in language learning (e.g. MacIntyre and Gardner 1994a; MacIntyre 1999). The commonly reported negative experiences of my students include painstaking rote learning of grammar and vocabulary; physical punishment by teachers and insulting comments from classmates or friends due to poor performance in examinations; expectation and push from the parents. Tuan (1995) and Tiangco's (2005) studies also found that Taiwanese university EFL learners' anxiety was strongly related to negative experiences very similar to those reported by my students. Learning English ought to be enjoyable in order to sustain students' motivation to learn. If students often encounter unpleasant learning experiences, it is not surprising that their interest in studying English is affected. Other studies (Chen 1998; Su 2004; Tiangco 2004) also found that some Taiwanese university students are not motivated to learn English due to their negative experiences in early stage learning.

In addition, a considerable number of Taiwanese university EFL learners tend to feel anxious because they lack self-confidence in their English proficiency (Wang 2003; Tiangco 2005). As was found in Cheng's (1997) study, many of my students said to me that they easily got intimidated by native speakers of English or peers who display good English speaking skills, which added to their experience of anxiety. Fear of making mistakes and losing face has a significant impact on Taiwanese university students' willingness to participate in classroom English oral communication (Cheng 1997; Cheng 1998).

Moreover, most Taiwanese university students have limited English speaking and listening proficiency when they enter higher education. As mentioned earlier (see 1.2.2. and 1.2.3.), this low proficiency is due to students' lack of opportunities to practice English outside the classroom and the ELT in Taiwan that focuses on reading, writing and grammar. When these students enter university and have English classes in which the teacher (myself, for example) tries to involve them more in speaking and listening, they experience anxiety because they are not used to this sort of learning and they are not confident about their speaking and listening skills. This anxiety tends to have various negative effects on students such as causing poor English language performance and impairing self-confidence and motivation (e.g. Ganschow et al. 1994; Cheng 1997; MacIntyre 1999; Woodrow 2006).

The above discussed anxiety in English language learning among Taiwanese university students is mainly anecdotal. In the next section, I focus on the review of research on this topic.

1.2.6. Research on Taiwanese university students' anxiety in English language learning

Several Taiwanese scholars have explored Taiwanese EFL university students' English language anxiety. For instance, Cheng's (1997) correlation study suggests that Taiwanese university students are worried about failing the English class; feeling overwhelmed by memorising the grammar rules and vocabulary, afraid of being laughed at by other students and being corrected by teachers. They tend to avoid speaking in class and do not feel comfortable speaking English to native speakers. Those teachers who place more emphasis on the importance of excellent pronunciation, memorisation of vocabulary and grammar rules, and immediate error correction also make students anxious. Cheng (1998) interviewed Taiwanese university EFL learners and found that the sources of their language anxiety are related to their beliefs or fears such as low self-confidence, unrealistic expectations/perfectionism, concern over a good image/fear of negative evaluation, and competitiveness. The most anxiety-provoking situations are those that entail evaluation, novelty, and ambiguity. Tuan's (1995) study found a negative correlation between English language anxiety and performance. This study further notes that students' negative attitudes towards English classes, fear of failing the class, low

confidence in English language competence, and low participation in class also lead to anxiety.

In more recent years, a number of quantitative correlation studies have been conducted to investigate anxiety about English language learning among Taiwanese university students (e.g. Cheng 2005; Huang 2005; Huang 2008; Tsai 2008; Tan 2009). The findings of these studies generally support those of the previous FL anxiety research in Taiwan context. A significant negative correlation between English language anxiety and English language achievement has been found (Cheng 2005; Huang 2008; Tsai 2008). The oral-oriented in-class activities (e.g. oral presentations) are anxiety provoking for students (Cheng 2005; Huang 2008), whereas group-oriented activities increase the possibility of producing less anxiety (Huang 2008). Teacher's behaviour and characteristics (e.g. giving surprise quizzes; being rigid and a poor communicator; being friendly, relaxed, and patient) might increase or reduce English language anxiety (Cheng 2005; Tan 2009). Learning motivation is identified to be either negatively correlated (Huang 2005) or positively correlated (Huang 2008) with English language anxiety. Anxiety is negatively correlated with self-confidence, prior experience of going abroad, weekly time spent on preparing or reviewing the English course work (Huang 2008), self-efficacy (Huang 2005), and positively correlated with peer competition, insufficient preparation, and poor comprehension (Tan 2009).

While most FL anxiety research in Taiwan context has focused on speaking skills, other studies have investigated specific English reading anxiety. For instance, Chen, M. L. (2007) examined the correlation between test anxiety and reading anxiety on students' performance in reading. However, corresponding to the contradictory and inconsistent findings on test anxiety and reading anxiety, this study also concludes that the influence of test anxiety and reading anxiety on students' performance in reading is quite weak and inconsistent. Chen, L. C. (2007) found that reading anxiety negatively correlates with reading strategy use. That is, students with a higher level of reading anxiety tend to report lower frequency of overall reading strategy use while reading English in academic contexts. Besides, students with higher amount of time spent weekly reading in English are less anxious while reading English in academic contexts.

Due to most Taiwanese university students' limited English proficiency and their anxiety about English language learning and verbal communication, sending students to study English in an English speaking country has been felt by educational leaders, teachers, and administrators, to be a possible solution. Next, I explain the conduct of study abroad (SA) programmes in Taiwan higher education.

1.2.7. Short-term study abroad programmes for Taiwanese university students

It's widely thought around the world that studying abroad, an experience combining immersion in the target language native speech community with formal classroom learning, potentially provides an effective and efficient means for second/foreign language learners to gain proficiency in the target language (Duenas-Tancred and Weber-Newth 1995; Freed 1998; Pellegrino Aveni 1998; Pearson 2003; Jackson 2004; Pellegrino Aveni 2005; Jackson 2006). However, how much proficiency can be gained during a relatively short period of studying abroad (three to four weeks) remains an unresolved issue.

In Taiwan, students, parents, teachers and administrators commonly expect that students who spend a period studying English abroad will be more confident about their English, therefore be less anxious about English language learning and use, and be more willing to make an effort to communicate. It is expected that such students will ultimately become more proficient in the language than others who don't go. Some literature also suggests that SA experiences can make students more confident about their FL/L2 competence (Kitao 1993; Davie 1996; Simões 1996; Tanaka and Ellis 2003; Matsuda and Gobel 2004; Magnan and Back 2007), less anxious about using it (Allen and Herron 2003; Tanaka and Ellis 2003; Matsuda and Gobel 2004), and more motivated to learn (Kitao 1993; Campbell 1996; Simões 1996).

In recent years, many universities have organised summer and winter SA programmes to overseas English speaking countries for their students (Yu 2008). Since 1996, the MOE in Taiwan has been providing the financial support for universities to organise short-term SA programmes (two to six weeks) in English speaking countries during winter and summer breaks. The purposes of such programmes are to enhance students' language learning, and to broaden their

international awareness on issues such as the existence of multiple cultures in some contexts (Lin 2002; Chiang 2008). In Taiwan, this kind of programme is usually called “study tour” and has become more and more popular during the past ten years (Chang 2005; Yang et al. 2008). For example the total number of students over history who went on such tours up to year 2000 was 200,000 (Lin 2002) and the number had gone up to 300,000 by 2006 (Duanmu 2007).

These study tours are popular among Taiwanese university students because they combine language learning with local travel. Students commonly think that going abroad enables them not only to experience different cultures and meet international friends but also to learn English in a relaxed and enjoyable manner. Living in an English speaking country, in the students’ perception, provides a more effective way of learning English than the way they learn English as a foreign language in Taiwan (Wu and Cheng 1997; Chang 2005; Yang et al. 2008; Yu 2008). The fact that universities pay part of the expenses for students also makes such study tours more affordable (Yang et al. 2008). Table 1.1 shows how Taiwanese universities organise these study tours for their students.

Table 1.1. Study tour arrangements in Taiwanese universities

Tour group	The university cooperates with the study tour agent to organise a study tour group of students along with one leading teacher and one tour guide.
Destination	America, Canada, UK, New Zealand, or Australia
Accommodation	Students stay in homes (hereafter home stay) of identified hosts or university accommodation
Length of tour	The study tours usually last about two to six weeks, either in summer or winter breaks
Courses	English language courses on listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills offered by a language school or the language centre at a university. There are usually three to six hours of classes every day, Monday to Friday
Extracurricular activities	Students can join the extracurricular activities arranged by the school. The study tour programme itself also offers sight-seeing tours on weekends

Data source: Wang (2001), Lin (2002), YAHOO TAIWAN, TO GO magazine, 2009

In 2007, the university where I teach in Taiwan established a short-term SA programme partly funded by an English language enhancement grant from the MOE. The purpose of this programme was to improve students’ English proficiency

through their communication in English language with native speakers and to enhance their interest in English and cultural enrichment. The programme aimed to send two groups of students to study English in English-speaking countries during summer and winter breaks every year from 2007 to 2011. The university selected students from those who were interested and financially capable based on their English test scores.

The first group of 15 students were sent on a one-month English immersion programme in Vancouver, Canada in July 2007. The research setting of this present study was the second programme launched in San Diego, USA for three weeks starting from Jan. 20th, 2008 to Feb. 10th, 2008. The SA group included ten students, a leading teacher and a local Taiwanese tour guide. The leading teacher accompanied the students throughout the whole period abroad and took care of any issues that might occur. The local Taiwanese tour guide took the whole group to various tourist spots in San Diego area at weekends. I was the group leading teacher for the group of students who participated in this study.

The language school my participants attended is located in the historic Old Town district of San Diego, a safe and friendly area, filled with a colourful array of shops, restaurants, gardens and picnic areas. The majority of students in the language school were from Brazil; the others were from North-east Asia and Europe. The curricular structure was two lessons a day (morning class and afternoon class), Monday to Thursday, starting from 9 am to 3 pm with one hour lunch break in between. There was only one 2.5 hour morning class on Friday. Each student had to take a placement test (with both written and spoken components) on the first day of school and then was placed in a class that corresponded to his/her level of English proficiency.

Among my eight participants, three were placed in the post-elementary class, three in the pre-intermediate class and the final two in the intermediate class (for details, see table 3.1 in 3.2.5.). The lesson content of both post-elementary and pre-intermediate classes only focused on English verbal skill training, while the intermediate class put emphasis on all four skills: English speaking, listening, reading and writing. The school arranged various after-class sight-seeing tours on weekdays and arranged for

the visiting students to be hosted by a native speaker family in the neighbourhood. I refer to this as a *homestay* arrangement. All the participants in my study joined the school-arranged activities on a daily basis and pairs of them were assigned to the same homestay.

As mentioned earlier in this section, in recent years, many SA programmes have been provided by universities in Taiwan, offering their undergraduates first-hand exposure to the target FL and culture. In the next section, let me turn to an overview of SA studies done in the Taiwanese context.

1.2.8. Research on study abroad experiences of Taiwanese students

Compared to American and European SA research literature, studies on Taiwanese students learning a FL abroad are scarce. Most of the existing studies are conducted from the marketing or tourism perspectives, focusing on consumers' purchase behaviour on SA programme products (e.g. Wang 2001; Chen 2003; Chen 2005; Yang et al. 2008). Some researchers have looked at SA programmes from an education perspective (Lin 2002; Chang 2005; Tseng 2006; Yu 2008). For instance, Chang (2005) conducted a pre- and post- test based study on the impact of a summer SA experience on Taiwanese students' English language learning attitudes and achievements. She found that this experience improved students' English language learning attitudes but did not have positive impacts on English language learning achievement.

Yu (2008) conducted a quantitative study to examine the impact of a short-term SA programme (three to four weeks) in America on Taiwanese students' cross-cultural adaptability, global perspective enhancement and personal development. The data indicates that the short-term tour enhanced students' cultural awareness and global perspective, but not English proficiency. Students who had cultural open-mindedness and good pre-departure preparation had better cross-cultural adaptability and global perspective development. Both Lin (2002) and Tseng's (2006) case studies collected data through field observations and interviews to explore the experiences, expectations, and reflections of those who joined the three-week SA programmes. Similar to what Yu (2008) found out, both studies suggested that this SA experience

helped Taiwanese students enhance their cultural awareness and personal development.

As mentioned earlier (see 1.2.5. and 1.2.6.), English language anxiety tends to impair students' performance and their willingness to participate in English oral communication. These negative effects of anxiety may potentially play a crucial role for the success of these SA programmes. However, there seems to be a lack in literature that explores Taiwanese university students' FL anxiety specifically in a SA setting.

1.2.9. Rationale for the study based on Taiwan context

The background information about the Taiwan context presented in the above sections had a direct influence on the focus of my study. By way of summary, some of the main emerging issues are as follows:

- There is a common belief held by teachers, administrators, parents, and students that students who spend a period studying English in an English speaking country will become more confident about their English competence, and less anxious about and more motivated for English language learning and use. Therefore, there is a need to examine the impact of a SA trip on students' self-confidence in their English proficiency, anxiety about and motivation for English language learning.
- For Taiwanese university students whose English is limited and with apparent pre-existing state of anxiety (with regard to oral communication, at least), learning English in a classroom with a native speaker teacher and international classmates, communicating with their host family and local people could be even more challenging and anxiety-provoking than sitting in an English classroom in Taiwan. Therefore, there is a need to examine the challenges posed to students' English language learning in different situations during the SA programme. In other words, what causes students' anxiety and how anxiety affects their English language learning while abroad.

1.3. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have described the Taiwan context where my research is situated, highlighting the English language teaching and learning in higher education and explaining the rationale for my study. In the next chapter I turn to the literature review, addressing the theoretical issues and the rationale for the study based on literature.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I start with a discussion of the notion of anxiety. I then review research literature on foreign language (FL) anxiety and on study abroad (SA) programmes. I also review three different approaches to research on FL anxiety and SLA: (1) cognitive approaches; (2) poststructuralist approaches; (3) sociocultural approaches. I conclude this chapter with an explanation of the rationale for my research based on literature and the proposed research questions.

2.2. THE NOTION OF ANXIETY

In this section I review literature on the notion of anxiety in general and FL anxiety in particular.

2.2.1. What is anxiety?

According to Horwitz et al. (1986, p.125), “anxiety is the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system.” This is the definition of anxiety I am adopting in my study. There are three distinct aspects of anxiety---trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. Trait anxiety is defined as a more permanent predisposition to be anxious (Scovel 1978) and state anxiety as “the transient emotional state of feeling nervous that can fluctuate over time and vary in intensity” (MacIntyre 1999, p.28). Spielberger (1966) contends that state anxiety is temporary and alters over time according to the degree of confrontation with the perceived threat, whereas trait anxiety is relatively permanent and is a steady personality feature. Nevertheless, these two types of anxiety are highly related and researchers have found strong correlation between the two (MacIntyre and Gardner 1991b). Beatty et al. (1989) indicate that state anxiety is a blend of the trait and the reaction to situational stimulus. That is, trait anxiety is the accumulation of prior experience of state anxiety. In other words, when facing an anxiety-provoking situation, a person with high trait anxiety tends to experience state anxiety.

The third aspect, situation-specific anxiety, according to Spielberger (1983), is apprehension at a particular moment in time in response to a definite situation. This perspective focuses on the situations where anxiety is aroused and thus it's called situation-specific anxiety. These situations may include public speaking, oral examinations, interview, or participating in a group discussion in English classes. Situation-specific anxiety is similar to state anxiety, but the former focuses on a single context or situation and it requires the respondents to ascribe their anxiety to a particular source. Situation-specific anxiety is also similar to trait anxiety in terms that it is stable and peculiar to each individual, except that it is specific to certain situations (Noro 2009).

In the present study, I am mainly concerned with situation-specific anxiety as defined above. As I explained above, there are similarities among trait, state, situation-specific anxieties, hence when I refer to anxiety later in the thesis, I am actually referring to all the types mentioned. In the rest of this thesis, I will consistently refer to FL anxiety as defined in the next subsection.

2.2.2. What is foreign language (FL) anxiety?

FL anxiety is considered as a form of situation-specific anxiety (Horwitz et al. 1986; MacIntyre and Gardner 1991a; MacIntyre 1995; Bailey et al. 1999; MacIntyre 1999; Aydin 2008). For example, Gardner and MacIntyre (1993a) include "Situational (or Language) Anxiety" among various individual differences which affects achievement in learning a second language. They refer to language anxiety as individual apprehension in the language class or any situation in which the language is used. This situational anxiety varies according to environmental conditions, perceptions of the level of threat in a certain situation, and fluctuations in the individual's tension level.

Horwitz et al. (1986, p.128) define FL anxiety as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviour related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process." In the present study, this definition of FL anxiety was adopted because Horwitz et al. (1986) were the first to highlight the importance of treating FL anxiety as a particular type of anxiety, a separate and distinct phenomenon particular to language learning. The writers also

developed Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (hereafter FLCAS) to measure students' FL anxiety. FLCAS is commonly used in quantitative correlation studies to measure students' anxiety towards learning a FL (e.g. Phillips 1992; Aida 1994; Bailey et al. 1999; Elkhafaifi 2005; Liu 2006). However, in this present study, rather than using the scale, I explored my participants' anxiety through multiple perspectives (interview, observation, and diary data).

Horwitz and associates (1986) argue that FL anxiety stems from three performance-related anxieties which are fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test anxiety. My study is concerned with all these three performance-related anxieties. Fear of negative evaluation is defined as "apprehension about others' evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively" (Horwitz et al. 1986, p.128). Horwitz et al. (ibid) suggest that students' fear of negative evaluation is provoked by the nature of the FL classroom where students' performances are continuously evaluated by the teacher and "students may also be acutely sensitive to the evaluations – real or imagined – of their peers" (p.128). The idea of fear of negative evaluation as a distinct FL anxiety component is also supported by MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) and MacIntyre (1995).

Horwitz et al. (ibid) further contend that FL learning concerns self-concept and self-expression much more than any other field of studies and therefore FL anxiety is distinguished from other academic or general anxieties. Argaman and Abu-Rabia (2002) also note that language anxiety manifests itself as an individual's concern for himself/herself, excessive self-consciousness, and doubts regarding self-esteem and his or her ability in language use. The reason for this is that adult learners especially who perceive themselves as reasonably socially-adept individuals will be challenged by their inadequate communication skills in a FL class and their self-perceptions will be threatened.

FL anxiety is also associated with communication apprehension, which is part of the general kinds of situational anxieties related to oral expression and interpersonal communication (Horwitz et al. 1986; MacIntyre and Gardner 1989; Sparks and Ganschow 1991; Argaman and Abu-Rabia 2002). Horwitz et al. (1986, p.127) define

communication apprehension as “a type of shyness characterised by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people.” The implication is that people who are anxious about oral communication generally will also be anxious when asked to speak a FL. Horwitz et al. (1986, p.127) define test anxiety as “a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure” and propose that this anxiety is also relevant to FL anxiety given that performance evaluation is an ongoing feature of most FL classes. In the next section, I review the findings of previous research on FL anxiety.

2.3. RESEARCH ON FL ANXIETY

In this section, I review literature on previous research on FL anxiety. I start by reviewing quantitative studies then turn to qualitative research on the issue.

2.3.1. Quantitative research on FL anxiety

There have been extensive studies on FL anxiety since the 1970s. Existing studies are mainly quantitative and most of them are correlation research. A large number of these studies investigated the correlation between FL anxiety and language achievement in different contexts (e.g. Horwitz 1991; Ganschow et al. 1994; MacIntyre and Gardner 1994b; Bailey et al. 1999; Onwuegbuzie et al. 1999; Argaman and Abu-Rabia 2002). Others examined how FL anxiety correlates with factors like teachers' beliefs (e.g. Cheng et al. 1999), students' perceptions of their FL proficiency (e.g. Dewaele et al. 2008; Liu and Jackson 2008), language skills and FL aptitude (e.g. Ganschow and Sparks 1996), fear of negative evaluation (e.g. Kitano 2001), self-esteem (e.g. Yamini and Tahriri 2006), etc.

Early FL anxiety research focused on L2 speaking (e.g. Young 1990; Phillips 1992; Horwitz 2001; Woodrow 2006). In recent years, a number of quantitative correlation studies have been carried out to investigate FL anxiety in different skill areas; for instance, listening (e.g. Vogely 1998; Elkhafaifi 2005; Noro 2009), writing (e.g. Cheng et al. 1999; Cheng 2002; Cheng 2004; Atay and Kurt 2006), and reading (e.g. Saito et al. 1999; Sellers 2000; Brantmeier 2005; Chen 2007; Chen 2007). These studies were based on the belief that unlike those reporting FL anxiety in speaking, some students may become anxious when participating in other skill activities such as listening, reading, or writing. By contrast, MacIntyre (1995) and Argaman and

Abu-Rabia (2002) state that anxiety can cause learning problems in all four skills-listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Anxiety can cause interference at input, processing, and output levels of FL learning (Horwitz et al. 1986; MacIntyre and Gardner 1989; Cheng 1997; MacIntyre 1999). This current study investigates anxiety in four skills during English language learning. Some more recent studies adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches to explore FL anxiety (e.g. Phillips 1992; Liao 1999; Liu 2006). These are still quantitative based correlation studies, but they added interviews, classroom observations or reflective journals for triangulation purposes to enhance their understanding of learners' anxiety in terms of its apparent sources and effects.

Overall, the quantitative/correlation studies on FL anxiety have made some important contributions to understanding of this topic and led to many pedagogical reforms designed to set up a low-anxiety learning environment. First, the studies generally found that anxiety impairs language learning performance (e.g. Horwitz 1991; Phillips 1992; Aida 1994; Ganschow et al. 1994; MacIntyre and Gardner 1994b; MacIntyre et al. 1997; Liao 1999). More recent studies also confirmed a negative correlation between language anxiety and various measures of language achievement (e.g. Abu-Rabia 2004; Elkhafaifi 2005; Frantzen and Magnan 2005; Sparks and Ganschow 2007; Dewaele 2007a; Dewaele et al. 2008). Secondly, the studies revealed a negative correlation between anxiety in relation to specific language skills and performance in those skills. For instance, L2 speaking anxiety negatively correlated with oral performance (Woodrow 2006) and listening anxiety negatively correlated with listening comprehension (Elkhafaifi 2005). Cheng et al. (1999) found a negative correlation between FL writing anxiety and FL writing achievement. Thirdly, the studies revealed various sources and effects of FL anxiety.

Among the most frequently identified sources of anxiety are personal characteristics and interpersonal issues. Under this category are fear of negative evaluation, fear of speaking a L2/FL, low self-perceived L2/FL proficiency and low self-esteem. A number of studies have identified fear of negative evaluation as a main source of anxiety. Included here are students' fear of making mistakes, teacher's error correction (e.g. Young 1990; Kitano 2001; Aydin 2008), and concern about speaking the FL/L2 in front of the teacher and peers (e.g. Argaman and Abu-Rabia 2002; Liu

and Jackson 2008), and native speakers (e.g. Aida 1994; Woodrow 2006). Learners' low perception of their ability in the L2/FL has also been frequently discussed as a strong source of anxiety (e.g. Young 1991b; MacIntyre et al. 1997; Matsuda and Gobel 2004; Donovan and MacIntyre 2005; Dewaele et al. 2008). Students are anxious because they feel inferior to peers or native speakers of the target language in terms of language proficiency (e.g. Kitano 2001; Williams and Andrade 2008).

Some scholars have suggested a negative correlation between an individual's degree of self-esteem and FL anxiety (e.g. Bailey et al. 1999; Onwuegbuzie et al. 1999; Yamini and Tahriri 2006). People with low self-esteem are concerned with pleasing others and worry about what others think about them, which strongly relates to anxiety (Young 1992). Learners with low self-esteem tend to suffer from fear of negative evaluation and communication apprehension, which causes them fear of speaking a L2/FL. In other words, fear of speaking a L2/FL is related to a variety of complex psychological constructs such as communication apprehension, self-esteem, and fear of negative evaluation (Young 1990; Kitano 2001). Other personal characteristics related to FL anxiety are shyness and introversion. People who are shy tend to be nervous and embarrassed about talking to other people and introverted people tend to be reserved, quiet, and unassertive. These people therefore are likely to develop FL anxiety (e.g. MacIntyre and Charos 1996; Dewaele 2002; Dewaele et al. 2008).

Besides the learners' personal factors and interpersonal issues, quantitative FL anxiety research has also revealed that anxiety is strongly influenced by the teachers and the learning environment. For instance, Liu (2006), Aydin (2008), and Williams and Andrade (2008) found that teachers' calling on students to answer questions make students anxious in a FL classroom. Teachers' harsh manner of correcting students' errors was also found to cause anxiety among students (e.g. Horwitz et al. 1986; Aida 1994). Abu-Rabia's (2004) correlation study revealed that teachers' attitudes and personalities are significant predictors of FL anxiety. Namely, the more understanding, encouraging, and supportive the teacher is, the lower the students' anxiety becomes. Fear of failing tests was also found to be correlated with FL anxiety (e.g. Aida 1994; Lin and Warden 1998; Aydin 2008).

Furthermore, several researchers have suggested that existing language skills and FL aptitude might affect anxiety levels in FL learning (Sparks and Ganschow 1991; Ganschow and Sparks 1996; Argaman and Abu-Rabia 2002; Sparks and Ganschow 2007). For instance, while Ganschow and Sparks (1996) do not suggest attributing FL learning problems directly to a high level of anxiety, they do contend that stronger language skills usually (but not always) compensate for the negative effects of anxiety on FL learning and lead to stronger achievement. Argaman and Abu-Rabia (2002, p.157) further state that “if students with high language anxiety obtain significantly low grades in every foreign-language skill, the real problem may not be the anxiety but a lack of ability in the FL arising from a totally different origin.” In response, Horwitz (2000) argues that the existence of anxiety in successful language learners rejects the contention that learning disability can be an explanation for all anxiety reactions. The current study assumes that anxiety and FL ability/performance constantly affect each other as the students learn / use the FL. That is, anxiety impairs performance in that students who are anxious may learn less and also may not be able to demonstrate what they have learned. Therefore, they may experience even more failure, which in turn escalates their anxiety. So far I have given an overview of what quantitative studies have said about the sources of FL anxiety. Next, let me turn to a review of quantitative research on *effects* of anxiety.

There is extensive research literature on the effects of FL anxiety which are generally categorised as either debilitating or facilitating. According to Young (1990, p.551), “anxiety leading to improved performance is called facilitating anxiety and anxiety leading to impaired performance is called debilitating anxiety.” Research to date has mostly focused on investigating (quantitatively) the debilitating effects of FL anxiety (e.g. Horwitz et al. 1986; MacIntyre and Gardner 1991a; Aida 1994; MacIntyre et al. 1997; Onwuegbuzie et al. 2000; Abu-Rabia 2004; Dewaele et al. 2008). Relatively few researchers (e.g. Young 1990; MacIntyre and Gardner 1994b; Argaman and Abu-Rabia 2002) have addressed facilitating anxiety. For instance, Argaman and Abu-Rabia (2002) proposed that facilitating anxiety, which is the proper, optimal level of anxiety, can motivate students to work harder and have better performance. This facilitating / optimal anxiety can lead to high achievement, whereas low anxiety produces no motivation for making efforts and high anxiety prevents students from performing well. The current study considers anxiety from

both its debilitating and facilitating aspects. Next let me further review findings of the research on debilitating effects of anxiety.

Besides the negative relation between FL anxiety and performance mentioned earlier in this section, empirical research has demonstrated that anxiety causes avoidance behaviour in the classroom. Anxious students tend to avoid attending classes, avoid voluntary answers and participation in oral activities / avoiding speaking, or avoid trying uncertain or novel linguistic forms (e.g. Horwitz et al. 1986; MacIntyre and Gardner 1991b; MacIntyre et al. 1997; Elkhafaifi 2005; Liu and Jackson 2008). Other researchers investigated the relationship between language anxiety and willingness to communicate (hereafter WTC) in a L2 that is defined as “readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2” (MacIntyre et al. 1998, p.547). They found that learners’ perceived low FL competence along with FL anxiety lead to a lack of or limited WTC (e.g. MacIntyre et al. 2002; Yashima et al. 2004; Liu and Jackson 2008). Anxiety also causes students’ negative attitudes towards the FL and impairs their motivation for learning (Phillips 1992; Dewaele 2005). Moreover, high levels of FL anxiety leads to low self-perceived FL proficiency and low perceived self-worth (Onwuegbuzie et al. 1999). Anxious students tend to underestimate their competence in the FL (MacIntyre et al. 1997; Dewaele 2002).

Despite their contributions to understanding of FL anxiety (mainly the causes and effects of anxiety), the quantitative studies on FL anxiety have certain limitations. First, the correlation studies, which measure the relationship between certain hypothesised variable and FL anxiety, tend to artificially isolate interrelated variables thus simplifying otherwise complex interrelationships. Second, it can be argued that the questions in the scales used in these correlation studies are manipulated by the researchers because they “invented” these questions and therefore some bias may occur. Such questions are mainly closed-ended and structured, containing limited categories and rating scales that might frame the responses given, which possibly limits the authenticity, richness, and depth of data. Third, most of the quantitative studies on FL anxiety make interpretations detached from the context, raising the possibility that the researcher will interpret what is happening in a narrow and limited way. Moreover, there is a tendency to generalise

findings, neglecting the inherent complexity of social interactions and human behaviour. Finally, most of these quantitative correlation studies on FL anxiety provide broad and generalised findings based on a large number of subjects. However, they cannot provide details of the studied individual.

The current study instead uses introspective techniques (interviews and diaries) and the qualitative case study approach to generate in-depth information regarding individuals' FL anxiety and pays attention to the complexity of social interactions. In the recent past, there have been other qualitative studies on FL anxiety, which I review in the next section.

2.3.2. Qualitative research on FL anxiety

Relatively few qualitative studies exist in FL anxiety literature. Most of them are pure interview studies examining students' perceptions of factors associated with language anxiety (e.g. Price 1991; Worde 2003; Ohata 2005b; Yan and Horwitz 2008). Price (1991) interviewed highly anxious American learners of French and found that students' sources of anxiety were fear of speaking the target language in front of their peers, fear of making mistakes and being laughed at by others, the frustration of not being able to communicate effectively, the difficulty of the FL classes, and students' perceptions that their FL language skills are weaker than those of other students. Furthermore, teachers played a significant role in the amount of anxiety students experienced in classes. For instance, a teacher who criticised students' accents made students anxious while a teacher who encouraged mistakes and periodically discussed the importance of making mistakes in order to learn relaxed students.

Worde's (2003) interview data gathered from American students learning French, German, and Spanish revealed that the anxiety-provoking factors were non-comprehension, speaking activities, pedagogical and instructional practices such as test anxiety, the fast speed of the language class, excessive amount of material covered in one semester, speaking to native speakers, and teachers' calling on students one after another in seating order and correcting students' errors. The five Japanese students enrolled in an American university in Ohata's (2005b) study stated that their personality traits (being introverted, or not outgoing, sociable, and

assertive) had a tremendous impact on their FL anxiety and restricted their attempts to communicate in English both in and outside the classroom.

Yan and Horwitz (2008) interviewed twenty-one EFL learners in China with varying levels of anxiety and founded that comparison with peers, learning strategies, and language learning interest and motivation were the most immediate factors associated with students' anxiety in language learning. Other variables like teacher characteristics, test types, language aptitude, parental influence, gender, class arrangement, and regional differences were reported as more remote sources of anxiety because they did not affect anxiety directly. To be exact, the students in this study perceived that these factors influence their comparison with peers and language learning strategies, which in turn influenced their anxiety.

Some other interview studies addressed both students and teachers' perceptions of language anxiety (e.g. Tsui 1996; Ohata 2005a). Tsui (1996) investigated teachers' perceptions of students' anxiety and reticence and found that the main issues were students' low English proficiency, fear of making mistakes, and incomprehensible input. However, Ohata (2005a) found that there were some differences or gaps between teachers' and students' perceptions of anxiety in L2 classroom contexts. For example, the students' efforts to deal with their anxiety by using various kinds of affective strategies, either consciously or unconsciously, were not always manifested in their apparent classroom behaviour so that the teacher could easily notice. Due to such a covert nature of students' anxiety, the teacher's assessment of students' anxiety was not always matched with the students' actual psychological needs. Furthermore, the interviewees in Ohata's (ibid) study also stated that FL anxiety can be either debilitating or facilitating, depending on the particular learner's level of anxiety, personality, and cultural background.

Samimy and Rardin (1994) used students' diaries to focus on certain issues or aspects of their language anxiety. They suggested that learners' unsuccessful and negative experiences in the past led to a high level of anxiety. Learners' motivation and positive attitude toward L2 learning could be enhanced by reducing unnecessary anxiety. Bailey (1983) also conducted a diary study to examine the relationship between competitiveness and anxiety in adult L2 learning. Her study suggested that

language classroom anxiety could be caused and /or aggravated by learners' competitiveness, defined as "the desire to excel in comparison" (p.96), when they see themselves as less proficient than the object of comparison. The object of comparison is typically the learner' classmates, but sometimes the learner may compete with his/her own idealised self-image or with other learners not directly involved in the language classroom (e.g. a friend, a sibling).

Jackson (2002) used interview and class observation data to investigate Chinese students' reticence and anxiety in English-medium business classes. She found that fear of making mistakes, fear of losing face, anxiety about speaking in large classes, anxiety about being the centre of attention accounted for these Chinese university students' lack of participation in an English-medium business course. Hilleson (1996) also used multiple sources of data (diaries, interviews, and observations) to explore L2 anxiety in an English-medium school. The findings suggested that students were anxious about the need to perform orally in the L2. The "on-the-spot" activities (e.g. being called on by the teacher to answer questions or doing presentation in front of the whole class) were particularly anxiety-provoking. Other crucial factors in anxiety were teachers' attitudes to errors and teachers' personal characteristics. Moreover, self-esteem was an important variable related to fear of making mistakes and fear of speaking in front of others (as one participant said, "I want to talk with them, but I don't want them to hear." p.257). Hilleson's (ibid) study also suggested that besides oral communication, anxieties related to reading and writing must also be considered.

To summarize, the causes of anxiety identified in qualitative research are similar to those in the quantitative research and can be grouped into three main categories: (1) anxiety due to personal characteristics and interpersonal issues such as fear of negative social evaluation, fear of speaking a L2/FL, low self perception of L2/FL proficiency/ feeling inferior, low self-esteem, introversion; (2) Anxiety due to teachers' personalities and teaching and the learning environment; (3) Anxiety due to actual low FL/L2 proficiency / poor performance. In the current study, I refer to these causes and effects of anxiety in my analysis (see 3.5.2.).

The qualitative studies I report back on provided a view of phenomenon from subjects' point of view. However, they found broadly the same things out as those quantitative studies did because these qualitative studies still took a largely decontextualised view of learners and their anxiety. In the current qualitative study, I seek to offer a deeper understanding of FL anxiety during a study abroad (SA) trip by using situated learning theory and poststructuralist approaches to SLA research (see 2.5.2. and 2.5.3.) to explore the data. What also makes my study different from the qualitative studies reviewed above is that my study is not primarily classroom-based. It also explores anxiety during the students' experience beyond the classroom.

As mentioned earlier (see 1.2.7.), study abroad experiences have been proposed as a way to overcome FL anxiety. On the other hand, the anxiety literature reviewed shows that the possible sources of anxiety are manifold, and the SA literature indicates that direct contact with native speakers abroad may even increase anxiety (Zhang 2001; Pellegrino Aveni 2005; Woodrow 2006). Part of my intention for conducting this study in this particular instance is to explore the possible impacts of SA experience on the students' FL anxiety. So, in the next section I will review literature on SA programmes. Later, I will explore literature on FL anxiety in SA contexts.

2.4. RESEARCH LITERATURE ON STUDY ABROAD (SA) PROGRAMMES

Due to the expansion in number of SA programmes since the 1980s along with the assumed positive impact of such programmes, there have been a large number of studies investigating language learning in SA contexts.

To begin with, Freed's (1995a) ground-breaking book, *Second Language Acquisition in a Study Abroad Context*, brought together a collection of studies. Some of the studies in this collection predicted and measured language gains in SA settings (Brecht et al. 1995; Lapkin et al. 1995), compared language learning at home and abroad for students at different levels (Guntermann 1995; Huebner 1995; Lafford 1995; Freed 1995b), and investigated the acquisition of sociolinguistic competence in SA settings (Marriott 1995; Regan 1995; Siegal 1995). Others offered a view of SA programmes from the perspective of the students who participated in these

programmes based on analyses of student diaries and narratives (Brecht and Robinson 1995; Miller and Ginsberg 1995; Polanyi 1995).

All twelve studies in this volume dealt with individual and group differences in linguistic development (e.g. fluency, lexical and grammatical development, use of communication strategies) in a SA setting, ranging from large quantitative analyses to smaller, qualitative case studies. The four comparative studies in this volume compared SA data to “at home” (AH) classroom control groups on communication strategies by students studying Spanish (Lafford 1995), fluency in L2 learners of French (Freed 1995b), grammatical and lexical performances by L2 learners of Spanish, and proficiency, discourse organisation and learning strategies of JFL (Japanese as a foreign language) learners (Huebner 1995).

The three qualitative studies in this volume provide insights into what actually goes on when American students go to Russia to study the language and how their linguistic gains are affected by the experiences they encounter. Polanyi (1995) explored the possibility of gender bias with respect to language growth abroad by using stories and reports written in extensive journals of 40 participants. He found out that the unpleasant gender-related behaviour (e.g. sexual harassment) encountered by females during SA resulted in self-doubts and frustrations, and therefore inhibited their language learning opportunities and their ultimate performance on tests which measure their learning. Miller and Ginsberg (1995) analysed a sample of students’ narratives in their journals expressing their opinions about the language, language learning processes and methods of language learning. The authors discovered that students were highly critical of what took place in the formal language classroom, but, ironically, sought to praise the same activities when they occurred out of class. These attitudes and beliefs that students developed affected all aspects of their language learning while abroad. Brecht and Robinson (1995) used different modes of elicitation such as observations, interviews, and diaries to explore the perceived value of formal instruction in SA settings. Their analysis shows that respondents had different views regarding perceived value of formal instruction in an immersion environment, which may have resulted from students’ diversified SA experiences, out-of-class contacts, and their needs of the

moment. Three years later, Freed (1998) summed up the SA research by presenting a profile of the linguistic skills of students who had been abroad:

Those who have been abroad appear to speak with greater ease and confidence, expressed in part by a greater abundance of speech, spoken at a faster rate and characterised by fewer dysfluent-sounding pauses. As a group, they tend to reformulate their speech to express more complicated and abstract thoughts, display a wider range of communicative strategies and a broader repertoire of styles (p.50).

Hence, despite the mixed findings, most of SA research conducted prior to the mid 1990s support the long-held popular belief that students who participated in these programmes (most of them are one-year or one-semester exchange programmes) tended to acquire greater proficiency in the target language during the experience, particularly with respect to oral skills than those FL students who remained in their home environment.

However, an issue regarding SA research is that most of it has been dominated by studies that rely on test scores (pre-residence/post-residence) to document the linguistic advantages and focus on numerous elements of second language acquisition in the SA context such as pronunciation, fluency and syntax, as well as measures of proficiency in reading, writing, comprehension of spoken language, and speaking ability (e.g. Coleman 1997; Coleman 1998; Freed 1998; Huebner 1998; Isabelli-Garcia 2003; Coleman 2007; Llanes and Muñoz 2009). There have also been plenty of test-based studies that have compared some specific linguistic features (e.g. communicative strategies, oral fluency, and grammatical and lexical abilities) that may differ in the language of two groups of students– SA students and students who remain at the home country (e.g. Freed 1990; DeKeyser 1991; Torres 2003; Collentine 2004; Dewey 2004; Freed et al. 2004; Lafford 2004; Segalowitz and Freed 2004; Lafford and Collentine 2006; Cubillos et al. 2008).

Salvadori (1997) noted that the extensive statistical research done to quantify L2 proficiency benefits of the SA experience did not or could not explore adequately the personal growth, perceptions, the experiences of SA programmes, and the impact of this experience on language learning. Coleman (1998, p.18) further argued that limiting research to linguistic outcomes “distorts the experience”, as “language skills are not merely mechanical: sociocultural and intercultural competence are essential

elements of the true linguistic proficiency which residence abroad is expected to enhance.” In other words, the quantitative studies on SA experiences reflect a highly cognitive and linguistic view of language learning, an input-processing-output model. As such, they tend to underplay the social aspect of L2 learning such as changing patterns of interaction and participation in activities, and changing relations to other people. Both Freed (1998) and Pellegrino Aveni (1998) identified gaps and weaknesses in SA research and acknowledged that Applied Linguistics has much to learn about how students actually spend their time while abroad, which language they speak with friends and host families, the purposes for which they use language and the amount of time they actually spend using the target language.

Perhaps arising from the gaps in the SA research identified above, recent research on SA language learning programmes has begun to investigate (mostly quantitatively) affective outcomes of SA programmes such as learner motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence. These studies have generally found that after the SA experience, FL learners’ anxiety decreased (Allen and Herron 2003; Tanaka and Ellis 2003; Matsuda and Gobel 2004), motivation for learning the FL was improved (Kitao 1993; Campbell 1996; Simões 1996), and self-confidence in FL proficiency was enhanced (Kitao 1993; Davie 1996; Simões 1996; Tanaka and Ellis 2003; Matsuda and Gobel 2004; Magnan and Back 2007). In the next subsection, I review research literature specifically on FL anxiety in SA contexts.

2.4.1. Research literature on FL anxiety in SA contexts

Relatively few researchers have explored students’ FL anxiety in a SA context (Zhang 2001; Hashimoto 2002; Oya et al. 2004; Woodrow 2006; Miller 2009). For instance, Zhang’s (2001) quantitative correlation study supplemented by informal interviews investigated anxiety of Chinese students on a six-month intensive English language programme in Singapore. The findings suggested that these students’ variability in anxiety might have been attributed to differences in their biological ages, different learning experiences, socio-economic backgrounds, and levels of English proficiency. Hashimoto’s (2002) correlation study on Japanese students at a university in the United States found that FL anxiety exerted a strong influence on students’ perceived competence and negatively affected their willingness to communicate (WTC) while studying abroad. Oya et al.’s (2004) correlation study

found that anxiety and personality were important predictors of oral English performance of Japanese students who were studying English at various language schools in New Zealand. Participants who were experiencing a higher level of anxiety made more errors in their spoken use of clauses whereas more extroverted participants produced better global impressions in the story-retelling task.

Woodrow (2006) also conducted a quantitative study to examine the correlation between anxiety and language performance and used interviews to investigate causes of anxiety. The majority of the participants were Asians (with Chinese students representing the largest group in the sample) who attended English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses at accredited intensive language centres in Australia. The analysis indicates that FL speaking anxiety is a significant predictor of oral achievement and the most frequent reported cause of anxiety was fear of interacting with native speakers, giving oral presentations and performing in front of classmates. Evidence for two types of anxious students also emerged: retrieval interference and skills deficit. Retrieval interference related to anxiety as inhibiting the recall of previously learned material at the output stage of learning. Skills deficit related to problems at the input and processing stages of learning due to poor study habits or a lack of skill. This resulted in anxiety at the output stage because learners realised their lack of knowledge. Another important finding of this study was that there were significant differences in anxiety experienced by Confucian heritage learners and Western learners. Chinese, Korean and Japanese were more anxious learners than Europeans, for instance, both in and out of class. The above four studies are valuable since few studies have reported on non-western participants in a target language-speaking country.

Miller (2009) conducted another quantitative study on American students studying different foreign languages abroad in different countries. She used various instruments to investigate the individual factors (use of idiomatic expressions in L2, tolerance of ambiguity, and time spent with native speakers) and cultural factors (individualistic and collectivistic culture) affecting students' anxiety during language study abroad. In Phase One, the study examined the individual factors and the findings supported the hypotheses: (1) Regardless of language skills, L2 students' high anxiety was positively correlated with high frequency of idiomatic language

used by the host family; (2) Regardless of language skills, the higher the L2 students' tolerance for ambiguity, the less anxious they felt; (3) Regardless of language skills, anxiety decreased as the L2 students spent more time with the host families. Phase Two used the variable of culture to investigate how capable L2 students from an individualistic culture were of managing their anxiety while living in a collectivistic country. The findings suggested that compared to students who identified themselves as more collectivistic, students from individualistic cultures experienced significant lower levels of anxiety in SA classrooms. These individualistic students, as time passed by, also converged at a relatively high rate with members of the collectivistic host country.

All the studies reviewed in this section offer findings that are helpful for our understanding of FL anxiety in SA contexts. In the next section, I turn to a review of emerging qualitative studies on SA experience.

2.4.2. Emerging qualitative research on SA experience

Since the late 1990s, there are emerging qualitative studies in SA literature that offer a view of SA from the perspectives of the students who participate in these programmes. A number of applied linguists used introspective techniques (e.g., diaries, interviews, and other means of self-report) and approaches like case studies and ethnographies to investigate the process involved in language and cultural learning (e.g. Burns 1997; Pellegrino Aveni 1998; Wilkinson 1998a; Wilkinson 1998b; Talburt and Stewart 1999; Ginsberg and Miller 2000; Levin 2001; Carson and Longhini 2002; Murphy-Lejeune 2002; Pellegrino Aveni 2005; Jackson 2008; Kinginger 2008). A few other researchers even made their participants become ethnographers for pedagogic purposes (Jordan and Barro 1995; Roberts et al. 2001; Jackson 2004; Jackson 2006). The participants' roles were converted from being passive students to active researchers. Through meaningful, sustained contact in the host country during the ethnographic fieldwork, these students learned to observe, listen, interpret, and analyze the discourse and behaviour of people of other cultures. They therefore had the opportunity to enhance their linguistic and intercultural communicative competence and to have more understanding of different aspects of the host country culture.

These qualitative methods are helpful for looking beneath the surface of a phenomenon, looking deep into the personal experiences of individuals, and drawing a much more complete picture than that allowed by purely quantitative methods. The contribution of these qualitative studies is that students' own perceptions of their language learning in the SA experiences potentially has great value for understanding their language use and social behaviour when immersed in an L2 environment. Such understanding may in turn help researchers, teachers, programme administrators, and students themselves become more realistic about the learning and language use behaviour that are likely to occur during the SA experience and so about the ultimate success of SA tours (Pellegrino Aveni 1998).

Burns (1997), Wilkinson (1998a; 1998b) and Talburt and Stewart's (1999) studies revealed that SA learners often felt rejected by their host culture and these perceptions made them withdraw from the L2 communities and consequently negatively affected their language learning and use. For instance, one American case participant in Wilkinson's (1998a) study recounted severe disappointment during her short-term summer language learning in France. On arrival, her hosts did not show up and she was left alone for the next 3 hours. Later on throughout her stay, the hosts did not engage her in extensive interaction in French. At school, since she was enrolled in language programme for foreigners, she did not have the chance to develop friendship with French students. Her interactions in service encounters were also limited and occasionally frustrating. Ultimately, she decided to cut short her stay in France and considered dropping her minor in French. Likewise, the African American in Talburt and Stewart's (1999) ethnographic study on a five week summer programme in Spain was subjected to continuous and humiliating emphasis on race and sexuality in her interactions with Spanish people. Like Polanyi (1995), Talburt and Stewart (ibid) concluded that race and gender were not peripheral to the SA experience, but had significant impact on learners' opportunities for interchange and their ultimate language learning.

More recently, Dufon and Churchill's (2006) book, *Language learners in Study Abroad Contexts*, features studies that addressed previous scholars' (Salvadori 1997; Freed 1998; Pellegrino Aveni 1998) call for qualitative studies on SA students' experiences. This volume offers a review that outlines primary areas of SA research

in the past 10 years. Over this period of time, the research agenda on SA has expanded from “a focus on global linguistic gains to include investigations into learning processes, individual differences, dimensions of sociolinguistic competence, the development of specific skills and the role that host context plays in shaping opportunities for interaction and learning” (Dufon and Churchill 2006, p.vii).

In this book, Dufon and Churchill review studies on various topics such as the following: (1) How Indonesians, through their discourse moves at the host dinner, socialise their guest students into the Indonesian world of food, which includes themes such as food as pleasure and as an ethnic identity marker (Dufon 2006); (2) The dynamic, socialization process of joint storytelling between Japanese FL learners and their hosts at dinner time and illustrate that this co-telling provides both sides with an opportunity for transforming and negotiating their stereotypical cultural beliefs and social identity (Cook 2006); (3) How the interactional dynamics between American students and Japanese hosts are mutually negotiated, providing opportunities for language learning and the co-construction of identity (Iino 2006); (4) How differently individual language learners socialise into the SA classroom (Churchill 2006; McMeekin 2006); (5) The relationship between contextual factors (e.g. programme design, host family involvement) and learner factors (e.g. learning motivation, attitudes towards the host culture) and gains in linguistic proficiency (Adams 2006; Isabelli-Garcia 2006).

Together, these studies in Dufon and Churchill’s (ibid) book portray the complex experience that study abroad constitutes and document the socialization processes collaboratively constructed in the classroom and at homestay. They show that the conversational dynamics in both the home and classroom support learners’ language acquisition, and also found that different individual and programme variables can either facilitate or restrict learners’ opportunities to engage in negotiation, to improve their learning strategies or to increase their investment in the learning process. Isabelli-Garcia’s (2006) case studies of four American learners in Argentina, for example, explains one participant’s low linguistic achievement with reference to her failure to seek interactional opportunities with native Argentine speakers. Furthermore, her negative attitudes towards the host culture along with her low motivation to learn hinder her from including more Argentines in her social network.

The findings suggest that a learners' language development positively correlates with engagement in local social networks. The comparative studies on language learning abroad and at home mentioned earlier (e.g. Collentine 2004; Freed, Segalowitz et al. 2004; Lafford 2004; Lafford and Collentine 2006) (see 2.4.) also suggest that research into the linguistic outcomes of SA tours should take into account the specific qualities of students' participation in particular discursive contexts, linking learning with social contexts.

By way of summary, the qualitative SA research discussed above examines the process of language learning abroad and shows that the nature of students' interactions depends, on the one hand, on the students' own motives and desires and, on the other, on how these same students are received in host contexts (classrooms, homestay, and a variety of formal and informal settings). Some students display a strong determination to speak the FL and to get entry into the local sociocultural network and practice, while others shy away from all, but engaging in those informal interactions that only require the most basic FL competence. Some students are received with warmth, patience, and enthusiasm, whereas others feel people are hostile or indifferent to them.

In other words, these qualitative SA studies suggest that the amount and quality of students' participation in contexts for learning and the extent to which the interaction is available, desired, and pursued by individuals are a matter of the interplay between students' dispositions and those of their interlocutors. In such research, the traditional emphasis on documenting learning outcomes (both linguistic and affective outcomes) is complemented by deeper investigation of quality and process of students' overseas experience and an understanding of how and why students use these experiences for learning. Jackson's (2008) concluding remark on SA research states that studies focusing on statistical measures of linguistic gains will remain important in SLA research, but researchers should also pay close attention to the complex, multifarious nature of SA environments and their impact on language learning. Next let me turn to an overall review of three different approaches to research on FL anxiety and SLA.

2.5. APPROACHES TO RESEARCH ON FL ANXIETY AND SLA

In this section, I review cognitive approaches, poststructuralist approaches, and sociocultural approaches to research on FL anxiety and Second Language Acquisition (SLA).

2.5.1. Cognitive approaches to research on FL anxiety

In the above sections, I have reviewed research literature on FL anxiety and SA experiences conducted within the cognitive paradigm that has been dominant in SLA research for decades. Cognitive SLA research conceives language learning as a cognitive and individual phenomenon (Firth and Wagner 1997; Haneda 2006) and regards language learners as carrying “bundles of variables” (Kinginger 2004, p.220), such as anxiety, motivation, introvert, extrovert, confidence, etc (Norton 2000). A language learner is conceptualised in these cognitive approaches as a “stable, internally homogeneous, fixed entity” (Hall 2002, cited in Swain and Deters 2007, p.823), something like “an information processor that receives input from caretakers, teachers and peers, processes this input into intake, and, ultimately, produces output of a measurable kind” (Kramsch 2002, p.1).

The quantitative studies I have reviewed so far in this chapter aim to quantitatively uncover the nature of FL anxiety of particular groups of learners, its effects on their L2 achievement and its correlation with other learner variables such as self-esteem, FL aptitude, etc. These are then reported in the form of time- and context-free generalisations. This approach has been popular partly because it does, it is argued, have clear pedagogical implications, with teachers able to identify what they need to do supposedly to set up a low anxiety environment. Since anxiety is seen as a learner-internal phenomenon, which is not readily available for direct observation, the major instrument used in these studies is questionnaire or a standard test battery in which anxiety is broken into small components and these components are then operationalised and measured in sets of questionnaire questions. Learners are asked to choose the most appropriate responses alternative on the answer sheet (e.g. Ganschow and Sparks 1996; MacIntyre et al. 1997; Rodriguez and Abreu 2003; Elkhafaifi 2005).

In addition, these quantitative researchers formulate hypotheses to make predictions of the correlations among the different components of anxiety and L2 achievement.

Then the hypotheses are verified by analysing questionnaire data using statistical procedures in order to find out significant correlations. The objectivity of findings is thought to be ensured by this formulation and testing of hypotheses. The generalisation of findings is also ensured by selecting FL learners (subjects) based on specific criteria (e.g. Ganschow et al. 1994; Bailey et al. 2000; Matsuda and Gobel 2004). In short, this cognitive research has a tendency to regard FL learners as having within themselves fairly fixed characteristics such as anxiety and views FL anxiety from an outsider (etic) perspective without regard to context.

Some studies do look at the way anxiety varies in different contexts, but they regard context as just another variable, not as a complex system (Dewaele 2002; Dewaele 2007b; Dewaele 2007c; Dewaele et al. 2008). These correlation studies only allow for linear relationships among selected variables. Moreover, as I have mentioned earlier (see 2.3.1.), variation in the data has been suppressed by questionnaires that do not allow subjects to respond in their own words. In other words, a construct that is as affectively complex and rich as anxiety is difficult to capture purely through people's responses to a set of normative statements.

Without ignoring the contributions of this cognitive approach to FL anxiety research, I believe that it is alone not able to tackle the variability and situatedness of L2 anxiety. This is my rationale for turning to the sociocultural perspectives that have emerged in recent SLA research (Zuengler and Miller 2006). In the following sections, I first review poststructuralist approaches to research on SLA. Then I move to a review of literature on the social turn in SLA research (Block 2003) in which I focus on one of the sociocultural theories — situated learning theory (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). I explain why Poststructuralist approaches to research on SLA and situated learning theory are the main theoretical and analytical frameworks adopted in the present study for my interpretation of FL anxiety as an idiosyncratic, dynamic, and situated construct.

2.5.2. Poststructuralist approaches to research on SLA

Responding to structuralist theories of language, poststructural theorists (Derrida 1976; Barthes 1977; Kristeva 1984; Weedon 1997) emphasise that “meaning is not fixed, but created through social discourses and practices” (Swain and Deters 2007,

p.827). Poststructuralist theory is inspired by Bourdieu's social theory (1977; 1991) that views linguistic practices as "a form of symbolic capital, convertible into economic and social capital, and distributed unequally within any given speech community (linguistic stratification)" (Pavlenko and Blackledge 2004, p.10).

Poststructuralist theory is grounded in the notion that individual factors (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity) and psychological factors (e.g., attitudes, motivation, language learning beliefs) are socially constituted. Thus the theory posts an objection to the socio-psychological approach to social issues, so common in SLA literature, that suggests language learning is an idealised and de-contextualised process and that motivation or attitude is a causal, unidirectional and stable construct (Pavlenko 2002).

Language learning, in a poststructuralist framework, is a process of socialisation rather than just an individual learner's linguistic and cognitive endeavour driven by positive attitudes (like motivation) and hindered by negative perception or affect (like anxiety). The seemingly internal and psychological factors such as motivation, attitudes or language learning beliefs, therefore, are constructed in social interactions and are in a state of flux, being shaped and reshaped by the contexts in which the learners are engaged (Pavlenko 2002). In sum, the poststructuralist paradigm of SLA applied in the present study represents my attempt to investigate the role of social dynamics in the process of language learning and use including FL anxiety in a SA context.

The frequently-cited, in-depth longitudinal studies on subjectivity (identity), agency and investment in L2 learning experiences of immigrant women in Canada (Norton 1995; Norton 2000), Chinese adolescent immigrant students in USA (Mckay and Wong 1996), and western women learning Japanese in Japan (Siegal 1996) are some of the early poststructuralist inquiries in SLA research. Their ground-breaking studies were soon followed by empirical examinations of L2 learning and use conducted within the poststructuralist framework (Kanno 2000; Kinginger 2004; Miller 2004; Clark and Gieve 2006). The longitudinal ethnographic/case nature of these studies contrast with the surveys and questionnaires favoured in mainstream cognitive SLA studies (including the majority of FL anxiety studies so far). As

Pavlenko (2002) notes, the “emic” (participant’s view of phenomena) data drawn from L2 learners’ spoken or written narratives in the poststructuralist enquiry is crucial for researchers’ understanding of learners’ verbal or non-verbal behaviour in various non-/instructional learning contexts.

In the following sections, I discuss the re-conceptualised notions of language, language learning, language learner, identity, power, and investment in poststructuralist approaches to SLA research. I also review the studies adopting these concepts in multiple linguistic contexts (immigrant and SA L2 learners), and the emerging new notion of anxiety in relation to identity.

2.5.2.1. Identity and Language learning

Poststructuralist approaches to SLA research reconceptualise language as symbolic capital, a site of identity (re)construction (Norton 1995; Norton 2000; Pavlenko 2000; Pavlenko 2002) and language learning as a process of socialisation (Willett 1995; Toohey 1998; Pavlenko 2002). Language learners are reconceptualised as agents whose multiple identities are dynamic and flexible. According to Weedon (1997) who developed feminist poststructural theory, the term “subjectivity” is used in the poststructuralist framework to refer to the contingent nature of identity. Therefore, the writer argues that the individual should no longer be considered as “unique, fixed and coherent”; instead he/she proposes a “subjectivity which is precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak” (p.32). Weedon (ibid) also gives “agency” to the individual learner by stating that “language cannot have social and political effectivity except in and through the actions of the individuals who become its bearers by taking up the forms of subjectivity and the meaning and values which it proposes and acting upon them” (p.34). Lantolf and Pavlenko (2001) further state:

as agents, learners actively engage in constructing the terms and conditions of their own learning...Human agency, in fact, links motivation, more recently conceptualised as investment by Norton (1995), to action and defines a myriad of paths taken by learners. Agency, in turn, is socially and historically constructed (p.145-146).

In this poststructuralist research approach, new notions of ideologies, investment, agency and identity, which are dynamic, contradictory, changing over time, and socially constructed, replace the fixed notions of attitudes, motivation, and

personality in socio-psychological perspectives adopted in cognitive SLA research (Norton 1995; McKay and Wong 1996; Norton 1997; Norton 2000; Pavlenko and Lantolf 2000; Lantolf and Pavlenko 2001). Before the 1990s, the concept of subjectivity was hardly used in SLA until Norton (1995; 2000). In her study of the social identity and language learning experiences of five immigrant women in Canada, Norton (2000, p.125) formulated a concept of identity grounded in the notions of “the multiple, nonunitary nature of the subject, subjectivity as a site of struggle and subjectivity as changing over time.” She defined identity as follows:

How a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how that person understands possibilities for the future (p.5).

Norton (1995) proposed a theory of social identity that integrates the language learner and the language learning context and explored how inequitable relations of power limit the opportunities L2 learners have to practice the target language outside the classroom. Her study found that the immigrant women negotiated their identities in their English social interactions. Their access to Anglophones did not necessarily mean access to English use opportunity as target language speakers may simply refuse to interact with L2 users who were perceived as incompetent communicators. These L2 users in Canada felt that in their intercultural communication the onus to understand and to be understood was always on the L2 user rather than on the target language speaker.

Miller's (2000; 2004) case studies on immigrant students in Australia also highlighted the idea that identity is framed in social contexts, memberships and interaction. Similar to the immigrant women in Norton's (1995; 2000) study, the students in this study, at their transition from the supportive community at the ESL high school to the mainstream high school, had difficulties achieving self presentation and renegotiating their identities. The power imbalance that existed between linguistic minority speakers and native speakers of the dominant language also made it difficult for these immigrant students to participate in mainstream social and academic contexts. Therefore, these immigrant students, ironically, had fewer opportunities to use English at the mainstream high school than at ESL high school.

Both studies further show that in immigrant contexts, despite their desire to acquire the symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1991) of L2, L2 learners may limit their language learning when their legitimate identities cannot be fashioned through the L2. For instance, the immigrant women in Norton's study withdrew from their ESL classes. The immigrant high school students in Miller's study connected to peers who spoke the same first language. In short, poststructuralist theory emphasises that L2 learners' multiple identities (linguistic, social, cultural, gender and ethnic identities) are constituted and reconstituted in the process of L2 learning and use. These identities, constructed within inequitable power relations in social contexts, mediate their access to linguistic resources and interactional opportunities in the L2. L2 learners' agencies and investments in language learning and use, on the other hand, are shaped by the range of identities available to them in the L2 (Pavlenko 2000; Pavlenko 2002). In the current study, I have adopted these poststructuralist notions of language, language learning, language learner, and identity to bring out the complexity and the situatedness of learning during a SA programme among four SA students (see Chapters 5 to 8).

Now let me turn to a more detailed discussion about the power issue in language learning (or access to language use opportunities) and identity construction. Norton (2000) uses the term "power" to refer to the socially constructed relations among individuals, institutions and communities through which symbolic resources (e.g. language, education, and friendship) and material resources (e.g. capital goods, real estate and money) in a society are produced, distributed and validated. Power not only operates at the macro level of powerful institutions, but also at the micro level of everyday social encounters between people with differential access to symbolic and material resources.

Drawing on Bourdieu's (1977; 1991) notion of unequal power relationships between interlocutors, Norton and Toohey (2002, p.125) note that language learners are not only learning a linguistic system, they are also "learning a diverse set of socio-cultural practices, often best understood in the context of wider relations of power." A learner's identity becomes significant in the latter aspect of language learning. A power-related construct that links to identity and language learning is "ownership of

a language” (Norton 1997) or “the right to speak” (Norton 1997; Pavlenko 2002) or “audibility” (Miller 2004).

Viewing language as a form of symbolic capital and a site of struggle, Norton (1997, p.412) and Pavlenko (2002, p.285) propose that the notion of L2 competence should include “the right to speak”. In more detail, due to the inequitable power relations in the social world (e.g. between L2 learners and target language speaker), a learner either can or cannot claim “the ownerships of the L2” or “the right to speak the L2” or “audibility in L2”. When unable to do so, learners might not develop an identity as “legitimate speakers” (Bourdieu 1991) and then their L2 learning outcome is impaired (see also McKay and Wong 1996). In short, identity construction cannot be fully understood without considering the power relations between language learners and target language speakers (Norton 2000). The power issue in language learning is used in the current study to interpret the four young adults’ identity conflict, anxiety, and negative experiences in and limited opportunities of interacting with native English speakers during the SA tour (see Chapters 5 to 9).

Another construct relating to power, identity, and language learning is “investment”, a concept introduced by Norton (1995; 2000). Viewing language as symbolic capital and emphasizing the relationship between the learner and the learning contexts, Norton (2000) contends that “If learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources” (p.10). These resources will in turn enhance their value in the social world. This concept of investment comprises the complex social history and multiple desires of language learners and therefore it is different from the notion of motivation. Motivation, in Norton’s (ibid) view, presupposes “a unitary, fixed, and ahistorical language learner who desires access to material resources that are the privilege of target language speakers” (p.10). Viewing language as a site of identity (re)construction, Norton (ibid) notes that “an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner’s own identity, an identity which is constantly changing across time and space” (p.11).

Related to investment, Norton (1997, p.410; 2000, p.8) claims that identity implies “the desire for recognition, the desire for affiliation and the desire for security and

safety.” Identity therefore links to power as these desires are strongly related to the circulation of material resources in society. Access to these resources means access to power and privilege, which in turn influence how people understand their relationship to the world and their possibilities for the future. In short, seeing identity as connected to desires again signals that language learners’ identities will shift in accordance with the changing social and power relations in learning contexts.

In the present study, I use the concept of investment to interpret these young adults’ different levels of motivation for English language learning and use in different contexts (see Chapters 5 to 9). Next let me review research on identity and language learning in study abroad contexts.

2.5.2.2. Identity and language learning in study abroad contexts

As I mentioned in 2.4.2, there are emerging qualitative studies on study abroad (SA) programmes. Besides, in recent years, some researchers have adopted poststructuralist approaches to their study on L2 learners’ identity construction in SA contexts (Kinging 2004; Virkkula 2006; Whitworth 2006; Block 2007a; Jackson 2008).

For instance, Kinginger (2004) traced Alice, through interviews and Alice’s diary entries for four years from her university studies in America to her SA programme in France, and back in the US. This study found that for Alice who had a disadvantaged social background with a series of personal problems during her adolescent years, becoming a speaker of French through the experiences of SA is a process of re-identifying herself to be a cultured person, someone she can admire. In this sense, Alice’s efforts toward French learning were her “investment” in social identity, just like those immigrant women in Norton’s (2000) study. Furthermore, unlike some of the participants in other SA studies (e.g., Polanyi 1995; Talburt and Stewart 1999; Pellegrino Aveni 2005), Alice succeeded in gaining membership in different communities with French peers during the SA programme. This success opened up the prospect of new subject positions for her and moved her away from ethnocentrism and toward greater intercultural sensitivity than others. Her SA experience, therefore, was personally fulfilling and identity transforming.

Whitworth's (2006) doctoral study focuses on identity and subject positioning of four American SA students in France. The study examined how these students positioned themselves and were positioned while abroad. It also analysed the effects of this positioning on their access to social networks, language learning opportunities, and overall public identity in France. The findings show that L2 learning is a constant (re)negotiation of access, agencies, subject positions and identities between learners and target language speakers (e.g. host families and French classmates). More importantly, SA students do not have unlimited access to interactional opportunities, which is the opposite of what is claimed in traditional SLA/SA studies. Whitworth's (ibid) study, instead, suggested that the process by which these learners do or do not find and receive access to linguistic opportunities with target language speakers is a complex endeavour. The process is complicated not only by learners' linguistic limitations, but also by for example their own reactions to the host community, their gender and their background.

Elsewhere, Jackson (2008) conducted an ethnographic case study of advanced English language students in Hong Kong who took part in a 5-week SA programme in England. She used poststructuralist perspectives to interpret the relationships between language, identity, and culture. Her study highlighted the importance of power, agency, investment in language and cultural learning, and identity expansion issues particularly relevant to L2 learners and the SA experiences. Through following L2 SA students from their home environment to the host culture and back again, Jackson (ibid) developed four cases of individual participants to better understand their complex, deeply personal processes of language and cultural learning and identity construction over time.

The studies reviewed above have analysed SA programmes in terms of identity, power, and investment. The current study also highlights these issues (identity, power, and investment) in analysing the four young adults' SA experience and their anxiety while abroad (see Chapters 5 to 8). In the next subsection, I focus on the poststructuralist notion of anxiety in relation to identity in language learning.

2.5.2.3. Identity and anxiety in language learning

As I said earlier (see 2.5.1.), cognitive SLA theorists have treated anxiety as a largely unproblematic individual phenomenon. They consider that anxiety has identifiable causes and effects, which can be elicited via surveys and occasionally interviews. As Norton (2000, p.5) notes, these researchers have assumed that L2 learners can be defined unproblematically as “motivated or unmotivated, introverted or extroverted, inhibited or uninhibited, without considering that such affective factors are frequently socially constructed in inequitable relations of power, changing over time and space, and possibly coexisting in contradictory ways in a single individual.”

Norton’s studies (1995; 2000; 2001) found that anxiety is not an inherent trait of a language learner, but one that is socially constructed within language learners’ lived experiences. The data shows that these immigrant women in Canada sometimes felt ashamed, inferior and uninterested as a result of their limited English ability. Norton (2000) argues that these anxious feelings of inadequacy and poor self-confidence must be linked to the power relations that the women had to negotiate in their social interactions in the wider community and their marginalised positions as immigrants. The data further indicates that L2 anxiety sometimes was influenced by the learner’s preoccupation with stressful daily living conditions. For instance, one woman stated that she felt distracted in the ESL class because she was worried about the problems she encountered at work.

Drawing on Norton’s (1997; 2000) notion that identity relates to desires for recognition, affiliation, security and safety, Stroud and Wee (2006) proposed the idea of “identity-based anxiety”. This concept of anxiety is different from the so-called “competence-based anxiety” in cognitive SLA theories. Competence-based anxiety assumes that learners feel anxious because they are insecure about their L2 competence, and therefore are concerned about how their language teachers or the target language speakers will evaluate their use of L2. “Identity-based anxiety”, despite not precluding “competence” from being a cause of anxiety, relates more to individuals’ concerns with maintaining their relationships with particular groups than the worry about their L2 competence. In other words, identity-based anxiety is strongly associated with learners’ desire for acceptance and avoiding being ridiculed by peers. For instance, one student in their study was reluctant to initiate an exchange with his teacher when he has difficulties understanding what the teacher

said. The reason was that he did not want to be accused of being an “attention seeker” by his classmates. This identity-based anxiety also appears in the narrative of the participants in the current study (see Chapters 5 to 8).

Other studies, although not being explicitly inspired by poststructuralist approaches to SLA research, have also shown that anxiety sometimes has to do more directly with relations with others, and that anxious students are desperately trying to avoid humiliation, embarrassment, and criticism, and to preserve their sense of self (identity) (Allwright and Bailey 1991; Ehrman 1996; Shamim 1996; Tsui 1996; Pellegrino Aveni 2005). For instance, Shamim’s (1996) study on students’ location in an English language classroom in Pakistan illustrates this identity-based anxiety and its effects on learning. Students sitting in the back were under pressure of being considered as dull and lazy or being ridiculed by their front-zone peers. They began to lose self-confidence, which had negative effects on their learning. In order to maintain good relationships with peers, the Chinese learners in Tsui’s (1996) study tried not to show that they were better than others in English classes. Likewise, the very competent learners in Allwright and Bailey’s (1991) study deliberately made mistakes in the language classroom because they were worried about standing out from, and being resented by their peers.

Pellegrino Aveni (2005) also links anxiety with learners’ sense of self. She notes that the sense of self is socially, culturally and historically constructed and it is dynamic and changing with the needs of the moment. Anxiety, in Pellegrino Aveni’s view, may not be a direct factor that affects learners’ L2 use, but “only the symptomatic panic that results from the challenges and threats learners feel against their personal sense of status, which in turn is the true agent inhibiting learners’ abilities and desires to use the L2 in social interaction” (p.24). This corresponds to the concept of anxiety proposed by Ehrman (1996) and Tsui (1996).

The overarching experience of threatened sense of self and the maintenance of social psychological security in a L2 are quite common for SA students. As Pellegrino Aveni’s (ibid) case study on the experiences and insights of actual SA language learners illustrates, lacking the comfortable mastery of linguistic, cultural, and societal adeptness made these students risk conveying a self-image that is inferior to

the self they may present in their first language. They risked being misunderstood or misperceived by others around them. They felt uncomfortable in establishing relationships with others in expectation of negative social evaluation. They consequently reduced their sociability in the L2 for the sake of maintaining and protecting their sense of self. Students' narrative journals also show that as their sense of self was strengthened, they became more sociable in further L2 interactions.

Addressing the fact that anxiety is the emotional byproduct of self-presentation; Pellegrino Aveni (ibid) further illustrates how interlocutors' attitudes and behaviour may affect learners' sense of self and subsequent language use. This is an issue that remains under-explored in SLA research. Interlocutors' frequent and harsh correction, negative attitudes towards learners' L2 skills could damage learners' sense of self and impede their L2 use. By contrast, interlocutors' positive and supportive attitude and behaviour could give learners a sense of security that motivated them to use the L2 in more challenging and risky ways.

Pellegrino Aveni (ibid) also states that learner's self-efficacy and self-esteem might affect learners' sense of self and subsequent L2 use. Self-efficacy is defined as learners' "belief in their own ability to perform tasks successfully" (p.88). Self-esteem is defined as learners' "perception of themselves as worthy individuals of status and intelligence" (p.88). Learners with strong self-esteem are likely to perceive higher sense of self-image during social interaction. If their self-efficacy is also positive, they are less likely to fear failure in L2 communication or, at the very last; their self-image will not be threatened by communication breakdown. Thus, such learners are likely to have more L2 communication than those who feel the need to protect their sense of self from the damaging effects of failed L2 use. It is important to note that self-efficacy and self-esteem are positively correlated and both depend on L2 learners' "perceptions" of their language abilities instead of their "actual" abilities. This is in line with the findings of Bailey's (1983) study.

Besides, learners use self-comparison to determine how secure their self-image is in terms of relative status, efficacy to control the L2 interaction, and validity of their efforts in L2 communication. What is noteworthy is that self-comparison takes place "not only between learners and other individuals, but also between learners and their

own expectations” (p.95). Pellegrino Aveni (ibid) uses the term “ideal self” to refer to learners’ own expectations for their ultimate progress in language learning. This is very similar to Dörnyei’s (2005) idea of ideal self in self psychology (I will further discuss Dörnyei’s concept of ideal self in 2.5.3.3.). When learners perceive their sense of self to be lower than that of others or worse than their “ideal self” due to their inability to perform as well as others or expected, this creates feelings of anxiety as a result of the conflict between having to perform and having to protect their sense of security. The anxiety in turn lessens learners’ drive to get involved in L2 interaction. Bailey’s (1983) introspective diary study on L2 learners’ competitiveness (self-comparison) revealed very similar findings as those mentioned here in Pellegrino Aveni’s study.

It is important to note that Pellegrino Aveni’s notion of anxiety is based on the individualist theoretical perspective. In this current study, I reinterpret her idea from a social perspective, using situated learning theory and poststructuralist approaches to SLA research, and thereby hopefully enabling a better understanding of individual’s anxiety and how it affects their learning. I also consider learners’ self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-comparison along with interlocutors’ attitudes and behaviour while interpreting these young adults’ identity conflict, anxiety, and subsequent use of English (see Chapters 5 to 9). However, in contrast to Pellegrino Aveni, I consider these factors from a social perspective.

Next, I shift my focus to the sociocultural approaches to SLA research, in particular the situated learning theory, which I have also used later as an analytical framework employed in this present study (see Chapters 5 to 9).

2.5.3. Sociocultural approaches to research on SLA

Since the 1990s, one of several important developments in SLA research is the growing impact of various sociocultural perspectives such as Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory (1978; 1986) and Lave and Wenger’s (1991; Wenger 1998) situated learning theory. Sociocultural theory argues that the development of the human mind cannot be fully understood without studying human culture and history. A number of SLA scholars have applied these sociocultural perspectives to their studies and reflected their interest in sociocultural and contextual factors as well as

individual agency and multifaceted identities involved in the process of learning and using an L2. For instance, Lantolf and Appel (1994) and Lantolf (2000) edited two volumes of SLA studies informed by Vygotsky perspectives. A number of others adopted Lave and Wenger's situated learning theory in their studies of L2 acquisition in various contexts (e.g. Toohey 1996; Haneda 1997; Casanave 1998; Toohey 1998; Flowerdew 2000; Norton 2000; Leki 2001; Morita 2004; Iddings 2005; Clark and Gieve 2006; Haneda 2006).

Even though this social turn in SLA (Block 2003) was already in process prior to 1997, I would like to address Firth and Wagner's (1997) call for a reconceptualisation of SLA theory because they have stimulated an even greater diversity in methodology and theoretical perspectives than previous scholars. Firth and Wagner call for a holistic approach to SLA research and emphasise the importance of linking the individual (or cognitive) factors to the social and contextual dimensions of language use. They also suggest increasing "emic" (participant-relevant) sensitivity towards a learner's multiple identities, and a broader SLA data base to allow investigating the acquisition and use of L2 in natural contexts outside classroom. Their article in 1997 *Modern Language Journal* (*MLJ*: 81, 3) has received many responses, either offering support (Hall 1997; Liddicoat 1997; Rampton 1997; Canagarajah 2007; Freeman 2007; Kramsch and Whiteside 2007; Lantolf and Johnson 2007; Swain and Deters 2007; Block 2007b) or declaring opposition (Kasper 1997; Long 1997; Poulisse 1997; Gass 1998; Gass et al. 2007). These responses have showed Firth and Wagner's (1997) prominent position in the ongoing cognitive-social debate and their galvanizing effect on scholars who disagreed with the cognitive view of SLA.

Nevertheless, social aspects of L2 learning and use are still under-represented and under-theorised in SLA literature (Pavlenko 2002). Several avenues of future research have been suggested:

- Conducting more research on the development of social relations and the specific social interactions in various language learning contexts (Firth and Wagner 2007).

- Adopting “an ecological understanding of discursive, social, and historical relativity” (Kramsch and Whiteside 2007, p.916).
- Expanding the use of qualitative and ethnographic approaches in analyzing situated learning and learners’ identity and agency (Swain and Deters 2007).

In this thesis, the sociocultural perspectives I will be referring to later and adopting as one of the analytical frameworks for my study is the situated learning theory of Lave and Wenger (1991; Wenger 1998). Therefore, in the next section, I explain this theory in some detail.

2.5.3.1. Situated learning theory

Situated learning theory (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998), as a neo-Vygotskian perspective, consists of two essential frameworks - Communities of Practice (CoP) and Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP). This theory is more explicit about power differentials in situated learning than classic Vygotskian theory (Swain and Deters 2007) (see the discussion of power relations in CoPs below). Wenger (1998) explains the formation of a CoP in this way:

Being alive as human beings means that we are constantly engaged in the pursuit of enterprises of all kinds, from ensuring our physical survival to seeking the most lofty pleasures. As we define these enterprises and engage in their pursuit together, we interact with each other and with the world and we tune our relations with each other and with the world accordingly. In other words, we learn.

Over time, this collective learning results in practices that reflect both the pursuit of our enterprises and the attendant social relations. These practices are thus the property of a kind of community created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise. It makes sense, therefore, to call these kinds of communities *communities of practice* (p.45).

This theory views learning as a socially situated process- a process called legitimate peripheral participation (LPP hereafter) by which newcomers gradually move toward fuller participation in a given CoP by interacting with more experienced community members (old-timers). Lave and Wenger (1991) use the term “peripherality” to refer to “an opening, a way of gaining access to sources for understanding through growing involvement”, but they also note there is “ambiguity inherent in peripheral participation” (p.37). Therefore peripherality indicates that individuals can belong in a CoP in multiple ways, not just at the core or the margin, and that individuals’

positions within a CoP can change over time. The concept of “legitimacy” can further explain this ambiguity:

In order to be on an inbound trajectory, newcomers must be granted enough legitimacy to be treated as potential members....Only with enough legitimacy can all their inevitable stumblings and violations become opportunities for learning rather than cause of dismissal, neglect, or exclusion (Wenger 1998, p.101).

This statement suggests that a certain level of legitimacy is essential for learning. Given the different social arrangements inherent in the inequitable power relations in any CoP, Lave and Wenger (1991) contend that LPP is not always a matter of peaceful assimilation but sometimes can be a conflictual process of negotiation and transformation. In other words, power relations in CoPs can organise newcomers’ access to a wide range of resources crucial for learning in a way either to promote or prevent their LPP:

Legitimate peripherality is a complex notion, implicated in social structures involving relations of power. As a place in which one moves toward more-intensive participation, peripherality is an empowering position. As a place in which one is kept from participation more fully- often legitimately, from the broader perspective of society at large- it is a disempowering position (Lave and Wenger 1991, p.36).

Like poststructuralist theory, situated learning theory links to Bourdieu’s (1991) social theory that explains how “agency is constrained, in an arguably non-deterministic way, by social structure” (Lamb 2009, p.231). Not being accepted as a legitimate peripheral participant and being denied the access to resources in a CoP, a learner might lose his/her sense of self (identity).

Lave and Wenger’s (1991) notion of a problematic and conflictual process of LPP signals that anxiety could possibly occur when a L2 learner is not granted “legitimate” status in a given CoP (e.g. L2 environment) or fails to develop an identity as a legitimate speaker as a result of inequitable power relations between old-timers (e.g. native language speakers) and newcomers (L2 learners). Anxiety, therefore, is a “symptom” of identity conflict. That is, anxiety occurs at the moment when there is an identity conflict. Both CoP and LPP frameworks have been used to bring out the complexity of the situated learning of the four SA students in the current study. These students’ diversified English language learning and use in different social contexts during the SA trip are interpreted as their different positions

and different levels of participation in various CoPs. Their anxiety and a lack of it in different CoPs are analysed in light of the concept of LPP (see Chapters 5 to 9).

In the following three subsections, I focus on the concept of identity in situated learning theory and the idea of non-participation in CoP and imagined communities. I then review how situated learning theory and CoP perspectives are applied in SLA research.

2.5.3.2. Identity in situated learning theory

One important aspect of situated learning theory is that learning involves the (re)construction of identities and identity can be a site of struggle. Their notion of learning as legitimate peripheral participation means that learning is seen as “an evolving form of membership” (Lave and Wenger 1991, p.53). Individuals develop identities of mastery as they change in how they participate in a CoP through the multiple social/power relations and roles they experience. Conceiving identities as “long-term, living relations between persons and their place and participation in communities of practice”, Lave and Wenger (ibid) contend that “identity, knowing, and social membership entail one another” (p.53).

Wenger’s (1998) CoP framework elaborates issues of identity and recognises the conflictual and situated nature of identity negotiation as learners move across the boundaries of different communities. He notes that by engaging in the CoPs, human beings not only learn new concepts but also transform themselves, fashioning new identities for themselves within that particular context. This notion of identity in a CoP framework has been used in the present study to interpret the interaction of the four young adults’ identity conflict, anxiety, and participation in different CoPs (see Chapters 5 to 9). In the next section, I discuss two other concepts in situated learning theory that are relevant to my study: non-participation in CoP and imagined communities.

2.5.3.3. Non-participation in CoP and imagined communities

Lave and Wenger’s (1991) legitimate peripheral participation framework has signalled the notion of non-participation by implying that particular social arrangements and power relations might constrain newcomers’ movement toward

fuller participation in CoPs. Wenger (1998) elaborates it and links it to identity by noting:

Our relations to communities of practice thus involve both participation and non-participation, and our identities are shaped by combinations of the two...Because our own practices usually include elements from other practices, and because we inevitably come in contact with communities of practice to which we do not belong, non-participation is an inevitable part of living in a landscape of practices (p.164-165).

The terms “peripherality” and “marginality” as proposed by Wenger are blends of participation and non-participation, but each produces very different experiences and identities. Marginality restricts participation, thereby causing a dominant form of non-participation to emerge. Peripherality, on the other hand, produces an enabling form of non-participation, which leads to the gradual inclusion of the newcomer in a CoP.

Noting that individuals are also defined in terms of their non-participation in practices and movement between or within them, Wenger (ibid) invokes “imagination” as another “mode of belonging” (p.73) in addition to engagement. Engagement is defined as “active involvement in mutual processes of negotiation of meaning” (p.173) and therefore is basically the work of forming CoPs. Imagination refers to “a process of expanding our self by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves” (p.176). Imagination enables reflection on one’s position within a practice and the perception of new patterns and the exploration of a practice and a new identity. This new identity constructed through imagination appears to be particularly relevant in Dörnyei’s (2005) concept of “ideal self” in self psychology (social cognitive perspective). Ideal self, in Dörnyei’s (ibid, p.101) view, refers to “the representation of the attributes that someone would ideally like to possess (i.e., representation of hopes, aspirations, or wishes).”

Wenger’s (1998) intriguing notion of “imagination” as a mode of belonging to a community has been applied in SLA research. Some SLA researchers have used this concept to imply that a CoP is not always a community that involves mutual engagements, but it can also be an “imagined community” (Norton 2001; Kanno and Norton 2003; Pavlenko and Norton 2007). Imagined communities refer to “groups of

people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination” (Kanno and Norton 2003, p.241). Pavlenko and Norton (2007) and Kanno and Norton (2003) argue that language learners’ actual and desired memberships in both “real” and “imagined” communities affect their identity, agency, motivation, investment, and resistance in language learning. The desired membership in an imagined community can be seen as part of the learner’s ideal self (Dörnyei 2005). The imagined communities of practice are so influential because they have defining sets of rules and regulations just like all communities (Kanno and Norton 2003). Wenger (1998) also notes that imagination should not be confused with misleading fantasy or withdrawal from reality.

In the present study, I use both concepts of non-participation and imagined communities to interpret the four young adults’ identity conflict and anxiety. I also link these students’ investment in English language learning with their desired membership in their imagined communities (see Chapters 5 to 9). A number of other researchers also adopt these concepts (e.g. identity, CoP, LPP, imagined communities, non-participation in CoP) in situated learning theory in their studies of L2 acquisition in various contexts, which I review in the next section.

2.5.3.4. Situated learning theory in SLA research

Drawing on Wenger’s (1998) attention to the importance of “mutuality” and “engagement” in determining the outcomes of CoP and learner’s identity construction, Jackson’s (2008) SA study illustrates L2 sojourners’ degree of participation in linguistic activities and social functions. In other words, the study explored SA students’ efforts and willingness to engage in CoP in the host culture. Those who perceived their hosts to be supportive and receptive developed “a sense of belonging” in new CoP. They found their stay fulfilling, and were therefore more open to personal/linguistic expansion and identity reconstruction. While others who perceived their hosts as unfriendly, distant or even racist experienced marginality or a lack of mutuality in the course of engagement in CoP. They felt their identities were threatened, and therefore reduced their willingness to communicate (WTC) (see 2.3.1.) in the host language.

One of the empirical studies inspired by the notion of imagined communities is Norton's (2001) work on two immigrant women's non-participation in L2 classrooms in Canada (for other studies on imagined communities, see e.g. Kanno 2000; Kanno and Norton 2003; Murphey et al. 2005). Drawing on Wenger's (1998) notion of non-participation, identity and mode of belonging, Norton (ibid) linked her participants' experiences of marginality and the resulting withdrawal from the language class to their imagined communities. She also examined how these imagined communities influenced their identity, investment and language learning. The study concluded that these two women's extreme acts of non-participation were acts of alignment on their part to preserve the integrity of their imagined communities and their desired identities (ideal self) within these communities. Instead of being an opportunity for learning from a position of peripherality, this non-participation is an act of resistance from a position of marginality. In short, "a learner's imagined community invited an imagined identity, and a learner's investment in the target language must be understood within this context" (Norton 2001, p.166).

Norton's (2001) study also indicates that L2 anxiety can be affected by a learner's imagined community and anxiety occurs when learners' desired memberships in imagined communities are denied. That is, L2 learners feel anxious when their access to the imagined community and the desired identity within it are rejected. Take one of the immigrant women in Norton's (ibid) study, Katarina, as an example, despite not being able to find employment as a teacher in Canada, the profession she had in Poland, Katarina still viewed herself as having legitimate claim to professional status. Her imagined community, then, was a community of professionals and her ideal self was being a professional. When her ESL teacher told her that her English was not "good enough" and discouraged her from taking a computer course, Katarina felt she was positioned as a "mere" immigrant. She felt her professional history was not acknowledged and was denied an important opportunity (the computer course) to gain access to her imagined community. She therefore was angry (anxiety occurred) and never returned to the ESL class. In other words, Katarina's identity was threatened when she was rejected as a legitimate peripheral participant in her imagined CoP and therefore anxiety took place.

On the other hand, despite hoping to have more social contact with Anglophone Canadians and improve their English, both women in Norton's (ibid) study felt anxious when they spoke to members of- or gatekeepers to their imagined communities. In Norton's view, they felt this anxiety because they believed that they could claim to be a legitimate member of their imagined communities, but had learnt, at the same time, that they could not take this old-timer status for granted. Norton notes that this anxiety should not be considered as an invariant characteristic of their L2 ability, but it could be understood with reference to learners' investment in particular kinds of social relationship. To conclude, this relationship between language anxiety and learners' imagined communities is grounded in the notion that learners' orientation toward such imagined communities might have impacts on their current identities, learning, and direct involvement in communities in their daily life.

Goldstein's (1996, 2000 cited in Block, 2003) study also examined the construction and development of social and cultural identities of female immigrants in Canada and investigated how their membership in Portuguese (native language)-based CoP shapes their decision not to acculturate or join an English (target language)-based CoP. Block (2003, p.132) further states that this "non-participation served to guarantee a secure sense of identity at the price of never obtaining the full cultural capital necessary to gain greater political and economic power in Canadian society."

Adopting the notion of identity in CoP framework, Morita's (2004) case study on six female Japanese graduate students in a Canadian university illustrates the major challenges these students face in negotiating competence, identities and power relations in different classroom CoPs. These negotiations, according to Lave and Wenger (1991) have crucial effects on learners' legitimate peripheral participation in communities. The findings of this study indicate that due to the difficulties experienced in class, these Japanese students commonly constructed identity as a less competent learner. They were concerned, to varying degrees with being viewed as less competent by their instructors and peers. But in some other classrooms, they were able to develop an identity as competent and valued members and therefore their class participation was enhanced. Therefore, these students' constructed identities were changeable based on their changing sense of competence as members of a given classroom community. Their constructed identities and sense of

competence in any given classroom simultaneously shaped and were shaped by their class participation. This dynamic co-construction of identity and participation also suggests the situated nature of identity negotiation.

In addition to Norton (2001), Morita (2004), and Jackson (2008), others researchers have adopted Lave and Wenger's situated learning theory in their studies of L2 acquisition in various contexts. For instance, Leki (2001) used a CoP framework to address L2 learners' social and academic relationships with their peers within American university course group projects and how the power inequality exaggerated by different linguistic competence affected these relationships. The study indicates that the two focal Chinese students' voices tended to be muted or ignored by their American domestic group members who perceived non-native English speaker students as "variously handicapped" (p.61). Both of them were denied access to the group discussion CoP and therefore were only entitled to peripheral, not full, participation.

Iddings' (2005) study focuses on the second-grade English language learners (ELLs) in an English-dominant, mainstream classroom community in America. Treating this classroom as a CoP, Iddings (ibid) investigated the ways these students gained access to classroom activities and to the language that conveyed them, and the ways they came to participate in the classroom contexts. The findings show that these ELLs' linguistic access to classroom activities and their progression toward legitimate peripheral participation in the English-dominant CoP were complicated by various factors. These factors were unequal participation in the classroom activities, ambiguities in the processes of instruction, and teacher's vagueness in communication such as poor word choices and incomplete explanations. My study is similar to the studies reviewed in this section and adds to the understanding of the challenges L2 learners face in negotiating competence, identities, and power relations in different CoPs and how these negotiations affects their anxiety and participation in various communities (see Chapters 5 to 9).

Since my individual case analysis has adopted some ideas from the analytic orientation of discursive social psychology, next I turn to a discussion of the discursive approach to language learning.

2.5.4. Discursive approach to language learning

In the 1990s, a new orientation- discursive social psychology- emerged in the field of social psychology (Kalaja and Leppanen 1998). Discursive social psychology draws a range of notions from poststructuralism (Potter and Edwards 2001) and did not see social psychological phenomena as something “already existing, inner reality of mental representations” (Kalaja and Leppanen 1998, p.165). Instead, it stresses that “reality enters human practices by way of the categories and descriptions that are part of those practices.” It also emphasises that “these descriptions and accounts that people use to constitute their worlds are themselves constructed” (Potter 1998, p.235). This reorientation, however, had not been explored in research into social psychology of L2 learning until Kalaja and Leppanen (1998) who examined L2 motivation as a discursive phenomenon and stated:

A discursive approach to L2 learning can offer scholars a means of gaining valuable insights into the ways in which L2 learners themselves display and negotiate in speech or writing their understandings and orientations towards L2 learning. In this way, scholars can also gain a better understanding of the complex ways in which learners- both individually and as a specific social group- understand and give meaning to their experiences (p.166).

In analysing how L2 learners constructed their motivation in oral and written narratives, Kalaja and Leppanen (ibid) adopted the analytic orientation of discursive social psychology that “endeavours to carry out systematic and close qualitative micro-analyses of interaction or specific texts through which issues related to social structure and setting can be examined” (p.175).

Proposing a person-in-context relational view of motivation, Ushioda (2009, p.222) also addresses the value of discourse analysis that focuses on “the situated process of how discourse practices, motives and identities are locally constructed in face-to-face encounters.” Discursive research is fundamentally self-reflexive in that researchers have to be aware of how their own positions and the devices they use contribute to the analytic process and the facts constructed in their research writing. However, it does not mean that its findings are simply rhetorical collections of the researcher’s personal observations and evaluations. Instead, self-reflexivity is “counterbalanced with a conscientious and systematic attention to data, and with

theoretically backed up interpretations of findings” (Kalaja and Leppanen 1998, p.173).

In sum, a discursive approach to L2 learning also means that the whole of the analysis is contextualised. This contextualised analysis can lead to better understanding of the complex ways in which individual language learners understand and give meaning to their experiences. SLA researchers applying poststructuralist perspectives generally follow this contextualised analysis. For instance, aiming to investigate participants’ view of reality, Jackson (2008, p.68) states: “I examined how their intercultural stories were constructed, mindful of the elements of narrative context (e.g., the purpose of their diary entries or ethnographic conversations, the cultural context and time frame in which they occurred).” Her analysis also examined the expressions the participants used to convey their ideas and emotions and the repetitions, patterns, the ordering and sequencing in their narratives (oral and written).

In the current study, as mentioned earlier (see 2.5.3.4.), I did not adopt the analytic orientation of discursive social psychology, but borrowed some ideas from it while analysing the four case participants’ anxiety in the English language learning process. In other words, the four individual case analyses were contextualised in that I considered broader social factors when analysing students’ statements about what triggered their anxiety. I was sensitive to the language (including the speaking tone) my participants’ used in constructing their anxiety. I was also self-reflexive, considering how my respondents were drawing on various discourses in their explanations of anxiety and in their descriptions of their experiences in discussion with me during interviews or in their written diary entries (see 3.5.4.2.).

2.6. RATIONALE FOR THE RESEARCH BASED ON LITERATURE

In this section, I present the rationale for the present research based on literature by addressing the issues emerging from the foregoing review. To begin with, FL anxiety has commonly been studied using quantitative approaches which have been rather limited because they have tended to depict anxiety as a stable learner-internal phenomenon and ignored the context bound, personal, and dynamic aspects of FL anxiety. That is, FL anxiety in cognitive research so far has been interpreted without

regard to its relationship to larger and frequently inequitable social structures. Therefore the fluctuating and situated nature of anxiety has not featured much in literature. Norton's (1995; 2000; 2001) study linked anxiety with learners' negotiations of power relations in their social interactions. However, the main focus of her study was not on anxiety, but on developing a poststructuralist notion of social identity in SLA. Hence there is a need for more qualitative FL anxiety studies that consider anxiety as a construct that has clear social origins and is shaped and reshaped by the contexts L2 learners engage in.

The issue regarding research on study abroad (SA) programmes is that it has been dominated by studies that rely on test scores (pre- and post-trip) to quantify L2 proficiency benefits of the SA experience. These quantitative studies have limitations in that they do not explore personal experiences during SA programmes and tend to underplay the complex, multifaceted nature of SA environment and its impact on SA students' L2 use and social behaviour. Scholars have called for more qualitative SA (case) studies that dig deeper into the qualities of student experiences (Salvadori 1997; Coleman 1998; Freed 1998; Pellegrino Aveni 1998; Jackson 2008; Kinginger 2008) by efforts to "follow learners closely throughout their overseas experience, ...paying due attention to individual differences" (DeKeyser 1991, p.117-118). Lafford (2006) and Block (2007b) further note that more research is needed that investigates how social factors (e.g., L2 learners' social class and the power relations and role expectations between them and their interlocutors) affect L2 learners' language learning and use in SA environments.

Research into FL anxiety in SA settings is relatively scarce. Most of the existing studies are quantitatively based, investigating the correlation between anxiety and such variables as L2 performance, willingness to communicate (WTC), time spent with native speakers, etc. Other studies have examined quantitatively how FL anxiety correlates with SA experience and assessed changes in the levels of FL anxiety over time during and after the SA experience. These quantitative / correlation studies do not provide rich and deep portraits of individual's perceptions of the effect of SA experience on anxiety. They only allow for linear relationships among selected variables and therefore fail to tackle the variability and situatedness of FL anxiety in a SA context. There seem to be very few qualitative studies

specifically examining L2 learners' anxiety during a SA trip that view phenomena from the subjects' point of view and appear to offer a richer understanding of FL anxiety in a SA setting. Thus there is a need for such studies.

In view of the gaps in literature mentioned above, the present study sought to explore FL anxiety qualitatively in a SA context, paying attention to how anxiety is shaped and reshaped by the social contexts learners engage in. It also aimed to offer a rich and deep understanding of how students perceive the impact of the SA trip on their English language learning and anxiety. Therefore, I posed five research questions for my study, based on the literature review and also relevant to the aims of this study as stated in Chapter 1, as follows:

1. What English language learning and use situations do participants find themselves in during the study abroad trip?
2. Do participants express anxiety in relation to these situations?
3. What reasons do participants give for their anxiety?
4. How does experienced anxiety, if any, during their study abroad trip, affect their overall study abroad English language learning experience?
5. In the perceptions of the participants, does this study abroad English language learning experience have any impact on their English language learning (including anxiety) once they are back in Taiwan?

2.7. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have demonstrated why my study matters from a theoretical point of view by reviewing literature that is relevant to my research and explaining the rationale for my study based on the review. Stemming from the literature and the statement of the problems based on the Taiwan context (see Chapter 1), the research questions are raised. In the next chapter, I explain the research methodology.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I start by explaining my decision to conduct a qualitative multiple-case study and then provide a detailed account of the research process. I talk about negotiation of access, sampling, ethical considerations, and pilot study, followed by the data generation process and data analysis. I conclude this chapter by discussing the issues of trustworthiness and the strategies I adopted to enhance it.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

In the following subsections, I justify my decision to design my research as a qualitative multiple-case study. I then talk about negotiation of access, sampling, and ethical considerations.

3.2.1. Qualitative approach

Generally speaking, qualitative research is concerned with the complexity of social interactions in daily life and with how the participants give meaning to these interactions. Qualitative researchers therefore conduct their studies in natural settings preferably by using multiple methods of inquiry to make sense of complex social phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Richards 2003; Rossman and Rallis 2003; Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Marshall and Rossman 2006). Thus, qualitative research is “pragmatic, interpretive, and grounded in the lived experiences of people” (Marshall and Rossman 2006, p.2).

Qualitative research into language anxiety has been emphasised by researchers (Price 1991; Samimy and Rardin 1994; Cheng 1998; Tse 2000; Elkhafaifi 2005). For instance, Elkhafaifi (2005) states:

More empirical studies and different kinds of investigation could reveal useful insights into what students learn. For example, exploration of affective states (like anxiety) and similar variables can sometimes be accomplished more effectively with qualitative interviews or student journal entries than with quantitative studies (p.216).

Cheng (1998) notes that qualitative research focuses on the inherent complexity of social interactions and human behaviour and can add depth and detail to our current knowledge of language anxiety.

Due to the strength of qualitative research into language anxiety along with the earlier mentioned limitations of the quantitative correlation studies on FL anxiety (see 2.3.1.), I have chosen to adopt a qualitative approach to investigate anxiety in the study abroad (SA) context. For this study, my primary concern was how the participants made sense of and perceived their experiences. While I was interested in the factors that influenced their anxiety and participation in the SA programme and their behaviour while there, I was not attempting to delineate with precision the causal relationship of these variables. Next I explain my reasons for selecting the case study method.

3.2.2. Case study method

The case study method, one of the qualitative approaches to inquiry, was defined by (Yin 2009, p.18) as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”.

Students’ anxiety in the English language learning process before, during and after a SA experience is the phenomenon that this study investigated. It is also a situation in which the boundary between the phenomenon under investigation and the context surrounding it is not clear. In other words, I used the case study method because I believed contextual conditions are highly pertinent to my study on anxiety. The information I needed and elicited was about representations of self and others, interactions with others, personal strategies for dealing with difficulties, moods and feelings during certain times and in certain places, and self-awareness. I also wanted to get a more holistic understanding of individual Taiwanese university students’ anxiety in the English language learning process, and the case study method has the potential to do so through multiple sources of data (Creswell 2007; Dörnyei 2007; Duff 2008; Yin 2009).

Generally there are two types of case study: *intrinsic* case study and *instrumental* case study (Stake 2005; Creswell 2007; Dörnyei 2007). According to Stake (2005, p.445), an intrinsic case study is undertaken because “one wants a better understanding of this particular case...this case itself is of interest”, while in an instrumental case study, “the case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else”. This present study is an instrumental case study. In other words, the intention to study the students in this SA programme was not due to the interest in the intrinsic features of these particular students, but in investigating Taiwanese English language learners’ anxiety before, during, and after a SA programme.

As I have pointed out above, I define my study as a case study of a group of students from one Taiwanese university on a SA programme. Within this main case (group), there are embedded cases who are the individual students who participated in the SA programme. Therefore I consider this as a multiple case study as I further explain in the next section.

3.2.3. Multiple-case study design

A multiple-case study is conducted “when there is even less interest in one particular case, a number of cases may be studied jointly in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition” (Stake 2005, p.445). A multiple-case study, therefore, is an instrumental study involving more than one case. Several scholars have mentioned its advantages over a single-case study (Stake 2005; Creswell 2007; Yin 2009). For example, Stake (2005, p.444) states that “we may be interested in a general phenomenon or a population of cases more than in the individual case, and we cannot understand a given case without knowing about other cases”. Therefore, researchers often purposefully select multiple cases to show different perspectives on an issue (Creswell 2007). Accordingly, I used a multiple-case design in which I had a total of eight cases. I have analysed the experiences of four of them in detail (see Chapters 5 to 8). I will explain why I had these eight and four cases in section 3.2.5 and 3.5.4.2. Next, I explain how I negotiated access for my study with the gatekeepers and participants.

3.2.4. Negotiation of access

Cohen et al. (2007, p.55) highlight the importance of gaining access to and acceptance by the research participants in the initial stage of the research project because “it offers the best opportunity for researchers to present their credentials as serious investigators and establish their own ethical position with respect to their proposed research.” My first step in negotiation of access was to get permission from the relevant gatekeepers at the university where I teach to conduct my proposed study and to involve the students on the SA programme that would be launched in January, 2008 (see details in 1.2.7.).

In July, 2007, I contacted the chairman of the English Language Centre, explained the aims of the study and the procedure of the fieldwork. He responded positively and stated that he would inform our university president about it. In August, 2007, I received a telephone call from the chairman. He told me that I was given the permission to conduct the study and that in order to facilitate the fieldwork, the president had appointed me as the leading teacher of this upcoming SA programme. The English Language Centre started recruiting and selecting a team of 10 students at the end of October, 2007. In November, my university informed the language school in America about my study and my intended classroom observations. I was then given the permission to sit in our Taiwanese students’ classes during the SA programme in San Diego.

I met my potential participants (the final ten students selected for the programme) in Dec, 2007, one month before their departure to America. There were four main purposes of this meeting: (1) Getting to know each other and building a good relationship between me and them, (2) Explaining the general aims and procedure of the study, (3) Selecting who would be the possible participants of my study, (4) Seeking their consent for participation. The first part of the meeting lasted about half an hour and I had the chance to gather some background information on each student such as age, academic major and status. Also I made a general introduction about my overall study and explained in detail how I expected them to participate in terms of interviews, observations and keeping diaries in all stages of the process. Meanwhile I asked who would accept to take part in this study and took care of other ethical considerations in qualitative research as explained in section 3.2.6.

To prevent influencing or biasing the participants' responses, I did not tell them my study was on "anxiety". Instead I stated that the aim of the study was to explore their "feelings", and "experiences" about English language learning before, during, and after this SA tour. (according to the lessons learnt from the pilot study, see 3.3.). Dörnyei (2007, p.69) states that "the reluctance to reveal too much about the nature of our research is a pragmatic one because certain information can influence or bias the participants' responses and may even make them withdraw from the study." After the briefing, anybody who did not want to participate was given the chance to withdraw from the study. Fortunately, nobody withdrew. I also requested each of them to sign the consent form. The written form contains all the necessary details suggested by Dörnyei (2007) (see Appendix 1). All of them responded positively. I treated this consent as an on-going process, rather than a one-off event in order to maintain participation. I kept contact with my participants throughout the five months data collection period to make sure they were happy about participating. I also offered them opportunities to talk about potential issues that might stop them from participating in the study. None of them raised any issue with me.

The first day we arrived at the language school in San Diego, I introduced myself to the school director and the class coordinator. They showed me around and gave me a brief introduction to the school. We also talked about my study and they showed their enthusiasm for it and said to me that they would do whatever they could to facilitate it. They also arranged a lunch for me to meet some of their teachers. During the lunch I briefly introduced myself to the teachers, my study and the focus and form of class observations I would conduct. Next I explain the sampling in the study in more detail.

3.2.5. Sampling

Sampling is a procedure for "defining the population on which the research will focus", and it is a crucial factor in the quality of a piece of research (Cohen et al. 2007, p.100). The logic of sampling in qualitative research is different from that in quantitative research as Dörnyei (2007, p.126) states:

Qualitative inquiry is not concerned with how representative the respondent sample is or how the experience is distributed in the population. Instead, the main goal of sampling is to find individuals who can provide rich and varied insights into the phenomenon under investigation so as to maximise what we can

learn. The goal is best achieved by means of some sort of “purposeful” or “purposive” sampling.

Therefore, in this study, I used purposive sampling. That is, I selected the participants whom I thought would provide in-depth information about the phenomenon under investigation (Cohen et al. 2007). My purposive sampling plan also considered feasibility issues in terms of time, money, respondent availability (Dörnyei 2007) and included negative (deviant) case sampling in order to enhance the quality and richness of the data (Mays and Pope 2000; Whittemore et al. 2001; Cohen et al. 2007).

Initially I decided to include all the ten students on the SA programme because they were all willing to participate as my sample. Also I was concerned with the possibility that a few of them might drop out later in which case I was thinking I would end up with 6 to 8 cases for the data analysis, which I expected could still grant me sufficient data to answer my research questions and would be manageable. Mason (2002, p.134) explains that “the key question to ask is whether your sample provides access to enough data, and with the right focus, to enable you to address your research questions.”

After I completed the ten pre-departure individual interviews, as expected, I realised that two interviewees seemed not very cooperative and a bit impatient when I interviewed them. So I asked them how they felt about being interviewed and the idea of keeping a diary during the three weeks abroad. One responded: “Can you interview me less?” and the other said: “Can I not to write a diary? I can tell you how I feel, but I felt troublesome to write something down.” I then offered them the chance to withdraw from the study at this point and they did. So, I worked with the remaining eight participants. Table 3.1 shows their background information. The participants’ names given here are pseudonyms.

Table 3.1. Overview of participants

Name / (Gender)	Age	Major	Academic year	Placed class in San Diego
Kai (M)	23	Information system Management	4 th year (Evening college)	Pre-intermediate
Jin (F)	25	Commercial Design	1 st year (Evening college)	Pre-intermediate
Chocolate (M)	22	Commercial Design	4 th year	Intermediate
Christina (F)	20	Commercial Design	2 nd year	Intermediate
Cynthia (F)	21	Bio-Technology	3 rd year	Post-elementary
Ulla (F)	21	Cosmetic Science	3 rd year	Pre-intermediate
Ryan (M)	19	Commercial Design	1 st year	Post-elementary
Sam (M)	22	Commercial Design	4 th year	Post-elementary

My selection above is also supported by literature on case study research. For example, Zach (2006, p.9) states that “ in the multiple–case studies design, there are no hard-and-fast rules about how many cases are required to satisfy the requirements of the replication strategy”. Yin (2009) also argues that the type of representative sampling logic used in survey research does not apply to the multiple–case study approach. He suggests that “the typical criteria regarding sample size is irrelevant” (p58). However, Mason (2002, p.134) states that “qualitative samples are usually small for practical reasons to do with the costs, especially in terms of time and money, of generating and analysing qualitative data.” Also for seeking greater depth of understanding, there is inevitably a trade-off in the number of participants to be included in the study (Darlington and Scott 2002). Therefore I had eight students who were willing to participate as my sample and for the study I was carrying out this was appropriate because the eight participants provided enough data for me to address the research questions and the amount of data was manageable.

3.2.6. Ethical considerations

Educational research that concerns people’s lives in the social world inevitably involves ethical issues, especially for qualitative research that is inherently interested in personal details of the participants’ lives and environment (Dörnyei 2007). Qualitative researchers, therefore, should be concerned to produce a moral or ethical

research process. It means attempting not only to “carry out our data generation and analysis morally, but also to plan our research and frame our questions in an ethical manner too” (Mason 2002, p.41). Rossman and Rallis (2003) further contend that ethics should not be separated from the discussion of trustworthiness, saying that “an unethical study is not a trustworthy study” (p.63). The primary principles of research ethics are: (1) Obtaining participants’ informed consent, (2) Preventing mental or physical harm to the participants, (3) Protecting the participants’ right to refuse to answer questions or withdraw from the study, (4) Insuring participants’ privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity (Cohen et al. 2007; Dörnyei 2007).

I have already signalled some ethical issues I paid attention to such as seeking permission from the gatekeepers and participants and having a meeting with them to explain the purpose of my study (see 3.2.4.). Other ethically related explanations I gave them were as follows:

- They could refuse to answer questions or to withdraw from the study completely at any time without offering any explanation.
- I would ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of all data I got from them. All the data would be safely stored without falling into unauthorised hands and the confidentiality would be ensured even after the study is completed.
- I would also ensure I do not infringe on their rights or activities and I would prevent any potential mental or physical harm to them and minimise intrusion into their lives.
- They are welcome to read all interview transcripts, observation notes, my interpretation about them, and my reporting of final outcome. They could also give comments to ensure the correct report of them.
- My intention of doing this study was not to judge them.
- Their participation would make a contribution to future students, and I would appreciate their valuable time.

Before I conducted the actual study, I did a pilot study whose details I explain in the next section.

3.3. PILOT STUDY

The importance and value of a pilot study has been stressed as a process that can possibly refine data generation procedure and research questions (Nunan 1992; Yin 2009). A pilot study can also enhance the quality of the research (Dörnyei 2007). Due to the “convenience, access, and geographic proximity” (Yin 2009, p.93), I conducted my pilot study at the Language Centre of University of Leeds where some Taiwanese students were enrolled for different periods of time, preparing for their future post-graduate studies. To help me get access to the site, my supervisor wrote an email, in Oct 2007, to the course director at the language centre about my intended interviews and class observations with one or two Taiwanese students there. I then got a positive response directly from the director who arranged a time and place I could meet the two Taiwanese students. He also gave me their class schedule and advised me to observe one particular class of each student. He said he would inform the teachers in those classes about my observation in advance.

While meeting the two Taiwanese girls in the common room at the language centre, I briefly talked about my study on FL anxiety and explained to them that my purpose of a pilot study was to try out the data generation techniques (interview and observation). I also informed them that my interviews with them would be audio-recorded. Both girls welcomed the idea and verbally gave their permission for me to observe them in class and interview them twice (one before and one after the class observation). I then worked out, with each of them, the date and place for the interviews. We agreed that all the interviews would also be conducted in the common room at the language centre. Then we casually chatted for about half an hour, getting to know each other. Both of the pilot participants just graduated from the university in Taiwan in June 2007 and arrived in UK in September, two months before I met them. They perceived their English proficiency to be intermediate. Both of them enrolled in a nine-month English language course at the language centre, hoping to pass IELTS and gain admission to the MA programme at the same university.

During the week starting from Nov. 4th 2007, I interviewed and observed the students as planned. Each interview was semi-structured, lasting 45 minutes to one hour, audio-recorded, and conducted in Chinese in order for my interviewees to fully express their feelings and thoughts. The first interview I had with each of them was

to try out the guiding questions I planned for pre-departure interview in the main fieldwork. The questions were mainly about their general English language learning experience in Taiwan and their disposition to study abroad in UK. Then I observed one class of each participant and each observation lasted 45 minutes. In both classes, the students sat in a circle and I sat outside the circle in a position where I could clearly see my case and I took notes in English about her behaviour while observing. After class, we went to the common room and started the post-class observation interview. The interview questions were based on the observed behaviour in class, starting from a general question: “How do you feel about this class?”

After transcribing and translating (into English) the total four interviews, I tried out the data analysis procedure. First of all, I read the transcripts thoroughly to get familiar with them. Then I started coding by highlighting relevant statements and then derive a set of codes corresponding to the research questions. I later grouped these codes into themes. Overall I had learnt important lessons from the pilot study and I made the following decisions before I went on the main study:

- Inspired by the responses from the interviewees, I added more items to the guiding interview questions, and revised some that appeared leading and not clear to the interviewees. For instance, instead of asking “Did you feel anxious”, I reframed the question as “How did you feel?”
- I discovered as I listened to the interview audio recording that I tended to interrupt the interviewee when she was talking, so I had to minimise my interference during interviews in the main study.
- I realised that informing my pilot participants of my study on “anxiety” seemed to affect their reactions to me. For example, one of them said “oh, I didn’t feel anxious, sorry about that!” or “I should feel anxious because you want to study that.” So, I decided to tell the participants in the main study that my study aims to explore their “feelings and experiences” about English language learning before, during, and after this SA programme.
- I learned that my interviewees tended to resist saying they were “anxious”, a very negative term in Chinese. They would report negative feelings like being nervous, frustrated, afraid, etc. Thus I decided to minimise my use of the term “anxiety” while interviewing the participants in the main study.

- I tested the quality of the MP3 digital voice recorder and developed my skills of how to use it. I decided to also use it in the main study as I found it efficient to record and store interview data.
- I realised conducting interviews in a place like common room could not ensure quietness and affected the quality of recording. So, I have to change the interviewing venue to a place in a quiet surrounding in the main study.
- I video recorded the first class observation, but the pilot participant said to me during the interview that the presence of the video camera made her feel uneasy in class. Instead of using the video camera in the second class observation, I took notes of what I observed and found that video or audio recording of observation was not needed because my note-taking could cover my observation focus and was manageable. Therefore I decided to rely on my note-taking to record observation data in the main study.
- I sensed that conducting an interview right after the observation facilitated spontaneous and genuine sharing of experience. As a result, I decided to continue doing so in the main study.
- I realised transcribing the interview audio recording and then translating them into English was much more time-consuming than I anticipated. So, I decided to start transcribing as soon as the first interview has been conducted and continued throughout the data generation period in the main study.
- I decided to use the themes I developed from the pilot interview data as the starting point during the main study data analysis.

3.4. DATA GENERATION PROCESS

The data generation process, in this study, involved three stages: the pre-departure period, three-weeks abroad, and follow-up stage. During the pre-departure period, I conducted interviews with individual students. The research instruments during the SA period were observations, interviews, and participants' diary entries. The follow-up stage involved interviewing my participants after they were back in Taiwan, two months after the trip. The interviewees were informed in advance that all the interviews would be audio-recorded by a MP3 digital voice recorder and they all gave me permission to do so. Considering that all the interviewees were Taiwanese, I decided to use Chinese to conduct my interviews. Using this shared language helped

the interviewees to express themselves freely and also enabled me to interpret their messages accurately. In order to fully answer my research questions, it was necessary to have these three stages of data collection. The interviews and observations conducted while abroad, supported by students' diaries were crucial to capture students' SA experiences. They were helpful for answering the research questions 1, 2, 3, and 4:

1. *What English language learning and use situations do participants find themselves in during the study abroad trip?*
2. *Do participants express anxiety in relation to these situations?*
3. *What reasons do participants give for their anxiety?*
4. *How does experienced anxiety, if any, during their study abroad trip, affect their overall study abroad English language learning experience?*

The pre-departure and follow-up interviews were to meet the comparison purposes and answer research question 5:

In the perceptions of the participants, does this study abroad English language learning experience have any impact on their English language learning (including anxiety) once they are back in Taiwan?

The follow-up interviews also provided supplementary information for answering research 1-4 as participants were asked to recall their overall experience during the SA tour. As I have indicated earlier in this section, I used interviews, observations, and diaries to generate data in this study. In the subsequent sections, I explain how I used these techniques, in some detail.

3.4.1. Data generation using interviews

Interviews are an essential and commonly used source of case study evidence (Duff 2008; Yin 2009). They also play an important role in Applied Linguistic / SLA research (Duff 2008). I used interviews because they provided me with the access to participants' reasons for their verbal and non-verbal behaviour, and their "current" perceptions, feelings, perspectives about the on-going, the past, and the upcoming social events or phenomena.

In this study, all the interviews I conducted during the three stages of data generation were semi-structured. Distinguished from structured interviews, semi-structured interview are directed by a set of general questions which were used flexibly by the researcher for encouraging the interviewee to talk about his/her experience, but the

interviewees also had certain control of how to frame and structure their responses (Darlington and Scott 2002; Mason 2002; Drever 2003; Dörnyei 2007). The advantage of the semi-structured interview is that the informal style and a fluid and flexible structure of the interview allow the researcher and interviewee to develop unexpected themes and issues (Mason 2002; Cohen et al. 2007). The open-ended questions have the potential to generate more elaborate and richer data than those generated by closed questions (Dörnyei 2007). Gillham (2000, p.65) states that “the semi-structured interview is the most important form of interviewing in case study research. Well done, it can be the richest single source of data.”

In my study, I used interviews at three different stages, as I have pointed out above. Next I explain how I generated data during these stages, starting with the pre-departure interviews.

3.4.1.1. Pre-departure interviews

I interviewed each of the ten participants during the last two weeks of December 2007, one month before our departure to America, in a quiet, comfortable meeting room at the language centre of the university where I teach. This gave a total of 10 pre-departure semi-structured individual interviews. Eight of them lasted about 30 to 45 minutes while the other two were relatively short - about 15 minutes. These two interviewees withdrew from the study after the interview (see 3.2.5.).

The pre-departure interview mainly focused on two issues: (1) the participants' previous English language learning experience in Taiwan, (2) their feelings about the upcoming trip to America (For pre-departure interview guiding questions, see Appendix 2). This background information gathered before the trip was important for me to make a comparison between their perception of their anxiety in the English language learning process before and after this visit and therefore enabled me to investigate whether the SA experience is beneficial for reducing their anxiety and to what degrees.

3.4.1.2. Interviews during the three-week period abroad

During the three weeks abroad (Jan. 20th to Feb. 10th 2008), I interviewed the participants on different dates for different durations. Table 3.3 (at the end of 3.4.3.)

shows the total number and cumulative time of interviews for each participant. Appendix 9 provides contextual information on the data and duration of each interview in San Diego USA from each participant.

The interviews during the period abroad were post-class observation interviews and on-going interviews. Appendix 4 and 6 show the guiding questions for both interviews. Being a participant observer in the field, most of my interviewing was done informally and semi-structured (Richards 2003). An informal interview means “any occasion, brief as it might be, when a researcher casually asks a question or two of someone in a field setting and gets an answer that constitutes usable data” (Holstein and Gubrium 2003, p.67) Some questions were asked without setting up an interview and it has the advantage as Gillham (2000, p.63) states: “Because they are not being formally interviewed they may give particularly revealing answers.”

In order to minimise the gap between the event and the reporting, the post-class observation interviews were conducted right after the observations to explore the thoughts behind the observed behaviour. At this moment, I expected that the interviewees still had fresh memories and feelings about what happened. These interviews usually took place in one empty classroom, where the quietness was ensured, during class or lunch breaks. The on-going interviews, on the other hand, took place whenever there was a natural break in the day. The interviews were very loosely structured and focused on my observation of the participant outside classroom; especially to find out their experiences of using or not using English and the reasons for them. The interviews also included inquiries about their general and any specific English language learning experience at homestay.

3.4.1.3. Follow-up interviews in Taiwan

I conducted eight follow-up interviews from April 14th to April 28th 2008, two months after the participants had gone back to Taiwan and they had been studying English at the university for more than one month. Appendix 8 shows the guiding questions I used in the follow-up interviews. The interviews were carried out in a quiet meeting room at the language centre of the university, each lasting between 35 minutes to 50 minutes. Participants were asked to recall their overall SA experience

and to express their self-perceived impacts of this experience on their English language learning and anxiety back in Taiwan.

3.4.2. Data generation using observations

The terms “observation” or in particular “participant observation” refers to “methods of generating data which entail the researcher immersing herself or himself in a research setting so that they can experience and observe at first hand a range of dimensions in and of that setting” (Mason 2002, p.84). Marshall and Rossman (2006, p.100) also state that participant observation “permits the researcher to hear, to see, and to begin to experience reality as the participants do.” In Applied Linguistic / SLA field, many case studies include observation of participants in their natural contexts because “observational work can help researchers understand the physical, social/cultural, and linguistic contexts in which language is used, and also collect relevant linguistic and interactional data for later analysis” (Duff 2008, p.138).

In this study, observations provided me with a good opportunity to observe my participants’ English language learning and use at the same time as it was happening. While I also witnessed the anxiety (difficulties, frustration, nervousness, etc.), if any, experienced by students. Yin (2009, p.109) states that “the interviewees’ responses are subject to the common problems of bias, poor recall, and poor or inaccurate articulation. Again, a reasonable approach is to corroborate interview data with information from other sources.” Therefore, the trustworthiness of the study may be criticised if I rely solely on interviewees to tell me about any kinds and different levels of anxiety experienced due to the different abilities interviewees have for retrieving their perceptions about the past events. Observations can also be used to check against participants’ subjective reporting of what they believe and do (Robson 2002; Mack et al. 2007; Duff 2008).

By taking part in each individual participant’s daily activities and social interactions and observing him or her throughout the day, I immersed myself into the group under investigation and developed a better and closer, or even trusting relationship with my participants. This rapport helped me to get more depth and richer data from the interviews and so offered me better understanding of the participants’ anxiety. The trustworthiness of the interview data was therefore strengthened. Observations

were also used as background information for the following interviews. Therefore, observations and interviews were complementary.

Fontana and Frey (2003) point out that establishing rapport with respondents is paramount for an interviewer to conduct a successful interview. However, Darlington and Scott (2002) suggest that strong connections between the researcher and participant can sometimes have negative effects. For example, the sense of shared understanding can make participants assume the interviewer understands whatever they are talking about and so skip important aspects of their stories. The interviewers, on the other hand, may think they know what the interviewees mean and then impose incorrect assumptions on the data. In order to avoid these negative effects, I always reminded myself of my ongoing role as a researcher and tried to avoid personal bias. The interviewees, on the other hand, were encouraged by me to explicate as much as they could to prevent any possible misinterpretation.

There are different levels of participation in observation (Stake 1995; Mason 2002; Borg 2006; Yin 2009). Based on Burgess (1984), Borg (2006) identifies four possible field roles of observers (see Table 3.2.).

Table 3.2. Field roles in observational research

Observer role	Description
Complete participant	Conceal the observer dimension and observes covertly.
Participant-as-observer	The researcher participates as well as observes by developing relationships with informants.
Observer-as- participant	Contact with informants is brief, formal and openly classified as observation.
Complete observer	Eavesdropping and reconnaissance in which the researcher is removed from sustained contact with the informant.

In this study I played the role of participant-as-observer, who participates and observes by developing relationships with informants. As Denscombe (1998) states:

Participant as observer, where the researcher's identity as a researcher is openly recognised thus having advantages of gaining informed consent from those involved- and takes the form of shadowing a person or group through normal life, witnessing first hand and in intimate detail the culture/events of interest (p.150).

What I was looking for during observations was inspired by what the literature said about the manifestation of anxiety on students such as avoiding eye contact with the teacher (or interlocutor), nervous or embarrassed facial expression (e.g. blushing),

stuttering while speaking, avoiding speaking English or restricting their utterances to a minimal length, having difficulty in understanding spoken English or making him/herself understood, etc. (Horwitz et al. 1986; MacIntyre and Gardner 1991a; Young 1991a; MacIntyre 1999; Ohata 2005b; Randall 2007). My observation notes were written in English. I tried to record as much detail as possible and the field notes generally covered the following main perspectives: (1) The people in the situation, (2) The specific actions that the participants were doing, (3) The activities and interactions among people, (4) The sequence of acts and activities (time), (5) The way the participants looked (apparent feelings) (6) The physical setting.

Next I explain in more detail how I conducted observations in and outside the classroom:

- *Classroom observations:* I conducted classroom observations over the three-week period in America. The focus of the observations was on each individual student's degree of participation in classroom activities, verbal communication with the teacher and the peers (both the quantity and quality), verbal and non-verbal expression and behaviour showing anxiety, avoidance behaviour and difficulties in participating in classroom activities, if any (see Appendix 3). While I observed a particular participant, I also paid attention to other participants who were in the same class. Referring back to the lessons learnt from the pilot study (see 3.3.), I did not video-tape the classes because instead of observing the participants' linguistic performance, my class observation perspective focused narrowly on students' interaction with the classmates and teacher, their verbal and non-verbal behaviour related to English language learning (including anxiety) in the classroom setting. Due to the high selectivity of the observation, I relied on my note taking (while observing) for recording and it worked well. The presence of the video-camera itself might make the people act and not behaving as their real selves (Dörnyei 2007; Duff 2007), or feel "self-conscious, sometimes frightened or intimidated, or as though they are under surveillance (Mason 2002, p.118).
- *Outside classroom observations:* I followed my participants wherever they went after their classes on a daily basis, watching what they did and listening

to what they said. Since all participants went around together (almost) all the time, it was possible to observe them all for (most of) the time. The observation focus was the participant's use of English (both the quantity and quality) when communicating with the local people, number of initiations of English conversations, avoidance behaviour, difficulties in English conversations, verbal/non-verbal expression and behaviour showing anxiety, if any (see Appendix 5). I found it difficult to take descriptive field notes when I interacted with the participants and taking notes interrupted the interaction and made people around feel uneasy. I did not video-record the observation, either, due to the earlier mentioned possible impacts of it. It was also not possible to record them as they moved around. Instead I made mental notes during day time and then wrote a detailed description of what had happened (in English) after I returned home on that day when my memory was still fresh. Because the host families seemed busy with their life schedules, I did not get the chance to visit them (I will explain this further in 10.4). What I did instead was to ask participants to talk about their English communication at homestay during on-going interviews. Some of them also recorded what had happened in their host families vividly in their diaries.

3.4.3. Data generation using diaries

Several scholars have addressed the unique advantages of diaries for data generation. One of the advantages of diary studies is the developmental data they can provide. Due to the systematic chronological records of personal responses to language learning situations, researchers can trace informants' attitudinal changes through the sequential entries, which would be difficult, if not impossible, to obtain in any other way (Bailey 1990; Nunan 1992; Pole and Morrison 2003; Dörnyei 2007). Secondly, the diaries aim to provide an in-depth portrait of the individual diarist, his or her unique history and idiosyncrasies. Diary studies then give teachers and researchers insights into the diversity of students to be found within a homogeneous language learning environment (Bailey 1990; Pole and Morrison 2003).

Learning English in an English speaking country can be a very unique experience for most Taiwanese students. However, each student had a very different experience during the visit depending on where they went, what they did, and who they stayed

with (different host families) after the regular English classes. Asking students to keep the diaries on a daily basis allowed me to look at individuals' diversified SA experiences. The diaries also helped me to identify issues for discussion during both the interviews while abroad and the follow-up interviews back in Taiwan.

The participants were asked to record their experience while abroad and make entries on a daily basis in their own free time for three weeks. They were informed in advance that the diaries were to be used for research purposes. At the airport before we took the flight, I gave each of them a nice diary book with a guideline on writing the diary (see Appendix 7). Due to their limited English writing proficiency and in order for them to easily and fully express themselves, I invited them to write in Chinese. In order to increase students' willingness to keep the diary, I told them that keeping an English diary was a multi-functional channel through which they could reflect on, record, and examine any aspects relevant to their English language learning abroad, such as learning progress, achievement, problems, personal feelings, special experience, learning plans, goals, and so on. They could even include some vignettes to make keeping a diary a fun thing to do. I was aware of the fact that they knew I was going to read the diaries and this could limit their content. Therefore I created a supportive and intimate relationship with my diarists to make them feel sufficiently comfortable to discuss their fear, joy, and frustrations in the diary. I collected the diaries on a weekly basis (collecting every Saturday and returning to them next Monday).

Even though the daily diaries have the potential to provide much more information on participants' diversified experiences than interviews, in this present study, interviews remained the main data source and diary data played a supporting role. The reason for this is that many people simply do not like keeping a diary, which is very demanding, and it is such a personal thing that they may not do it in the way I envisaged. As showed in table 3.3., only two participants had entries everyday, while four had three to nine entries out of the 21 days, and two of them had no entry at all. The table also gives details of the number of interviews and observations and the time they took cumulatively. Appendix 9 provides contextual information on the date and duration of each interview and classroom observation, and the dates of diary entries collected in San Diego USA from each participant.

Table 3.3. Total number and length of interviews, observations, and diary entries during the SA trip

Participant	Total number of interview / cumulative time	Total number of Classroom observation / cumulative time	Total number of diary entry
Kai	10 interviews / 112 minutes	4 observations / 5.5 hours	3 entries
Jin	7 interviews / 104 minutes	5 observations / 6.5 hours	0 entries
Chocolate	8 interviews / 119 minutes	3 observations / 3.5 hours	0 entries
Christina	9 interviews / 125 minutes	3 observations / 3 hours	21 entries
Cynthia	11 interviews / 117 minutes	6 observations / 7.5 hours	5 entries
Ulla	10 interviews / 112 minutes	4 observations / 5.5 hours	21 entries
Ryan	13 interviews / 166 minutes	6 observations / 6.5 hours	7 entries
Sam	12 interviews / 142 minutes	6 observations / 7.5 hours	9 entries
Total	997 minutes of interview	45.5 hours of observation	66 diary entries

3.5. DATA ANALYSIS

After the data generation process, my next task was to try to make meaning from this large volume of data. Yin (2009, p.126) states: “data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, and testing or otherwise recombining evidence, to draw empirically based conclusions.” From the onset, I want to point out that I used thematic analysis, defined as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.79). I followed Braun and Clarke’s six phases of thematic analysis (2006, p.87) as the guidance with some modification as necessary: 1. Familiarizing yourself with your data including transcription of verbal data, 2. Generating initial codes, 3. Searching for themes, 4. Reviewing themes, 5. Defining and naming themes, 6. Producing a report. In the following four subsections, I explain what I did in these analysis phases.

3.5.1. Transcribing, translating, and familiarising myself with the data

Dörnyei (2007, p.246) states that “the first step in data analysis is to transfer the recording into a textual form.”. Therefore, my first data analysis activity was to transcribe pre-departure interview data as a way of starting to familiarise myself with

the data. I started transcribing as soon as possible after an actual interview was completed as suggested by Gillham (2000, p.71) who states: “your memory will help you in hearing what is on the tape.” In other words, I transcribed the interviews as the data generation process was going on.

Dörnyei (2007, p.160) notes that “in qualitative research almost anything can be perceived as potential data.” So, I decided to transcribe all the utterances in the recording because I did not know, at that stage, what would turn out to be significant statements and what would not, and I did not want to lose any potential data. The transcription also included stress, intonation, and emotional vocalisation such as laughter because I considered these features to be useful for interpreting “how” the participants talked about anxiety and for better capturing their real feelings. Richard (2003) and Dörnyei (2007) also state that the interviewee’s emotional emphasis such as stress, intonation, etc. can be crucial for the researcher to get the real meaning of the message the interviewee wants to convey.

I then translated all the Chinese transcripts into English. In order to deal with the issue of losing meaning through translation, I asked two of my colleagues at the university I teach in Taiwan who are also English teachers to check my English translation of interview transcripts. I gave each of them some parts of it and asked them to translate back into Chinese. Then I asked the third colleague to check the two versions. This process helped me to check if my translation correctly reflected the original transcription. I was aware that no translation can totally capture the original content, but I ensured as far as possible the equality of meaning. Next I immersed myself in the data by reading through the English interview transcripts several times to acquire a general idea of each participant’s history of English language learning, their feelings about this coming trip, and an overview of individual differences.

After I came back from America, I created a file for each participant and organised all the interview, observation, and diary data collected so far under each corresponding file. Then I transcribed and translated the interview data gathered in America in the same manner as for the pre-departure interviews. I also translated the diary entries into English and typed my observation notes that were written in

English. Sample excerpts of the interview transcripts, observation notes and diary entries are provided in Appendices 10-12. Again, I read through the interview transcripts, observation notes, and diary entries several times to get a sense of each participant's overall English language learning experience in America and also the individual differences. Right after all the follow-up interviews were transcribed and translated, the eight individual files were completed, consisting of all the data collected before, during, and after the SA experience. I read and reread each participant's file to understand the connection between the three stages. For instance, I was interested in finding out if the sources of anxiety reported in pre-departure interviews appeared in the interviews or diary data gathered during the SA tour, and whether their anxiety changed after they were back in Taiwan.

3.5.2. Generating initial codes

After familiarizing myself with the data through transcription, translation, and reading, I went on to second phase of thematic analysis: Generating initial codes. I started my coding from the interview data because it was the primary data source for this study. I used the term "coding", defined by Creswell (2007, p.148) as "reducing the data into meaningful segments and assigning names for the segments." I decided not to use any computer software to assist my coding activities mainly because the training for the relevant software – like Nvivo, was not readily available at the time I was ready to embark on data analysis. I returned to each participant's account to identify significant statements. With my research questions in mind, I looked for those phrases, sentences, or paragraphs that related directly to the following three major themes:

1. Causes of anxiety
2. Effects of anxiety in terms of feelings those causes engendered
3. Effects of anxiety in terms of how these feelings affected their behaviour

I coded the statements of each participant into various causes, feelings, and behaviour effects of anxiety. Appendix 13 shows two examples of codes applied to short segments of the data. Some coding labels were suggested by cognitive FL anxiety literature (see 2.3.1. and 2.3.2. for causes and effects of anxiety in literature) because I found those causes and effects of anxiety the participants reported correspond to those identified in the literature. Others came inductively from the data

itself, created from meaning units or actual phrases used in specific text segments. For instance, in the first example, code labels: “working in an unfamiliar learning environment”, “unfamiliar class task”, “insufficient preparation for speaking” and “poor performance” were derived from literature. In the second example, code labels: “passive and quiet class atmosphere” and “keeping quiet in class” were created by the participant’s actual wording.

Up to this stage, I had all the various Sources of anxiety → Anxiety → Effects of anxiety codes derived from interview data collected during the trip for the eight participants. The product of this initial coding was a collection of significant statements that are related to each participant’s causes and effects of anxiety. At first I came up with 56 codes of causes and 42 codes of effects. I also attached participant names after each code in order to see which code was most common among participants and which code was exclusive to only one or two participants, as Huberman and Miles (1994) suggest. Appendix 14 and 15 show the list of causes of anxiety codes and the list of effects of anxiety codes.

3.5.3. Searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes

At this point the third phase began which involved “sorting the different codes into potential themes, and collating all the relevant coded data extract within the identified themes” (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.89). I grouped the codes that share common characteristics together under a broader theme. Nine cause themes and seven effect themes that covered all of the codes were then generated (see Appendix 16 and 17).

Meanwhile, I continued revising and refining the themes, as the fourth and fifth phase of thematic analysis suggests. I went through the fourth phase: reviewing themes that involves “checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts” and the fifth phase: defining and naming themes through “ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme” (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.87). I reduced overlap and redundancy among codes and considered whether any theme was problematic. I found some codes within a particular theme did not fit there, and

therefore I reworked my themes, resorted codes into the already-existing themes, and created new themes that better fitted the data extracts. After that, I defined and further refined the themes as a process to identify “the essence of what each theme is about (as well as the themes overall), and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures” (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.92). This theme defining and naming continued until the names of themes appeared “concise, punchy, and immediately giving the reader a sense of what the theme is about (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.93). By the end of the fifth phase, I had eight cause themes and seven effect themes as shown in Chapter 4.

3.5.4. Producing the research report

The final phase of thematic analysis was to write up the research report. Influenced by the dominant cognitive approaches that characterise FL anxiety as having identifiable causes and effects, I first produced a cross-case report on the main themes based on what seemed to be causes and effects of anxiety (see Chapter 4). However, the findings suggested that a limitation to this kind of analysis is that it treats anxiety as a fixed individual internal phenomenon and therefore has little regard to the contexts in which individual learners engage. In other words, the analysis could only provide a surface view of the participants’ anxiety. Ayres et al. (2003, p.871) state:

Qualitative data management strategies that depend solely on coding and sorting texts into units of like meaning can strip much of this contextual richness (of individual experience) away. To prevent this, some authors have recommended treating individual accounts as whole cases or stories.

Therefore, I did not continue analysing the observation and diary data by searching for themes/ patterns across the eight cases, Instead, I moved on to in-depth single case analysis to explore individual students’ anxiety in much greater depth and to look for the complexity and individual differences. Reviewing the whole range of data from the participants, I sensed the importance of contexts and identity in relation to anxiety. Meanwhile, as I have noted in Chapter 2, many SLA scholars informed by poststructuralist approaches to SLA research and Communities of Practice (CoP) perspectives have called for more attention to be paid to sociocultural and contextual factors as well as multifaceted identities involved in the process of L2 learning and use. Norton (2000, p.120), for example, argues that “a language

learner's affective filter cannot be understood apart from his/her relationship to larger, and frequently inequitable social structures." Therefore, I considered the critical issue of context and identity in analysing my participants' anxiety in the process of English language learning and brought in poststructuralist approaches to SLA research and situated learning theories to deepen my understanding of the four students' anxiety and to interpret their situated experiences concerning English language learning and use during the SA trip. In the following two subsections, I explain how I produced the cross-case report and individual-case report in more detail.

3.5.4.1. Cross-case report

The cross-case analysis is defined as "a thematic analysis across the cases" (Creswell 2007, p.75). As suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), I chose the vivid data extracts to demonstrate the essence of each theme and avoided unnecessary complexity. In order to see how crucial causes and effects were to participants' anxiety and to compare and contrast between cases, I went back to the original data and the codes to count the number of times each participant reported each cause and effect. I created a table showing the eight causes, starting from the most to the least reported, with an overview of the number of times that each participant reported each cause. The same table was produced for effects of anxiety. I then produced a report of the cross-case analysis (see Chapter 4). The cross-case report dealt only with the interview data.

3.5.4.2. Individual-case report

Next I carried out the single-case analysis. Creswell (2007, p.75) calls it "within-case analysis" that provides "a detailed description of each case and themes within the case." After reviewing interview transcripts, observation notes, and diary entries of the eight participants, I selected four of them as my illustrative cases because they supplied more detailed information about their SA experiences and their anxiety in the English language learning process before, during, and after the trip, than the other four students in the study. In order to achieve a holistic understanding of each case, I looked at each individual's whole range of data (pre-during-post trip).

I first presented a report on their pre-departure English language learning experiences and feelings about the upcoming trip to America. Next I wrote case reports on the students' SA experiences in the three main English language learning and use situations (contexts) -classroom, homestay, and out-of-class activities. The report focused on the particular anxious experiences in different contexts, what triggered anxiety, and how the various anxious feelings (depression, frustration, fear, nervousness, etc.) affected the student's English language learning while abroad. I compared and contrasted causes and effects of anxiety and different levels of anxiety in different contexts. I also analysed how the anxiety in one context was influenced by that in another context. The final single-case reports also present the student's perceived impact of the SA experience on their English language learning including anxiety back in Taiwan as revealed by the post-trip data.

Overall, by comparing data gathered in different stages and different contexts, I was better able to understand how dynamic and fluctuating my cases' anxiety was. After the three stages of analysis were completed, I wrote up a comprehensive story of each individual case (the story of one person's anxiety in the English language learning process before - during – after the SA experience) with a summary at the end of it (see Chapters 5 to 8) .

The main difference in the analysis here compared to the cross-case analysis is that I did not take the cases' expressed causes and effects of anxiety for granted. My analysis went deeper by going beyond the participants' words. That is, I considered the broader social, institutional (school, homestay, out of class activities), and personality (e.g. identity) / background factors when analysing students' statements about what triggered their anxiety. However, it is important to note that my consideration of at least some of the factors mentioned above also depended on participants' words (e.g. English language learning and anxiety at homestay). I was sensitive to the language (including the speaking tone) the participants used to construct their anxiety in interviews and diaries. I also tried to be self-reflexive, keeping in mind that I, as a researcher, and the participants were not entities independent of one another. I considered how my respondents were drawing on various discourses in their explanations of anxiety and in their descriptions of their experiences in discussion with me during interviews or in their written diary entries.

This contextualised single-case analysis involved a radical theoretical re-evaluation and re-definition of anxiety. This kind of shift of orientation means that my analysis drew on distinctly different philosophical conceptualisation compared to cognitive studies on FL anxiety. I considered anxiety as something that can be constructed in speech or writing in various ways by learners due to differences in situations, interactional settings, and individual factors. Adopting this more “situated” approach to anxiety in the individual case analysis, I am following Ushioda’s (2009) “person-in-context” approach to L2 motivation research which focuses on “the unique local particularities of the person as self-reflective intentional agent, inherently part of and shaping her own context” (p.218) (see 2.5.4.).

Having noted, in the previous chapter, the limitations of a purely cognitive psychometric approach to FL anxiety research, I have found poststructuralist approaches to SLA research and situated learning theory helpful for explaining my data that signals the significant role of context and identity in anxiety. The poststructuralist and situated learning perspectives are compelling in their potential for tackling the variable, situated, and rhetorical nature of anxiety, which is something theoretically and analytically difficult to do within the cognitive paradigm applied in FL anxiety research despite its good intentions and contributions to the field.

Drawing on these two perspectives, the analysis shows how each individual case participant negotiated identity, competence, power relations, participation and membership in various communities of practice (CoP) or in similar CoPs over time and how these negotiations influenced their anxiety and personal agency to take ownership of their learning. In other words, the single-case reports offer a holistic understanding of how language learners’ anxiety is shaped and reshaped by social / contextual factors and by their identity construction in a SA context. In the next section, I turn to explain why I think my study is trustworthy.

3.6. ENHANCING TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose four ways in which qualitative researchers can enhance the trustworthiness of qualitative research. In Table 3.4, I present these

different aspects of trustworthiness and their corresponding terminology and definitions based on research literature (Creswell and Miller 2000; Gillham 2000; Mason 2002; Hammersley and Atkinson 2007; Yin 2009) that seems to have similar ideas of trustworthiness as Lincoln and Guba (1985). I also use the concepts of trustworthiness to address the quality of this study.

Table 3.4. Criteria of trustworthiness in research

In qualitative research	In quantitative research	Definition
Credibility	Internal validity	Extent to which the study actually investigates what it claims to investigate and reports what actually occurred in the field.
Transferability	External validity	Extent to which the researcher findings may be transferable, relevant or generalisable to other cases or contexts.
Dependability	Reliability	Extent to which the research procedure is clear enough to readers e.g. to enable other researchers to carry out similar studies in the same or other contexts.
Confirmability	Objectivity	How neutral the researcher is and to what extent s/he influences the findings.

Next I explain in some detail how I paid attention to the aspects of trustworthiness identified above during my study.

3.6.1. Credibility

I addressed the questions of credibility in a number of ways. First, I followed the principles of *triangulation* (Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Stake 2005). Stake (2005, p.454) defines triangulation as “a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation.” There are different types of triangulation in qualitative research: “1. Methods triangulation: Checking out the consistency of findings generated by different data generation methods, 2. Triangulation of sources: Checking out the consistency of different data sources within the same method, 3. Analyst triangulation: Using multiple analysts to review findings, 4. Theory/perspective triangulation: Using multiple perspectives or theories to interrupt the data” (Patton 2002, p.556). A lot of scholars have stated that trustworthiness of qualitative studies is strengthened by triangulation, and also that a holistic view with deeper understanding of the issue under study is achieved (Stake 1995; Bassey 1999; Denzin and Lincoln 2005; Stake 2005; Cohen et al. 2007; Dörnyei 2007; Yin 2009).

In this study, I used methods triangulation (checking out the consistency of findings generated by interviews, observations, and diary entries) to enhance the credibility of my study. Observations both in and out of classrooms provided basis for post-class observation interviews and on-going interviews. These interviews allowed me to understand the observational data from the participants' perspectives instead of depending on my own interpretations. Participants' diary entries supplemented interview and observation data as I explained earlier (see 3.4.3.). I compared and cross-checked data derived from interviews, observations, and diaries, and found consistency between these three sources of data. This consistency contributes significantly to the credibility of the study (Patton 2002). I also believed that multiple viewpoints allowed for greater trustworthiness in data and that was why multiple cases which also contributed to data source triangulation were chosen for this study.

Secondly, the credibility of the study can be strengthened by the researcher's intensive involvement in the research site. Through the intensive involvement in the field, researchers can build trust with participants and the rapport can make participants feel more comfortable disclosing their feelings or opinions, and therefore solidify evidence (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Robson 1993; Creswell and Miller 2000; Maxwell 2005; Creswell 2007; Dörnyei 2007). My sustained presence in the settings studied during the whole period of the SA tour involved persistent classroom observations, daily outing observations and intensive interviews (on-going interviews and post-class observation interviews). I talked with each of the participants almost every day, either casual chatting or interviewing, during class/lunch breaks and we went together as a group on various sight-seeing tours after school and on weekends.

Third, I used *peer debriefing* to help check the credibility of my study as suggested in research literature. Peer debriefing is the review of the data and research process by someone who is familiar with the research. It therefore provides an external check of the research process and enhances research credibility (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Creswell and Miller 2000; Mason 2002; Creswell 2007). I constantly discussed various issues throughout the process of my entire study (e.g. my research design,

data analysis, coding scheme, methodology, interpretation, etc.) with two PhD colleagues in the School of Education at the University of Leeds. They have also seen parts of my writing. Sometimes they asked hard questions about my research methods or interpretations and sometimes we did not really agree with each other. But I have benefited from and been inspired by these discussions and their valuable insights and comments, which made me think harder and deeper. Peer debriefing helped me to limit my biases and therefore also strengthened confirmability of the study by checking if my logical inferences and interpretations make sense to someone else.

Another suggestion in research literature on how researchers may enhance the credibility of their findings is *member checking*. Member checking involves taking data and interpretation back to the participants and giving them a chance to react and verify the data or the emerging findings, which can reduce error and strengthen the credibility of a research project (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Stake 1995; Creswell and Miller 2000; Mays and Pope 2000; Barbour 2001; Maxwell 2005; Creswell 2007). After I finished all the Chinese transcriptions of interview audio recording (pre-during-post trip) and my observation notes, I organised them into eight individual data files. I then sent these files separately through email attachments to the students and asked them to comment on the accuracy of the raw data. They all responded that the data matched their experiences. Later, after I had the second draft of the four individual case stories, I sent it to each person by an email attachment. Two of them replied to my email. One said that my report of her was detailed and matched her experiences and feelings, and the other responded that his English was too poor to understand my report. I think the reason why the other two did not reply was because they were on military service at that time during which they did not have internet access.

3.6.2. Transferability

Scholars argue that transferability is not a concern for qualitative research and/or case studies (e.g. Gillham 2000; Richards 2003; Creswell 2007). For instance, Creswell (2007, p.74) notes that “as a general rule, qualitative researcher are reluctant to generalise from one case to another because the contexts of the cases differ.” Richards (2003, p.10) also states that “it might be said that the power of

qualitative research (e.g. case studies) derives from its ability to represent the particular and that this distinguishes it from those sorts of research which depend on generalisability.” This “particularization”, in Van Lier’s (2005, p.198) term, means that “insights from a case study can inform, be adapted to, and provide comparative information to a wide variety of others cases, so long as one is careful to take contextual differences into account.”

In this study, since students’ perceptions are formed according to their individual social and linguistic experiences, study of student perceptions is individualistic, and thus difficult to generalise to larger population. Diary and interview data gathered can provide deep insights into individuals’ personal experiences, but it cannot be thought to represent the experiences of all SA students. Nevertheless, “case studies compensate in-depth and detail of portrayal, offering an opportunity to appreciate the unique complexity of particular contexts” (Kinginger 2008, p.113). Ultimately, it was not my objective to generalise to the whole of the Taiwanese context or anxiety in the English language learning process during a SA tour in general as this is not consistent with qualitative case studies (Stake 1995; Creswell 2007).

3.6.3. Dependability

Providing thick description of the setting, participants, and the themes (e.g. data collection and analysis) of a qualitative study has been recognised as one way of establishing dependability in a study (Stake 1995; Richards 2009; Yin 2009). Thick description is “deep, dense, detailed accounts” (Denzin 1989, p.83). The purpose of thick description is to “create verisimilitude, statements that produce for the readers the feeling that they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described in a study”(Creswell and Miller 2000. p.129).

The present study’s dependability, therefore, was strengthened by my detailed description of the four cases’ anxiety in the English language learning process before, during, and after the SA experience, and the sufficiently detailed information on the process of my data collection and analysis. As commonly suggested by scholars (Gillham 2000; Silverman 2005; Dörnyei 2007; Duff 2008), I maintained a research log, defined as “a systematic account of one’s research activities and reflections” (Duff 2008, p.142). It has been very helpful for my thick description of

the study. I started writing it at the beginning of my research project and fully documented the data collection and analysis process and the on-going decisions and the rationale behind it. For instance, during the three weeks abroad, I documented my everyday experiences, perceptions, interpretations and my reasoning for every action I took (e.g. who to observe and interview) after I got home every day, in case any information not considered relevant at the time would prove useful in the future. All the entries were properly dated and kept together in a Microsoft Word folder. This logbook has assisted me not to mix up numerical details during the whole research process and therefore a thick description of the study could be provided. As Duff (2008, p.142) notes: “Having a research log is very helpful when information that earlier was very salient and memorable becomes harder to retrieve and reconstruct with time.”

3.6.4. Confirmability

Researchers have suggested that confirmability of a qualitative research can be enhanced by *researcher reflexivity*, which means that researcher is sensitive to the ways the researcher and the research process have shaped the collected data including researcher’s prior assumptions, experience, beliefs, and biases (or subjectivity) (Angen 2000; Creswell and Miller 2000; Mays and Pope 2000). However, self-reflexivity does not mean that the researcher achieves objectivity. In fact, no study can claim that it achieves pure objectivity. Given the interpretive nature of qualitative research in which “the researcher makes meaning of (interprets) what he learns as he goes along” (Rossman and Rallis 2003, p.36), it is impossible for the researcher, as a key instrument in the research process (Patton 2002; Rossman and Rallis 2003; Duff 2008), to remain completely separate from the subject of inquiry (Angen 2000; Maxwell 2005). It is normal for researchers to carry their prior conceptualisation and prejudices to the fieldwork (Duff 2008). Nevertheless, researchers still try to maintain a reasonable level of detachment and open-mindedness (being neutral and unbiased) (Denscombe 2002).

My intention here, therefore, was not to eliminate, but to be aware of, and try to reduce my influence on the participants. I considered how my values and expectations would affect my conduct and conclusion of the study. Meanwhile I maintained an open mind and tried to keep my biases out of the investigation and be

willing to learn from the field. One strategy I used was to avoid asking leading, closed, or short-answer interview questions that do not enable participants to reflect upon their own perspectives. I tried to monitor my own perceptions about anxiety and about English language learning in order not to affect what my participants said.

I acknowledged that my presence as an observer would inevitably have an influence on the participants and the setting being observed (see also Gillham 2000; Duff 2008). For example, one participant wrote in her diary on the second day that she felt nervous in class and knowing that I was observing her made her even more nervous. What I did to reduce my effect was to conduct persistent observations which I hoped would help participants get used to my presence both in the classroom and during outings. My intensive every-day participation enabled me to “blend into” the research site and I presented myself in a non-threatening light and maintained a good relationship with the participants. I also made them fully understand the research purpose of the observation. The advantage of doing so is that participants who understand why the observer is there and what the observer is doing will be less bothered by the presence of the observer and the observation may be less likely to have a negative reactive impact on the setting. I was also conceptually clear about what was being observed, which could enhance rigor and consistency in observation. In sum, my self-reflexivity enhanced the confirmability of the study.

On the other hand, attention to negative cases (or deviant case analysis) has been a long established tactic for improving the trustworthiness of explanation in qualitative research. This deviant case analysis searches for, and discusses elements in the data that (seem to) contradict the emerging explanation of the phenomena under study (Mays and Pope 2000; Whitemore et al. 2001; Creswell 2007). My deviant case analysis of one student who seemed to be more relaxed, and had the best oral English competence and the most extensive English use during the SA tour (see 5.1.) could thereby strengthen the confirmability of my findings. It also helped to strengthen credibility and dependability of the study. The confirmability of the study could also be strengthened by thick description mentioned earlier (see 3.6.3.) as Duff (2008, p.56) notes that “providing sufficient detail about decision making, coding or analysis, chains of reasoning, and data sampling can allay concerns about unprincipled subjectivity.”

3.7. CONCLUSION

In order to assist the readers to make judgement about the quality of the study, in this chapter, I presented a detailed account of the research design and the rationale behind it, the process of the fieldwork, the procedures involved in the data generation and analysis, and the strategies used to enhance the quality of the study. Now I proceed to present the findings of this study in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION OF THE FINDINGS CHAPTERS

Chapters 4 to 8 are findings chapters. In Chapter 4, I present a report of the cross-case analysis of data from all the eight participants mainly in terms of the major causes and effects of anxiety during the study abroad (SA) trip. I present this first because it provides a surface overview of English language learners' anxiety in a SA context. Then I move on to an in-depth analysis of four participants, as presented in Chapters 5 to 8. The rationale for these individual case reports is to understand each individual's anxiety in terms of the broader social, institutional (school, homestay, out of class) and personal contexts. As mentioned earlier (see 3.5.4.2.), the in-depth case analysis adopts a more "situated" (Ushioda 2009, p.217) approach to anxiety, trying to understand language learners as "people who are necessarily located in particular cultural and historical contexts" (Ushioda 2009, p.216). Situated analysis tries to capture the non-linear, dynamic, and complex relationships between anxiety and the contexts in which learners acted. To begin with, I present, in table 4.1., the examples of symbols indicating the sources of the citations that will feature in the findings chapters. Appendix 18 shows all the symbols that I use.

Table 4.1. Examples of symbols used to indicate sources of data

J 123	Jin's interview on Jan, 23 rd , 2008
K 122	Kai's interview on Jan, 22 nd , 2008
U 121	Ulla's interview on Jan, 21 st , 2008
R121, RD120	Ryan's interview on Jan, 21 st , 2008 and diary entry on Jan, 20 th , 2008
S121, SD120	Sam's interview on Jan, 21 st , 2008 and diary entry on Jan, 20 th , 2008
C1121	Christina's interview on Jan, 21 st , 2008
C1D120	Christina's diary entry on Jan, 20 th , 2008
C1O123	Christina's observation on Jan, 23 rd , 2008
C2121	Chocolate's interview on Jan, 21 st , 2008

4.2. CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

In this section I discuss the major causes and effects of anxiety expressed by the participants during interviews while abroad. I present these causes and effects of anxiety in descending order of frequency as reported by my participants.

4.2.1. Causes of anxiety

In this section, I present eight major causes of anxiety expressed by the participants during interviews while abroad. It is important to note that there are many

interrelationships among these causes, as Table 4.2. shows. For instance, anxiety due to fear of negative social evaluation may affect anxiety due to fear of speaking English. Anxiety resulting from low actual/self perceived English proficiency and feeling inferior may affect anxiety due to fear of negative social evaluation. Table 4.2 also shows an overview of the number of times that each participant mentioned each cause. I present this quantitative breakdown of the causes of anxiety because it can offer a view of how crucial each factor is to the participants' anxiety in English language learning.

Table 4.2. Participants' number of reports on causes of anxiety

Participant name Cause of anxiety	Ryan	Sam	Jin	Ulla	Kai	Cynthia	Christina	Chocolate	Total
1. Low actual /self perceived English proficiency / Feeling inferior	24	27	23	20	9	7	20	6	136
2. Fear of negative social evaluation	21	7	4	5	5	1	13	7	63
3. Difficulty in comprehension	15	6	2	1	1	1	12	8	46
4. Fear of speaking English	6	5	3	3	2	1	9	0	29
5. Unfamiliar environment / English task	4	3	1	2	1	2	3	0	16
6. Self-perceived personal characteristic	2	1	0	2	2	0	2	1	10
7. Strong motivation	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	4
8. Culture difference	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3
Total	73	51	33	33	20	12	62	23	

From Table 4.2 we can see that low actual and self-perceived English proficiency or feeling inferior was reported as being by far the greatest cause of anxiety overall and for seven out of the eight participants. Seven participants also reported that fear of negative evaluation was the second most common cause of anxiety. Three participants reported difficulty in comprehension, and three others reported speaking English as their third highest cause of anxiety. The rest of the causes were relatively minor due to the lower number of reports. Next I discuss each of the causes individually.

1. Anxiety resulting from low actual/self-perceived English proficiency and feeling inferior

All eight participants said that their actual or self-perceived poor English proficiency or performance both in and out of class contributed to anxiety. They expressed anxiety-related feelings whenever they could not understand spoken English or could not make themselves understood. The following quote illustrates this anxiety: "I felt depressed and frustrated when I couldn't understand them (host family) and when I couldn't express myself. I felt very annoyed" [J124]. This poor English proficiency caused or at least aggravated their feeling inferior to others. One of them made a representative statement:

I feel everybody is doing all right and their English is improving except me. It seems that only I have problems. I feel very weak emotionally and physically. I feel every body in class is learning well and my learning ability is very bad. I gave myself too much pressure and I am very annoyed about it [R123].

2. Anxiety due to fear of negative social evaluation

All eight participants also stated that they worried about or were afraid of people's negative evaluation of their English competence either in the classroom, at homestay, or in out-of-class activities. The following excerpt illustrates this form of anxiety:

My listening and speaking were not very good, but I had to do group discussion in class. My group members didn't understand me and I felt humiliated and afraid of their judgment of my English [J128].

3. Anxiety due to difficulty in comprehension

All eight participants in this study mentioned that they were anxious about not being able to comprehend teachers' talk or teaching, which can be illustrated by the quote below:

I was more relaxed in the morning class because it's easier. I felt I could control it more. This afternoon class is more difficult because the teacher used many specific terms that I don't understand. I was more nervous in her class [K122].

In addition, three participants stated that anxiety occurred when they could not understand their international peers' fast speaking during the small group discussion. Their fast responses to the teacher made my participants feel inferior and become very anxious in class. Ulla, as an example, stated: "I felt those Brazilians all spoke so fast and they could respond to the teacher very fast as well. They could answer the teacher's questions before I could react. I felt very nervous and anxious" [U121]. Local people and host family's fast speaking was also reported as a source of anxiety

by five participants. For instance, Jin said: “When my hostess spoke too fast, I was worried about what exactly she was talking about and I didn’t understand her” [J124].

4. Anxiety due to fear of speaking English

Seven participants stated that class oral activities like being called on by teacher or small group discussion made them anxious. This speaking anxiety usually involved fear of negative evaluation and poor actual speaking competence, which can be illustrated by the statement:

I always feel uncomfortable when speaking English. Like in class, I was called on to read a passage, but I couldn’t read it smoothly. I encountered a word I don’t know every two words. People must be laughing at me. I just hope teacher won’t call me to speak [U131].

Five of them also talked about their anxious experience of speaking English to native speakers, including their host family. For instance, Kai stated the following:

Whenever the local people didn’t understand me, they would just stop there and became speechless. I felt very nervous at that moment because I didn’t know what to do and how to say to make myself understood [K131].

5. Anxiety related to working in an unfamiliar learning environment or performing unfamiliar English tasks

Seven participants reported their anxiety about working in an unfamiliar learning environment, or performing unfamiliar English tasks, which can be illustrated by the quotes below:

I was a bit nervous because there were many people in this class and some of them I don’t know. This is the first time we had many new students [S128].

In the afternoon class, the teacher asked everybody to tell a story to the whole class. Even though we were sitting, I was very nervous at that time. I didn’t know what and how to say because I have never done this before [C2125].

6. Anxiety due to self-perceived personal characteristic

Four participants stated that they tended to compare and compete with other people, and they started to feel anxious when they felt their English was worse than others’. Four participants reported that their shy personality made them more concerned about speaking English to others. Therefore they were passive in the classroom and they did not really seek chances to practice English outside the classroom. The quotes below capture how competition, comparison, and shyness influenced anxiety:

I tend to compare and compete with people. When I felt my English was the worst in our Taiwanese group, I felt very down and stressed, and then my learning was impaired [R124].

I felt so embarrassed and I didn't know what to talk about. I am not like Chocolate who is very good at chitchat. This is due to the different personalities. I am shy. I am afraid I will annoy them (host family) [K124].

7. Anxiety resulting from strong motivation

Three participants revealed that their strong motivation for learning / practicing English caused anxiety. In other words, they felt anxious when they could not learn as much as expected either because of their incompetence or the environment that did not facilitate learning. Chocolate made the following representative statement: "Some things I still can't understand. I tried hard to understand, but I couldn't. That was a bad feeling because I always wanted to learn, but I couldn't" [C2128].

8. Anxiety resulting from cultural difference

Two participants reported that cultural difference in terms of teaching styles made them anxious. They were also more anxious about talking to non-Asian classmates due to the cultural distance between them. For instance, one said: "I was very nervous because the American way of teaching is very different, but I felt better when I got used to the teaching styles here."

4.2.2. Effects of anxiety

In this section, I present seven major effects of anxiety expressed by the participants during interviews while abroad. Table 4.3. presents an overview of how often the participants reported each effect of anxiety in order to see how strong each effect is.

Table 4.3. Participants' number of reports on effects of anxiety

Participant name Effect of anxiety	Ryan	Sam	Jin	Ulla	Kai	Cynthia	Christina	Chocolate	Total
1. Avoidance / reduced WTC	15	5	7	9	5	1	10	3	55
2. Leading to short-term motivation	2	11	4	3	1	0	2	1	24
3. Poor performance	7	2	2	2	1	0	3	1	18
4. Low self-confidence/ self perception/ feeling inferior	7	3	2	5	0	0	0	0	17
5. Interrupting learning process	7	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	11
6. Increasing communication planning time	1	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	7
7. Impairing short-term motivation	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	4
Total	40	21	16	19	7	2	21	10	

From Table 4.3 we can see that avoidance / reduced WTC (willingness to communicate) (see 2.3.1.) was reported as being by far the greatest effect of anxiety overall and for seven out of the eight participants. One participant had the highest number of reporting on anxiety leading to short-term motivation, two others reported it as the second strongest effect of anxiety, and three others reported it as the third one. Two participants had the second highest number of report on poor performance, and three others had the third highest number of report on it. The rest of the effects were relatively minor due to the lower number of reports. What is noteworthy in Table 4.3 is the apparent contradiction between anxiety both leading to and impairing short-term motivation, even in the same person. Besides, Table 4.2. and 4.3. show that poor language performance / proficiency and low self-perception / feeling inferior can be classified both as causes and effects of anxiety. Next I discuss each of the effects individually.

1. Anxiety causes avoidance or reduced WTC (Willingness to Communicate)

All eight participants reported avoidance behaviour in the classroom due to anxiety. Fear of making mistakes was one of the major reasons for their low class participation, which can be illustrated by the statement: "If I am not certain about it, I won't say anything in class. I was afraid of making mistakes" [C2123]. An interesting finding is that anxiety made them have very limited class participation,

which, however, in turn generated more anxiety. Seven of them mentioned that their low class participation made them anxious, feeling like an outsider in class and having no sense of belonging. The following statement is one example:

I always felt uneasy during the whole class because I couldn't say much at all and I could only say one or two words, but not fluently at all. I couldn't join their conversation. I felt like an outsider [U122].

Regarding the situations outside the classroom, seven participants reported they avoided (did not dare) speaking to the host family, local people, and international peers. Their avoidance could be illustrated by the quote: "I preferred to go out with Taiwanese. I was avoiding speaking English outside the classroom. I felt uncomfortable about the communication obstacle" [U131].

2. Facilitating anxiety – Anxiety leads to short-term motivation

Seven participants reported facilitating anxiety that motivated them to work harder and have better performance (see 2.3.1.). This facilitating anxiety can be captured by the following quote:

I felt depressed when I knew all other classmates could understand the teacher, but I couldn't. I was nervous and depressed when I felt my performance was not good and I couldn't participate in class. I am worried I would be left behind others. I have to study hard during class breaks and make sure I understand all the words on the handout [J123].

3. Anxiety causes poor performance

Seven participants mentioned that anxiety made them perform worse, which can be illustrated by the statement: "Sometimes my brain went blank when I got nervous and anxious in class, and therefore I forgot the words I have learnt" [K123]. The fact that poor language performance / proficiency was found to be both a cause and an effect of the anxiety my participants experienced shows the reciprocal relationship between anxiety and performance.

4. Anxiety impairs self-confidence and leads to low self-perception / feeling inferior

Four participants mentioned that their self-confidence or self-perception was negatively affected by anxiety and then they felt inferior, which can be captured by the quote: "When I was anxious, I underestimated my English and I kept thinking I could not understand spoken English at all and my overall English was so poor. I felt

very inferior” [R27]. Three of them had self-defeating thoughts when they were anxious. For example, one said: “I felt very nervous and anxious all the time in class. I felt helpless and I must look like an idiot. I felt I am so stupid” [U121]. It is important to note that low self-perception / feeling inferior and a lack of self-confidence are again both a reported cause and an effect of anxiety. That is, low self-confidence and low self-perception / feeling inferior led to anxiety, which in turn, further impaired self-perception and self-confidence. This is a vicious circle.

5. Anxiety interrupts the English language learning process

Three participants reported that they had difficulty concentrating in class when they felt anxious, which could be illustrated by the statement: “The morning class made me most uneasy. I could not concentrate in class.” This effect is also closely linked to the cause described earlier about difficulty in comprehension (see 4.2.1.). Another vicious circle appears and becomes a pattern.

6. Anxiety increases the planning time in communication

Three participants noted that when they were anxious, they tended to think a lot and make sure the sentence is correct before saying it. The following statement could represent what they said:

I felt nervous when I had to speak English and when I said something but not sure if he/she understood me or not. I was nervous before I said something. I was thinking what I should say and what the correct way of saying it is and how to say it in complete sentences [J414].

7. Anxiety negatively affects learners’ short-term motivation to learn English

Three participants indicated that anxiety impaired their short-term motivation to learn English during the SA trip. For example, one said: “All the negative emotions such as anxiety I had at homestay and in the morning class made me not want to learn English while in America. I became less motivated to learn” [R27].

4.3. CONCLUSION

This cross-case analysis shows that the causes and effects of anxiety may not always be distinguishable and there are no clear-cut and predictable relations between the two (e.g. some factors were found to be both the cause and effect of anxiety). It signals that based on the cross-case analysis which has featured commonly in

literature (e.g. Samimy and Rardin 1994; Cheng 1998; Liao 1999; Tse 2000; Gregersen and Horwitz 2002; Worde 2003; Ohata 2005a), the causes and effects of anxiety have been mainly analyzed at a superficial level. Also I found the findings I generated from this cross-case analysis just confirm the results of many previous cognitive FL anxiety studies (e.g. MacIntyre 1999; Kitano 2001; Argaman and Abu-Rabia 2002; Gregersen and Horwitz 2002; Yashima et al. 2004; Elkhafaifi 2005; Liu 2006; Woodrow 2006). Therefore I now move on to the next four chapters where the in-depth, individual case analysis shows how diverse and complex the four young adults' SA experiences were and how context-dependent and variable their anxiety was.

CHAPTER 5: RYAN

5.1. INTRODUCTION OF CASES CHAPTERS

As explained in Chapter 3, I chose to present data from four participants (Ryan, Sam, Christina, and Chocolate) in detail as independent cases because they provided more information than the others about their study abroad experiences and FL anxiety before, during and after the trip. According to the total number of times that each participant mentioned all the causes and effects of anxiety (shown in table 4.2 and 4.3), the first three appeared to be more anxious students and the final one (as a deviant case) apparently more relaxed. This final case also had the best oral English proficiency and the highest use of English both in and out of class among the eight participants.

Below is a description of the structure of how each case is presented. The reason for this particular structure is to help the readers follow my train of thought more easily and to ultimately help me in answering my research questions. Each case is presented as follows:

1. The learner's history of English language learning and feelings about the upcoming trip: providing background information useful for interpreting his/her comments and behaviour during the trip;
2. The learner's study abroad experience: looking into the kind of anxiety experienced in the classroom, at homestay, and in out-of-class activities over the three week period and the learner's recall of his/her overall study abroad experience two months after the trip;
3. The learner's perception of the impact of this study abroad experience on his/her English proficiency, fear of speaking English, anxiety in the English language learning process, and English language learning motivation after they are back in Taiwan;
4. Summary of the findings for the learner.

The first case begins by introducing Ryan and his history of English language learning and feelings about the trip.

5.2. RYAN'S HISTORY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AND FEELINGS ABOUT THE SA TRIP

At the time when I was conducting my fieldwork, Ryan was 19 years old. He was a first year vocational university student. Having never been abroad and being eager to see the outside world, Ryan was one of the first students who volunteered to join this study abroad (SA) programme.

During the pre-departure interview, Ryan told me that his parents had a very high expectation of him and had been encouraging him to learn English well. At the age of nine, Ryan was sent by his parents to learn English at a private language centre and he continued the lessons during junior high and senior vocational school years. Besides, since his final year of senior vocational school, his parents hired an English tutor for him. The first three years of English language learning experience at the private language centre were pleasant for Ryan due to the teacher's style of teaching: "The teaching was very impressive because the Taiwanese teacher had lived in America for many years and his teaching was very American and interactive. We learnt from playing. The class was very interesting" [R1220]. Another pleasant experience, according to Ryan, was that he played a key character in Kids English drama and performed well even though he felt tired memorizing his lines.

Ryan said he studied English very hard in the first two years of junior high school due to the teacher's encouragement like giving extra points and peer competition. However, he lost his interest and motivation to learn English in the final year of junior high school: "At that time I did not want to learn English because I felt my English was getting worse than my classmates. The more inferior I felt the less interest and motivation I had for English language learning" [R1220]. Later on in senior vocational school, the English lessons were all about rote-learning of grammar and vocabulary. Ryan commented: "I totally lost my interest in studying English. Therefore I put more focus on developing my vocational skills and forgot the English grammar and vocabulary I had learnt" [R1220]. Ryan also said that he devoted most of his time on Commercial Design during the first year in university and I could see his passion for this subject. During the trip, he was taking lots of pictures and he told me he was editing them professionally at night in order to upload them to his personal commercial design webpage, and therefore he did not

have time to do the English homework. He also commented as follows during the pre-departure interview:

When I am interested in something, I will work hard to learn it just like doing Commercial Design assignments. I felt happy because I am very interested in it. When I presented the assignment and got good feedback from others, I felt self-accomplished. This sense of accomplishment was the motive for me to continue learning [R1220].

Despite the pleasant English language learning experience during childhood, Ryan, at the time of being interviewed, thought that his English proficiency was poor. His poor performance, which might partly relate to his poor foreign language aptitude, generated anxiety and a lack of self-accomplishment impaired his interest and motivation for English language learning. He stated:

My foreign language aptitude is not good. I can never learn English well and my English is poor. I easily forgot the vocabulary I have memorised. I hated it. I felt unhappy. When I felt I did not accomplish something, my interest and motivation for learning disappeared [R1220].

Generally speaking, Ryan was anxious in English classes. There were many factors causing this anxiety. One of them was his fear of English teachers who would get upset and impatient when the students did not perform well: "I am used to be scared in English classes and I was afraid that the teacher would get upset. Therefore, I felt very frustrated in recent classes. Yes, it's really frustrating" [R1220]. The teacher's non-interactive teaching and his rote learning of English vocabulary and grammar were other sources of anxiety:

Some teachers asked us to read the textbook passage by passage and to memorise those vocabulary and grammar rules at home by writing them several times. I felt meaningless to do so and gradually I didn't feel like attending those teachers' classes and started to hate learning English [R1220].

Moreover, speaking English was anxiety-inducing for Ryan: "I felt scared when I had to speak English in class. I don't have the courage to speak English to a native speaker or speak English in front of my classmate whose English is much better than mine" [R1220]. This anxiety about speaking English was caused by fear of making mistakes, poor self-perceived oral English proficiency, and feeling inferior, as he continued saying:

I have a classmate who used to live in Canada. Her English is super good. Whenever I heard her speaking English, I wondered how come she could speak English so fluently. I felt very bad and so sad. I felt so inferior, and therefore I didn't

dare to speak English in front of her. I would be very embarrassed because my English is very poor and I was afraid of making mistakes [R1220].

Ryan's narrative above indicates that a lack of self-confidence held him back from using English with peers who were more proficient in the language. Jackson's (2008) study also found that those who were less proficient or less confident about their English oral skills were more anxious and reluctant to speak English with somebody who was more fluent. Pellegrino Aveni (2005) suggests that language learners' fear of making mistakes (when speaking with a person whose L2 is better than theirs) may relate to the fear that their mistakes may lower their linguistic and intellectual status. In this view, Ryan's anxiety over speaking English can be interpreted as rooted in his concern of self-presentation.

Ryan also felt anxious about English listening, reading, writing, and testing in which he was concerned about poor performance: "I got annoyed when I could not understand spoken and written English" [R1220]. "I felt bad when I was trying to write something in English, but could not spell those words out or make a complete sentence" [R1220]. "The more I cared about my performance, the more nervous I was" [R1220]. "I tended to be very nervous, and sometimes got panic during English tests" [R1220]. Furthermore, concern about social and parental evaluation also caused anxiety: "I felt worried and nervous when people asked about my English proficiency" [R1220]. The reason was that his parents had invested a lot in his English language learning, sending him to the English language centre, and hiring a tutor for him, but he still could not learn English well: "I was afraid that people would say all my English language learning was useless" [R1220].

Even though Ryan was anxious about English language learning, he still thought English was very important and he "should" study English hard for his future career: "My parents and teachers always told me that I can't compete with others if my English is not good. I agree because I could be much more competitive if both my vocational skills and English are good. I also don't want to limit my future career in Taiwan" [R1220]. Ryan's statement discloses his awareness of the symbolic and material resources, or what Bourdieu (1991) called the "symbolic capital" learning English can provide (see 2.5.2.). However, he lost interest in English and this

instrumental motivation (Gardner and Lambert 1972), defined as learners' desire to learn a language for utilitarian purposes such as employment, was not strong enough to turn his thoughts into action. Ryan said to me: "I feel there are two Ryans deep in my heart. One really wants to learn English. The other just doesn't have the impulse to do so. I am that kind of person who needed to be interested in something before I could make efforts to learn it" [1220].

Consequently, instead of setting any objective on gaining English proficiency, Ryan's main expectation of this coming trip to America was to boost his interest in English language learning: "I could take this opportunity to feel the whole-English environment and I believe I will be much more interested in English afterwards" [R1220]. Besides, he hoped that this trip could make him "become another person" because he acknowledged that some aspects of his personality added up to his anxiety and impaired his English language learning:

I have a very high ego that made me ashamed of making mistakes. I know the most important thing in English language learning was not to be afraid of making mistakes. This is my weakness and I will try hard to improve it. I feel we Asians tend to care about our performance and others' perception of ourselves. Sometimes I really felt I couldn't be like this all the time because I gave myself too much pressure and made myself very anxious. So, I hope I could become another person in America because nobody knows me there and I could be more open-minded, like those westerners (Americans), without all these unnecessary misgivings [R1220].

Despite having all these expectations in mind, Ryan was still quite nervous about this coming trip. The following quote illustrates his pre-trip worries:

What I am most afraid of is I can't make friends in America because I worry that I will speak Chinese all the time there. I told myself many time that I should try my best not to speak Chinese when I am in America, but I am really scared of English oral communication with native speakers. Even though I look forward to this trip, but I still get frightened and nervous about it because I am going to a country where I don't know anybody and I don't know their language either [R1220].

It appears to me that Ryan was in a paradox that he expected himself to practice English and make friends as much as he could while in America, but at the same time he was worried about his poor English and scared of English oral communication. Some possible reasons could explain Ryan's worry and fear. First, according to Ryan, this was his first time to go abroad. Second, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, the English language teaching and the social context in Taiwan where English is a foreign rather than second language did not grant Ryan many chances to

practice oral English both in and outside classroom. Third, he said he had never studied English with a native speaker teacher.

As for the upcoming homestay experience, Ryan had more expectations than worries. He was keen to immerse himself in and explore the American culture: “I am looking forward to experiencing American life. I am very impressed with those American houses I saw on TV. I want to know what people are doing in those houses everyday. I also hope I can take buses myself and explore the neighbourhood” [R1220].

5.3. RYAN’S STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE

In the following subsections, I describe Ryan’s study abroad experience in terms of his anxiety in the classroom, at homestay, and in out-of-class activities, along with Ryan’s recall of his overall SA experience two months after the trip.

5.3.1. Ryan’s anxiety in the classroom

As per Ryan’s pre-trip statement that he tended to feel anxious during English language tests and fear to speak English to a native speaker, it was no surprise that the placement speaking test on the first day of school made Ryan very anxious. He sounded depressed when I interviewed him: “I felt very frustrated in the test. I seemed to understand and felt familiar with some words, but I couldn’t respond to the teacher. I felt I had to use double energy to understand English. It’s very painstaking” [R121]. His diary of the day also recorded his frustration about the test and being placed in the lowest level of class seemed to have added to anxiety. “Today is the day of test. I guessed I would be placed in the lowest level of class. It turned out to be true. I felt bad and sad” [RD121]. This anxiety resulting from poor performance and feeling inferior corresponds to what he told me before the trip.

Later on I observed Ryan’s first day of class and noticed that he never spoke voluntarily. When he was called on to speak, he either looked at his Taiwanese classmates sitting next to him for help or just remained silent. He seemed not to understand what the teacher said and his Taiwanese classmates sitting next to him would translate it into Chinese for him. During the post-class observation interview, Ryan expressed that his low class participation and poor English proficiency induced

anxiety: “I feel the teacher was very patient and nice. The problem is my English is too poor. I didn’t say anything. I really felt sorry and embarrassed” [R121]. His poor English also made him feel very scared when called on and his reaction to this anxious situation was trying to avoid it: “I felt most nervous when the teacher asked me or the whole class to answer her question, but I didn’t know the answer and others did not know either. I felt nervous when there was silence. It’s very scary and I really hoped she (the teacher) didn’t talk to me” [R121].

Another source of stress was the teacher’s prohibition of speaking Chinese in class: “The teacher said “No Chinese”. I felt like a criminal when I spoke Chinese in class because I had to speak in a very low voice. I felt stressed because I couldn’t let the teacher hear me speaking Chinese” [R121]. Overall Ryan’s oral narrative shows that his poor English proficiency caused him a strong feeling of anxiety on the first day of class. This anxiety in turn made Ryan have poor self-perceived English proficiency and feel inferior: “I feel my English is much worse than my classmates’ because I didn’t know this and I didn’t know that. I feel my English is so bad” [R121].

It is possible that his Taiwanese classmates’ help (translating the teacher’s words into Chinese for him), which showed their English was much better than his, may have aggravated Ryan’s feeling of inferiority and poor self-perceived English competence. This might have added to a feeling of anxiety according to Ryan’s pre-departure statement that he felt very bad and so sad and so inferior when he heard his classmate speaking very good English. Ryan also wrote in his diary on the first day of school about this overwhelming class which made him easily get tired and therefore his learning and performance were impaired: “I easily got tired in class because I had to use double energy to understand the teacher. I was so tired that sometimes I was in a daze. I missed what the teacher said and also I couldn’t understand most of it” [RD121].

Two days later, during the first class break, some of our Taiwanese students came to me and asked me to comfort Ryan because he was feeling very depressed and anxious. I asked Ryan “how are you today?” but he started crying and said:

My brain went blank in class. I couldn't read and I didn't understand at all. I was like an idiot sitting there and doing nothing. I was also thinking about many things and that made me very depressed...I don't mean that our hostess is not good, but I can't get along with her. It's very painstaking and I feel very tired both emotionally and physically. I felt I was the worst student in class because I didn't know how to read the words and sentences. The teacher later on didn't call on me any more. I was very depressed because that made me feel I was the worst student in class [R123].

From the above statement, we could see that Ryan's negative experience and anxiety at homestay (for details, see 5.3.2.) affected his learning in class and contributed to poor performance. In other words, Ryan anxiety in the classroom could possibly have derived from his preoccupation with stressful everyday living situations. This also occurred in Norton's (2000) study on the immigrant women in the ESL classroom. Ryan's poor performance along with the teacher's ignoring him in class (not calling on him any more), in turn, led to further low self-perception and anxiety. From his repeating: "I felt I was the worst student in class.", we could sense that this strong feeling of inferiority made Ryan even more anxious. This was a vicious circle.

It is also possible that not being called on by the teacher made Ryan feel excluded from the class discourse hence the feeling of being marginalised and isolated, which may have generated anxiety. My observation of this morning class also indicates that obviously the teacher tended to call on those students whose English and class performance were better. Ignored by the teacher, Ryan may have felt he was perceived as a far less competent student than his classmates. This situation could have been anxiety-provoking according to his pre-trip statement that caring about how people perceive him caused him pressure and made him very anxious. Tsui's (1996) study also found that teachers who allocate turns in favour of brighter students will undermine the self-esteem of the weaker students and students who are seldom allocated turns will feel ignored by the teacher.

Furthermore, corresponding to Ryan's pre-trip statement about "non-interactive teaching" causing his anxiety in the classroom, the teacher-centred teaching along with difficult class materials also made Ryan anxious and caused him to perform poorly in this SA class. This again impaired his self-perception and further anxiety occurred. His personal characteristics such as his high ego (see the quote in 5.2.),

may also have added to this high level of anxiety. He said: “I gave myself too much pressure” [R123]. He was still crying and continued talking:

I felt nervous in class. The class was not interactive at all, just taking notes all the time. The teacher kept talking, but I couldn't understand her. The textbook she used was too difficult to understand. I was very stressed in her class because I felt that I didn't improve at all and I didn't know what I came here for. I feel everybody in class is learning well and my learning ability is very bad [R123].

His diary of the day also recorded this “most depressing class”. He wrote about how this anxiety made him feel like avoiding it: “I felt so down and my brain went totally blank in class. I really felt like running out of the classroom” [RD123]. From here we could see a high level of anxiety caused Ryan avoidance and impaired his investment (Norton 2000) (see 2.5.2.1.) in English language learning. He talked about this anxious class again during the interview on the final day of classes: “At that time I felt very depressed and angry and I felt like I wanted to scream. I wanted to skip the class” [R27].

Ryan's narrative indicates that this morning class continued to make Ryan very anxious for two weeks. The teacher remained the source of stress for him, which corresponds to his pre-trip stated fear of an English teacher who would get upset about and impatient with students' poor performance. I noted during my observation that the teacher seemed to be serious and strict, not that friendly compared with other teachers. She would get a bit upset when the student did not pay full attention and failed to answer the questions or when they did not do the homework. Since Ryan's class performance was always not good, the teacher paid more attention on him and approached him to see how he was doing from time to time. She would ask Ryan in front of the whole class: “Did you understand?” “Are you ready?” “Did you have the pen ready?” Ryan never responded to the teacher and seemed to keep his head down and avoid eye contact with her. He seemed to be in a bad mood and was ignoring the teacher.

During the post-class observation interview, when asked how he felt about the teacher checking on him, Ryan responded: “I don't like that. Her behaviour made me feel that I knew nothing and couldn't do anything in class. I felt bad and depressed” [R124]. He also explained why he put his head down and avoided eye contact with

the teacher: "I did so because I was afraid that the teacher would think that I couldn't follow and needed help from her if I looked at her" [R124]. Again Ryan was avoiding the teacher as he tried to escape from the anxious situation that made him have self-defeating thoughts. Tsui's (1996) study also found that anxious students are desperately trying to avoid humiliation, embarrassment, and criticism in order to preserve their self-esteem.

Sometimes the teacher grouped the students into small groups for discussion and she usually assigned the Taiwanese students into one group. I noticed that Ryan was looking at other groups during one discussion. Anxiety occurred when he saw other groups asking the teacher many questions and chatting with the teacher happily, as he commented in the post-class observation interview: "I felt we were a bit inferior and I was a bit sad. They could interact with the teacher better, but our group just spoke Chinese in low voices and we didn't know how to ask the teacher questions. It seemed to me that we were very lazy" [R124].

Ryan also talked about his negative feeling when grouped with international peers: "I was a bit afraid because I couldn't express myself fully" [R124]. However, this anxiety made him focus more on the group discussion: "I had to pay more attention and focus more because I couldn't speak Chinese" [R124]. Ryan's words "a bit afraid" used here compared with "very depressed" used when talking about his feelings towards the morning class teacher's behaviour (e.g. ignoring Ryan when calling on students) could imply less anxiety during the group discussion. It appears to me that a higher level of anxiety made Ryan avoid the teacher (debilitating anxiety), while a lower level of anxiety led to his efforts to participate more in the group discussion (facilitating anxiety) (see 2.3.1.).

Different people Ryan interacted with seemed to be crucial when explaining the different levels of anxiety he experienced. Since the first week, the morning class teacher's personal characteristics (e.g. being strict, looking serious, and getting upset about students' poor performance) and her behaviour (e.g. ignoring Ryan while calling on students, and only asking Ryan if he understood or not) had made Ryan feel inferior and threatened his self-perception, which induced a high level of anxiety on Ryan. In contrast, Ryan felt more at ease when interacting with international

peers because he did not feel inferior to them and his sense of self was not threatened: "I could tell they (international classmates) didn't know much about grammar either, therefore, I was a bit released and not feeling bad about myself" [R124]. Moreover, classmates' supportive and understanding attitude towards Ryan's limited English generated much less anxiety over social evaluation: "Both Taiwanese and international classmates told me it's ok that I don't speak English and they could understand how I felt" [R124]. Ryan's narrative implies that his level of anxiety and class participation might have been influenced by the identity issue.

Interestingly, Ryan once felt much more relaxed in the same class (morning class) because two classes merged: "It was fun. It would be boring when there were only us. I felt I was doing ok in this class, not feeling depressed and annoyed. I felt much better today" [R128]. My observation had recorded this big class in which students had to compose a dialogue with the partner and then each pair had to go to the front to present their dialogue to the whole class. Everybody was discussing in pairs with some laughter. When each pair was presenting in the front, the rest of the students laughed and gave applause no matter how the presenters performed. It was obviously a much more interactive and happier class than the regular morning classes.

Even though Ryan said that he did not think he did well in the presentation and felt other pairs had better performance, he was not as anxious about it as he usually was: "I was a bit nervous when it's my turn to go to the front and present, but the exercise was fun as well" [R128]. The cheerful and supporting (giving applause) audience may account for this lower level of anxiety. Ryan also recorded this class in his diary: "In the morning class we merged with Kai's class and the class became very interactive. There were double students in the classroom and I started to feel excited and participated in the speaking exercise. I started to feel the morning class was quite nice" [RD128]. To conclude, it seems to me that the class environment and atmosphere could be a critical factor determining the level of anxiety Ryan experienced in class.

On the other hand, my observation of Ryan's afternoon classes during the three weeks abroad recorded that he looked rather happy and relaxed with smiles on his face and he had more participation than in the morning class. He did not avoid eye

contact with the teacher and he showed he understood by nodding his head. His performance was still worse than others, but the teacher was quite encouraging and said “good” to Ryan even when he made some mistakes. Compared to the morning class teacher who was strict and serious, this teacher had a very friendly personality with lots of smiles on her face. Her way of teaching was different as well. She mostly used games to encourage students to speak in a non-threatening and more relaxing class environment. Compared with the morning class teacher who spoke fast and using more advanced and grammar-based class materials, she spoke rather slowly and her class materials were easier and mostly conversation practices. During one post-class observation interview, Ryan told me: “I felt better, probably because of the teacher. I felt more relaxed and secure, not that tense in her class” [R123]. The teacher’s compliment to him could also explain why he was less anxious: “I felt quite happy when the teacher said “very good” to me. I was pleasantly surprised I could get that right” [R123].

Corresponding to his pre-trip positive comments on learning English through playing, playing games in this afternoon class also made Ryan very relaxed and not as anxious about his poor performance as he was in other class activities:

I didn’t do well in that game, but I was quite relaxed. I like interactive class activities like games. I wouldn’t get nervous in that kind of activities. I would get crazy if the teacher kept talking and there was no interactive activity. I would give up after a while because I couldn’t understand her [R123].

This lower level of anxiety led to better overall self-perceived class performance: “I feel my performance was better probably because I was more relaxed in this class” [R123]. This narrative implies that what mattered in Ryan’s anxiety construct might not be his actual, but self-perceived language competence, and how significant others perceive his proficiency. His perception of his English proficiency was in a state of flux, varying from one context to another.

Ryan only felt anxious in this afternoon class when it was his turn to speak or when called on but he did not know how to pronounce certain words: “I was nervous because all the people were watching me and waiting for me to finish the sentence, but I just didn’t know how to pronounce it.” [R129] Fear of making mistakes added to the anxiety about being called on in class: “I felt ashamed, sometimes worried and

anxious when I was called on and realised the sentence I spoke was wrong” [R129]. This fear of making mistake sometimes prevented Ryan from participating in class: “Sometimes I didn’t dare to talk because I was afraid of making mistakes” [R129]. When called on, Ryan was put in the spotlight and he had to face and be judged by the whole class including the teacher. This anxiety over social evaluation could perhaps have gone further when Ryan had to show his incompetence to a large group of people. Ryan’s narrative about being called on brings to mind Ehrman’s (1996) suggestion that anxiety is not always just about learning. Sometimes it has to do more directly with relations with others. This is in line with the concept of identity-based anxiety (Allwright and Bailey 1991; Tsui 1996; Stroud and Wee 2006) (see 2.5.2.3.).

What was noteworthy was that Ryan stated the opposite about being called on by the morning class teacher: “I didn’t feel nervous. This is the chance she gave me to practice” [R124]. This discrepancy could be understood by his earlier statement about how the morning class teacher was ignoring him when calling on students, which made him depressed and feel like the worst student in class. When called on by this teacher, finally, Ryan released his anxiety and saw this as a chance to practice English. As a result, we could see that the level of anxiety Ryan felt towards certain class activity could be very different in different class contexts. Ryan’s contrasting statements here recall poststructuralist SLA scholars’ claim (e.g. Norton 2000) that language learners’ affective factors change over time and space, and possibly coexist in contradictory ways in a single individual (see 2.5.2.3.).

In sharp contrast with feeling very anxious in the morning class for two weeks, Ryan seemed not to care much any more in the final week: “I am not that stressed any more, but I felt very bored and sleepy probably because all the Brazilians are gone and the whole school became very quiet. I didn’t pay full attention. I was absent-minded in class” [R25]. He no longer reported, during the post-class observation interviews, those anxiety-provoking feelings such as feeling that he is the worst student. It is possible that Ryan felt less anxious in the same class in the final week because he got used to the anxious-provoking situations. However, he still did not enjoy this class and was still trying to avoid the class: “I felt like I was at high school and kept looking at the clock during class and hoping time would go faster” [R25].

My class observations of Ryan in the final week also show that he looked absent-minded. Sometimes he did not write down anything in the writing exercise. He even fell asleep in class once and he skipped one class. During the interview on the last day of classes, he told me: “I feel very relaxed now because I am going back to Taiwan” [R27].

The feeling of being ignored and being positioned as an incompetent student by the morning class teacher for two weeks could possibly explain Ryan’s withdrawal and reduced participation in this class during the final week. The SA students in Morita’s (2004) study also avoided speaking in front of the instructor who seemed to impose negative identities or roles on them. Furthermore, the teacher-centred approach and in many instances, written activities in which students were expected to work on their own (e.g. taking notes) could have discouraged and cut off Ryan’s interaction with classmates. In addition, the previous feeling “I am the worst in class” perhaps had impaired Ryan’s sense of belonging. Feeling isolated and marginalised, Ryan might have begun to question the value of further investing his time and energy and therefore started to distance himself from the social network in the classroom, as evidenced by his detached attitude in the final week morning classes.

5.3.2. Ryan’s anxiety at homestay

When asked, on the second day, how he felt on the first night at homestay, Ryan used many different very negative words to describe the significant anxiety resulting from communication difficulty such as “panic”, “helpless”, “so embarrassed”, “getting crazy”, “annoyed”:

I was panic and helpless. I saw our hostess, but I couldn’t talk to her. There was big difficulty in the communication. I felt I was a deaf-mute person. I felt so embarrassed that I was getting crazy...I am still wondering now how to get along with her tonight. It annoyed me a lot...Help! Who can help me? (Said out loud) [R121].

The words “I felt I was a deaf-mute person.” may imply that anxiety occurred when there was a threat to Ryan’s high-ego and his identity as a reasonably socially-adept person. The hostess’s impatient attitude towards Ryan’s limited oral English competence made Ryan feel even worse and his response to this highly anxious situation was pretending he understood what the hostess said: “She said to us “Oh,

my god! You don't know any English AT ALL?" I pretended and responded "Yes, I know." Then she continued talking, but I had no clue what she was talking about" [R121]. Ryan's narrative echoes the finding of Pellegrino Aveni's (2005) study that interlocutors' negative attitudes towards learners' L2 skill can damage learners' sense of self, cause anxious feelings, and impede their L2 use (see 2.5.2.3.).

The hostess' impatience to communicate with learners with very limited command of English perhaps reflects the fact, highlighted by poststructuralist SLA theorists (e.g. Norton 2000; Pavlenko 2002; Miller 2004), of a power imbalance in the relationship between native speakers and language learners (see 2.5.2.1.). The homestay is a L2 context where the learner is expected to work to understand the native speaker, rather than the native speaker ensuring the learner understands (Norton 1995; Norton 2000; Pavlenko 2000). This undermines Long's (1996) claim that native speakers are potential facilitators of L2 learning. Furthermore, Ryan's pretending he understood the hostess shows that he was striving to maintain a positive social identity.

In addition, Ryan experienced some culture shock that generated anxiety: "She looks very elegant and has blond hair. Her whole house is very dreamy and American. I really can't get used to the whole environment and I couldn't sleep well last night. The next morning I had the American breakfast and that was so sweet. I don't like it" [R121]. Ryan also noted down this anxious feeling and the resulting low self-perception in his diary on the first night, which is very similar to what he said during the interview:

I feel like I was in TV and I have strange feelings. Seeing all English words around me and living with my host mother who is white made it hard to believe now I am in a "real world"...I couldn't understand my home mom at all. I feel I am so bad and I feel very down [RD120].

On the third day, Ryan came to me the first thing in the morning and said that he felt very depressed the night before. The same communication difficulties remained and he reported: "I noticed she (the hostess) got annoyed" [R122]. The communication between them completely failed and the hostess called our Taiwanese tour guide to translate for them, which made Ryan feel even worse: "I felt so embarrassed because we needed Damon to translate for us" [R122]. Ryan felt annoyed when his hostess

was talking to him: “I didn’t know if she was saying something friendly or unfriendly. I felt annoyed. I don’t like uncertainty” [R122].

The words “I felt annoyed. I don’t like uncertainty” possibly suggest that his low level of tolerance for ambiguity, which is inherent in FL/L2 learning, caused anxiety. According to Pellegrino Aveni (2005), language learners’ low level of tolerance for ambiguity signals their need to maintain a reasonable amount of control over the L2 use environment. In this view, the source of Ryan’s anxiety over uncertainty could be interpreted as the perceived threat to his sense of control. Ehrman (1996) also notes that anxiety relates to learners’ response to a perceived threat to their sense of security or self-esteem, or a threat to the perceived integrity of their identity

The hostess’ job as a university TOEFL teacher and her compliment on another Chinese student’s good English increased Ryan’s anxiety: “Her job also made me very stressed and annoyed. She told us she teaches TOEFL...When she complimented the Chinese girl’s good English in front of us, I felt she was being ironical. I felt very stressed” [R122]. The hostess’ professional job as an English teacher at an academically accredited university may have imposed her higher expectation and standard of students’ English proficiency and therefore made Ryan very stressed. All these anxious feelings led to Ryan’s avoidance behaviour at homestay: “I felt bad and went to our room right after the dinner, I felt like I was avoiding her (the hostess)” [R122].

This communication obstacle at homestay remained throughout the three weeks. Ryan was always anxious about communicating with his host mother. This anxiety further impaired his English performance because he was engaging in anxiety-related thoughts. He stated the following on one of the last days of the trip: “Every time when we talked, I felt helpless and my brain went blank. I was very nervous and kept asking myself: “What should I do?” [R27]. He also said: “I always felt I was misunderstood and therefore I always tried to avoid talking to her (hostess)” [R27]. This statement implies that Ryan’s inadequate English competence had put him at higher chances of feeling misperceived. Such a feeling, according to Pellegrino Aveni (2005) and Jackson (2008), can cause a threat to L2 learners’ self-presentation, generating anxiety and impairing their investment in language learning.

This appears to have been the case for Ryan's anxiety and low sociability at homestay. In other words, it is possible that Ryan was avoiding the hostess because he wanted to protect his sense of self.

On the other hand, Ryan's pre-trip statements show that despite worrying about English oral communication in America, he seemed to underestimate the significance of living with somebody in another language and culture. He did not expect the cultural shock and serious communication difficulties he would encounter at homestay. He sounded excited when he talked about the upcoming homestay experience (see the quote in 5.2.). The fact that the programme did not provide students with orientation on life in the host family may also have contributed to Ryan's anxiety because he was not mentally prepared for these negative experiences. As Jackson's (2008) study demonstrates, pre-sojourn preparation and personal expectation influence how the sojourners deal with culture shock.

All the possible factors that triggered anxiety mentioned above could have perhaps resulted in withdrawal and avoidance behaviour at homestay and consequently may have reduced success in Ryan's English acquisition while abroad. He reflected as follows in the follow-up interview: "The negative experiences I had were mostly at homestay and in the morning classes. The negative emotions such as anxiety made me not want to learn English. I wanted to go back to Taiwan so much at that time [R416].

5.3.3. Ryan's anxiety in out-of-class activities

On the way to school on the second day, Ryan and his roommate got lost, but they did not dare to ask for directions. Ryan revealed as follows during the interview: "When we got lost, we didn't dare to ask for directions because both of us didn't know how to pronounce words. I felt very lonely. I felt helpless and depressed" [R121]. This anxiety was caused by and also led to low self-perception and self-defeating thoughts: "I feel people here see me as a freak. They must see me as an Asian who didn't know what he was doing here" [R121]. This fear of asking local people for directions may relate to not only Ryan's limited oral English competence, but also his negative experience at homestay the night before. The hostess was the first native English speaker Ryan ever spoke to. The communication difficulty

between them and the resulting anxiety possibly had impaired his courage to involve in another discourse with a native English speaker.

Also this was Ryan's first experience to walk only with his roommate whose English was also very poor, on the street in a strange country where they could not see many Asians around. Sensing his visible ethnicity difference may have led Ryan to develop a sense of insecurity and added to his anxiety. This might be explained by the words "lonely" and "helpless" which Ryan used to describe his anxiety in this situation. Furthermore, his statement: "I feel people here see me as a freak" may also imply his fear of negative social evaluation and the lack of a sense of engagement (Wenger 1998) (see 2.5.3.3.), which would have likely impaired his sense of self. As Miller (2000) suggests, the visible difference in ethnicity is salient to the students' language learning and use, and to their identity negotiation.

Native speakers' fast and incomprehensible talk also made Ryan anxious: "I would be frightened when the person spoke very fast. I felt nervous when the person said a lot to me but I had no clue what he/she was talking about" [R128]. This fear of speaking to native speakers impaired Ryan's oral performance and caused further anxiety, fear of the interlocutor's negative evaluation of his English, low self-perception and self-defeating thoughts. For instance, Ryan told me one experience he had at Starbucks coffee shop:

I wanted to say "Strawberry", but I suddenly forgot how to say that word. It's so embarrassing. The clerk then asked me "where are you from?" I responded "No" and then walked away. At that moment I said to myself "What am I doing? Why did I respond "No"?! I felt I was such an idiot. Actually I could understand that question, but I didn't know what I was doing. I guess I was too nervous. I still remember when I said "No" to the clerk, he didn't have any facial expression and said "oh". I guess he knew right away that I can't understand or speak English. I felt so embarrassed [R128].

Ryan's narrative above provides an example of the dialectic relationship between language learning and language learner's identity within the poststructuralist paradigm of SLA (see 2.5.2.1.). Norton's (2000, p.11) states: "When language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with target language speakers, but they are constantly organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world." By saying "I felt I was such an idiot", Ryan identified himself negatively through this encounter and anxiety might have occurred

as a symptom of identity conflict. In addition, the last two sentences in Ryan's narrative above imply that he was concerned about being perceived, by the clerk, as uneducated and illiterate when he could not speak or understand English properly. As Pavlenko (2002, p.284) points out: "Multilingual contexts are particularly fraught with the tensions of identity politics whereby many individuals experience a perpetual conflict between self-chosen identities and others' attempts to position them differently."

Ryan continued reporting similar miscommunication with local people in the following days. These encounters made him anxious and anxiety increased his planning time in communication: "I was double checking the sentence in mind and making sure that was correct before I said it" [R24]. In addition, Ryan mentioned racial discrimination in two contacts with local people. He felt discriminated against when the Starbucks clerk was not as friendly as those in Taiwan. He also said that one black man looked at him in an unfriendly manner on the street: "I felt bad. I personally don't discriminate black people and I was wondering why they discriminated us" [R27]. Ryan's reaction in the two contexts brings to mind Ward et al.'s (2001) two claims: (1) Drawing on ethnocentric tendencies, L2 learners' first inclination is to perceive their interlocutor to be racist; (2) Being minority group members, these learners inevitably sense they are different and their vulnerability in an unfamiliar context may account for their self-perceived discrimination. The sojourners in Jackson's (2008) study also expressed their sense of being different and not being fully accepted by the majority group, and therefore felt discriminated against. Ryan's anxiety as it appeared in the narrative above recalls the finding of both Jackson (2008) and Ward et al.'s (2001) studies that the perceived discrimination can be upsetting, a shock to L2 learners' sense of self and feeling of security (identity conflict), leading to stress and psychological and sociocultural adjustment problems.

On the other hand, Ryan started complaining about excursion arrangement during the interview in the final week: "The places we visited in San Diego were very boring. I feel Taipei is better. I want to go back to Taiwan" [R24]. This statement suggests that Ryan's limited openness to a different culture along with perceived discrimination might have impaired his willingness to interact and invest in learning

English during the SA tour. Jackson (2008) found that the sojourners' ethnocentrism held them back from fully enjoying their stay and created a negative mood, and this appears to have been the case for Ryan.

On the final day of the classes, Ryan sounded depressed when making the following comment on his overall SA experience:

I feel wasted and not worth it. I feel there are many things I didn't learn well. I didn't make many friends, which was a result of my poor English and the fact that I always speak Chinese here. I don't have the sense of participation. I feel the barrier and the gap. I am very angry with myself that I didn't learn basic English well in Taiwan. As a result, I feel everything is very inconvenient in the daily life here [R27].

All these regrets and anxiety were understandable when we recall Ryan's pre-trip worry about speaking Chinese all the time and not being able to make friends in America. Ryan's parents' high expectation (see the quote in 5.2.) may also have added to this anxiety about not learning well. The statement: "I didn't have the sense of participation. I feel the barrier and the gap." implies that anxiety might have resulted from Ryan's perception of "non-participation" (Wenger 1998) (see 2.5.3.3.) and of "boundaries" between his familiar and his new communities - the gap that the newcomer has to bridge, and the barriers that old-timers tend to put up (consciously or not).

In sum, Ryan's unwillingness or inability (including limited English competence) to conform to local norms and his failing to identify himself as a socially-adept person in the host country could have caused him anxiety and may also possibly explain his perceived discrimination and negative perception of the host culture. All these factors in turn might have contributed to Ryan's sense of rejection, reduced contact, and disappointment with the SA experience. This disappointment and dissatisfaction inevitably caused further anxiety and self-defeating thoughts.

Interestingly, Ryan stated: "as for those Brazilians and Italians, I didn't feel too bad about not making friends with them" [R27]. This low motivation for social interaction and practicing English with internationals was related to anxiety resulting from cultural difference, which could be shown in Ryan's statement below about his feelings towards these "non-Asian" peers:

The Brazilians were always very noisy at school and our cultures were completely different. I did say “Hi” to couple of them, but I was nervous when I did so because I didn’t know how they would look at we Chinese. Those Italians also looked strange and I didn’t know how to make friends with them [R27].

Overall, throughout the three weeks, Ryan reported much less anxiety in out-of-class activities than in the classroom (especially the morning class) and at homestay probably because we Taiwanese all gathered together as a group in almost every outing after school. Ryan could always ask for help from the rest of us while ordering food or shopping: “I felt better when there were other Taiwanese around me otherwise I can’t survive by myself. I would be scared if I had to ask people something or ask for their service by myself” [R128]. This need for a sense of security outweighed his pre-departure determination of trying not to speak Chinese all the time during the SA tour. In the poststructuralist conception of identity and language (e.g. Pavlenko 2002), Ryan’s desire to acquire the symbolic capital (e.g. friendship with international peers) afforded by English was in conflict with his resistance to the identities offered to him by potential interactions in English outside classroom. This situation might have caused his limited English use in out-of-class activities. Being with the Taiwanese group, Ryan solved his identity conflict, relieved his anxiety and got a sense of security.

This reduction in anxiety in out-of-class activities might also relate to the SA programme design itself. The SA programmes, for most students, parents, teachers and administrators in Taiwan, mean that the participating students form a “tour group” that includes a leading teacher (myself) and a local Taiwanese tour guide, to study English and tour in the host country (see 1.2.7.). Parents and teachers also expect this because letting these young adults who usually do not have good command of English go alone in a strange country is a dangerous thing to do. Therefore, it is normal for students to always gather around fellow Taiwanese, interacting with each other in Chinese and thus decreasing the time they could spend with native speakers and international peers. This tends to have an adverse effect on the students’ English development, but meanwhile, provides a positive social and emotional effect as it offers a buffer space between learners and the host culture. Likewise, other international students in the present study, Brazilians for example, also came to America as a group with their teacher from home country. The

language school did organise some sight-seeing activities for all students to join together, but my observation shows that regardless of nationalities, most of the students seemed to “naturally” gather around fellow students from their own country, speaking their native languages in these activities.

5.3.4. Ryan’s recall of his overall SA experience

During the follow-up interview (two months after the trip), I asked Ryan again about his anxiety in the classroom, at homestay, and in out-of-class activities. Generally speaking, what he said in this follow-up interview is similar to what he said during the trip. When asked, what class activities in San Diego, if there was any, made him anxious, nervous, and worried, Ryan started a lengthy description of his anxious feelings towards his morning class teacher and concluded: “I really felt she was a scary teacher” [R416]. This could possibly imply that “the teacher” was the dominant factor causing Ryan’s anxiety in the classroom.

Ryan concluded that his homestay experience had been a negative one: “I was always very stressed and nervous in the house because I was afraid she (the hostess) would get upset about me at any time. I was afraid because I still needed her to take care of me for three weeks” [R416]. From the last sentence we could again see how Ryan’s anxiety was related to a possible power imbalance between the guest students and the hostess. In this SA programme, students paid a small honorarium, which was not considered to be a fee like being paid to a hotel. The basic assumption was that host families were hosting the students as good-will volunteers. Ryan, in this case, was considered as a care receiver, and therefore he had to be nice to his host mother for receiving her care.

When asked about his overall outside classroom English language learning and use, Ryan responded: “as for the experience that I gave wrong responses to people outside school, it didn’t really impair my learning. I just felt funny about it” [R416]. Interestingly, different from repeating “so embarrassed” when talking about the incident during the trip, he used the word “funny” when he recalled it. This difference may suggest that the level of anxiety Ryan felt towards a particular occasion could have gone down when he had been out of that situation for a period of time. This brings to mind Norton’s (2000) statement that feelings of anxiety

change over historical time and social space (see 2.5.2.3.). Likewise, comparing “embarrassed” and “funny” which Ryan used to describe his miscommunication with the local people, to words like “frightened”, “scared”, “anxious” and “nervous” used when talking about his English language learning and use in classroom and homestay contexts suggests that Ryan seemed less anxious about not being able to communicate with the local people than with his hostess, teachers, and classmates.

The different levels of involvement Ryan had with his teacher, hostess, and local people may partly explain the different levels of anxiety he felt in different contexts: “I would never see them (local people) again. When I thought of this, I stopped caring about their thinking and evaluation of me that much” [R416]. This statement further suggests that less fear of social evaluation could have reduced Ryan’s anxiety in out-of-class context. The classroom and homestay contexts in which Ryan had instant contacts with the teacher and hostess for three weeks involved more concern about social evaluation and therefore were more anxiety-provoking: “I still care about their evaluation of me much because we had to stay together for three weeks” [R416]. Ryan’s high level of anxiety at homestay seriously impaired his learning in class (see the quote in 5.3.1.) while the low anxiety occurred in out-of-class activities did not really have negative effects on Ryan’s classroom learning (see the quote earlier in this section). Ryan’s narrative above shows that his anxiety during the SA tour was very similar to “social anxiety” (Pozo et al. 1991, p.355) defined as “a tendency to become apprehensive in social settings in which the person is motivated to make a particular impression on another person and holds serious doubts about being able to do so.”

5.4. RYAN’S PERCEPTION OF IMPACTS OF THE SA EXPERIENCE

In the following subsections, I talk about Ryan’s perception of the impact of the SA tour on his perceived English proficiency, fear of speaking English, anxiety about and motivation for learning English.

5.4.1. Impact of SA on Ryan’s perception of his English proficiency

On the last day of classes in America, when asked about the impact of this trip on his overall English language learning, if there is any, Ryan responded: “I feel we are more like a tour group and we have very limited time here. Therefore it’s difficult to

learn English well. I am very unhappy that my English didn't improve at all" [R27]. This anxiety about not gaining English proficiency seemed surprising when I refer back to his pre-trip statement: "I didn't set up any goal to improve my English. I just hope I will be very interested in English afterwards" [R1220]. One possible explanation for the discrepancy might be that not learning English well while in America and the resulting communication difficulties had restricted Ryan's access to a wide range of ongoing activities and to information, resources and opportunities for participation. This would have confirmed his pre-departure worry about the coming trip: "I am afraid I can't fit into the environment" [R1220].

During the follow-up interview two months after the trip, however, Ryan said: "I am more confident about my English after the trip, but I am definitely still worried about it. I still feel my English is not good enough" [R416]. This stated gain in confidence is not very convincing due to his statement regarding unhappiness about not improving his English at the end of the trip. It seems to me that Ryan was trying to construct a positive impact of this SA experience to me because I was the teacher and perhaps he did not want to let me down.

5.4.2. Impact of SA on Ryan's fear of speaking English and anxiety in English language learning

This SA experience did not lessen Ryan's fear of speaking English to native speakers. Indeed, Ryan's different ways of constructing his anxiety about speaking English seems to suggest that anxiety was aggravated by the actual USA experience. He said: "I don't have the courage to speak English to a native speaker" [R1220] before the trip, but he used "very scared" and "very stressed" to describe this anxiety after the trip. Besides, his pre-trip fear of making mistakes could have also been aggravated by his embarrassing experiences of giving wrong responses to the people in America:

The horrible experience in America made me very scared of speaking English to native speakers. I feel very stressed about it because English is their native language and they will know any mistake I made. I will feel very embarrassed when they recognised my mistakes. Therefore, I really can't accept speaking English to them and I think they don't want to listen to my English either [R416].

From the last sentence: “I think they don’t want to listen to my English either”, we could sense that Ryan’s “horrible” experience of interacting with local people including the hostess might have led to low self-perception and therefore worsened his anxiety about speaking English after the trip. This again suggests that Ryan’s anxiety might have been a symptom of identity conflict. Furthermore, it is possible that his negative perception of native English speakers also added to the anxiety: “I feel most foreign customers (native English speakers) in Taiwan have bad attitude and they will blame us when we can’t speak English right. I still remember the terrible western customer I met in my previous part-time job” [R416]. Ryan’s reflection here contradicts the finding of Kormos and Csizer (2007) and Clement et al.’s (1994) studies that contacts with native speakers help decrease learners’ language use anxiety.

Regarding his English language learning back in Taiwan, Ryan continued to fear being called on in class and tended to avoid it: “I always sit in back of the classroom because I can avoid some trouble such as being called by the teacher. I would feel anxious and nervous when I was called on suddenly” [R416]. The word “suddenly” implies Ryan’s anxiety over insufficient preparation for speaking as he went on saying: “I didn’t feel anxious and nervous when I volunteered to answer the question. I did it because I have prepared for it and therefore I didn’t feel anxious” [R1416]. Ryan’s voluntary response to the teacher, which he never did in the SA classroom (according to Ryan’s on-trip narrative and the observation data), may suggest that compared to the SA classroom, the English classes in Taiwan were less anxiety-provoking for Ryan. The easier content and Ryan’s intention to hide in class explain this lower anxiety:

The class activities were quite easy like taking turns practicing the same sentence pattern, which I could handle it. Therefore, I didn’t feel too anxious, nervous, or worried in class. Another reason was that I always sat in back of the classroom. I did so because I was afraid the teacher would find me dozing off in class if I sat in front of the class [R416].

From here, it appears to me that the class size could have been one of the factors influencing Ryan’s anxiety in the English classrooms. The SA class size (7 to 12 students in one class) was much smaller than that of the English classes at formal schooling in Taiwan (40 to 50 students in one class). In a small class, Ryan had

nowhere to hide and the teacher could have much more interaction with all the students, which might have contributed to more anxiety for Ryan.

On the other hand, this SA experience caused anxiety in terms of peer pressure. Ryan described what happened between him and his friends as follows:

The worst thing was my friends would make fun of me and ask me to translate this and that into English, but I couldn't. They said "How come you couldn't translate it? You have studied in America! They said ironically that I am ABC (America born Chinese) now and my English must be very good. I couldn't stand it and I hated them behaving like this [R416].

This anxiety over social evaluation is similar to his pre-trip statement about his worry and nervousness when being asked about his English proficiency. He was worried and nervous because his parents had invested a lot in his English education, but he still did not learn it well (see the quote in 5.2.). It appears to me that Ryan did not realise how unrealistic his pre-trip goal (to become a transformed person who is more open-minded, not worrying too much about how others perceive him) was given that he was only away for three weeks.

5.4.3. Impact of SA on Ryan's motivation for learning English

Ryan sounded positive when talking about the impact of this trip on his motivation for English language learning on the last day of classes in America. This motivation was strongly related to his regrets and disappointment about this trip: "After this experience, I will be expecting myself to improve my English to a certain level and then I can come here again and make a lot of friends, not like this time. This is the motivation. I will always remember this trip made me more motivated to learn" [R27]. However, this strong motivation seemed to be eroded two months later. Ryan talked about his private English tutor classes during the follow-up interview:

I just had one or two tutor classes after I came back from America. I always skipped the class when I was busy. Actually I am embarrassed and sorry about it. I did want to learn, but just couldn't have regular classes. Besides, I was not quite happy in the previous classes because I felt so bored with learning grammar. However, deep in my heart, I still want to learn well. It's just that every time I still hoped the time could go by quickly in class. I do feel more motivated to learn English after the trip, but it's hard to put it into reality [R416].

From his saying "I did want to learn", "I still want to learn well", "I do feel more motivated to learn", it seems to me that Ryan was trying to convince me of his

motivation because I was the teacher and he could have thought this was the “social desirable” response a teacher would expect. However, this statement that he felt more motivated to learn English is not convincing because Ryan did not put his so-called “motivation” into action. To be exact, he was not making investment in English language learning. In addition to “sitting at the back of the class” mentioned earlier (see 5.4.2.), Ryan further talked about his laziness at formal English schooling like not preparing for quizzes: “Our teacher always tests us on vocabulary, but I am lazy and never memorise them. So I always felt terrible and helpless during the quizzes” [R416]. In sum, unfortunately this SA experience did not make Ryan more interested in English language learning as he expected before the trip. All the negative English language learning and use experiences while abroad along with the negative view of the host culture may account for this result.

5.5. SUMMARY

Ryan seemed to be the most anxious person in our Taiwanese group during the SA tour, which can be seen in table 4.2. and 4.3. in which Ryan had the highest number of reports on both causes and effects of anxiety. From all the talks I had with him during interviews before, during, and after the trip along with his on-trip diary entries, I got a sense that Ryan is a person who has a high ego and cares about how people perceive him very much. These characters could have made Ryan more prone to anxiety. For instance, when his performance was worse than he expected and when he felt inferior and expected negative evaluation from others, he became very anxious, and then his learning was seriously impaired.

The significant amount of anxiety Ryan experienced during the SA trip could be traced back to his past English language learning experiences. Even though he had many English lessons outside formal schooling, his learning had not been effective due to various factors such as rote learning of vocabulary and grammar, a lack of sufficient oral English training, a lack of interest in English language learning, and poor FL aptitude. The poor pre-trip English proficiency along with the fact that this was Ryan’s first time going abroad and studying English with native speaker teachers may have contributed to Ryan’s great amount of anxiety when he entered into an English native speech community.

The pre-trip stated causes of anxiety such as feeling inferior and concern about social evaluation were also the major causes of Ryan's anxiety during the trip. In other words, anxiety might have occurred when the imperfect English language skill put Ryan at risk conveying a self-image, that is inferior to the self he may present in Chinese, to his conversational partners (teacher, classmates, hostess, and local people). This anxiety, in turn, caused not only poor performance but also avoidance behaviour in the classroom, at homestay, and in out-of-class activities, which further impaired Ryan's self-perception, self-esteem and self-confidence.

Ryan's story recalls Pellegrino Aveni's (2005) and Ehrman's (1996) claim that anxiety is a symptom of perceived threat L2 learners feel against their sense of self during L2 learning and use. His avoidance of L2 use in the classroom, at homestay, and in out-of-class activities therefore might be the manifestation of his need to protect his self-esteem (identity). What was noteworthy was that the level of anxiety Ryan felt towards certain class activities was very different in different class contexts and the anxiety had either debilitating or facilitating effects on him depending on different class contexts and different levels of anxiety experienced.

This SA experience, unfortunately, did not have positive impacts on Ryan. Instead, he still had low self-perceived English proficiency, not making investment in English language learning, and seemed to have more severe fear of speaking English to native speakers after the trip. All of these might be related to his frustrating English language learning experiences and the accompanying anxious feelings during abroad. In the next chapter, I give a portrait of Sam.

CHAPTER 6: SAM

6.1. SAM'S HISTORY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AND FEELING ABOUT THE SA TRIP

At the time when I was conducting my fieldwork, Sam was 22 years old. He was a final year vocational university student. Inspired by his classmate who became very interested in English language learning and not afraid of speaking English after a short-term study abroad (SA) experience, Sam decided to join this SA programme in San Diego.

During the first interview I had with him, Sam seemed nervous, blushing frequently and stammering occasionally as he spoke, but he was willing to talk. In contrast to Ryan, Sam told me that he started learning English at the more conventional age of 13, the first year in junior high school, and he had never had any private English lessons outside formal schooling. When asked to talk about his overall English language learning experiences in Taiwan, the first sentence he said was “It’s a very painful experience. There was no positive experience. I always felt very stressed about it” [S1221]. He found English very difficult from the very beginning: “It took me a long time just to learn letters A to Z. I felt very painful at that time. Then I lost the interest in English language learning” [S1221].

Besides poor performance, the negative interaction with the English teacher may also account for Sam’s anxiety and lack of interest in learning English: “I hated him and he hated me, too. He scolded me all the time. Therefore I refused to go to his class and refused to study English” [S1221]. The peers were also influential in Sam’s lack of motivation: “I gathered with those classmates whose English was also very poor and therefore I never thought of studying hard to improve my English. I just memorised vocabulary before tests” [S1221].

From here we could sense that Sam’s initial poor performance impaired his interest and motivation and also caused anxiety. Then the anxiety and lack of motivation caused further poor performance. This vicious circle remained during Sam’s senior vocational school and university years: “During junior high and senior vocational

school, I couldn't understand the English teacher and the class content at all. I hated English classes. I usually dozed off in class and I failed the university compulsory English course" [S1221]. Sam reflected this reciprocal relationship between anxiety and learning performance: "I didn't perform well in English from the very beginning and then I started to hate English and totally avoided it. The feeling of hating English and avoidance behaviour caused even worse performance. This is a vicious circle" [S1221].

Like Ryan's case, non-interactive teaching and rote learning of vocabulary and grammar rules made Sam anxious: "The teacher gave us vocabulary and grammar rules to memorise and then tested us everyday. I always felt stressed. I also felt memorizing all those was useless" [S1221]. The Taiwanese general social value and parents' expectation added to this stress:

In Taiwan society, education qualification and test scores mean everything. Learning in this environment makes me unhappy and very stressed. Taiwanese parents, including mine, always expect us to study as much as we can and get a higher degree. I was scolded by them every time I did poorly in exams [S1221].

This stress from others' expectation caused high anxiety and impaired Sam's learning motivation and performance: "The stress made me not interested in English at all. I can't read, can't write, and can't speak English. I hated English very much. I totally gave it up" [S1221]. In sum, Sam's anxiety seemed to strongly relate to the learning context both in terms of where he learned English and how he got on with the teacher and also cultural/social pressure.

Furthermore, like Ryan, Sam felt anxious due to his poor self-perceived English proficiency and feeling inferior. He added after mentioning that even his father, who is a fisherman and his younger sister's English is better than his: "I feel I am useless....I am quite anxious about my poor English" [S1221]. Anxiety also occurred when he saw his friends talking in English with a foreigner: "I couldn't understand what they were talking about at all. I felt I was like an outsider. I felt depressed and sad. My English is too bad" [S1221]. Sam's narrative suggests that his anxiety over comprehension difficulty in this social interaction was related to the fear of being left behind by his peers.

Pellegrino Aveni (2005) points out that if a learner perceives that L2 use will threaten his/her self-presentation, he/she is less likely to use the L2 (see 2.5.2.3.), and this appears to have been the case for Sam. The following excerpt illustrates that anxiety about poor English and feeling inferior made Sam worry about negative social evaluation and afraid of speaking English and making mistakes. Therefore avoidance behaviour occurred:

Because of my poor English, I didn't dare to speak English. I am afraid of making mistakes. I felt nervous and anxious about speaking English. English is my weakness, therefore I don't want people to know it. I was trying to avoid speaking English [S1221].

Like Ryan's case, incomprehensible listening and English tests also made Sam anxious: "Speaking is the most anxiety-provoking. Then it's the listening. I felt anxious when I didn't understand spoken English...when I couldn't write something in English tests. I kept thinking I was going to fail the subject. I was very stressed" [S1221].

Nevertheless, Sam told me that he started to sense the importance of English for his future career in the final year of university, which is similar to Ryan's instrumental orientation towards English language learning. Peers' experiences were crucial for this change: "Some of my friends had started looking for a job and they told me they were rejected due to poor English" [S1221]. Therefore, he decided to join this SA programme to improve his English. According to Sam, his parents who had been encouraging him to improve his English also supported his decision. However, Sam's motivation for improving his English, at the time I interviewed him, made him regret not learning English well in the past. This regret caused a feeling of inferiority and anxiety: "I think my English is the worst among my classmates. I think autonomy learning is very important. They would study English on their own and they improved. I gave up my English too early. That's too bad" [S1221].

Furthermore, like Ryan, Sam attributed his poor performance mainly to a lack of interest: "I was not interested in English from the very beginning. If I am interested in something, I can learn it better and faster. My problem is so far I don't find very strong interest for learning English" [1221]. As a result, similar to Ryan, instead of expecting much linguistic improvement, Sam hoped this trip to America could boost

his interest in learning English and lessen his fear of speaking English. As mentioned earlier, this was inspired by his peer who had gone on the SA trip in the past:

Learning some basic English greeting conversation will be enough. What I really hope is I will be very interested in English and no longer avoid it. Also I hope I will be less afraid of speaking English. I wanted to be like my classmate who became very interested in and not afraid of English after studying English in Canada for one month [S1221].

Despite the expectations, Sam, like Ryan, was nervous about this coming trip due to his poor actual and self-perceived English proficiency:

I don't even know if I can survive in America or not. I am worried the host family speak advanced English and I can't understand them. I am also afraid the class level there will be much higher than my level and I couldn't understand what the teacher and classmates said. That will make me feel very helpless and anxious. But I still want to give myself a try, and maybe this experience can make me very motivated to learn English" [S1221].

6.2. SAM'S STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE

In the following subsections, I describe Sam's study abroad experience in terms of his anxiety in the classroom, at homestay, and in out-of-class activities, along with Sam's recall of his overall SA experience two months after the trip.

6.2.1. Sam's anxiety in the classroom

Sam stated, in the interview on the first day of school, that the placement test did not make him anxious or nervous because the teacher in the speaking test did not ask difficult questions and he still could communicate with her: "She just asked my age and major. I could handle that part. She asked me about sports later on, but I didn't know how to talk about sports in English. I could only use body language to show what I meant, but she understood me. I was not nervous at all" [S121].

I observed Sam's first day of class. He looked nervous and blushed frequently. He did not have any voluntary speaking, which is similar to Ryan, and he kept checking vocabulary on the electronic dictionary. He was called by the teacher, but seemed not to know how to react. He could just say something irrelevant like "yes" or "no".

During the post-observation interview, he made a very similar statement as Ryan:

I felt most nervous when the teacher talked to me or asked me questions in close distance, but I couldn't understand what she said at all.....I also felt very nervous when the teacher spoke very fast and I couldn't catch on. I felt that all others could

understand and I was the only one who didn't understand. I felt very nervous at that moment [S121].

My observation also noted down that the Taiwanese girl sitting next to Sam tried to translate the teacher's sentences into Chinese to him. Sam told me during the post-class observation interview: "Jean taught me and helped me a lot. She translated for me all the time. There was so much I didn't understand and therefore I feel my English is still much worse than others" [S121]. Similar to Ryan's case, the peer's help may have counterproductively made Sam feel inferior and start to think that he was the worst in class and added to the anxiety.

Sam continued being quiet on the second day of classes and constantly checking words in the dictionary even in the small group work. Lacking a sense of belonging, fear of making mistakes, poor oral English competence and the resulting anxiety were the main reasons for his low class participation. He revealed the following in the post-class observation interview:

I didn't understand what the teacher and classmates said. I felt very lost and didn't know what to say. When they were talking, I felt I was an outsider. I felt very embarrassed, worried and nervous. When I felt so, I would let them talk and continue checking in my dictionary. Also I didn't dare to say something because I was afraid of making mistakes" [S122].

By saying "I felt I was an outsider", Sam expressed his lack of a sense of belonging in this classroom. This could have caused identity conflict as "identity references the desire for affiliation" (Norton 2000, p.8) (see 2.5.2.1.). Therefore, Sam's anxiety in the classroom might have been a result of identity conflict. "I didn't dare to say something because I was afraid of making mistakes" implies that Sam was quiet because he was afraid of negative social evaluation and tried to avoid damaging his self-image. This corresponds to his pre-trip statement that he avoided speaking English because he wanted to avoid showing his weakness to others. In sum, what really impaired Sam's class participation might not have been anxiety but the threat to his identity. It was just cyclical that identity issue caused anxiety which made Sam perform worse. The poor performance strengthened his identity as a weak student which made him more anxious.

Despite these anxious feelings, Sam was quite satisfied with the interactive class, which he always expected but never had a chance to have in Taiwan. The interaction with the teacher encouraged him to work harder in class. He perceived that his class performance was good and he felt good and was proud of himself. A “new me” seemed to appear:

I always fell into sleep whenever I saw the English textbook in class in Taiwan and I hated to go to English classes. However, in today’s class, I had the interaction with the teacher and she corrected my errors, which is the experience I always wanted but never had. This made me want to understand what the teacher said and this was the first time I would check vocabulary on dictionary in class. Therefore, I feel my class performance today is very good. I feel I am so good because I could be so passionate about English. I had never been like this [S121].

Sam’s narrative above echoes the central aspect of Lave and Wenger’s (1991; Wenger 1998) situated learning theory and poststructuralism that conceptualises learning as involving the reconstruction of identities (see 2.5.2,1 and 2.5.3.2.).

In sum, similar to Ryan’s case, the SA classes inevitably were challenging and anxiety-provoking for Sam. According to Sam, this was his first time to be in a whole-English formal classroom and he had very limited command of English. The factors causing anxiety remain the same before and during the trip such as incomprehensible listening, poor English speaking ability, fear of speaking English, feeling inferior to peers, and fear of making mistakes. However, meanwhile he felt good about his passion for English because this passion (interest) had been his main expectation from this trip (see the quote in 6.1.). It seems to me that his passion and the sense of “better me” outweighed his anxiety and therefore this anxiety was facilitating and led to further short-term motivation: “I will study more and try to figure out what is in today’s handout tonight...The nervous feeling and pressure probably could make me more motivated to learn English” [S121]. Sam’s facilitating anxiety again implies the strong link between identity and anxiety and recalls Norton’s (2000) claim that both identity and anxiety are contextualised.

His diary of the day also recorded: “The whole school is English-only. The teachers spoke lots of English. I really couldn’t understand. My English is too bad, but I felt it’s very challenging” [SD121]. The word “challenging” is indicative of Sam’s positive attitude towards his poor English and the difficulties he was facing. This

positive attitude might also relate to the fact that he did not expect much linguistic improvement out of this SA experience, but rather the interest in English language learning. He considered this “pressure” (anxiety) as positive because it could help him gain the interest and motivation for learning English (see the quote earlier in this section). Therefore, Sam’s case suggests that anxiety may vary according to personal expectations.

Reading Sam’s diary gave me a sense that he started to enjoy the classes on the third day of the first week: “I was not as nervous in class as before. I was more daring to speak some basic sentences” [SD123]. For the rest of the days he wrote: “I am really looking forward to the classes today” [SD124] and repeated sentences like “The class was very interesting and fun” [SD124], “The teacher was very nice and patient” [SD125]. At the end of the first week, identity reconstruction seemed to also occur in his written narrative:

In the past I was always very afraid because I couldn’t speak English. I did not dare to look at people’s eyes. Learning English here has built up my confidence and independence. I am no longer pessimistic. I no longer felt sad about my poor English or avoid it; instead, I now want to practice English as much as I can [SD125].

This diminished anxiety and the resulting motivation might strongly relate to his emphasising positive written remarks about the teachers. If I refer back to his pre-trip interview statement: “The English teachers in high school were usually very cruel and violent to students, giving us physical punishments. I wanted to rebel the school and teachers and therefore I rejected English even more. I was very nasty that time” [S1221], I may reason that Sam’s “nice and patient” teacher in this SA classroom could have been very encouraging and greatly reduced Sam’s anxiety.

The completely different learning/teaching contexts help explain the difference in the behaviour of the Taiwanese and American teachers. In Taiwan, physical punishment has been a tradition in high school education partly due to the university entrance exams. The teachers play a strict role to make students behave and pass the exams and they emphasise the rote-learning of test materials, which inevitably causes some anxiety and pressure on students (see 1.2.5.). The language school Sam attended in the US, on the other hand, accepted students from all over the world, aiming to

create a fun, friendly, and supportive environment for students to learn English and most importantly, to enhance students' interest in English and American culture. The teachers were usually friendly and adopted many different activities like games to make the classes more enjoyable for students (according to my field notes). Therefore, like Ryan's case, the teacher seemed to be a dominant factor in the level of anxiety Sam experienced. To conclude, Sam was encountering a new kind of community, a classroom with very different kinds of practices from those he had known before, and because of that he could almost start afresh, construct a new identity as a legitimate peripheral participant (LPP) (Lave and Wenger 1991) in this new community with its enjoyable communicative activities.

Corresponding to the interview and diary data, my class observation of Sam at the end of the first week noted down that he looked diligent, repeating the sentences by himself whenever he got time. Sam further confirmed his high motivation during the post-class observation interview: "There were many words I don't know how to pronounce, so I wanted to practice those words as much as I could" [S124]. Since Sam's English was below average in class, the teacher paid more attention to him, checking how he was doing from time to time. Contrasting with Ryan, his reaction to this was very positive: "I was very happy because that meant the teacher cared about me" [S124]. Compared to his high school English teacher who tended to scold students who had poor performance like Sam, this feeling of care received from the teacher could have been very encouraging to Sam, leading to high learning motivation and participation in class.

On the first day of the second week, Sam forgot to bring his dictionary to school, which generated high anxiety for him in class. He wrote in his diary: "I felt extremely painful, really terrible. I felt so depressed and insecure without a dictionary. I didn't know what to do when I didn't have it with me" [SD128]. His class on that day merged with a higher level class and that was the same class I mentioned in Ryan's case (see 5.3.1.). My observation notes show that Sam seemed nervous and blushed from time to time while presenting the dialogue, but he was using some body language to make the dialogue more vivid. Sam did not think he performed well: "I felt I did it poorly. Other pairs wrote more than ten sentences and my pair just had three or four. It was too short" [S128].

Opposite to Ryan's case, this merged class made Sam more anxious than usual:

I felt quite uneasy. We suddenly had seven or eight students in our class whom I had never seen before. I didn't know them and suddenly the teacher asked us to present the dialogue in front of the whole class. I didn't know how to make up a dialogue. I was too nervous when I presented it and that's also why I didn't perform well. I hoped I could have practiced more and I could have done it without looking at my notes [S128].

From his words we could see that working in an unfamiliar environment, performing difficult and unfamiliar tasks, and insufficient preparation for speaking caused anxiety and poor performance. Norton and Toohey (2001), and Pellegrino Aveni (2005) suggest that learners' ability to control their self-image might be severely impaired when they try to create expressions with a L2 over which they have relatively less control and within a context they are unfamiliar with. In this view, Sam's anxiety in this class may have been the symptomatic panic that resulted from the challenges and threats he felt against his identity. In addition, the lack of a dictionary, the resulting sense of depression and no sense of security may have negatively affected his actual or perceived performance. Having new classmates coming from an upper level of class may have made Sam feel inferior, and therefore caused him a higher level of anxiety than usual and poor self-perceived performance. From the CoP perspective, part of Sam's anxiety can be interpreted as that the presence of the new students changed the dynamics of the CoP again, making him feel marginal as he was denied LPP by the more proficient newcomers.

A couple days later, I observed Sam's afternoon class. He seemed unhappy and kept quiet, checking words in a dictionary all the time. He participated much less than he usually did. I confronted him during the post-class observation interview with what I noticed, Sam responded:

I didn't understand the first part of the class. I was surprised that I forgot all the words I learnt yesterday. That's too bad (sighed). I blamed myself for not reviewing them last night. So I pushed myself to check all the words in the dictionary and to try to memorise them in class" [S131].

Sam's narrative recalls Ehrman's (1996) claim that disappointment with one's performance can lead to reduced self-efficacy and can also result in anxiety that gets in the way of learning. In other words, Sam had been very motivated to learn English. However, when he realised that he did not learn as well as he expected,

anxiety took place. This anxiety resulting from high motivation may also relate to the pressure from his parents' expectation and this costly SA programme itself: "My parents spent a lot of money to send me here. They said I had to learn something out of the trip. I want to earn the money back and learn as much as I can" [S27]. Similar to Ryan's case, this implies Sam's anxiety about living up to other people's (parents) expectations.

Since the Brazilian group left at the end of the second week, Sam's afternoon class had to merge with one upper level class during the final week. Sam came and talked to me about his problem in the merged class during one outing. This initiation may imply he was quite irritated by it:

We merged with Ulla, Jin, and Kai whose English is better than ours. The teacher would prefer to talk to them and they talked for most of time. But I had no clue what they were talking about. I started to feel bored. I didn't have chances to participate. I felt I didn't belong to this class. It seemed to me our class level had been upgraded and I couldn't catch on. I felt I was inferior to them and we were in different groups [S26].

His words suggest that anxiety occurred when his motivation to learn and participate was rejected by the environment. The teacher's preference to talk to "better others" and Sam's lack of familiarity with their mode of discourse may have worsened his feeling of inferiority and therefore anxiety was heightened. Wenger's (1998, p.164) concept of non-participation in the CoP framework suggests that "we not only produce our identities through the practices we engage in, but we also define ourselves through practices we do not engage in" (see 2.5.3.3.), which could perhaps explain why Sam identified himself as inferior to and different from others through his non-participation in this class. Sam's case here recalls the finding of Morita's (2004) study that behind students' reticence were multiple and interrelated issues, including not only language related issues but also the issue of identity.

Sam's morning class, otherwise, was going smoothly as usual in the final week. My observation recorded that he participated and always had his homework done. However, he did not practice those sentences and words on his own as he did in the first week. He looked relaxed and doing fine. During the post-class observation interview, he reflected:

This final week I started to feel the morning classes became routine. I don't feel pleasantly surprised like how I felt in the first week. Also I can understand the teacher more and more now. I don't need to be cautious and anxious all the time any more. I still highly participated but just that I am no longer working so hard as on the first couple days [S24].

This statement implies that the anxiety he experienced in the beginning of the trip was facilitating and motivated him to work harder, whereas low anxiety in the final week produced less motivation for making efforts. Hence the level of anxiety Sam experienced fluctuated across time and different levels of anxiety had different effects on his learning.

Besides getting familiar with the environment and more understanding of the teacher and class content, the physical architecture of the morning class in the final week seemed also to lower the level of anxiety Sam experienced. In that class, the large oval table allowed all the students to sit near each other and see each other's faces, which facilitated communication and helped create a supportive environment to learn as Sam revealed: "I felt most relaxed in this class because we sat in a circle and we faced each other" [S26]. Haneda (2006) and Churchill (2006) also found that different classroom physical space arrangements can either facilitate or limit students' learning, participation and interactions with classmates.

Two of his Taiwanese classmates told me during one excursion in the final week that they felt Sam had improved a lot and he now would respond to the teacher voluntarily, saying some basic words and sentences. Sam himself also felt a sense of accomplishment about his improvement: "I felt I succeeded and accomplished something when I could speak out. I particularly felt so when I could correct my classmate's errors because he didn't pay full attention. I felt I have changed" [S26]. The last sentence may be significant because it implies that Sam's English language learning experience in the SA classroom had been personally transformative, leading to at least a temporary identity reconstruction. His self-esteem and self-efficacy grew during the stay and he became more confident of his ability in spoken English. The higher self-esteem and self-confidence (efficacy) could have lessened Sam's fear of speaking English and his anxiety in the classroom as a whole. Therefore he spoke more in class. The SA students in Jackson (2008) and Pellegrino Aveni's (2005)

studies also became more willing to take risks and to venture further in the host culture when their self-confidence and self-esteem grew.

Despite his initial anxiety and fears about studying abroad and communication difficulties, contrasting with Ryan, Sam felt reluctant to return to Taiwan towards the end of the trip: “I feel more comfortable staying here. Even though I am not working as hard as I was in the first week, I can still learn more English here than in Taiwan” [S27].

6.2.2. Sam’s anxiety at homestay

Staying at the same home, Sam and Ryan’s oral and written narrative about the communication difficulties with their hostess and the resulting anxiety on the first night is very similar. For instance, the hostess’s impatient attitude towards his poor oral English and her job as a TOEFL English teacher also made Sam anxious: “She kept saying “Oh, my god! You two don’t speak any English AT ALL?” I felt so embarrassed. Also I felt even more afraid and embarrassed when I knew she is a TOEFL English teacher” [S121]. Sam’s diary also recorded his high anxiety and the consequent avoidance behaviour that was similar to Ryan: “I was pretending I understood and said “yes, I know.” I was suddenly in a very bad mood. I was wondering how the two English idiots could communicate with an English teacher. It’s going to be a big difficulty, but I will try my best to overcome it” [SD120]. From the last sentence we could see that, in contrast to Ryan, Sam saw value in the English communication difficulties at homestay.

Sam stated, both in the interview and diary that the communication difficulty remained till the end of the first week and he had had limited interaction with the hostess. However, it seemed to me he was no longer as anxious as he was on the first night. For instance, he wrote in his diary without mentioning any negative emotions: “The situation at homestay is the same. We can’t understand each other. I hardly have interaction with her” [SD123]. When asked “How did you feel when you didn’t understand her”, Sam responded: “I didn’t really feel anxious or nervous at home because I was always very tired after I got home and I had to do homework and write the diary. No time for me to think too much” [S123]. Similar to Ryan’s case, the statement suggests that Sam’s anxiety might be related to his everyday living

conditions. The statement also suggests that Sam seemed to transmit a message to me that he was not anxious at homestay. Nevertheless, his continuing comments signal his unexpressed anxiety and struggle:

My English is not good and that's why I came here to learn English. It's not my fault and it's not a shame. I just have to stay here for three weeks and I don't think I will keep contact with her (the hostess) afterwards. I just want to go through the three weeks smoothly, not giving myself too much pressure. The good thing is this Thursday a Chinese girl will be back and she could translate for us [S123].

It appears to me that anxiety did exist, but better than Ryan, Sam seemed able to hold positive learning attitudes and take a very pragmatic view of the relationship and so not allow it to make him too anxious.

Sam also developed his own way to cope with the communication difficulties and to cover his anxiety and embarrassment: "I am used to not comprehending what she said. I could just respond with an idiot smile. It's the same as how I communicated with the teachers" [S123]. In contrast to Ryan, as the statement below suggests, Sam still had the intention to continue interacting with his hostess despite the communication difficulties. This intention was due to his lower level of anxiety along with high motivation and perception that the host family experience provides a helpful environment for English language learning. He stated:

I still hope she would come and talk to me. When she speaks more, I can force myself to understand her although I mostly could only understand one or two words. At least I could learn some words from her. This is why I stay with an American host family; otherwise I would just stay at the hotel [S123].

The diary entries Sam kept during the second week indicates that Sam's English communication with the host mother had improved a bit: "I gradually could understand some of her questions and respond to some of her words even though I still couldn't speak in complete sentences. She seemed to understand what I meant and rephrased what I said into sentences" [S128]. His diary also shows that his motivation for practicing English with his host mother continued: "Today is a good day. I practiced more English with Linda. The only pity was I couldn't write down and memorise the sentences she said to me" [SD129]. Despite his motivation, Sam's English communication with his hostess was still considered limited till the end of the trip as he revealed in the interview during the final week: "I still have limited interaction with Linda, which is not because I don't want to, but because my English is too poor" [S27]. Therefore, Sam's limited social English interaction at homestay

might have resulted from Sam's poor English language skills rather than his avoidance.

6.2.3. Sam's anxiety in out-of-class activities

Sam's first day of diary entry recorded how he felt when he spoke to the custom officer at the airport: "I felt so embarrassed because I couldn't respond any English word to the custom officer's questions. I felt lost and very sad" [SD120]. This anxiety was understandable because this was Sam's first time speaking to a native English speaker and he had to face the officer and answer the questions by himself. Also the communication difficulty occurred right after getting off the plane could have been disappointing according to his expectation and excitement during the flight as recorded in his diary: "I was so excited during the flight. I was thinking I am going to see many different people in America and interact with them happily" [SD120].

Like Ryan, Sam also wrote in his diary that he and his roommate got lost on the way to school: "We got lost and walked without directions. Ryan was in a very bad mood and kept quiet. Therefore I started to panic. We didn't know how to ask for help" [SD121]. From here we could see that the person Sam was with in an anxiety-provoking situation could possibly have had some effects on the level of anxiety Sam felt in that context. Ryan's bad mood might have made Sam feel stressed and even more helpless because Ryan was not able to provide help for solving the problem. In other words, anxiety might be infectious, which is in line with the findings of Dörnyei and Kormos's (2000) study.

Sam revealed both in the interview and diary that he preferred classes to excursions. For instance, he stated the following during one interview:

I feel the classes were more interesting than excursions because the teacher was there. I didn't dare to speak English outside classroom. For example, Chocolate taught me how to ask for refilling my drink, but I didn't bother to try....I tried before, but the person looked very confused and frowned. I think I pronounced words wrong. I felt humiliated because I couldn't make myself understood and I couldn't understand the person when he/she responded to me [S128].

The way he talked about his English language use during excursions contrasts sharply with the optimism and self-confidence he expressed when talking about his

classroom learning. This again echoes the poststructuralist view of identity as diverse, contradictory, dynamic and changing over historical time and social space (see 2.5.2.1.). It also brings to mind the concept of identity in the CoP framework that involves conflictual and situated identity negotiation as learners move across the boundaries of different communities (see 2.5.3.2.). Sam's non-unitary and contradictory identities in the two different contexts (classroom and out-of-class activities) might have important implications for understanding his high motivation in classroom learning and his unwillingness to try to use English outside the classroom. In other words, when Sam experienced an identity conflict in relation to a role or practice he was expected to adopt, his participation in a given CoP was negatively affected, and vice versa.

Sam's statement above suggests that using the L2 in an authentic environment with no teacher being there to help is more anxiety-provoking for L2 learners. The teachers in the SA classroom had extensive experience interacting with international students. My observation shows that they tended to speak slowly and they were used to and had good understanding of different accents. They could be much more supportive and understanding than local people towards Sam's weakness in English oral skills. Sam also told me: "What I said was really poor English, but the teacher could still understand me and helped me to speak in complete sentences. But local people wouldn't do so" [S129]. Clark and Gieve's (2006) study has a similar finding that students working with language teachers who are aware of students' linguistic and cultural needs would have a stronger sense of security than those who are with a teacher with limited experience of working with L2 users.

Borrowing poststructuralist SLA terms, Sam found it difficult to be "audible" (Miller 2004) or to claim "the ownership of English" (Norton 1997) (see 2.5.2.1.) when he left the supportive classroom environment due to the unequal power relationships between the L2 learners and native speakers. Therefore he failed to develop an identity as "legitimate speakers" (Bourdieu 1991), which may have caused anxiety and also negatively influenced the extent to which he may participate in out-of-class English social interactions. Sam's experience is very similar to that of the ESL students in Miller (ibid), Morita (2004), and Clark and Gieve's (2006) studies when

they transferred into the mainstream high school or university from the previous supportive ESL learning setting.

Furthermore, the previous unsuccessful and anxious communication experiences probably had led to Sam's expectation of poor results when speaking English to local people and therefore impaired his willingness to take risks. Pozo et al.'s (1991) study on social anxiety and self perception also revealed that language learners' negative attitudes towards their English skills and inability to predict a positive outcome of their L2 use in the social interaction with native speakers made them feel socially anxious and they responded with withdrawal. Jackson (2008) and Pellegrino Aveni's (2005) studies on L2 learners on SA programmes also found that those learners who felt they were unable to perform tasks in the L2 adequately (poor sense of self-efficacy) would judge the L2 interaction as a bad risk to take.

Sam's expressed feeling of "humiliation" (see the quote above) may possibly have threatened Sam's self-image, and therefore also resulted in anxiety and resistance to engage in future social English. This recalls poststructuralist SLA scholars' (e.g. Siegal 1996; Pavlenko 2000) viewpoint that the subject positions L2 users occupied in the target language may be unacceptable or incompatible with those in their native language. Failing to fashion "legitimate identities" in L2 may make L2 learners limit their learning and refuse to modify their behaviour and reconstruct their identities despite the recognised symbolic value of the language. Drawing on Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of legitimate peripheral participation as a problematic and conflictual process of learning (see 2.5.3.1.), Sam's failing to identify himself as a legitimate speaker may have caused anxiety. Therefore, anxiety may not be the factor that impaired Sam's willingness to communicate in English with the local people. Instead, anxiety may have only been the symptomatic panic resulting from the threats Sam felt against his sense of self.

At the end of the trip, Sam made the following concluding remark about his English language learning and use in out-of-class activities: "We didn't really need to use English outside classroom. Some people in our group have better English proficiency. I just followed them and learnt with them" [S24]. This statement suggests that like Ryan's case, Sam's limited English language use during

excursions throughout the three weeks was caused by both his avoidance and the peer support. As a result of poor command of English, like Ryan, Sam also sought a sense of security by sticking with the Taiwanese group: “I do need to gather with Taiwanese because my English is too poor and I need their help. I feel safe when being with them” [S24]. Besides causes related to the design of the SA programme mentioned in Ryan’s case (see 5.3.3.), Sam’s shy personality also partly accounted for his limited use of English outside the classroom: “I am shy and therefore I didn’t have much interaction with international friends either. Speaking English to strangers made me nervous and made my speaking even worse” [S417].

6.2.4. Sam’s recall of his overall SA experience

Contrasting with his on-trip statement that he did not feel nervous at all during the placement test, Sam noted the following when asked, during the follow-up interview, if there was any change in his overall feelings during the three weeks in San Diego:

I was the most nervous during the placement test on the first day. The test was so difficult to me and I couldn’t read the written test and I couldn’t understand what the interviewer asked me. I felt very stressed at that time and I told myself: “How stupid I am to join the study abroad programme and I am torturing myself [S417].

There are two possible explanations for this discrepancy, which bring out the complexity of anxiety. First, it is true that, as he stated right after the test, Sam was not anxious. This lack of anxiety could be better understood if we look into the context where the teacher was very friendly and she spoke very slowly when interviewing students (according to my field notes). Also the placement test was not like those English tests at formal schooling as the language school director said to every student that the test was for the purpose of assigning them to the right class level. In this circumstance, Sam might not have to worry about failing the test like he said in the pre-departure interview. Second, he may have felt anxious but may not have felt close enough to me, on the first day of the trip, to reveal his true feelings. Also perhaps he did not want people to know that he had started regretting and thought of giving up at the beginning of the trip.

Sam’s recall of the SA classes, otherwise, is very pleasant: “The English-only classroom made me more anxious, but I could learn faster and better there” [S417]. This facilitating anxiety enhanced his motivation to learn and his better class

performance could have gradually made the anxiety to fade away: “I had more and more interaction with the teacher. I felt so relaxed in the final days that I didn’t want to go back to Taiwan” [S417].

Sam acknowledged, but sounded frustrated that the homestay experience was not helpful for his English language learning due to his poor English: “My English was so poor that I didn’t learn anything at homestay” [S417]. Tracing back to his on-trip statement that his poor oral English competence had impaired his communication and constrained his interaction with the hostess, this lack of practice not surprisingly caused Sam’s self-perceived limited learning. Sam’s frustrated tone may imply that anxiety occurred when his earlier perception and expectation that the host family experience provides a helpful environment for learning authentic English (see the quote in 6.2.2.) turned out to be disappointing.

The anxiety Sam felt when talking to local people in America resurfaced during the follow-up interview: “I felt nervous and anxious when I had to order food or ask for direction. I felt I didn’t know any English at all and I didn’t dare to speak unless another Taiwanese helped me to say it in English” [S417]. He continued with a lengthy description of the communication difficulties he encountered, which might imply the significance of these events.

6.3. SAM’S PERCEPTION OF IMPACTS OF THE SA EXPERIENCE

In the following subsections, I talk about Sam’s perception of the impact of SA on his perceived English proficiency, fear of speaking English, anxiety about and motivation for learning English.

6.3.1. Impact of SA on Sam’s perception of his English proficiency

Towards the end of the trip, Sam sounded happy: “I feel my English has improved. I hope I can stay longer and my English will definitely improve more” [S27]. Two months later, this better self-perceived English proficiency was still present and this result went beyond his pre-trip expectation of just learning some basic greeting in English: “Compared to last semester, I can understand more of the teacher’s lecture this semester. I think the experience improved my listening skill” [S417]. With this better self-perceived and actual oral English proficiency, Sam no longer felt inferior

to his peers: “I felt my friends’ English was so good before, but I don’t feel so any more because now I can understand what they said and I even knew they made mistakes” [S417].

Nevertheless, generally speaking, Sam was still not confident about his English after the trip: “My English did improve because of this experience, but didn’t improve much. I am still not confident and I am worried about my English” [S417]. This perception seems reasonable if we consider how much proficiency could be gained during a relatively short period of studying abroad (three weeks). On the other hand, Sam’s recall of his actual SA experiences seemed to demoralise his self-perceived English proficiency. He added after talking about the communication difficulty with native English speakers encountered in America: “What I thought turned out to be reality. My English is really poor and I always know that” [S417].

6.3.2. Impact of SA on Sam’s fear of speaking English and anxiety in English language learning

On the final day of the classes in America, when asked about the impact of this SA experience on his English language learning, if there is any, Sam responded: “I am not very scared of speaking English and learning English any more, but I still feel English is very difficult” [S27]. His pre-trip expectation for less fear of speaking English was realised. The level of anxiety seemed to be lower, but anxiety itself did not disappear completely. Like Ryan, Sam mentioned his anxiety about English tests at formal schooling two months after the trip: “I felt nervous, anxious, and worried whenever the teacher said there would be a test” [S417]. Being a final year student, Sam couldn’t graduate on time if he failed this course again. This inevitably put some pressure on Sam and added to his fear of failing the class. Surely lessening anxiety about speaking English cannot be expected to affect anxiety about learning English in Taiwan which is anxiety about passing a test that does not involve speaking.

6.3.3. Impact of SA on Sam’s motivation for learning English

Sam had been motivated to learn English throughout the whole trip. He stated the following on one of the final days in America: “I still feel I want to practice English as much as I can. I am more interested in English now than before” [S27]. However,

what worried him was whether this motivation would remain after the trip. “I am not sure how I will be after I go back to Taiwan” [S27]. He repeated this sentence three times during the interview, which may imply his big concern about lacking motivation and he seemed to worry he would return to the “old him”.

Going back to the traditional learning environment in Taiwan was the expected reason for the motivation to disappear: “I have to retake university English courses I failed before. The classes will be like the ones I usually had before. The teacher just reads through the textbook and I will feel bored and lose my motivation to learn” [S27]. Fortunately, things turned out to be more positive than he thought. Two months later, Sam realised his pre-trip goal and considered himself as becoming an “active learner”. He expressed his strong motivation as follows:

This is an inspiring experience that motivates me to learn English. I used to hate English, but now I feel English fun and interesting. I am reviewing the vocabulary and grammar I learnt during high school. I think I am an active learner now. I am also keeping a diary to record down my motivation. I am going to serve the army soon, but I hope I can read the diary after I come back and I can still be motivated. I can't be like the person I was again who didn't want to learn English at all [S417].

Sam's narrative above illustrates Wenger's (1998, p.215) note that learning “transforms who we are and what we can do...it is not just an accumulation of skills and information, but a process of becoming- to become a certain person or, conversely, to avoid becoming a certain person.” The L2 sojourners in Jackson's (2008) study also experienced identity reconstruction in the host speech community. Two of them, for example, developed a new identity that is more inclusive, more international, and intercultural after their five week sojourn in UK.

So, what made Sam become so much more positive about English language learning? One possible explanation may appear if we compare the debilitating and facilitating anxiety Sam experienced in different contexts. Anxiety and negative English language learning experience before the trip had made Sam reject English since high school. However, two months after the trip, Sam revealed: “When I recalled those negative experiences and feelings I encountered in America such as feeling nervous, depressed, embarrassed about not understanding what my host mother said, I felt these memories made me want to learn English more seriously” [S417]. The contrasting effects of anxiety on Sam in different learning contexts

again recall Bailey (1983) and Norton's (2000) claim that anxiety is context-dependent instead of a permanent predisposition of a learner (see 2.5.2.3.).

Besides, the "real life" English experience and communication difficulties encountered in America may have made Sam regret not learning English well before and feel that without a good command of English, life would be difficult. For instance, Sam added after talking about his difficulty in understanding the hostess and his fear of asking local people for direction while getting lost: "I suddenly felt that English was so important. I should know at least some basic sentences and questions, but I didn't" [S121]. It is possible that Sam's perception of English had changed after the trip. Like the L2 sojourners in Jackson's (2008) study, he no longer viewed it merely as a tool to get a job; instead, it is a language in real life.

In other words, referring back to his pre-trip instrumental motivation for English language learning, Sam might have found English important in a qualitatively different way in America from the way it is in Taiwan. It is possible that after the SA experience, he internalised the motive and could actually envisage a future ideal English-speaking self (Dörnyei 2005) as he said: "If my English is good enough, maybe one day I can do my master abroad" [S417]. Sam's post-trip motivation to learn English illustrates Norton (1995; 2000) and Jackson's (2008) concept of investment that has a strong link to the learner's identity and desire for the future (see 2.5.2.1.). Overall, as Norton and Toohey (2002) found in their studies of other L2 learners, Sam's perception of English changed and then his investment in English language learning deepened.

6.4. SUMMARY

Prior to the trip to America, Sam had suffered from severe anxiety since he started learning English. Besides harsh learning experiences (e.g. fighting with the English teacher, rote learning of vocabulary and grammar, pressure from parents' expectation), there were various and interrelated factors causing this anxiety. For instance, poor self-perceived and actual English proficiency / performance, feeling inferior, fear of speaking English, fear of failing the class, and concern about negative social evaluation. The anxiety made Sam totally reject English language learning and avoid speaking English.

Not surprisingly Sam's anxiety was still present in the first couple days of classes during the SA trip. The causes of anxiety were similar to those reported prior to the trip. He avoided any voluntary speaking and got very nervous when called on by the teacher. Despite these anxious feelings, Sam was very satisfied with the interactive classes, which encouraged his motivation for learning and led to a better sense of self. This strong motivation, however, sometimes caused anxiety. For instance, when Sam realised he did not learn as much as he expected, he felt anxious. However, this anxiety in turn led to further motivation. With time passing by, getting used to the class environment along with more understanding of the class content, anxiety eroded gradually. Meanwhile, Sam's higher self-esteem and self-confidence lessened his fear of speaking English in the classroom.

Sam's English language learning experiences at homestay and in out-of-class activities, however, were not as positive as in the classroom. The local people including the hostess were not as supportive and understanding towards Sam's poor oral English competence as the teachers. This made learning in these contexts more anxiety-provoking and limited his English language use. The previous unsuccessful communication and the resulting threat against sense of self along with expectation of future communication difficulty were other causes of Sam's anxiety in out-of-class activities. He therefore avoided using English by gathering with fellow Taiwanese during excursions and relied on them for English communication needs. It is important to note that Sam did not have the intended avoidance behaviour at homestay, which was a result of Sam's positive learning attitudes and pragmatic view of communication difficulties and the resulting lower level of anxiety.

Generally speaking this SA experience had very positive impact on Sam. He had better perceived oral English proficiency and therefore he no longer felt inferior to his peers. His anxiety about speaking and learning English was reduced and he was more motivated to learn. His new perception of English as a real-life language and his envision of his future English-speaking self may be the possible reasons for this change. In the next chapter, I give a portrait of Christina.

CHAPTER 7: CHRISTINA

7.1. CHRISTINA'S HISTORY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AND FEELINGS ABOUT THE SA TRIP

At the time when I was conducting my fieldwork, Christina was 20 years old. She was a second year vocational university student. She intended to join the previous study abroad (SA) trip in Vancouver last summer but missed the deadline. Therefore, she decided to go this time.

My first impression of Christina during the pre-departure interview was that she was a very shy person who talked timidly in a low voice. Very early in the interview, Christina told me, but sounded embarrassed, that she was born in America and lived there till the age of six before she moved back to Taiwan. Her parents divorced and then she and her father moved back to Taiwan. This unique biography may have had an impact on her English language learning and self-perception. Christina's narrative implies that being an American gave her some pressure but motivated her to learn English. The experience of living there helped her to learn English in an easier and faster way than her peers when she started her formal English schooling in Taiwan and made her confident about her pronunciation. She talked about these positive effects as follows:

I always wanted to improve my English. I would feel ashamed of the fact that I was born in America but my English was very poor. When I started studying English at the junior high school, I didn't understand grammar, but I know how to say basic sentences. I felt I could learn English faster and easier than my classmates because I used to live in America for six years. I feel my pronunciation is ok even though I don't have exact American accent [C11227].

However, she also mentioned that she almost forgot the English she had learnt in America because "I live in Taiwan, and we do not have chances to use English here" [C11227]. According to Christina, after she came back to Taiwan, she went through the six-year formal English education from the first grade in junior high till the third year of senior vocational school. She also attended private English language lessons during junior high school. However, the teaching there was like the teaching in formal schooling, focusing on memorizing vocabulary and grammar and the teachers were Taiwanese as well. Christina further stated that in Taiwan, she never had an experience of learning English with an English native speaker and never received

enough oral English language training for performing basic communication with a native speaker.

Christina did not consider herself as a student who studied English hard and her English academic performance at school was just average: “I just memorised vocabulary before the tests. I don’t care about the test marks I received” [C11227]. Being a student from the senior vocational school where English was not seriously emphasised and there were only two hours of English language teaching per week (see 1.2.4.), Christina did not receive as much English language training in formal schooling as those students in the comprehensive education system. Christina also perceived vocational university students as poorer English performers: “Usually vocational students’ English is not good, compared to those people in comprehensive universities” [C11227].

Generally speaking, before the trip, Christina was not anxious about learning English in Taiwan despite her low self-perceived English proficiency. When asked, in the pre-departure interview, if she had any positive or negative English language learning experiences, Christina responded: “I didn’t have any negative experience” [C11227]. According to Christina, there were various possible factors causing this limited anxiety such as not caring about the test marks received, the low academic requirement at the vocational schooling, and lacking the need to communicate in English in Taiwan where English is a foreign rather than second language (see 1.2.2.). Christina rarely felt anxious in English classrooms except when she could not understand certain parts or being called on in class. Even so, this anxiety motivated her to learn:

Occasionally I did feel anxious. I would feel annoyed if I couldn’t understand certain parts and felt that I wanted to figure it out. I would feel nervous when there was more interaction such as the teacher called on me to answer questions. But the anxious feeling motivated me to learn more and to try my best [C11227].

The way Christina constructed anxiety was quite positive. She was transmitting a message to me that anxiety seemed not to be an issue in her English language learning experiences in Taiwan. She said that what concerned her more was lacking the confidence in her English proficiency and fear of talking to native speakers. This fear might have been intensified by this coming trip to America due to the need to

communicate in English in America using her low English proficiency. In other words, Christina was not anxious about learning English in Taiwan but was anxious about going to America and the English demands of doing so. Like Ryan and Sam, she stated, during the pre-departure interview, that she worried about the communication difficulty she might encounter in America. This could perhaps confirm her fears about being identified as “the American who can’t speak English”:

My overall English proficiency is not very good. If I have to communicate in English or write a passage, I am afraid I am not able to do so. I can only say some easy words. I don’t dare to talk to native speakers. Actually I am quite nervous about this coming trip because I am going to a country where I can’t understand or read their language. When I first knew that we will stay with the host family, I felt very scared. I am afraid I can’t communicate with them [C11227].

These worries reflected her expectation of this coming trip. Contrasting with Ryan and Sam, Christina expected to gain better oral English competence, but like Sam, she hoped she could be less afraid of speaking English after the trip: “The biggest expectation is I can improve my English. I hope I can communicate in English more naturally, not worried about going abroad and speaking English to native speakers. I want to enhance my confidence” [C11227]. Better English writing competence after the trip was also expected due to Christina’s extremely poor self-perceived writing proficiency and high anxiety about English writing:

I feel most anxious about writing English because I really can’t write. Some words and sentences I could speak or understand, but I just couldn’t write them down. My English writing is extremely poor. So I also hope I can increase my vocabulary and improve my writing skills [C11227].

Her father also expected that she could improve her English from this SA experience: “My father’s English is very good and therefore he expects me to have good English competence as well. When I mentioned about this study tour to him, he told me I could give it a try” [C11227].

7.2. CHRISTINA’S STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE

In the following subsections, I describe Christina’s study abroad experience in terms of her anxiety in the classroom, at homestay, and in out-of-class activities, along with Christina’s recall of her overall SA experience two months after the trip.

7.2.1. Christina’s anxiety in the classroom

Like Ryan and Sam, Christina felt anxious on the first day of classes because she had to speak English to a native English teacher and international classmates using her very limited oral English proficiency. Also she had never been in a whole-English classroom since she came back to Taiwan from America. She expressed her frustration both during the post-class observation interview and in her diary of the day. The first couple sentences in the diary appeared: "Today is the first day I formally had classes. What I heard was all English and I could only speak English, but my English is rather limited. I felt frustrated" [C1D121]. Like Sam, Christian mentioned, during the interview her anxiety resulting from poor English proficiency and the lack of an electronic dictionary in class:

I really need a dictionary. The teacher gave us some handouts to read, but there were many words I didn't know. All other classmates were checking dictionary all the time, but I had no dictionary. I felt frustrated. I felt bad because I could not figure out what all those words mean [C1121].

This oral narrative shows that she really wanted to understand the class more, but without a dictionary, she just could not. Like Sam, Christina felt anxious due to her motivation to learn. That is, anxiety could possibly result from motivation. She also wrote, in her diary of the day, her frustration with lacking the dictionary: "All my classmates were checking words on their electronic dictionaries in class, but I was just sitting there like an idiot doing nothing" [C1121].

Throughout the three weeks, Christina continued to reveal, in both interviews and diary, how lacking a dictionary made her anxious and impaired her learning and performance in class. One day in the second week she even came to me during the class break, sounding very frustrated:

I feel so painful. I regretted so much that I did not bring the electronic dictionary here. My learning became very slow and I skipped all the words I didn't know. I am worried. I came here mainly to learn and practice English. But now I feel I come here to tour and I spoke Chinese all the time outside classroom. I could not learn much in class, either [C1131].

Christina's narrative above shows that her poor learning performance generated further anxiety due to her expectation for improving English and the motivation to learn. She started to blame herself and had self-defeating thoughts.

Overall, as the interview and diary data show, Christina had been quite anxious in the classroom during the first week. My observation recorded that she always had low class participation and limited interaction with both Taiwanese and international classmates. Like Ryan and Sam, she kept quiet during the small group and whole class discussions in which other students talked voluntarily. She would only talk in the pair work, in a very low voice though, probably because she had to interact with her partner. Unlike other Taiwanese students in other classes who always sat together and tried to help each other in Chinese, Christina did not sit beside her only Taiwanese classmate; neither did they talk to each other. When I mentioned to her in the post-class observation interview what I had noticed, she sounded depressed and spoke in a low voice acknowledging her anxious feelings and the resulting avoidance behaviour. Her depressing tone implies that like Ryan, she felt bad about her low class participation.

She stated that she felt anxious in classes because she was afraid of making mistakes, feeling inferior to classmates, having poor actual and self-perceived English competence, and working in an unfamiliar learning environment. Moreover, Christina noted: “The class materials were more advanced than my English proficiency. I felt even more nervous in a difficult class” [C1124]. It is noteworthy that Christina’s avoidance behaviour in class contradicts her pre-trip statement that anxiety made her want to learn more and try her best. Ohata (2005a) states that a high level of anxiety is associated with debilitating anxiety, while low anxiety can have facilitating effects on L2 learners. In this view, Christina’s anxiety in the SA classroom was debilitating probably because Christina experienced a higher level of anxiety here than in the English classrooms in Taiwan. The terms “awful” and “scared” she used to describe her feeling in the SA class also imply the significant amount of anxiety: “I felt scared and I was afraid of making mistakes. Therefore I spoke in a low voice...I felt awful because I had to interact with my partner. Sometimes I didn’t understand her” [C1123]. Meanwhile, Christina did not say much in class sometimes simply because she did not have sufficient capability to do so or because she was shy; she said: “My speaking is quite poor and I don’t know how to say things in English. I was quiet also because I was shy” [C1122].

Like Ryan and Sam, Christina felt very anxious about being called on during the first week. She also felt nervous in the small group discussions. When asked about the most nervous and anxious experience in class, if there was any, Christina responded:

I felt frightened when the teacher called me to answer questions. The second class made me most nervous and anxious because the teacher gave us an article to read first and then we had to discuss it in small groups. I didn't understand the difficult article and therefore I had no clue what to say [C1122].

The term "frightened" that she used here and "nervous" that she used in Taiwan seem to signal higher anxiety experienced when called on by a native teacher to answer questions in front of international classmates. It is important to note that Christina had mentioned, three times during the first week, her anxious feelings about being called on in class. This high level of anxiety was debilitating and caused avoidance and impaired performance: "I hoped the teacher would never call on me...When the teacher called me to answer questions, I got frightened and didn't know how to react first" [C1125].

This anxiety about being called on could possibly also explain why she avoided voluntary speaking and only spoke in the pair work. Nevertheless, she expressed anxiety during the pair work due to fear of partner's negative evaluation: "I felt very nervous when I didn't know what to say to my partner. Sometimes I would speak out Chinese words. I felt very embarrassed" [C1122]. My observation recorded that Christina did not say a lot and her partner seemed to be getting impatient and asked her to say more. Another aspect worth bringing out is, similar to Ryan's case, the cultural difference could have worsened Christina's anxiety: "I felt less nervous talking to Asians than those Brazilians and Italians because I felt they look more familiar. I felt more familiar with them" [C1123]. The fact that her diary of the day also recorded the difficulty and anxiety in the pair work implies that this was really an unpleasant experience. She used "awful" to describe the significant amount of anxiety experienced. The following extract is part of her diary entry on January, 23rd:

I really felt awful in today's class...in the beginning we had to read an article and then talk about the main idea of the article to our partner. This was a pair work and I had to speak to my partner...that was really difficult and I had no clue how and what to start. The worst thing is she (the partner) seemed angry when I did not know what to say [C1D123].

Christina's anxiety in the pair work could be understood by bringing in poststructuralist SLA scholars' (e.g. Pavlenko and Lantolf 2000; Pavlenko 2002) view that L2 learners' anxiety could be explained as their affective response to the conflict between their intention (or demand) to communicate in the L2, but with limited language competence, at a given moment, and their desire to maintain and protect their sense of self and self-presentation.

What interested me was that in contrast to Ryan who found the teacher's encouragement helpful, Christina felt anxious when she was complimented by the teacher. The culture difference in terms of teaching styles, her low self-perceived English competence along with fear of peers' negative evaluation contributed to this anxiety:

It's impossible that I was as good as what the teacher said. The teachers in Taiwan wouldn't give us encouragement like this. I prefer Taiwanese teaching style. It is probably because of the culture differences. Sometimes I felt the teachers here were too exaggerated. I felt embarrassed and nervous when I heard the compliment because all other classmates heard that as well [C1125].

The last sentence in this narrative implies that Christina's anxiety about the teacher's compliment could be understood in terms of identity-based anxiety (Stroud and Wee 2006) (see 2.5.2.3.). She might have suffered from identity-based anxiety because she was concerned with the opinions of her peers and did not wish to stand out from her peers. Christina's anxiety generated by trying not to show herself as better than others might be related to the Chinese culture that emphasises modesty (Tsui 1996) (see 1.2.3.). Moreover, the sentence "It's impossible that I was as good as what the teacher said" suggests that Christina's anxiety in this case may also associate with the feelings that what the teacher said was not actually meaningful and true.

The class social context cannot be ignored when trying to explain Christina's anxiety in the first-week classroom English language learning. Christina was placed in the highest level class among our Taiwanese group, where she only had one Taiwanese classmate. Learning English in an unfamiliar social context along with her shy personality could have caused further anxiety on Christina during the first week. She stated: "I am a shy person and I become nervous and quiet in an unfamiliar environment" [C1122]. In addition, the international classmates had been studying

with the class for several weeks before Christina came in as a newcomer (this was so in this class and in others too), and most of the classmates were very outgoing and they seemed to be very close and always chatted happily in class. Christina's shy personality made her become an extreme case in the classroom. However, the classmates seemed not to have any intention to bring her into their small groups. My observation of one of Christina's classes during the first week recorded as follows:

Christina and the Japanese girl did not chat and remained quiet after practicing asking and answering those questions on the handout. The classroom was full of laughers while other pairs were all chatting and discussing cheerfully. However, when the Japanese girl paired with another Brazilian guy in another exercise, she became very cheerful and talked with him with enthusiasm [C1O123].

Christina perceived herself as an outsider of the class without a sense of belonging, which caused her anxiety as she stated during one interview in the first week:

I feel I can't fit into the class. It seems to me that they know each other for a long time and they are very close. If I stayed here longer, probably I could be closer to them. I am a quiet person. I felt a bit nervous when they talked happily to each other, but I did not say anything. I felt I was an outsider [C1125].

My observation of Christina during the second week shows that she seemed more relaxed and behaved more actively in class than she was in the first week. The way she wrote about her classes in the diary was more cheerful and positive. Like Sam, Christina wrote a couple of very positive sentences such as "Today it was a good day for school!!" [C1D128], "The class was fun." [C1D129] "Time went very fast in this class." [C1D131] During one post-class observation interview in the second week, she stated the following:

Afterwards we discussed in small groups. I did not feel too nervous about it because I didn't need to speak English in front of the teacher and the whole class. I like small group discussion also because I could hear people from other countries speaking English. I was happy to talk a lot about my country to my classmates. I was very happy at that time! [C1128].

The narrative above illustrates that she started to like small group discussions and felt more confident and comfortable about speaking English in the group during the second week. The discussion topic also mattered. It is possible that talking about Taiwan made things easier and probably enhanced her desired identity as a Taiwanese student, which might have lessened her anxiety.

One possible reason for Christina's higher class participation and much lower anxiety in class during the second week was that she was getting more familiar with the teacher and classmates, having a stronger feeling of belonging to the class, and therefore enjoyed herself more in class. Both my observation and Christina's diary noted that she asked for pictures with her Brazilian classmates and teachers during the class breaks. She also wrote about her sadness when some of her classmates and teachers were leaving the school, which perhaps implies that she had become close to them and they felt like friends. All this familiarity, warmth, and inclusion might have led to relaxation and enjoyment. In Pellegrino Aveni's (2005) words, Christina's written narrative shows that her "sense of security" was strengthened, and therefore she became more sociable in L2 interactions. This higher sociability in the classroom echoes Lave and Wenger's (1991) claim that newcomers build up new understanding and broaden themselves through the process of mutual engagement with old-timers in the community.

The source of stress in class that Christina wrote in her diary during the second week was English writing, probably because the teacher started to ask them to write from the second week. Christina wrote about her anxiety and writing difficulty in statements like "Oh! It's difficult to write a story" [C1D130], and "I hate writing articles because I don't know the grammar and the words. I need a dictionary!" [C1D130]. Her anxiety about English writing could be traced back to her pre-trip stated writing difficulties and the resulting anxiety.

This poor English writing competence is very common among vocational university students like Christina. They tend to be poor academic performers in junior high school where the English education mainly focuses on rote-learning of vocabulary and grammar (see 1.2.3. and 1.2.4.). Therefore, they usually have very poor English grammar knowledge and limited vocabulary, which makes writing very difficult for them. As an English teacher in a vocational university, I also found that most of my students could hardly write in complete sentences and their writing was full of grammar mistakes and wrong spelling. Interestingly, however, Christina started writing in English in her diary from the second week. Seven days of her diary entries consisted of both Chinese and English. This could suggest that even though she "hated" writing English, she was willing and motivated to try. This motivation

corresponds to her pre-trip statement that she expected this SA experience could improve her writing skill.

My class observation of Christina in the final week was very similar to that in the second week. Christina looked relaxed, having eye contact with the teachers and classmates, and had more class participation than in the first week, such as speaking more in a louder voice in the pair or group work. She sometimes responded to the teacher voluntarily with other students. During the post-class observation interview, she reflected: "I feel I could catch up more. I am more active than I was in the first week. I am more used to responding voluntarily to the teacher and not very afraid any more because everybody in class is quite active" [C124]. On the last day of classes, when asked about her overall feelings about this SA experience, she responded: "It's good, but it's so short that I feel it got to the end too soon" [C127]. Like Sam, Christina hoped to stay longer in America. Getting very close to her classmates was part of the reason as she revealed in the diary: "Today is our graduation ceremony. I feel sad about leaving. I feel I am very close to my classmates, but I have to say goodbye to them. I really want to stay here longer" [C1D28].

7.2.2. Christina's anxiety at homestay

As she had had expressed worries, before the trip, about oral communication difficulty with her host family and fear to speak English to them, Christina was very nervous on the first night at homestay. Like Ryan and Sam, Christina recorded her communication difficulty and the resulting anxious feelings in her diary and also talked about it during the interview the next day: "I was quite nervous because I couldn't understand what my home mom said, but I had to respond to her" [C1121]. She did not talk much with her hostess, but she expected herself to say more in the future as she wrote in her diary: "I did not really talk to her...I have to do better and try my best later" [C1D120]. From these statements we could see that like Sam, Christina was holding positive attitudes towards her difficulty in communicating with her hostess.

However, both Christina's oral and written narrative on the following days shows that the communication difficulty at homestay remained. The following quote

illustrates that both Christina's poor oral English competence and the hostess's inability to communicate with less than fluent learners accounted for the communication difficulties and therefore anxiety took place:

Sometimes I asked her (hostess) what she meant by this and that, but she didn't know how to explain to me. I could only give up and respond "yeah..." and passed the topic. It's very difficult to communicate with her. I felt lost and depressed. I guessed she didn't hear me clearly and didn't understand me either [C1129].

Christina was afraid of and nervous about speaking English to her hostess: "I am afraid I would stop suddenly because I did not know what and how to say something in English" [C1123]. Similar to those in the classroom, the reported causes of anxiety at homestay were fear of making mistakes, worry about hostess' negative evaluation of her English, feeling inferior to the native speaker (hostess), and poor oral English competence.

This anxiety, in turn, increased her planning time in communication and caused limited interaction with the hostess: "If she talked to me, I would respond, but I tended to think a lot, making sure my sentence was correct before saying something to her. I hardly initiated talking to her" [C1123]. This limited interaction and poor English communication with the hostess caused further anxiety and self-defeating thoughts. She felt bad and anxious when she compared herself to her Taiwanese roommate who obviously could respond to the hostess better and talk more in the house:

When our hostess talked to us or asked us questions, for most of time, Ulla (her roommate) was the one responding. I felt I was very bad and my English was very poor. I came here, but I couldn't say any sentence. I felt bad and anxious" [C1129].

This anxiety could be traced back to the living arrangement in this SA programme design. The dual placement of Taiwanese students in one host family sometimes could have led to the peer competition. Furthermore, she expected herself to learn and practice English as much as she could in America (see also the quote in 7.2.1.), so she might start to feel anxious when she could not do so due to either anxiety or the actual poor English competence. The sentence "I felt I was very bad" signals Christina's negative identity construction and recalls Wenger's (1998) notion that "non-participation" shapes learners' identity (see 2.5.3.3.). Christina's anxiety over her silence, therefore, might have been a result of the threat she felt against her sense of self.

Another point worth bringing out is that different from sounding depressed when talking about the difficulties encountered in class, the tone Christina used to talk about her communication difficulty at homestay was more cheerful with occasional laughter. Likewise, the more positive words she used to describe how she felt at homestay also imply a lower level of anxiety there than in the classroom. For example, she used words like “scared” and “awful” to describe her anxiety in the classroom, but concluded the communication difficulty occurred at homestay as a “funny” experience in her diary on January 23rd:

Home mom asked us what we wanted to eat for dinner. Ulla responded that she wanted to have noodles. What surprised me was she did not know what noodles were. We were trying very hard to explain and Ulla said: “just like spaghetti, but it’s very long...long...” Unfortunately, she still didn’t understand us and we were even corrected the pronunciation of “Corn”. I feel the whole thing is very funny [C1D123].

There are other possible indications or reasons for Christina’s lower level of anxiety at homestay than in the classroom. First, different from her behaviour in the first-week classes, she was more willing to communicate and did not have deliberate avoidance at homestay. It was just that lacking both linguistic and social competence stopped her from speaking to her hostess: “Actually I sometimes wanted to sit in the living room with her (the hostess) and talk to her. However, I did not know how to start, so I never did so” [C1129].

Second, Christina felt close to her hostess who was a friendly old lady and nice to her guest students: “She was always quite happy when talking to us and never showed impatience when she did not understand me. She is very nice and sometimes I feel I become her child” [C1131]. Consequently, Christina may feel more sense of belonging at homestay than in the classroom where most of her classmates had formed a social group that she had difficulty blending into during the first week. The classmate also once showed impatience when she was quiet.

Third, according to what Christina and her roommate told me, the host mother did not have much time to spend with her guest students except for occasional mealtime interaction. Also the language acquisition in an informal context like homestay is voluntary and therefore Christina could decide either to participate or not. The

homestay context, therefore, seemed less linguistically challenging and demanding than the classroom. In class, Christina had to comprehend spoken English of both the teacher and international students with different accents and be asked to speak English when called on or in the pair or small group work.

Christina's English oral performance at homestay was still not good in the final week and this made her anxious: "I still didn't understand her at all and therefore my responses were always short. I felt very bad about this" [C127]. This anxiety perhaps could be explained if we refer back to Christina's pre-trip "unrealistic" expectation for linguistic improvement and her first night determination to have better communication with the hostess. We should consider the possibility that she might also expect herself to have better English performance at homestay in the final week just like how she performed in the classroom. In other words, anxiety occurred when the reality turned out to be different from what she had been expecting. In addition, like Ryan and Sam's case, parental expectation could also have added to this anxiety when Christina finally realised she was going to disappoint her father.

7.2.3. Christina's anxiety in out-of-class activities

Christina's feelings seemed to be in turmoil when she returned to her birthplace (America). She had difficulties understanding the custom officer at the airport. "Very bad!!!" [C1D120] she wrote in her diary. Meanwhile she seemed happy and a bit proud to be American: "When we went through the custom clearance, I was separated from our group because I am a US passport holder. I didn't need to do finger prints, taking photos, and some other troublesome things like they had to" [C1D120].

Over the three weeks period of time, a number of positive experiences talking to local people appeared in Christina's oral and written narrative. For example, she talked about one experience at MacDonald. She felt anxious at first and did not dare to go to the counter to order because "I was afraid of making mistakes. I was afraid I didn't know how to continue after I made a mistake. I was also afraid of the confusing face I would see because the counter assistant didn't understand me" [C1129]. But then she tried to convince herself: "now that I am in America now, making mistakes isn't a big deal" [C1129]. She tried and realised she could

communicate with the MacDonald staff better than she thought: “I was very impressed with myself” [C1129]. This experience corresponds to her pre-trip fear of speaking English to a native speaker, but she would still convince herself to have a try and the result turned out to be better than she thought.

She also had some positive experiences elsewhere. She told me she was very happy when she could understand spoken English and make herself understood. For instance, she said that she could understand and respond to a local person sitting next to her on bus, and she chatted in English with a Taiwanese American who could not speak Chinese at Starbucks. She added after talking about these pleasant encounters: “I felt a sense of accomplishment” [C1129]. To conclude, she seemed to underestimate her English oral proficiency before the trip and she was a lot more willing to try to talk to local people than she thought before the trip. These positive experiences perhaps had given Christina confidence, enhanced her self-efficacy, and made her feel that she wanted to speak as much English as she could. She stated she felt bad about speaking Chinese all the time because “that would lose the meaning of coming here” [C1129].

Therefore, Christina and her Taiwanese friend decided to speak English to each other while shopping. This was a very pleasant experience for Christina because “our level of English proficiency is similar. It’s easy to communicate with her. I felt relaxed. We didn’t need to fear making mistakes in front of each other. Also speaking English made me feel being in America” [C1129]. This high motivation contradicts her pre-trip worry: “I am afraid I will get annoyed because I have to use and understand English everyday” [C11227]. Pellegrino Aveni (2005), Dörnyei (2005), and Ehrman (1996) also point out that highly positive self-efficacy—more expectation of good results—supports an individual’s willingness to use an L2 in a particular sociocultural setting.

Nevertheless, Christina’s English language learning and use in out-of-class activities were not always pleasant. She also mentioned, both in the interview and diary, several anxious experiences. For instance, like Ryan and Sam, she felt anxious when she encountered incomprehensible listening due to local people’s fast speaking and

when she failed to express herself properly. The following was Christina's account about what happened:

I couldn't understand the shop assistant and asked him to say that again, but he still spoke super fast the second time. I felt very embarrassed when he looked at me smiling and kept talking, but I had no clue what he was talking about. I ended up just saying "thank you" and then ran away...Another time I wanted to refund one cloth, but the shop assistant didn't understand me. I was nervous at that moment. I felt I was very bad [C1129].

Some factors have to be taken into account when we try to understand Christina's anxiety about her communication difficulties. First of all, the power imbalance between language learners and native speakers mentioned earlier (see 5.3.2.), may have added to Christina's anxiety. The shop assistant's fast speaking implies that the native speakers are usually unwilling to take the time to solve the communication problems with the language learners (Norton 2000; Miller 2004). Second, Christina once noted: "I kind of felt inferior when talking to a native speaker like my home mom because she always talked a lot, but I almost couldn't say anything" [C1123]. This statement suggests that part of her anxiety about communicating with local people may have come from feelings of being disadvantaged by her limited English competence. Third, in this natural language learning context, English language use was free and normal, rather than carefully controlled and simplified as in the classroom (Norton 2000). This made the communication more challenging not only for Ryan and Sam, but also for Christina. Anxiety, therefore, occurred.

Nevertheless, like Ryan and Sam, Christina reported less anxious feeling in out-of-class activities than in the classroom because she usually (but not always) gathered around fellow Taiwanese students after class. This seems to contradict her statement that she wanted to practice English more outside the classroom. There are four possible explanations for Christina's limited English language use with local people and these explanations also apply to Ryan and Sam's cases. First, Christina's inadequate English competence might not have granted her access to local American social network. Second, her anxiety about communication difficulties with local people mentioned earlier in this section may also have caused some avoidance. This perhaps could explain why she would rather practice English with her Taiwanese friend instead of local people. Third, according to Christina, this was her first time being abroad without her family around. She might have felt insecure and therefore

she gathered around Taiwanese peers: “I will feel lonely and didn’t know what to do if I don’t go with our group” [C1422]. Finally, the SA programme design itself, which I had addressed in Ryan’s case, also encouraged this gathering (see 5.3.3.).

7.2.4. Christina’s recall of her overall SA experience

Generally speaking, Christina’s recall of her overall anxiety in SA classes is similar to her statements during the trip: “I felt worst when the teacher called on me and the negative part of my classroom experience is I didn’t have an electronic dictionary with me” [C1422]. However, like Sam, she stated that this more anxiety-provoking SA classroom facilitated her learning:

I could learn English better and be more motivated to learn in America even though the English-only classes made me more nervous and anxious than the English classes in Taiwan. Being called on in class made me anxious, but I could get more sense of accomplishment when I could respond the teacher right [C1422].

Her on-trip and post-trip statements about the homestay situation are also similar. Like Sam’s case, the communication difficulty with her hostess made Christina perceive that this homestay experience is not helpful for her English language learning: “It’s not very helpful. I couldn’t understand her. The worse thing is she seemed not to know I didn’t understand her and she kept talking” [C1422].

When asked: “Did you ever feel anxious, nervous, or worried while in San Diego regarding your outside classroom English language learning and use?” Christina responded: “I felt so when I talked to local people during excursions” [C1422]. The fact that she didn’t mention about the anxious experience talking to her host mother this time may imply that communicating with the host mother could be less anxiety-provoking than with local people. One possible explanation might be that Christina once felt close to the hostess because the hostess never got impatient with her limited English verbal competence (see the quote in 7.2.2.). The local people, however, were strangers to Christina. Interestingly, this is in contrast to Ryan’s case. For Ryan, a lower level of involvement with local people and the resulting less reason to care about “their evaluation of me” generated less anxiety about the miscommunication with local people than with the hostess (see the quote in 5.3.4.). Ryan’s feeling rejected in relationship with his host mother might be a crucial reason for this difference.

7.3. CHRISTINA'S PERCEPTION OF IMPACTS OF THE SA EXPERIENCE

In the following subsections, I talk about Christina's perception of the impact of the SA tour on her perceived English proficiency, fear of speaking English, anxiety about and motivation for learning English.

7.3.1. Impact of SA on Christina's perception of her English proficiency

When interviewed on the last day of classes in America, Christina stated: "I feel my English became better because I had to speak English in English-only classes everyday and I feel I fit into the environment better and better" [C127]. Two months later, however, she said: "This study abroad experience further confirmed my poor English. Actually before the trip, I knew that I couldn't speak English when facing a native speaker" [C1422]. The contrasting statements suggest that Christina's better self-perceived English proficiency gained in America did not last long and similar to Sam's case; this better perception could turn completely negative when she recalled her actual unsuccessful communication with Americans.

7.3.2. Impact of SA on Christina's fear of speaking English and anxiety in English language learning

The finding suggests that this SA experience did not permanently diminish Christina's fear of speaking English: "I was more daring to speak English and less afraid of making mistakes when I just came back from America. However, after about three weeks, all these feelings were gone and I was like the old me who didn't dare to speak English and I was afraid of making mistakes" [C1422]. What was noteworthy was that "the old me" seems to imply that there was a "new me" created during, and shortly after the trip. Therefore we could perhaps reason that like Sam's case, this SA experience is personally transformative, at least temporarily, for Christina.

A possible reason for the new self-perception to disappear was that she had left the L2 environment and returned back to the normal life in Taiwan. A lack of practice could have impaired Christina's confidence she gained in America, which caused fear of speaking English again. Furthermore, being back in the Taiwanese "face focused" context (see 1.2.3.) could have possibly triggered all the social evaluation

fears mentioned earlier. On the other hand, despite encountering quite amount of anxiety during the trip especially in the first week, this SA experience did not cause Christina any anxiety in the English language learning process after she was back in Taiwan. She said in the follow-up interview: “I never rejected or being afraid of English language learning” [C1422]. Just like last semester (before the trip), Christina seldom felt anxious in English classes this semester except for being called on: “I only felt anxious when being called on in class, others are fine” [C1422].

7.3.3. Impact of SA on Christina’s motivation for learning English

On the last day of classes, when asked whether this SA experience would influence her future English language learning in Taiwan, Christina responded: “I think it will motivate me to learn English and improve it” [C127]. However, two months later, when I asked her about the impact of the trip on her motivation for learning English, if there is any, she responded: “There is no such impact; I feel the same as how I felt before the trip” [C1422]. The possible reason for this was that being back to the familiar daily routines for two months could have made Christina forget the motivation she felt in America.

7.4. SUMMARY

Overall, the significant amount of anxiety Christina experienced in the first week of SA classes could be traced back to her past English language learning experience. In spite of being born in America, she had left America at age of six and lived in Taiwan since then. The English education she received in Taiwan did not provide sufficient oral English language training for performing basic communication with a native speaker. Both poor actual / perceived English proficiency and lacking the chances to practice English outside classroom in Taiwan made Christina not confident about her English competence. All these factors might have contributed to Christina’s great amount of anxiety when she entered into an English native speech community with whole-English formal classroom learning.

In sum, the first-week anxiety in the SA classroom was mainly anxiety over social evaluation involving Christina’s negative social perceptions and self-consciousness when speaking or participating in social contexts. The reported causes of anxiety were fear of making mistakes, poor self-perceived English proficiency, feeling

inferior to peers, fear of negative social evaluation, and no sense of belonging to the class. Consequently, this anxiety was gradually eroded when Christina started getting closer to the teacher and classmates from the second week. This sense of security and belonging explain why she started to participate actively in the class community.

The main factors making Christina anxious at homestay and in out-of-class activities are similar to those in the classroom. The interesting finding is that the homestay and excursion contexts were less anxiety inducing than the classroom setting. One of the possible reasons might be that the language acquisition in an informal learning context like homestay and out-of-class activities is voluntary and therefore less linguistically challenging and demanding for Christina than the classroom. Her gathering around Taiwanese in out-of-class activities could perhaps also explain why she experienced less anxiety in this context.

The findings suggest that this SA experience did not permanently diminish Christina's fear of speaking English; neither did it sustain her better self-perceived English proficiency and learning motivation gained in America. After the brief stay in the USA, she was quickly immersed in familiar routines in Taiwan. A lack of practice might have impaired the confidence gained in America and therefore her fear of speaking English came back. Likewise, the lack of a need for English communication in Taiwan social context may possibly have made her motivation disappear. In the next chapter, I give a portrait of Chocolate.

CHAPTER 8: CHOCOLATE

8.1. CHOCOLATE'S HISTORY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AND FEELINGS ABOUT THE SA TRIP

At the time when I was conducting my fieldwork, Chocolate was 22 years old. He was a final year vocational university student. Chocolate had joined the previous summer study abroad (SA) programme in Vancouver. He had found the trip pleasant in a sense that it was very helpful for his English language learning. Therefore he decided to join the next similar programme in San Diego. During the first meeting I had with the ten students on this programme, Chocolate quickly grasped my attention. Since he had studied abroad once, he was acting like he knew everything and sometimes he was talking loudly in English.

During the pre-departure interview, Chocolate said he started learning English at the age of ten, but he did not enjoy it and gave it up after two months: "I felt English was not fun that time because it couldn't give me a sense of accomplishment. I learnt other things and I could join some contests. I was very proud of myself when I won. There was no such contest in English language learning" [C21219]. Later on he spent all his time playing basketball during high school and he was never serious about school work till the second year of university: "At that time I was not interested in school learning, including English" [C21219]. After he had decided, with the sole intention of having fun in a foreign country, to join the previous summer abroad programme, he started to read some English sentences out loud at home and found English interesting: "That was the first time I felt English was quite fun" [C21219]. This interest seems to have encouraged his English language learning and use during the SA trip: "I talked to my host family, the people on street and the teachers there" [C21219].

As mentioned earlier, Chocolate enjoyed the trip in Vancouver very much. He was very positive about the experience because it enhanced his motivation for learning English, confidence in oral English proficiency, and culture awareness:

Even though my English proficiency did not improve much, but at least I became very interested in English and more confident about my English oral proficiency after talking to people there in English. I realised I could make myself understood

using all the words I knew even with some drawings. I also got the chance to understand a different culture” [C21219].

Chocolate’s narrative echoes the finding of Kormos and Csizer’s study (2007, p.253) that “in terms of invested effort, situations when the conversation between the target language speakers and the learner went smoothly, contributed to increasing the time and energy the student was willing to put into L2 learning.” After the trip to Vancouver, he attended English classes at a private language centre, spending at least three hours a day there practicing English conversations and he enjoyed it: “All the teachers, both Taiwanese and foreign teachers there spoke English. I like this way. It’s very helpful for my English language learning” [C21219]. Chocolate also said that he visited America with his parents once when he was in primary school and he was dreaming he could have lived in that kind of beautiful environment. Both the pleasant tour and SA experiences may have widened Chocolate’s horizon and influenced his views about the future. He was considering pursuing studies overseas at the time when I first interviewed him: “Actually I really hope I can study abroad for my master degree” [C21219].

Chocolate’s statement above brings to mind Wenger’s (1998) concept of imagination as a mode of belonging in a given CoP (see 2.5.3.3.). It implies that Chocolate’s desired identity in his imagined community (Kanno and Norton 2003) was being a student who possesses good English competence and who studies overseas. This desired identity may partially explain Chocolate’s high investment in English language learning. Pavlenko and Norton (2007) note that language learners’ actual or desired memberships in the imagined communities affect their agency and investment in language learning. Apparently Chocolate’s pre-trip drive to learn English was stronger than the other young adults whose stories have been explored so far (e.g. he is the only person who stated that he spent at least three hours a day learning and practicing English at the private language centre). His hope to do his Masters degree abroad shows that he seemed to have internalised his motive and could envisage a future English-speaking self and therefore he appeared to be more invested in English language learning prior to the trip.

With one SA experience and everyday English classes at the private language centre, Chocolate, during the pre-departure interview, stated that he was very confident about his oral English competence. He also enjoyed speaking English in public because that gave him a sense of being superior: “I felt superior when I spoke English in public at school. Other students didn’t understand me at all and asked me to shut up (laughter). Even so, I kept talking in English. I wanted to make them jealous (laughter)” [C21219]. It seems to me that Chocolate, prior to the trip to America, had identified himself as a good English speaker (learner). His self-confidence about his English oral proficiency was presumably built on his feeling of belonging, or being a core member in his imagined global community of English users and of non-membership in the community of most Taiwanese teens.

It is not that Chocolate never got anxious in his English language learning experience. His reported causes of anxiety were the teacher’s incomprehensible talk and non-interactive teaching, rote learning of vocabulary and grammar rules, English writing, English tests, failing to fulfil an objective in English language learning, fear of being laughed at by others due to mistakes made, being called on in class when he did not know what to answer, insufficient preparation for speaking. Most of the causes also appeared in Ryan and Sam’s pre-trip reported causes of anxiety. The main effect of anxiety was avoidance. The following are Chocolate’s account:

I was nervous when the teacher asked me questions but I didn’t understand her [C21219].

I didn’t spend time memorizing English vocabulary and grammar because I really felt painful about it. The high school teachers always required us to memorise vocabulary and grammar then tested us. They would punish us physically if we didn’t get a good score [C21219].

I tended to be worried and nervous if I set up an objective to improve my English because I was afraid that I couldn’t fulfil the objective [C21219].

I feel my writing was the worst. I had been resisting writing [C21219].

I was always very nervous before an English test [C21219].

I would get nervous when people were laughing at me after I made a mistake in English [C21219].

I felt nervous when I was called on by the teacher or asked to speak on stage, but I didn’t know what to say because I didn’t prepare for it. Everybody was looking at

me at that moment. Actually I quite like speaking English on stage as long as I have prepared for it [C21219].

Having had a very-positive SA experience previously and due to the self-confidence in his ability to cope with English, Chocolate's expectation and excitement for this coming trip outweighed his worries about it. He sounded excited when talking about his expectation to practice even more English this time in America: "I hope I won't have too many Taiwanese classmates and I want to forget about Chinese there. I want to speak more to local people and international friends than last time in Vancouver. I want to learn different cultures" [C21219].

When I asked him if he worried about English communication in the US, he responded: "I was not worried last time. I am not worried this time either" [C21219]. The only worry he mentioned was not being able to understand the class content and the teacher's talk:

I'm afraid I will be like last time in Vancouver. When I didn't understand most of the teacher's talk there, I started to feel I couldn't learn anything and then resisted the class sometimes. I felt there were so many things I didn't know. I felt my English was much worse than others [C21219].

From this statement we could see that not understanding the class caused Chocolate anxiety, which in turn led to avoidance behaviour, low self-perceived English proficiency, and a feeling of inferiority. This tendency also applies to Ryan, Sam, and Christina.

8.2. CHOCOLATE'S STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE

In the following subsections, I describe Chocolate's study abroad experience in terms of his anxiety in the classroom, at homestay, and in out-of-class activities, along with Chocolate's recall of his overall SA experience two months after the trip.

8.2.1. Chocolate's anxiety in the classroom

During the interview on the first day of school, Chocolate expressed his boredom of the written part in the placement test: "It's so boring because I need to read a lot, but I didn't know the answer. I can't improve myself by the test. Speaking test is more interesting. I like to talk to people!!! (Speaking out loud)" [C2121]. When comparing the word "boring" used here and the words "very nervous" used before the trip to

describe his anxiety about English tests in Taiwan, I could perhaps reason that the placement test was less anxiety-provoking for Chocolate than the English tests in Taiwan.

Several reasons could possibly explain this. First, Chocolate enjoyed the speaking comprehension test, which did not exist in most of the English tests in Taiwan. Second, the placement test might not be considered as a “formal test” like the ones in Taiwan. Instead, with the previous experience in Vancouver, Chocolate could have known that this test was just used to place students to the appropriate level of class. Therefore he probably would not suffer from his pre-trip stated anxiety over English tests. Third, the school held a welcome party for our Taiwanese group before the test, which might have established a supportive and pleasant environment and therefore lessened anxiety.

During the first class break on the next day, Chocolate came to me and talked about his class problems:

I feel so bad and so sad. We ended up using the same textbook I used at the private language centre in Taiwan. I feel I am so stupid! Why did I need to come to America to learn English?! And the teacher just taught a little bit. My classmates were all chatting in their native languages. They are all from Asia and half of them are Taiwanese. My partner, the Korean guy, kept silent in the pair work. It's very boring [C2122].

Like Sam and Christina, Chocolate had been highly motivated to learn and therefore felt anxious when he could not learn as much from the class as he expected. Chocolate's comparison with his earlier positive English language learning experience at the language centre in Taiwan and Vancouver possibly have added to this anxiety: “When I was in Vancouver, I learnt a lot and when I was at the private language centre in Taiwan, I learnt a lot, too. Here I don't think I can learn a lot. I feel very bad” [C2122].

Later in the day, Chocolate asked me to accompany him to talk to the class coordinator for a change of his class. After he was placed in a new class, he started to enjoy it and commented as follows in one post-class observation interview:

The teacher influenced students' participation. Take the previous class as an example, the teacher's teaching pace was very slow and then students tended to be passive and lazy. If the teacher was very active asking students to do this and that,

like this new class, I would be more motivated to participate. If everybody in class was very active and enthusiastic, I would dare to talk [C2125].

From here we could see that, similar to Ryan and Sam's cases, the class atmosphere was crucial to Chocolate's level of anxiety and class participation and the teacher was a determining factor for the class atmosphere.

My observation notes indicate that Chocolate's behaviour in both morning and afternoon classes during the first two weeks is very different from that of Ryan, Sam, and Christina. He looked as if he was having a lot of fun, actively participating in class, talking extensively, and being the first to volunteer answering the teacher's questions. He spoke out loud in English most of the time. The following excerpt illustrates that his high class participation could be explained by his confidence about his oral English competence, feeling superior about his pronunciation, no fear of speaking English, and low fear of making mistakes and the teacher's error correction:

I: How did you feel when you were speaking English in class?

C2: I was not nervous, just like speaking Chinese. If I made mistakes, the teacher would correct me and I felt I learnt something. Sure I was a bit embarrassed when being corrected, but I wouldn't feel nervous if no classmate was laughing at me...Also once they (international classmates) told me they liked my pronunciation because they all had accents [C2122].

In addition, the teacher's supportive attitude towards students' mistakes and her friendly way of correcting errors may also have made Chocolate relaxed. My observation recorded that the teacher said "good try" before correcting students' errors and then said: "It would be better if you say..." Chocolate once also told me: "Compared to the teachers in Taiwan, the teachers here are much more positive. They would give me positive feedback even after I made a mistake" [C2125]. Comparing Chocolate's use of "nervous" to describe his feeling of being laughed with his saying "a bit embarrassed" about the teacher's error correction, I sense that what bothered Chocolate in class was being laughed at by peers. This was also his reported cause of anxiety prior to the trip. Being laughed at by others may possibly cause a sense of being humiliated or ridiculed, and could lead to a threat to self-presentation. Chocolate's anxiety over being laughed at by others therefore might be an example of, but slightly different from "identity-based anxiety" (Stroud and Wee

2006), where the learners were worried about being mocked by their peers for being “good” students.

This fear of being laughed at by the peers (fear of peers’ negative evaluation) could be explained by my outside classroom observation noting that Chocolate had been telling both Taiwanese and international classmates how wonderful his previous SA experience had been and he had really learnt a lot of English. This behaviour may imply that Chocolate was trying to present himself as a good English learner. This could also be seen in his pre-departure statement that he liked to speak English in public because he wanted to make people jealous (see the quote in 8.1.). Furthermore, he reflected: “I got nervous easily whenever there was a contest or competition because I always wanted to win. This is one aspect of my personality” [C227]. This statement suggests that he felt anxious when there was a possibility he would lose or when he felt inferior. As Bailey (1983) and Pellegrino Aveni (2005) note, the relationship of competition (self-comparison) to anxiety is that anxiety is a series of physical and emotional responses to the conflict between the need to perform (to win, to present a good self-image to others) and the threat to the learners’ sense of self brought by having to perform (see 2.5.2.3.).

In sum, Chocolate participated actively in class because he was confident, relaxed, and motivated to learn. Chocolate expressed his easiness in class due to his preference for this international learning environment and the fact that the teachers in this context did not give grades. He sounded happy while saying: “I like learning English here more than in Taiwan because I can have many international classmates and I can learn different cultures. I feel relaxed here, not like feeling stressed in Taiwan, probably also because the teachers here don’t give us grades” [C2125]. His statement implies that a different approach to teaching and learning may have affected anxiety. In other words, the native speaker teachers’ different cultural view that students’ learning needed not always to be judged by test marks may have been helpful for lessening Chocolate’s anxiety. Chocolate also attributed his high class participation to his personality and to his positive learning experience at the language centre in Taiwan:

I: I noticed that you always participated actively in class. What do you think the reason for it?

C2: I think this is due to my personality. I am always like this. The teachers at the language centre in Taiwan were always very friendly to me and would encourage me. When they saw me, they would act like we were very good friends and keep talking to me. One teacher said to me that my personality had very positive impact on my English learning [C2125].

However, there was one time Chocolate became quiet in a group discussion. Therefore I asked him in the post-class observation interview: “How did you feel when you were doing the group discussion?” Chocolate responded: “I felt nervous when I didn’t know what to say. I was not familiar with the discussion topic” [C2122]. This anxiety resulting from low class participation could be explained again by Chocolate’s high learning motivation and the threat to his identity as a good English speaker (learner). Not being able to say anything during the discussion may have possibly made him feel inferior and not learning as much as expected. Anxiety therefore occurred. Morita (2004) found that when her subjects struggled to participate actively in discussion, they developed an identity as a less competent learner, which made participation even more difficult for them. This process may explain Chocolate’s silence and anxiety in this group discussion.

Looking into this particular group discussion context is also helpful for understanding this anxiety. My observation recorded that this was a large group mostly consisting of Europeans and Brazilians. The big number of peers involved may have worsened Chocolate’s anxiety about feeling inferior. Moreover, these Europeans and Brazilians were talking cheerfully to each other and seemed to exclude Chocolate from their conversation. Like Christina, Chocolate felt nervous probably because he was feeling isolated and being marginalised when he was excluded from the group discussion. He might also have felt disappointed because he always hoped to make friends with them (see the quote in 8.2.3.).

Since Chocolate had been performing well in class, the class coordinator placed him in an upper level class from the beginning of the final week. One day later, I observed his class and noticed that the way Chocolate behaved was quite different from what he usually was. When the class was waiting for the teacher to come, Chocolate usually chatted with classmates loudly, but in this new class, by contrast, he remained quiet. He was a relatively quiet student and only responded voluntarily

to the teacher once, while others were actively answering or asking the teacher questions. The only response he had was wrong and the teacher corrected his error. Chocolate looked like he was in low spirits. Later on in the small group work of four people, the Brazilian girl was leading the discussion. Chocolate was like an outsider while others were laughing a lot. He did talk a bit and laugh sometimes, but seemed not to be enjoying as much as others was. He went out of the classroom during the discussion once and after he came back, he didn't say anything till the class ended. During the break, I over-heard one teacher greeting Chocolate "How are you?" and he responded: "Not good, the class was too difficult."

In the beginning of the post-class observation interview, I asked Chocolate how he felt in this new class and he shouted: "I want to cry. I felt very frustrated. I couldn't follow the class and didn't understand the teacher and the class materials. I want to cry! I want to cry!" [C225]. His shouting and repeating the sentence "I wanted to cry" seem to signal how severe this anxiety was. The following excerpt illustrates that, similar to Ryan, Sam, and Christina's cases, the difficulty of the class, incomprehensible listening, feeling inferior, and low self-perceived English proficiency and class performance caused this high level of anxiety. The anxiety in turn led to avoidance (hoping to go back to the original class):

I think the class level is much higher than my level. All my classmates are better than me. Their English is so good. My class performance was not good, either, because I didn't understand and I couldn't follow. I wanted to go back to my previous class. I could learn more there. I felt bad because I couldn't learn much in this new class [C225].

The last sentence in this statement once again implies anxiety resulting from his strong learning motivation. That is, Chocolate, as a highly motivated learner, felt bad when he realised he could not learn as much as he expected. In sum, it seems to me that Chocolate's confidence was quite fragile and easily threatened. This challenges the traditional cognitivist view of self-confidence as a permanent individual characteristic. As Norton (2000) suggests, both feelings of anxiety and self-confidence are socially constructed in and by the lived experiences of learners. Moreover, his anxiety in this upper level class was not surprising if we refer back to his pre-trip worry about not understanding the class content and teacher.

Chocolate's poor class performance and the contrasting classmates' high class participation may perhaps have threatened his identity as a good English learner. This might have generated anxiety and impaired his investment in the classroom. His low class participation or "non-participation" (Wenger 1998) might be his act to preserve the integrity of his imagined self. Chocolate's experience in this higher level class is similar to that of the immigrant women in Canada in Norton's (2001) study who withdrew from their ESL class as a result of anxiety that occurred when their desired memberships in imagined communities were denied (see 2.5.3.4.). Chocolate's case echoes Haneda's (2006) findings that language learners' current mode of engagement in a particular CoP cannot be fully understood without addressing both their past life histories and their envisioned futures.

It is also possible that Chocolate was worried about how he would be judged by those "better others". The self-image he could produce in this new class was significantly inferior to the image he produced in the previous classes. This concern about self-presentation may be one of the reasons for Chocolate's withdrawal from using English with peers who were more proficient in the language. He might have been trying not to show his weakness in front of them, and to avoid negative social evaluation. This once again recalls Pellegrino Aveni's (2005) argument that the threat to self-presentation produces a feeling of anxiety and therefore inhibits learners' desire to use the L2 in the social interaction. Chocolate's low participation in this class, therefore, can be seen as his way of solving the conflict between the threat to his self-presentation and the use of L2.

Furthermore, like Christina, being a newcomer in the class, Chocolate might have felt quite uneasy when being in this "unfamiliar" social context where others had been very close to each other. My observation noting that he kept quiet while others were chatting happily with each other in the beginning of the class might imply Chocolate's inability to engage in this new social group and his sense of being marginalised or isolated. This could have caused identity conflict and a lack of "mutuality of engagement" (Wenger 1998). One day later Chocolate asked the class coordinator to move him back to the original class. This may imply a high level of anxiety and suggest that identity conflict resulting from lacking a sense of belonging, participation and affiliation had made Chocolate try to run away from the class. This

avoidance behaviour also appeared in his previous trip to Vancouver (see the quote in 8.1.).

8.2.2. Chocolate's anxiety at homestay

Contrasting with Ryan, Sam, and Christina, Chocolate responded: "the same, very good, just like in Vancouver" [C2121] to my inquiry about his feelings about the first night at homestay. This lack of anxiety could be traced back to his previous English language learning experience and extensive contacts with native speakers. He had stayed with a host family for one month in Vancouver and he had quite a lot of contacts with the native English teachers at the private language centre in Taiwan. His good command of oral English and enjoyment of speaking English may also have contributed to this lack of anxiety.

However, Chocolate did not have much interaction with his host family throughout the three weeks: The following excerpt illustrates the situation at homestay:

I: How did you feel about your communication at homestay?

C2: They are usually not home. When they were home, I did not really talk to them much because they were usually watching TV. I sometimes would ask them some questions...Most of the time I wanted to talk, but I couldn't find a topic. I felt nervous at that moment because I saw them but didn't know what to say to them [C2125].

From Chocolate's description, it seems to me that like Christina, Ryan, and Sam's hosts, his host family did not really extend their "job" beyond the basic charge of providing accommodation and food. They seemed busy with their life schedules and did not spend much time with the guest students. According to Chocolate, the hosts remained distant, and therefore it was hard for him to think of a topic to talk to them. We could understand better why not talking while seeing each other made Chocolate feel uneasy if we consider his earlier mentioned anxiety resulting from strong motivation in the classroom setting. It is possible that the similar anxiety may have taken place in the homestay context. That is, not being able to start a conversation with his host family might be anxiety inducing for Chocolate due to his pre-trip high expectation and motivation to speak to native speakers as much as he could (see the quote in 8.1.).

Moreover, Chocolate had been enjoying talking with the teacher, classmates, and local people (see 8.2.3.). He might have identified himself as a sociable person who is good at initiating casual chats and drawing people's attention to his speech. This difficulty of finding a topic to chat about at homestay may have been frustrating and the emergences of silence could possibly have caused some uneasiness and embarrassment on him. Morita (2004, p.596) claims that "silence did not necessarily represent the reticent students' inaction or a lack of desire for participation; they were in fact engaged with many cognitive, affective, and social activities." This appears to have been the case for Chocolate's English language learning at homestay where he most of the time remained silent not because he did not have the desire to talk, but due to the distant host family or his inability to find a topic to chat with them. He wanted to talk and felt nervous about his silence.

8.2.3. Chocolate's anxiety in out-of-class activities

Corresponding to his pre-trip English language learning integrative motivation (Gardner and Lambert 1972), defined as the desire to learn a language to integrate successfully with the target language community, Chocolate did not intend to get close to the Taiwanese group. My observation recorded that he was actively greeting and talking with local people during our Taiwanese group-outings and sometimes he decided to go somewhere else by himself. During the interview, he said: "There is no English interaction when going out with Taiwanese. Our group is so boring. I don't want to talk to other Asians either. Those Brazilians, Europeans, and American local people were more interesting. I could learn about their different cultures when I talked to them" [C2128].

This statement indicates his much higher level of investment in learning social English than other Taiwanese peers. It also shows his agency (Lantolf and Pavlenko 2001) (see 2.5.2.1.) with respect to identifying himself as a good English speaker (learner) and a feeling of non-membership in the community of Taiwanese peers. My observation noted that those local people he spoke to responded to him in a friendly way and their communication went smoothly. When asked about his outside classroom English language learning and use, Chocolate responded: "I initiated talking to them (local people) and they would respond to me and chat with me

(laughter). I could communicate with them without difficulties. Some said: “you speak English very well.” I felt happy!” [C2128].

From here we could see that the receptive local people helped Chocolate to identify himself as a legitimate speaker (Lave and Wenger 1991) and to gain “ownership of English” (Norton 1997) or “the right to speak” (Norton 1997; Pavlenko 2002) or “audibility”(Miller 2004) (see 2.5.2.1.). All these factors along with the self-accomplishment Chocolate felt about his successful communication with local people could have accounted for the lack of anxiety. Corresponding to the findings of Ehrman (1996) and Pellegrino Aveni’s (2005) studies, Chocolate’s confidence and self-efficacy continued growing, which facilitated his further investment in social English language learning.

However, Chocolate’s English communication with local people was not completely anxiety-free. He reported several anxiety-provoking encounters. For example, he said: “I chatted with an Indian the other day, but he had a strong accent and I couldn’t understand him. I had to ask him some words I didn’t know. I felt embarrassed” [C2128]. The word “embarrassed” used here, comparing to “nervous” used when he talked about not being able to find a topic to talk to his host family, implies Chocolate’s lower level of anxiety about not comprehending this local person’s talk. One possible explanation is that due to the pleasant encounters (both linguistically and socially) he had with local people, Chocolate had a better perception of his English communication ability in the outing context than the homestay context. He stated: “I still think I had better interaction with the strangers on street than with my host family. At homestay, however, I started to use my body language to make them understand me. There were some words I didn’t know how to say in English” [C2125]. This better self-perception could have lessened his anxiety about the difficulty in communicating with the local people. As Pellegrino Aveni (2005) notes, when the language learners’ self-efficacy is highly positive, they will not perceive their self-image to be threatened by communication breakdown (see 2.5.2.3.). This appears to have been the case for Chocolates’ lower anxiety about the communication difficulty with the Indian. Moreover, it may have been less anxiety-provoking when the communication difficulty was a result of a non-native speaker’s heavy accent.

Other incidents seem to make Chocolate more anxious in which he used words like “nervous”, “sad”, and “scared” to describe his feelings. For instance, he felt nervous when he had to understand and respond to spoken English in limited time: “I felt nervous when I was in line to buy a ticket. There were many people behind me waiting for me, but I couldn’t understand what the ticket staff said and didn’t know how to respond” [C2128]. Similar to the classroom situation, this statement recalls Pellegrino Aveni’s (2005) statement that anxiety appears when pressure comes and when learners’ desire to be in control is threatened. In other words, Chocolate’s anxiety in this occasion again might have been the symptom of identity conflict –the threat to his sense of control.

Some local people were unfriendly or impatient when Chocolate approached them to talk: “But some people didn’t want to talk to me probably because they were tired or for other reasons. I felt sad and frustrated” [C2128]. The unpleasant encounters show that Chocolate’s access to English interaction opportunities was not only shaped by his own intentions, but also by the people whom he interacted. His interactional opportunities may have been curtailed by his non-native speaker status, perceived by local people as incompetent communicators. A number of studies have found that target language speakers’ negative perception of non-native speakers limits interactional opportunities between them (Kanno 2000; Miller 2000; Norton 2000; Kinginger 2004; Jackson 2008). Hence, Chocolate’s narrative above challenges traditional cognitive SLA theorists’ assumption that the language learners’ access to the target language community is a function of the learners’ motivation. His story echoes poststructuralist SLA scholars’ (e.g. Norton 1995; Norton 2000; Pavlenko 2002) argument that the inequitable power relations in social contexts limit L2 learners’ opportunities to practice the target language outside classrooms (see 2.5.2.1.).

Chocolate reported another critical incident that happened elsewhere:

One time when I got on the bus, one black man was looking at me and suddenly gave me a middle finger. I felt most uncomfortable at that moment. He was very unfriendly to me. I tried not to look at him. I felt very nervous and scared in that situation because I didn’t know what else would happen [C2128].

This negative experience inevitably caused anxiety when we consider Chocolate's perceived threat against his safety. Again, his previous English language learning experiences may also relate to this anxiety. He had received positive feedback from his English native teachers in Taiwan and he had had very pleasant experience with Canadians during the SA tour in Vancouver. He may have constructed a self who is a good language learner and his efforts to communicate had been respected. Consequently this first experience of being rejected by local people could have possibly threatened Chocolate's social esteem and caused him anxiety.

During the final week, I noticed that Chocolate sometimes sat on the sofa in school lounge alone without talking to anybody. He looked not as cheerful as he was during the past two weeks. Most of the international students had left the previous weekend and this could have been a possible reason for his quietness. Another reason might have been that Chocolate had isolated himself from the Taiwanese group as he always wanted to make friends with internationals rather than gathering around Taiwanese (see the quote earlier in this section). His extensive use of English in informal situations might have made him branded by other Taiwanese as an "out-group" member due to the unwritten social norm that speaking English among Taiwanese group was considered as showing off (Other Taiwanese students have told me that they felt Chocolate was showing off because he always spoke in English). The Cantonese sojourners in Jackson's (2008) study also revealed that using English in informal situations was considered "showing off" and would lead to being labelled as an "out-group" member. Chinese (the mother tongue), in this case, served as a powerful symbol of these young Taiwanese adults' affiliation with each other in the SA context. This illustrates the poststructuralist concept of language as not merely "a linguistic systems of signs and symbols; it is also a complex social practice" (e.g. Norton and Toohey 2002, p.409).

When I interviewed Chocolate in the final week, he sounded unhappy and complained:

I am very disappointed about the trip. I feel people in Vancouver are more polite and people here are rude. Some people ignored me when I tried to talk to them. I felt I was discriminated at that time. When things like this happened, I would be hesitant to initiate talking to people next time [C227].

This negative perception of Americans was possibly related to his unpleasant encounters with some unfriendly and impatient local people. These negative experiences (e.g. feeling rejected by local people, fear of possible harm) along with the perceived discrimination may have threatened Chocolate's social identity and feeling of security, which might have caused anxiety, and negatively affected his willingness to participate in future social English. Chocolate's experience here corresponds to that of the sojourners in Jackson's (2008) study whose willingness to participate in a CoP was impaired when they felt they were excluded from the community due to their perceived discrimination. This marginality not only restricted participation but also went deep into the learners' identity.

My observation in the final week recorded that Chocolate joined Taiwanese outings more and no longer initiated talking to local people. This change of behaviour probably was caused by Chocolate's resistance to the host culture and his seeking identity, security, solidarity and affiliation in the Taiwanese group. Chocolate's different levels of intended social English interaction outside classroom illustrate Norton's (2000, p.11) claim that "a learner's investment in the target language may be complex, contradictory, and in a state of flux" (see 2.5.2.1.). As Pavlenko (2002, p.280-281) has written: "such seemingly internal and psychological factors as attitudes, motivation or language learning beliefs have clear social origins and are shaped and reshaped by the contexts in which the learners find themselves" (see 2.5.2.).

On the other hand, it may be possible that the feeling of being discriminated against caused a negative perception of the host culture, and disappointment about the trip as a whole: "I am very disappointed about the trip. I heard San Diego was very nice before I came here, but now I feel so-so" [C227]. This disappointment and dissatisfaction could possibly have generated some anxiety on Chocolate and this may explain why he looked low-spirited during the final week. Like the subjects in Jackson (2008) and Ward et al.'s (2001) studies, Chocolate's perceived discrimination caused psychological and sociocultural adjustment problems.

8.2.4. Chocolate's recall of his overall SA experience

When recalling what happened in America, Chocolate mentioned three times in the follow-up interview how anxious he was in that upper-level class. This might imply the significance of anxiety experienced at that time. This high anxiety interrupted his learning process in class: “That made me worried and thought of other things not related to the class. I tended to be like this, since I was a kid, when the class was too difficult and I couldn’t understand the teacher” [C2421]. This statement corresponds to my observation of Chocolate’s passive participation in that class. He also reported: “I felt anxious when we played a game and we had to compete with other groups. I felt nervous because I wanted to win in limited time” [C2421]. It seems to me that Chocolate tended to get nervous when he had to achieve something in limited time because he also said during the trip that he got nervous when he had to understand and respond to the ticket staff in limited time.

When asked about his negative experiences overall during the trip, if there was any, Chocolate responded: “We should be careful about black men at night. Besides, we should be careful when talking to the strangers there” [C2421]. The repeating word “careful” implies the unpleasant encounters with local people were perceived as threatening, generating the highest anxiety during the trip, and reducing his investment in English language learning in out-of-class activities. This emphasises the influence of social factors (social interaction with the interlocutor) on Chocolates’ anxiety and his use of the language.

8.3. CHOCOLATES’ PERCEPTION OF IMPACTS OF THE SA EXPERIENCE

In the following subsections, I talk about Chocolate’s perception of the impact of the SA tour on his perceived English proficiency, anxiety about and motivation for learning English.

8.3.1. Impact of SA on Chocolate’s perception of his English proficiency

When asked “What do you think of your English proficiency after this study abroad experience?” two months after the trip, Chocolate responded: “I felt I gained more confidence after my first study abroad tour last summer. I don’t feel so this time because I didn’t learn as much English as I expected” [C2421]. The word “expected” indicates his pre-trip expectation for practicing even more English this time in

America (see the quote in 8.1.). This expectation may imply that the previous positive SA experience possibly had made Chocolate expect this second trip to be as good as or even better than the previous trip and he might have inevitably compared the two trips.

Unfortunately, things in San Diego turned out to be not as pleasant as those in Vancouver. He encountered some unfriendly local people and he gave up his chances to practice English with native speakers afterwards. He also had far fewer contacts with his host family this time than in Vancouver. Furthermore, he was once disappointed with the class during the trip: “I like the teaching in Vancouver than here because they made their own handouts and they adjusted their teaching according to students’ proficiency. The teachers here in San Diego just copied textbook materials to be their handouts” [C2122]. He also got anxious and felt he could not learn much in a class where the teacher did not teach much and the classmates were talking in their native language and in another class that was too difficult for him. All these dissatisfaction and disappointment in the classroom, at homestay, and in out-of-class activities contexts may explain his statement about not learning as much English as expected and his denial of being more confident about his English after this trip.

8.3.2. Impact of SA on Chocolate’s anxiety in English language learning

In the follow-up interview, Chocolate reflected on his pride in his new identity as someone whose English language learning wouldn’t be affected by anxiety: “I feel now I have grown up and I know how to overcome these negative feelings such as anxiety. These emotions won’t cause any negative effects on my English language learning any more” [C2421]. The SA experiences, in Chocolate’s perception, had helped to lessen his anxiety in English language learning: “the two study abroad experiences I had and talking to different nationalities made a difference. My extensive use of English is helpful” [C2421].

8.3.3. Impact of SA on Chocolate’s motivation for learning English

Chocolate responded “Not really” to my inquiry whether this trip to America had any impact on his motivation for learning English. In sharp contrast with his daily class attendance at the language centre after the trip to Vancouver, this time he told

me: “I haven’t attend any English class since I came back from America because I have been busy at preparing for the graduation commercial design exhibition. I got lazy about learning English and I don’t practice English as much as before” [C2421].

It is possible that the negative encounters with local people in America impaired his motivation for English language learning: “My motivation decreased as time went by during that three weeks because I felt this trip was not fun. It’s more interesting to talk to strangers on street in the beginning. I met some unfriendly people later on and I guess that’s why I felt not fun and my motivation decreased” [C2421]. This statement again indicates Chocolate’s disappointment and dissatisfaction with the trip and that was probably why he was not motivated after the trip.

Furthermore, Chocolate told me that the trip to Vancouver was his “first time ever” studying abroad and the first experience is always more encouraging than the second one: “I feel I learnt more from Vancouver trip because that was my first time ever to study abroad. Learning is always like this. I will gain much progress for the first time, but became lazier later on” [C2421]. This less motivation seems also reasonable when he had something more urgent (preparing for the graduation exhibition) to do. On the other hand, not practicing and learning English for the past two months since he came back from America may also explain Chocolates’ denial of the positive impact of this trip on his English proficiency. He revealed: “I am still worried about my English. I am worried that I will forget what I learnt if I don’t practice and use English for a long time” [C2421].

8.4. SUMMARY

Chocolate’s first SA experience in Vancouver was very positive and had enhanced his English language learning motivation and self-confidence in oral English proficiency. Nevertheless, he also reported, during the pre-departure interview, some factors causing his anxiety in English classes in Taiwan such as the teacher’s incomprehensible talk, rote learning of vocabulary and grammar, English writing, English tests, fear of being laughed at due to the mistake made, or insufficient preparation for speaking.

My observation and interview data gathered during the three weeks in San Diego indicates that among our Taiwanese group, Chocolate had the highest actual and self-perceived oral English competence and experienced the lowest level of anxiety. This might have resulted from his previous positive English language learning experiences in Vancouver and Taiwan. The low level of anxiety led to Chocolate's more extensive use of English in San Diego compared with his Taiwanese peers. Overall, he actively participated in class and talked to local people and international peers after school except for the time anxiety occurred and therefore he reduced his use of English.

However, Chocolate's high learning motivation sometimes had caused him to feel anxious both in and outside classroom. In other words, he was anxious when he felt he didn't learn or practice English as much as he expected. In addition to high motivation, other reported sources of anxiety during the trip were fear of being laughed at, low class participation, incomprehensible listening, the difficulty of class, feeling inferior and poor self perceived English proficiency and class performance. It is important to point out that these factors were anxiety-provoking because they all possibly involved a threat to Chocolate's identity as a good English learner (speaker).

This second SA experience did not have as many positive impacts on Chocolate as the first experience. He reflected that he was not more confident about his English competence and he was not motivated to learn English after the trip. A lack of confidence gain might have been a result of Chocolate's perception of not learning as much as expected during the trip. His disappointment and dissatisfaction with the trip may account for his lack of motivation for learning English after the trip. The positive impact of the trip, in Chocolate's perception, was that he had learned how to overcome anxiety and anxiety no longer impaired his English language learning.

CHAPTER 9: DISCUSSION

9.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I discuss the key findings in relation to the aim of the study and views from situated learning theory and poststructuralist approaches to SLA research as well as points generated by the review of literature on FL anxiety and study abroad (SA) programmes. The main aim of this study, as I stated in Chapter 1 was to explore the feelings of anxiety among a group of Taiwanese university English as foreign language (EFL) learners who were studying English in a short-term SA programme in America. This study also aimed to investigate students' perceptions of the impact of the SA experience on their English language learning in general and anxiety in particular after they came back in Taiwan. Here I revisit the research questions:

1. What English language learning and use situations do participants find themselves in during the study abroad trip?
2. Do participants express anxiety in relation to these situations?
3. What reasons do participants give for their anxiety?
4. How does experienced anxiety, if any, during their study abroad trip, affect their overall study abroad English language learning experience?
5. In the perceptions of the participants, does this study abroad English language learning experience have any impact on their English language learning (including anxiety) once they are back in Taiwan?

Accordingly, this chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section is a discussion on the complex nature of anxiety that deals broadly with questions 1 to 4. In the second section, I address question 5 by discussing the students' perceptions of how the SA experience affected their English language learning and anxiety after they were back in Taiwan. Since the study is to explore anxiety in English language learning, before I start the discussion proper, let me explain how I interpret the four case participants' SA English language learning using the CoP and poststructuralist perspectives.

To bring out the complexity of the situated learning of the four individual SA students, as presented in Chapters 5 to 8, this study makes use of poststructuralist approaches to SLA research that consider language learning not simply as a cognitive process (learning linguistic rules), but a process of “socialization into specific communities of practice” (Pavlenko 2002, p.286). A given community of practice (CoP) could be “as broad as society or culture, or as narrow as a particular language classroom” (Lantolf and Pavlenko 2001, p.148). The various English language learning and use situations my participants were involved in during the SA trip could be conceptualised as three relevant CoPs: the classroom CoP, homestay CoP, and wider society CoP. I conceive their English language learning in out-of-class activities as their engagement in the wider society CoP (see 2.5.3.1. for Wenger’s (1998) concept of the construct of a CoP).

In Lave and Wenger’s (1991; Wenger 1998) terms, the four young adults’ English language learning during the SA tour could be seen as a social process of moving from “legitimate peripheral participation” (LPP) towards fuller participation in a given CoP with the support of more experienced community members (old-timers). This process was not always a matter of peaceful assimilation but sometimes could be a conflictual process of negotiation and transformation, which involved struggles over access to resources crucial for learning (see 2.5.3.1.). Sam and Christina’s three-week classroom English language learning process illustrates Lave and Wenger’s (1991, p.36) argument that “as a place in which one moves toward more-intensive participation, peripherality is an empowering position” (see 2.5.3.1.). Both Sam and Christina took full advantage of their positioning, as an “apprentice”, in the classroom CoP and were willing to learn, which led to their enhanced linguistic skills and positive identity reconstruction. However, Ryan, Sam, Christina, and Chocolate’s negative experiences in interacting with their host family or the local people, for example, bring to mind poststructuralist SLA scholars’ emphasis on the difficulties in being socialised into a L2 community (e.g. McKay and Wong 1996; Norton 2000; Miller 2004; Jackson 2008).

Both the poststructuralist perspectives and situated learning theory address the way that power relations in social contexts (or CoPs) organise learners’ access to interactional opportunities (see 2.5.2.1. and 2.5.3.1.). In other words, these power

relations can either constrain or facilitate newcomers' movement towards fuller participation in a CoP. In poststructuralist SLA scholars' terms, these four young adults were unable to claim "ownership of a language" (Norton 1997) or "the right to speak" (Norton 1997; Pavlenko 2002) or "audibility" (Miller 2004) due to the inequitable power relations between L2 learners and target language speakers. When unable to do so, they might not develop an identity as "legitimate speakers" (Bourdieu 1991) (see 2.5.2.1.). From the CoP perspective, they were not granted enough legitimacy by the more powerful old-timers (host family and local people) to be treated as potential members in the homestay CoP and wider society CoP. Therefore their LPP in these communities was denied. All four stories recall poststructuralist SLA scholars' (e.g. Pavlenko 2002; Morita 2004; Jackson 2008) view that learners' agencies and investments in language learning and use are shaped by the range of identities available to them in the L2. Their SA English language learning involved the negotiation of identity, which illustrates the central aspect of poststructuralism and situated learning theory that conceptualise learning as a site of identity construction. Next I turn to the discussion on the complex nature of anxiety.

9.2. COMPLEX NATURE OF ANXIETY

In chapter 4, I presented a cross-case analysis of anxiety in terms of causes and effects. However, as the individual case studies reveal (see Chapters 5 to 8), anxiety is such a complex issue that it is very difficult to describe it purely in terms of patterns of causes and effects. To be exact, my attempt to view anxiety in terms of causes and effects was a failure because I could only describe the causes and effects in terms of generalities that did not actually explain individual anxiety.

The four individual case studies suggest that the participants' anxiety during the SA trip can be seen as deriving from their negotiation of identity, competence and membership in different CoPs. They were afraid of not being granted "legitimate" status by the members/old-timers (e.g. the teachers, host family, local people) of the classroom, homestay, and wider society CoPs or of failing to develop an identity as a legitimate speaker of English. Anxiety, in Wenger's (1998) CoP framework, can be interpreted as the result of the conflictual and situated nature of identity negotiation as learners move across the boundaries of different CoPs (see 2.5.3.1.). The newcomers (my participants) may have chosen to maintain a marginal form of

participation (Wenger 1998) in CoPs in order to avoid compromising their sense of self (identity). Their silence both in and outside the classroom, therefore, seems to serve as a face-saving or self-esteem protection strategy for them.

In the following subsections, I discuss this complex nature of anxiety in terms of anxiety as a symptom of identity conflict and as context-dependent and always fluctuating in the classroom CoP, homestay CoP, and wider society CoP that the participants engaged in during the SA trip.

9.2.1. Anxiety in classroom CoP

All the four case participants had well-established attitudes towards their English communicative abilities at the time when I first interviewed them before our departure to USA (see 5.2., 6.1., 7.1., 8.1.). Based on the narrative data, this perception had significant influences on their sense of self, the subsequent level of anxiety, and how, when, and why they used English in the classroom CoPs during the SA trip. Ryan, Sam, Christina, and Chocolate all expressed anxiety due to their low self-perceived English proficiency and feeling of inferiority once in the USA (see 5.3.1., 6.2.1., 7.2.1., 8.2.1.). Their feeling of inferiority can be seen as a result of self-comparison about how they measured up to others in the desired classroom CoP, to “expert” members or just others further along the learning trajectory towards membership. Having compared themselves with others and having the sense of being inferior along with the low self-perceived English proficiency impaired their identity as a potential member of the classroom community and caused them anxiety. For instance, Chocolate stated: “all my classmates are better than me”, Sam noted: “I felt I didn’t belong to this class” when talking about their anxiety over not being able to follow the class content in one of the SA classrooms.

At the same time these four young adults constructed such an identity as a less competent member of the classroom CoP based on their sense of how others might perceive them. Ryan, Sam, Christina, and Chocolate were all afraid, to varying degrees, of the negative evaluation from their classmates and teacher (including being afraid of making mistakes and being laughed at) (see 5.3.1., 6.2.1., 7.2.1., 8.2.1.). In other words, they were all afraid of not being granted the legitimate status by the old-timers of the classroom CoP (the teacher and classmates). The classmates

were the old-timers because our Taiwanese group were put in classes that had already been together for several weeks. All four were worried about not being able to meet their class community expectations regarding competence, especially English linguistic competence. If I apply the poststructuralist notion of language and identity to understand this fear of negative evaluation in multilingual contexts, I can interpret it as “a perpetual conflict between self-chosen identities and others’ attempts to position them differently” (Pavlenko 2002, p.284). They were afraid of negative social evaluation because they wished to maintain an impression of high social, intellectual, and linguistic status, but held serious doubts about their ability to do so in English due to poor English skills, difficult goals, or social environment conditions.

Also they might have believed that to speak inadequately in English would lower their worth in the eyes of the members of the classroom community, threaten their peripheral position in the CoP, and deny their access to LPP. Thus they had avoidance behaviour in the classroom and ended up denying themselves valuable practice opportunities (see 5.3.1., 6.2.1., 7.2.1., 8.2.1.). For instance, Sam stated that he did not dare to say something in class because he was afraid of making mistakes. Ryan avoided eye contact with the teacher because he feared that the teacher would think he could not follow the class if he looked at her. Christina noted, during the first week of classes, that she remained quiet because she felt anxious and inferior to her classmates.

What was noteworthy was that the four participants’ self-perceived English proficiency and level of confidence did not remain fixed, but was in a state of flux and framed in social contexts. Based on the success or failure of each interaction in class, they further confirmed or adjusted their attitudes towards their English proficiency and constructed different identities. When their sense of self was strengthened, they released some of their anxiety and became more sociable in further L2 interactions, and vice versa (see 5.3.1., 6.2.1., 7.2.1., 8.2.1.). From the CoP perspective, their self-confidence was their self-perceived status in the classroom CoP. This self-perceived status did not remain fixed as they constructed various identities based on their changing sense of competence as a member of different classroom communities. This recalls Lave and Wenger’s (1991; Wenger

1998) notion of competence as situated abilities in different CoPs. That is, the same learner could negotiate different identities and participate differently within classroom CoPs as well as across them (see 2.5.3.2.). This is in line with the findings of Morita's (2004) study on the L2 learners in a Canadian university. Both my study and Morita's highlight individual's multiple memberships and various modes of participation in different classroom CoPs. This identity in practice is defined socially because it is produced as a lived experience of participation in specific communities (Wenger 1998).

For instance, Chocolate had been confident about his oral English competence, relaxed, and actively participated in the first two weeks of classes. During this period of time, Chocolate was recognised as a legitimate and competent member of a given classroom CoP. However, he expressed his high level of anxiety and strong feeling of inferiority in the new classroom CoP where he remained silent most of the time. This threatened his identity as a good English learner or a legitimate participant of the classroom community. He therefore tried to avoid this class by asking the class coordinator to transfer him back to the original class. Christina felt less anxious and had higher class participation in the second week when she became more confident or self-assured, and got closer to the classmates and the teacher, which implies that she gradually identified herself as a legitimate member of the classroom CoP.

In addition, Ryan, Sam, and Christina all experienced both debilitating and facilitating anxiety in different classroom CoPs (see 5.3.1., 6.2.1., 7.2.1.). Adopting the situated learning theory (SLT) perspectives, facilitating anxiety is one that does not impair learners' participation in the practices of the CoP, and so allows them to be on an inbound trajectory of LPP. Debilitating anxiety, on the other hand, produces instances of non-participation, and so over time learners potentially change their trajectory towards marginality. The key difference is that anxiety facilitates when it enables participation to happen, and debilitates when it does not. Sam's higher self-perception (a sense of better me) in the first week of SA classroom learning motivated him to learn English even though he was anxious. However, his poor self-perceived English proficiency and feeling inferior before the trip denied him the access to resources in the English classroom CoP in Taiwan and caused debilitating anxiety. Hence his interest in and motivation for learning were impaired and he

chose not to participate in this CoP as a reflective form of resistance. Before the trip to America, Christina stated that she only felt anxious when called on to answer questions in an English class, but the anxious feeling motivated her to learn. In contrast, she experienced a high level of anxiety during the first week of SA classrooms and had low class participation and limited interaction with both Taiwanese and international classmates.

In reviewing their experiences, I could see that facilitating anxiety occurred when learners' sense of self was strong and vice versa. Sam's higher self-perception (a sense of better me) constructed in SA classroom CoP could have strengthened his sense of self and made him feel accepted as a legitimate participant of the community. He therefore was motivated to learn and tried to adjust to the community practices even though he was anxious. Christina experienced debilitating anxiety when she entered the whole-English classroom – a new CoP- that was much more challenging than the English classes in Taiwan. Her stated causes of anxiety like fear of making mistakes, feeling inferior to classmates, having poor self-perceived English competence all possibly have threatened Christina's sense of self and made her feel marginalised in the classroom CoP. This marginality is a force that results in non-participation in that Christina, as a newcomer, was kept on an outbound trajectory of LPP in the classroom community.

Ryan, Sam, Christina, and Chocolate's narrative suggests that they use the teachers and classmates' attitudes and behaviour to evaluate how they were accepted by the members of the classroom CoP (see 5.3.1., 6.2.1., 7.2.1., 8.2.1.). That is, these contextual factors (teachers and classmates' attitudes and behaviour) were the signals used to indicate acceptance or rejection in the classroom CoP. Rejection implied a denial of LPP and caused them anxiety, while acceptance enabled them to progress on an inward learning trajectory. For example, the morning class teacher ignored Ryan while calling on students. Her behaviour lowered Ryan's self-perceived English proficiency and level of self-confidence (perceiving himself as the worst student in class). Therefore Ryan felt threatened against his identity as a legitimate speaker of the community and was extremely anxious in the morning classroom CoP. Conversely, Ryan had better self-perceived class performance (even though his actual class performance was still poor) in the afternoon class where the teacher had

a very friendly personality and always encouraged students and gave positive comments even when they made mistakes. Ryan thus was granted legitimate status, strengthened his sense of self, and became more relaxed and participated more in this afternoon classroom CoP than in the morning classroom CoP. The classmates' supportive and understanding attitude towards Ryan's limited English also granted him more legitimacy to progress on an inward learning trajectory and therefore made him focused in the group discussion.

However, Christina felt anxious in the first-week classes where she saw her classmates talking happily to each other and sensed that her partner was angry at her silence in the pair work. The classmates seemed not to treat Christina as a potential member of the class community. Also being a newcomer of the classroom CoP and without knowing the shared values of the community, Christina did not know how to engage in this community. She perceived herself as an outsider of the class community without a sense of engagement. She therefore remained quiet in class. One of the reasons for Chocolate's low anxiety and high participation in classes was the teacher's supportive attitudes towards students' mistakes and friendly ways of correcting errors. However, Chocolate once felt anxious in the same class because his group members seemed to exclude him from their conversation. In other words, the group members denied Chocolate's access to sources for understanding through involvement and kept him from participating more legitimately, which caused anxiety. These class social contexts bring to mind Lave and Wenger's (1991) argument that particular social arrangements in any community may constrain or facilitate a new comer's movement towards fuller participation.

It is noteworthy that different learners may perceive the same teacher or classmate's attitudes and behaviour differently. For instance, Ryan and Sam had contrasting interpretations of their morning class teacher's behaviour. Since both Ryan and Sam's class performance was worse than that of other students, their teacher paid more attention on them, checking on how they were doing. Ryan, having low self-confidence, poor self-perceived English proficiency, and a strong feeling of inferiority in that class, interpreted this behaviour of the teacher as an indication that the teacher positioned him as a student who knew nothing and could not do anything in class. He therefore was anxious and tried to avoid the teacher. Sam, on the other

hand, had been proud of himself and had good self-perceived class performance due to his passion for English language learning in the SA classroom. He perceived that the teacher did so because she cared about him, which made him “happy” and motivated him to learn and participate in class. From the SLT perspective, Sam was heading inwards, Ryan outwards on their trajectory of LPP in this class CoP. This fundamentally affected their interpretations of the same teacher practice – one as “help” and the other as “admonition”.

Another finding of the present study is that Sam, Christina, and Chocolate all experienced anxiety resulting from strong motivation through their engagement in the classroom CoP (see 6.2.1., 7.2.1., 8.2.1.). To be exact, they felt anxious when they felt they did not learn / practice / perform English as much or as well as they expected. A negative correlation between language anxiety and motivation has been identified in cognitive FL anxiety research (Gardner et al. 1992; Gardner and MacIntyre 1993a; Sparks and Ganschow 1993a; MacIntyre and Charos 1996; Yan 1998; Noels et al. 1999; Dewaele 2005; Huang 2005; Bernaus et al. 2007). These researchers claim that a high level of motivation suppresses anxiety. However, strong motivation can also possibly result in anxiety as it is intuitive that when people really care about something, they get anxious about it sometimes (Yamashiro and McLaughlin 2001; Huang 2008).

This anxiety from strong motivation suggests that the self-comparison mentioned earlier in this section took place not only between learners and other individuals but also between learners and their own expectations. In CoP terms, the unfavourable comparison between their desired positions (e.g. belonging in the classroom CoP at the core) and self-perceived positions (e.g. belonging in the classroom CoP at the margin) in the community caused identity conflict and generated anxiety. Chocolate’s comparison of his trip to Vancouver and to San Diego, for example, caused him anxiety in the classroom and made him disappointed about the trip as a whole (see 8.2.1. and 8.2.3.). Next I discuss the four participants’ anxiety in their engagement in the homestay CoP.

9.2.2. Anxiety in homestay CoP

Through the lenses of CoP perspectives, Ryan, Sam, and Christina's high anxiety on the first night of their homestay (see 5.3.2., 6.2.2., 7.2.2.) could be interpreted as follows: When they arrived at homestay, their imagined community (the imagined American community) suddenly became real and English was just part of the shared repertoire of this new CoP, lots of other new meanings to negotiate and discourses/gestures/styles etc. to learn. Being complete newcomers in the homestay CoP, they had not yet developed expectations about how to interact with the old-timers of the community (the host family). In terms of the participants' identity, their non-membership in the homestay CoP might have become a form of incompetence (Wenger 1998) and led to anxiety, illustrated by Ryan's words "I felt I was a deaf-mute person" on the first night of homestay. Both Ryan and Sam's pretending they understood the hostess on the same night shows that they were striving to maintain a positive social identity and their legitimate status in the homestay community.

Ryan and Christina's fear of speaking English at homestay (see 5.3.2. and 7.2.2.) brings to mind Pavlenko's (2000; 2002) claim that L2 learners' fear of speaking the language is actually a paradoxical conflict resulting from their wish to maintain the same sense of self they occupy in their L1, yet finding that the very act of L2 use threatens this image due to their imperfect command of the L2. In other words, they wanted to belong to the homestay CoP, but their limited command of English made them afraid of being rejected by the old-timers of the community-the host family. Their limited interaction with the hostess therefore could sometimes be seen as a result of them trying to avoid having to struggle with the limitations of their own self-expression, or as an act to protect their peripheral position in the homestay CoP.

The ways each of them negotiated their identity, competence, and membership, and how they perceived and interpreted their own anxiety in the homestay CoP were different. They therefore had different modes of participation in this community during the three weeks abroad (see 5.3.2., 6.2.2., 7.2.2., 8.2.2.). For instance, Ryan and Sam had very different reactions to their serious difficulties in communicating with the same hostess. Ryan was very anxious and cried about it. His lack of mutuality in the course of engagement in the homestay CoP (based on the negative experience in interacting with his hostess) undermined his bid to portray himself as a legitimate English speaker, and a temporary member of the community. This might

have contributed to anxiety, and therefore he took a very passive role in the homestay CoP. Sam also felt anxious over the situation at homestay, but the anxiety did not last long because he had more positive learning attitudes towards the communication difficulties. He accepted his peripheral position as a social “apprentice” in the community and therefore he was willing to learn. Unlike Ryan, Sam still hoped the hostess would come and talk to him and then he could learn some English out of it.

In line with Jackson’s (2008) study on Hong Kong Chinese students in UK, this present study reveals that these young adults’ anxiety at their homestay was dependent on contextual factors. Ryan, Sam, and Christina’ narrative suggests that they used their host family’s facial expressions, manners, evaluative comments, and responses to their use of English to assess whether their communicative efforts were successful or not, and to evaluate the extent to which the host family accepted them. This evaluation could greatly affect their sense of self and anxiety and, consequently, inform their further English language use at homestay (see 5.3.2., 6.2.2., 7.2.2.).

For instance, Ryan felt extremely anxious on the first night of his homestay due to the hostess’ impatient feedback on his limited English. He stated: “I feel I am so bad” while talking about his high anxiety in that situation. This suggests that the old-timer of the homestay CoP denied Ryan’s legitimate status in that community. He then resisted further participation in the homestay community because he felt his hostess was marginalizing or imposing certain unwanted roles and identities on him. Christina also had difficulty in communicating with her hostess, but her narrative implies that she did not experience high anxiety at homestay because her hostess was always friendly and never showed impatience when the communication between them broke down. Christina’s statement: “I feel I become her child” suggests that the hostess’ attitudes and behaviour made her feel that she was accepted as a member of the homestay CoP. Hence Christina did not deliberately avoid interaction at homestay like Ryan did. Borrowing Wenger’s (1998, p.193) term, the “mutuality” Christina experienced in the homestay CoP could be seen as very fulfilling and provide great “social energy”. It is therefore clear that the ways the four participants negotiated discourses, competence, and identities in the homestay CoP varied, according to contextual factors. These negotiations led to different levels of anxiety

and different learning trajectories for their LPP in their homestay communities. Next I turn to a discussion of the four young adults' anxiety in their engagement in the wider society CoP.

9.2.3. Anxiety in wider society CoP

Ryan, Sam, and Christina all expressed their fear of speaking English to American local people (see 5.3.3., 6.2.3., 7.2.3.). Such fear, similar to their fear of speaking English at home stay (see 9.2.2.), might be strongly related to the identity conflict. With their imperfect command of spoken English, their ability to reveal their true thoughts and identity was severely impaired and they risked being misunderstood or misperceived by the members of the wider society community in terms of both literal message and self-image. Sam expressed his "humiliated" feelings about not being able to make himself understood by the shop clerk. Christina stated: "I felt I was very bad" when telling me that the shop clerk did not understand what she was talking about. Ryan stated that he felt he was "such an idiot" when he responded to the Starbucks clerk in an irrelevant manner.

Ryan, Sam, Christina, and Chocolate's anxiety over difficulty in comprehension may also have involved identity issues. Not being able to comprehend the interlocutor's spoken English, like limited English speaking ability, caused them oral communication difficulties and impaired their ability to present themselves as a legitimate member of the wider society CoP. This could have threatened their sense of self, and denied them an inward trajectory in the community. Their marginal position in the CoP put them under identity threat. All four stated that they felt "embarrassed" or "humiliated" when they could not comprehend local people's spoken English (see 5.3.3., 6.2.3., 7.2.3., 8.2.3.). The SA students in Jackson's (2008) study also expressed their frustration and disappointment when they realised that they were "clearly outsiders" and perceived themselves as playing a very passive marginal role in CoPs due to their lack of familiarity with the mode of discourse.

Overall, Ryan, Sam, and Christina wanted to belong to this wider society CoP, but their limited command of English made them feel they were rejected and kept in the marginal position by the community members (the local people). They therefore reacted by reaffirming their membership in their Taiwanese peer group CoP (see

5.3.3., 6.2.3., 7.2.3.). In other words, they resisted their positioning as “novices” in the wider society CoP and withdrew their participation in this community in order to stay true to their current sense of self (identity) in Chinese and to remain in the familiar modes of behaviour and belonging. This echoes Lave and Wenger’s (1991) claim that the denial of LPP, may lead to resistance, or forms of behaviour which can be mistaken for loss of interest, and maybe ultimately to LPP in other CoPs.

From a poststructuralist SLA perspective, not being able to represent themselves through the use of English (the identity conflict), their Chinese identities and language seemed to become necessary resources for them to maintain social memberships and to represent their sense of self. Therefore, they relied heavily on the Taiwanese group for social interaction in order to solve their identity conflict and to seek a sense of belonging and security, and hence released their anxiety. The immigrant students in Miller’s (2000) study also stopped trying to speak English and gathered with their ethnic group after their transition from ESL learning community to the mainstream high school because they found themselves neither heard nor understood by their dominant native English speaking peers (see 2.5.2.1.). Jackson’s (2008) study found the L2 sojourners’ anxiety, fear, and insecurity were closely linked to self-conception or identity issues. Those who were not positioned as favourably as they were in their home country (being positioned as illegitimate speakers of the target language in the host country) withdrew from the host culture and did not take advantage of linguistic affordances in the L2 environment.

Furthermore, corresponding to Pellegrino Aveni’s (2005) research on American SA students in Russia, this study reveals that local people’s attitudes and behaviour were the signals used to indicate acceptance/ rejection in the wider society CoP. When certain attitudes and behaviour made all four feel unaccepted as a legitimate participant of the community, they started to feel anxious and moved away from more intensive participation, and vice versa (see 5.3.3, 6.2.3., 7.2.3., 8.2.3.). As a result, their anxiety in the wider society CoP was context-dependent and always fluctuating. For instance, we have seen that the shop clerk’s confused face and frown made Sam feel “humiliated” when he could not make the clerk understand him. His narrative suggests that he interpreted the shop clerk’s frown as rejection and felt he was not deemed legitimacy by the shop clerk and therefore anxiety occurred. He

afterwards decided to avoid using English in out-of-class activities. On the other hand, local people's complimentary remarks about Chocolate's oral English competence made Chocolate feel he was accepted as a fully functioning member of the wider society CoP and facilitated his further investment in social English language use. However, later some local people's unfriendly attitudes and behaviour (e.g. being impatient when Chocolate approached to talk to them; giving Chocolate a middle finger) threatened his legitimate status in the community and made him anxious. After these negative encounters, Chocolate expressed his resistance to the host culture and started to join Taiwanese outings more and no longer initiated talking to local people.

9.2.4. Summary

By way of summarizing the four participants' anxiety in their engagement in the classroom CoP, homestay CoP, and wider society CoP during the SA trip, I conceptualise their FL anxiety largely as a symptom of a deeper identity conflict. In my interpretation, I recognise that anxiety was present, but suggest that what really impaired the four students' English language learning and use might not have been anxiety but identity conflict. This is in line with Pellegrino Aveni's (2005) claim (see 2.5.2.3.):

Anxiety may not be the factor that affects learners' use of L2 directly. Instead, anxiety may be only the symptomatic panic that results from the challenges and threats learners feel against their personal sense of status, which in turn is the true agent inhibiting learner's abilities and desires to use the L2 in the social interaction (p.24).

However, as mentioned earlier (see 2.5.2.3.), I further develop Pellegrino Aveni's idea of anxiety by using situated learning theory and a poststructuralist SLA perspective to bring out the context-dependent and fluctuating nature of anxiety. The longer-term perspective (analysing the whole range of data collected pre, during and after the trip) adopted in the individual case analysis (1) explains the contradictions in my cross-case report (see 4.2.2.); (2) contradicts the simplistic description of FL anxiety as a permanent, fixed predisposition of a learner (see 2.5.1.); (3) problematises many of the cause-effect relationships which have been previously identified in the current dominating cognitive FL anxiety research (see 2.3.1. and 2.3.2.). As the stories unfolded, we could see that for a particular student, some of

the cause and effect relationships I presented in the cross-case report did not remain fixed but changed across time and space. For example, a comment like “anxiety impairs self-confidence” was for some students only a temporary state.

So, compared to the cause and effect relationships that I first saw and that are reported in much of the FL anxiety literature, the single-case analysis looks at anxiety in different ways through the lenses of CoP and poststructuralist perspectives. The analysis provides a deeper understanding of anxiety in relation to identity, and considers it as fluid and dynamic, not a stable individual internal phenomenon, but being shaped and reshaped through learners’ engagement in L2 related activities (see 3.5.4.2. for a review of the differences between cross-case analysis and single-case analysis).

9.3. IMPACT OF THE SA TRIP ON STUDENTS’ ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AND ANXIETY

So far the discussion on the complex nature of anxiety has been relevant to the research questions 1 to 4 (see 9.1.). In this section, I address research question 5:

In the perceptions of the participants, does this study abroad English language learning experience have any impact on their English language learning (including anxiety) once they are back in Taiwan?

I discuss the impact of the SA trip on students' English language learning and anxiety through two main perspectives. First I address the individual differences in the outcomes of the SA experience. Then I consider whether the impact of the SA programme can be related to learners’ access to L2 opportunities and their dispositions affecting L2 learning during the SA trip.

9.3.1. Individual differences in the outcomes of the SA experience

After coming back to their original Chinese-speaking CoP, the four case participants gave diverse accounts of how they perceived the impact of this SA experience on their English language learning (including anxiety) back in Taiwan. Sam stated that he became less afraid of speaking English and much more motivated to learn English. In other words, he wanted to belong to the global community of English users after the trip (see 6.3.). Ryan’s pre- and post-trip statements indicate that this SA experience aggravated his fear of speaking English to native speakers and put

him on an outbound trajectory of LPP in the English speaking community. His contrasting statements about his strong motivation for learning English at the end of the trip and his self-confessed laziness in English classes back in Taiwan suggest that the impact of the trip quickly faded away and he was still not making investment in English language learning after the trip (see 5.4.).

In Christina's case, the positive self-perceived impacts (less afraid of speaking English, more motivated to learn, more confident about her English proficiency) were also short-lived, lasting only three weeks after the trip (see 7.3.). Chocolate did not perceive that this second experience of SA had had as many positive impacts as the first experience. He reflected that he was not more confident about his English competence and he was not motivated to learn English after the trip. However, he felt studying abroad twice had helped him overcome his anxiety and anxiety no longer impaired his English language learning (see 8.3.).

The above comments cast doubt on the ability of the generalised affective outcomes (e.g. more confident, less anxious, and more motivated) offered by cognitive quantitative SA/SLA studies (e.g. Kitao 1993; Tanaka and Ellis 2003; Matsuda and Gobel 2004) (see 2.4.) to adequately explain the authentic, rich, and deep portraits of individuals' self-perceived impacts of SA experience. This is because, as Ushioda (2009, p.220) points out, those quantitative studies treat L2 learners as "theoretical abstractions" rather than "real persons". The present study recalls the socially oriented SLA theorists' view that "the learning process will necessarily result in different outcomes for different people" (Lantolf and Pavlenko 2001, p.158). As Jackson (2008, p.240) notes: "The use of rich qualitative data provided insight into what actually happens during stays abroad and dispelled the myth that all sojourners automatically benefit from mere exposure to the host speech community."

Recognition of individual differences in SA outcome is important given the existence of variables unique to the SA context such as the amount and type of interaction between individual guest students and their host family; the ready availability of various social contexts and opportunities for interaction between students and native speakers (Lafford 2006). The variability of these context factors along with individual factors (e.g. students' L2 proficiency and willingness to take

advantage of these opportunities to improve their L2) among students may explain these four young adults' diverse accounts of their self-perceived impacts of this SA experience. Talburt and Stewart's (1999) ethnographic study on five L2 Spanish learners on a five-week SA programme in Spain also illustrates the different impacts of the SA experience on individual learners.

9.3.2. The minimal impact of the SA trip

Ryan, Christina, and Chocolate's narrative about the perceived impacts of this SA experience may disappoint parents, teachers, and administrators, but can make people more realistic about what such short trips can / cannot do. In other words, students should not be expected to become full participants in the English speaking CoPs in a relatively short period of time (three weeks). The findings challenge those SA/SLA studies that suggest students who spend a period studying L2 abroad will be more confident about their L2 proficiency (Kitao 1993; Davie 1996; Simões 1996; Tanaka and Ellis 2003; Matsuda and Gobel 2004; Magnan and Back 2007), and therefore be less anxious about speaking the L2 (Allen 2002; Allen and Herron 2003; Tanaka and Ellis 2003; Matsuda and Gobel 2004) and more motivated to learn (Freed 1990; Kitao 1993; Campbell 1996; Simões 1996; Allen 2002). The present study shows that all three did not benefit much from their SA experiences in terms of enhancing their English language learning in general and reducing their anxiety in particular as people expect and some literature suggests.

One of the possible reasons for the minimal impact of the SA programme was that they, like those SA students in Wilkinson (1998b), Kinginger (2004), Whitworth (2006), and Jackson's (2008) studies, did not have unlimited or easy access to opportunities to interact with native speakers while abroad. Ryan, Sam, and Christina's limited English language use in out-of-class activities along with Chocolate's unpleasant encounters with local people (see 5.3.3., 6.2.3., 7.2.3., 8.2.3.), for instance, remind us that it is naïve to assume that learners can enhance their language learning simply by being present in the host speech community. That is, access to anglophones does not necessarily mean access to opportunities to use English (Norton 2000) (see 2.5.2.1.). This casts doubt on the conclusions of most cognitive (quantitative) SA studies that take the availability of interactional opportunities for granted. That is, the way purely cognitive SLA researchers

conceive of and examine interaction focuses on the linguistic and cognitive aspects of idealised communication between native and non-native speakers, as well as between non-natives.

As Pavlenko (2000) and Block (2007a; 2007b) argue, these quantitative studies fail to consider that the interactions are deeply embedded in social contexts and relations of power, and neglect the profound impact that speakers' multiple identities (e.g. linguistic, racial and ethnic identities) may have on their opportunities for linguistic interaction and negotiation of meaning. The present study revealed that the process through which the four accessed, and were offered access, to the linguistic resources and interactional opportunities in the classroom CoP, homestay CoP, and wider society CoP during the SA tour was complicated by a range of contextual factors (e.g. interlocutors' attitudes and behaviour, power relations in social contexts) and personal factors (e.g. personality traits, identities, anxiety, degrees of investment) (see 9.2.1, 9.2.2., 9.2.3.).

The investigation of the issue of access to linguistic resources in the process of L2 learning within the poststructuralist framework is still relatively new in SLA research despite some attempts having been made (Siegal 1996; Norton 2000; Pavlenko 2000; Kinginger 2004; Miller 2004; Whitworth 2006; Jackson 2008). Following Pavlenko (2000) and Jackson (2008), this study suggests that instead of being treated as a trivial issue as it was in previous cognitive SLA studies, L2 learners' access to linguistic and interactional opportunities deserves close attention and in-depth examination, given that it is one of the factors that determine the success or not of a SA programme. Next I try to explain the minimal impact of the SA trip by considering the four students' dispositions affecting their English language learning while abroad.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, learners' dispositions towards language learning are closely related to both real and imagined belongings within CoPs (Kanno 2000; Norton 2001; Kinginger 2004). The minimal impact of the SA trip in the present study therefore could also possibly be explained by the differences between what the four young adults imagined before the trip and what they actually experienced during the trip. All four wanted to study English in America because they desired

membership in their imagined American community of English users. For instance, before their departure to the USA, Ryan hoped that the SA trip could make him become “another person” who, “like those westerners (Americans)”, does not care much about how people perceive him (see 5.2.). Christina expected she could improve her English language skills and be able to communicate in English more naturally and not be afraid of speaking to native speakers (see 7.1.). Chocolate, having had the previous very positive SA experience, was very excited about the upcoming trip to America and expected that he could talk more with the local people than the last time he studied in Canada (see 8.1.). Thus, the teachers, host family, and local people were both the Americans they encountered and old-timers in this imagined community.

However, the negative experiences they encountered through their engagement in the classroom CoP, homestay CoP, and wider society CoP during the trip made them feel that they did not possess a legitimate status in their imagined community. They then felt anxious when with more experienced participants in their imagined community and were silenced by the old-timers. Besides Norton’s (2001) study (see 2.5.3.4.), another example of the connection between learners’ non-participation and their imagined communities is Kanno’s (2000) study on the identities of a Japanese teenager (Rui) who spent two thirds of his life in English speaking countries. Rui had an imagined identity as Japanese in his imagined community-Japan. Hence he made every effort to maintain his Japanese language proficiency during the years he was away from Japan. However, he felt disappointed when he went back to Japan and finally realised that the “real” Japan was very different from his imagined (idealised) Japan. Afterwards he developed anti-Japan and anti-Japanese sentiments, discarding his Japanese identity entirely.

It is noteworthy that among the four participants, only Sam had a very positive perception of how the SA experience affected his English language learning in general and anxiety in particular after he was back in Taiwan. This could be explained not only by Sam’s new perception of English as a real-life language and his vision of his future English-speaking self, but also the new self-perception (new me) he developed during and after the SA tour. Sam identified himself as a poor English learner and he hated English before departing for America. However, his

positive SA classroom learning experience stimulated personal growth, boosted his self-esteem and self-confidence and inspired further positive identity construction during the trip. After he came back to Taiwan, he became very motivated for English language learning and considered himself as an active learner (see Chapter 6).

9.4. CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, the main point I wish to underscore is that anxiety is a complex issue. What makes it complex is that anxiety can be seen as a symptom of identity conflict and is context-dependent and always fluctuating. Furthermore, the findings of this study suggest that in the perceptions of the participants, the SA programme had minimal impact on enhancing their English language learning and reducing their anxiety. In the next chapter, I make some conclusions on the whole study and also highlight the possible ways to make SA tours more beneficial to students.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSIONS

10.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I provide an overview of the study then outline the contributions and limitations of the study, consider the implications of the study for designs of study abroad (SA) programmes, and make suggestions for further research. I conclude with some personal reflections on this research.

10.2. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

In this study I explored the feelings of anxiety among a group of Taiwanese university students studying English in a SA programme in USA. In choosing this topic, I was influenced by the constant statements among my students of EFL at a university in Taiwan that they were afraid of speaking English and they felt anxious about learning English due to their negative learning experiences (e.g. painstaking rote learning of vocabulary and grammar). This anxiety, according to them, in turn prevented their practice in speaking the language. They avoided speaking English because they lacked confidence and feared making mistakes. Due to such anxiety they were not able to improve in the language. Therefore, one of the issues I was interested in was the reasons for anxiety among the EFL students.

Furthermore, in recent years, many universities in Taiwan (including the one where I teach) organise short-term (usually about one month) SA trips to English speaking countries for their students. There is a common belief that immersion in an English speaking environment gives students plenty of opportunities to practice English. Students who spend a period studying English abroad are also expected to be more confident about their English, therefore less anxious and more willing to make an effort to communicate in English. This study also aimed at examining whether such assumptions are a true reflection of the SA experiences. However, since learners' anxiety may potentially play a crucial role in the success (or lack of success) of these SA programmes, this study also explored how students' anxiety, if any, affected their English language learning while abroad. The study also drew a rationale based on literature from the fact that there seems to be a lack of qualitative studies focusing specifically on FL learners' anxiety in a SA context.

Due to the strength of qualitative research into FL anxiety along with my desire to get a more holistic understanding of individual Taiwanese university students' anxiety in the English language learning process, I conducted a multiple-case study in which eight students who joined a SA programme in USA were studied. In order to fully answer my research questions, I interviewed the participants for the first time one month before their departure to USA to get the history of their English language learning and feelings about the upcoming trip. I then shadowed them during three weeks abroad, conducting observations and on-going interviews and post-class observation interviews to capture their "live" SA experiences. I also collected their diary entries while abroad. Two months after the trip, these students were interviewed for the final time. The follow-up interviews gathered data on their self-perceived impacts of this SA experience on their English language learning in general and anxiety in particular once they were back in Taiwan.

Influenced by the dominant cognitive approaches to research on FL anxiety (see 2.3), I first conducted a cross-case analysis, searching for the patterns of causes and effects of anxiety as stated by the eight participants during the interviews. However, I did not continue analysing the observation and diary data this way. The reason was that the findings I generated suggested that the causes and effects of anxiety may not always be distinguishable and there are no clear-cut and predictable relations between the two. It signals that the cross-case analysis could only provide a surface view of the participants' anxiety. Besides, while reviewing the whole range of data from the participants, I sensed the importance of contexts and identity in relation to anxiety. Recently many SLA scholars, informed by the poststructuralist and situated learning perspectives, have called for more attention to be paid to the sociocultural / contextual factors and multifaceted identities involved in the process of L2 learning and use. As a result, I used these two perspectives to help me deepen my understanding of each of four individual case participants' anxiety.

Generally, the study showed that students' anxiety in the English language learning process is a complex issue. Anxiety can be viewed as a symptom of a deeper identity conflict, which in turn inhibited these students' abilities and desires to use English in their social interactions. Moreover, anxiety is context-dependent and always

fluctuating. The findings also indicated that the students did not benefit much from their SA experiences in terms of enhancing their English language learning and reducing their anxiety as envisaged by teachers, parents, administrators, and students in Taiwan and some SA literature. From my study, I have identified what I consider to be the main contributions to the field of SLA, which I highlight in the next section.

10.3. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

In this section, I consider the contributions of the study to the field of SLA as follows: (1) methodological contributions; (2) addition to literature on FL anxiety and SA; (3) additional knowledge to the field of SLA; (4) contribution to foreign language learning in the Taiwan context

Methodological contributions

Methodologically, I see my study as demonstrating the benefits of using the qualitative case study in studying psychological aspects of language learning such as anxiety. This is firstly because in this study I successfully triangulated data generation techniques (interviews, observations, and diaries) enabling the corroboration of data from various sources and providing a more holistic understanding of anxiety than would have merged from a purely quantitative survey. Secondly, this study offers a very thick description of the entire research process, which not only offers rich insights into FL learners' experiences during a SA trip but also makes it possible to replicate this study in other contexts.

Moreover, by focusing on individual differences and complexity, and considering social and contextual factors in interpreting individuals' anxiety during the SA experience, this study demonstrates the need for researchers in SLA to pay attention to changes that their research participants may experience depending on time and space (in different contexts). Such approaches to research have not been reported much in SLA research.

Addition to literature on FL anxiety

My study adds to the literature on FL anxiety by interpreting and discussing the phenomenon of anxiety in language learning in terms of situated learning theory and

poststructuralist approaches to SLA research. In this way, the study makes two important contributions: (1) It enriches our understanding of anxiety as a symptom of identity conflict; (2) It captures the complex nature of anxiety that is context-dependent and always fluctuating. In making this contribution, my study adds to the few similar previous studies (e.g. Norton 1995; Lamb 2009; Ushioda 2009) that have reconceptualised another psychological factor in language learning – motivation – as a construct that has clear social origins and are shaped and reshaped by the contexts L2 learners engage in. Therefore my study adds a social, identity related and contextual dimension to the literature on anxiety that appears to have been generally under-addressed in current FL anxiety literature.

Additional knowledge to the field of SLA

Another contribution of this study to the field of SLA is that it adds to the research (in particular, qualitative inquiries) into FL learners' anxiety in SA settings. The study contradicts the common belief that SA programmes always provide a positive language learning environment in which students have unlimited opportunities to practice the L2 with the native speakers. The study shows that various social factors caused SA students identity conflict, anxiety, and impaired their access to social interactions in the target language. Hence the SA trip had a very minimal impact on enhancing students' English language learning in general and reducing their anxiety in particular. In this way, my study also raises questions in the field of SLA regarding the benefits of SA trips in enhancing language learning and / or how such trips may be improved to benefit students more. Such questions on the merits of SA programmes have rarely been discussed in previous SLA research.

Contribution to foreign language learning in the Taiwan context

My study provides a rich empirical account of Taiwanese FL students' experiences during a SA programme, which could be a basis for improvement of the designs of such programmes and for how the students and other people involved may be prepared for them in the future. This contribution is timely considering that there are a growing number of universities both in Taiwan and in other countries that are encouraging their students to take part in such SA programmes. These trips are not really based on any empirical evidence of the assumed benefits. In relation to this, there have been plenty of studies documenting the SA learning experiences and

anxiety of American, European, and other Asian (Mainland Chinese, Japanese, Korean, etc.) university students (see 2.4.1. and 2.4.2.), but none, as far as I am aware of, Taiwanese university students.

Having identified the contributions of my study, I must acknowledge that there are several issues that may be considered as limitations of the study which I explain in the next section.

10.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

To begin with, I did not get the chance to observe the participants' actual English language use at their homestay. There were four host families the eight participants stayed with. According to the participants' reports, the first one was an old lady who was usually asleep when the guest students were home. The second one was a young couple who were usually not at home, and the third one was a single mother who lived alone and was also very busy with her life schedules. The final family did not allow students to bring visitors home. I contacted the host families, but they were not available for interviews at the times when I had the chance to do so, since my priority was to shadow the students as they interacted with the classmates and teachers and in out-of-class context. Nevertheless, I still got insightful data on the participants' homestay English language learning and use experiences from constantly interviewing the participants and collecting the diary entries while abroad.

Another limitation that I wish to acknowledge is that due to the time and resources constraints, I did not include the viewpoints of the teachers and non-Taiwanese students or some other people (e.g. the shop clerk) that the students encountered in America. These people may perhaps have offered valuable insights; however, including others into the scope of this study would have reduced the time I could have spent with the students (since I was shadowing them) and the in-depth portrait of individual learners would have been impaired. In spite of the limitations identified above, I am confident that I took sufficient care to maximise the trustworthiness of my study. Hence, in the next section, I explain some of the implications for SA programme design that arise from this research.

10.5. IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMME DESIGN

These findings suggest that the organisers of SA trips should consider providing students with pre-departure and on-trip briefing sessions that can help to minimise the debilitating effects of anxiety due to identity conflict and to maximise the students' learning while abroad. The post-trip sessions should also not be neglected in order to extend SA students' language and cultural learning when they are back in the home country. The briefings suggested here could be conducted as I suggest below.

Pre-departure preparation phase:

In this study, the students were only given a short orientation (about 30 minutes) that focused on packing advice. This was apparently inadequate. The leading teacher of the SA group should offer students a well-designed pre-trip intercultural communication course or series of workshops. The course or workshops can help students prepare for the challenges they are likely to face in the host country such as language barriers, identity conflict, racial difference, and culture shock. Besides, students should also be taught to develop strategies to ease their transition to a new sociocultural and linguistic environment of the host country to prevent unrealistic expectations that could lead to disappointments and disillusionment while abroad. This pre-departure preparation phase should also take into account students' specific concerns and aspirations. This is in line with the findings in my study that in the pre-departure period, most of the participants were worried about staying with the host families and the English language demands of staying in America.

The pre-departure preparation session can also bring in previous SA students who can provide practical advice for their peers. For example, they can share their SA experiences, to encourage the newcomers to set up realistic goals for their stay abroad, and to advice on building relationships with the host family. This can also help to ease the fear of the departing students who have never travelled outside their own cultural environment without family around.

For homestay placement to work well and to maximise students' language and cultural learning, the homestay coordinator should select hosts who are keen to share their culture with the guest students, can provide more interaction with them and be more patient to communicate with less than fluent learners. Such preparation could

also involve discussing with the host families what roles are expected of them and determining if they are willing to carry those roles. As my study reveals, one cannot assume that homestay is always a supportive linguistic and cultural learning environment for SA students and that host-guest student relationship will always flourish. Identity “crisis” and anxiety often appeared in these young adults’ oral and written narrative about their homestay English language learning situations. Data also suggests that the hosts’ busy life schedule seemed not to allow them to spend time with the guest students, which made the homestay experience less rewarding for students.

On-trip briefings phase:

During the SA period, the leading teacher of the SA group could arrange a briefing once a week during which the students can have a chance to share their experiences and raise questions about confusing or troubling intercultural encounters. The students can also be advised to contact the leading teacher whenever difficulties arise either in classes or out of it (including homestay). They can reduce their anxiety by knowing that support will always be available. It should also be the responsibility of the leading teacher to discuss any issues with the host families and the teachers.

While in the host speech community, the young adults in the present study experienced identity conflict and anxiety in various problematic intercultural incidents either in the classroom or out of it. If they could have had sufficient socio-emotional support during the trip, their English language learning and use might not have been as seriously impaired as it was. The leading teacher should be trained to handle the briefings in a sensitive and supportive manner so that the students could be more willing to be open about issues of identity conflict, intercultural adjustment, host-student relationship, perceived discrimination, and English linguistic incompetence. These group sessions could foster personal growth and self-confidence, reduce anxiety, and encourage students to have more exposure to the host environment.

Post-trip briefing phase:

The findings suggested that once the students were back into familiar routines in the home country, the impact of the trip quickly faded away (see 9.3.). In order to

maximise the potential of this SA experience, students could be encouraged to create opportunities for their continued use of FL in social settings after they return home. For instance, they can keep contacts with their host family and international friends they made abroad. They could also work collaboratively to prepare a presentation to share their experience with the subsequent group and respond to questions. This activity could give them a chance to reflect on their SA English language learning process and also motivate future SA students to take advantage of affordances in the host environment. Furthermore, the leading teacher of the SA group could offer a learner-centred briefing session that encourages students to revisit their pre-departure goals and worries, take stock of their language learning and anxiety, and set goals for further enhancement of their FL skills. During such a session, the students could also offer valuable suggestions about improving future SA programmes.

10.6. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There are some areas that were beyond the scope of this study but which could also enhance our understanding about several issues related to the study. First, there is a need for studies that examine the long-term impact of short-term SA trips on FL university students in terms of linguistic, intercultural, personal growth (e.g. identity expansion), and anxiety in the FL learning process. Second, future researchers can expand the scope of the qualitative research on language learning abroad by including the viewpoints of others (e.g. the teachers, host family, international fellow students) the participants encountered. These others can play a significant role in students' adjustment process and influence their language learning and use. Their views concerning the participants' English language learning can then be triangulated with those of the participants themselves to develop a more comprehensive picture of what actually happens during a SA trip.

Furthermore, most previous studies on SA programmes have not explored the influence of social factors on FL learners' language use in the host environment. While my study makes a contribution to this aspect, because I recognise that the power of qualitative case studies lies heavily in multiplicity of findings, I would suggest that similar studies be carried out in various contexts to increase empirical evidence in the field of both FL anxiety and SA programmes. Like in my study, such

studies would benefit the field by paying attention to sociocultural and individual factors, power relations in different contexts.

10.7. FINAL REFLECTIONS: LEARNING FROM THE STUDY

To conclude, here is a brief reflection on what I have learnt from doing this research. As a novice researcher, this study helped me grasp research skills and concepts that I would not otherwise have mastered. I learnt what data is in qualitative research, and how to collect, analyse, and interpret it. I learnt how to balance reading, thinking, writing, reflecting, and re-doing all these again and again as aspects of development. I also learnt the conventions of academic writing and how to illustrate my ideas. One of the most valuable things I learnt is the interactiveness of all aspects of doing the research, from initial thinking to finally writing up. Going through the whole process gave me some confidence in my ability to carry out further research.

This study offered me a lot of insights into individual students' SA experiences and made me more sympathetic towards L2 learners' difficulties with and anxiety about language learning and use in a L2 speech environment. I have also learnt about the importance of context in studies about second language acquisition. I have begun to develop a sense of noticing, which came about with training in this research, so that I now treat phenomena in a more informed way. I also gained an understanding of FL learning and anxiety related literature without which I would not have been able to proceed.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Participant consent form

Participant consent form 參與研究同意書

Research Aim:

The purpose of this study is to explore your feelings and experiences about English language learning before, during and after this study abroad experience. 本研究是想瞭解你遊學前,遊學期間及遊學後學習英文的感覺和經驗。

Research Procedure:

1. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be:

- interviewed once before the departure to San Diego
- interviewed several times while in San Diego
- interviewed once after the trip
- observed about your English language learning in and outside classroom in San Diego
- asked to keep a diary while in San Diego
- All the interviews will be audio-recorded.

如果你同意參與此研究,你將會接受一次行前訪談,遊學期間兩次訪談,回國之後最後一次訪談。所有訪談皆會錄音。此研究研究員(隨團老師)也會觀察兩天你遊學期間課堂上和課堂外學習英文的情形。你也會被要求在遊學期間寫日記。

Ethical issues:

1. The participation is voluntary and withdraw at any point is allowed.

參與這項研究,完全是自願性質的,你可以在任何時間點,選擇退出這項研究

2. All the data gathered from you will be confidential and anonymous.

所有從你身上取得的資料,都會是保密且匿名的

3. Your rights and activities will not be infringed and you will be prevented from any potential harm. The intrusion into your lives will be minimized.

你的權利和活動不會被侵犯,你也不會受到任何心理或生理的傷害,你的生活也不會被打擾

4. You are welcome to read all interview transcripts, observation notes, and final report. You are more than welcome to give comments to ensure correct report of you.

歡迎你來讀所有關於你的訪談記錄,觀察筆記,和最後的研究報告,你可以發表任何相關意見以確保關於你的正確描述

5. My intention of doing this research is not to judge you.

這項研究的目的,並不是去評斷你

6. The participation can make a contribution to future students, and I will be appreciated for your valuable time.

你的參與將可以對將來的學生有貢獻。我很感激你對這項研究付出的時間和精力。

* I agree to participate in this study

Participant Signature: _____ Date:

* I agree to the provisions mentioned above

Researcher Signature Date:

Appendix 2: Guiding interview questions for pre-departure interviews

1. Previous experience

- Tell me your past English language learning experience in Taiwan?

Possible prompts:

1. Did you start learning English before the formal English education (starts from the age of 13)? If yes, tell me more about it? Any positive/negative experiences?
 2. Can you tell me more about the particular positive or negative English language learning experience (both in school and at private cram school, if any) in Taiwan?
 3. What do you think of Taiwanese teachers' way of teaching?
 4. Do you think you have benefited from the English education in Taiwan?
 5. Do you think you study hard on English? Yes, why? No, why not?
 6. How was your English academic performance at school?
- Have you had any experience of foreign (English speaking country) living before this particular visit?
 - Have you ever had any travel-immersion experience in an English speaking country before: tourist / school experience, etc.?
 - Have you had any experience of learning English with an English native speaker outside academic schooling? How did you feel in those English classes?
 - Have you had any experience of talking to native English speakers? -Yes, How did you feel about it?
 - How did these experiences (mentioned in previous two questions) influence your overall English language learning?
 - How did you feel when you did certain English activities such as speaking, listening, reading and writing?
 - How do you feel about your overall English proficiency and your particular English speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills?
 - How do you feel about your English proficiency compared to your classmates and friends?

2. Personal disposition

- Why did you decide to go abroad to study and what are you most looking forward to?
- Do you have any concern about this visit? Yes-Can you tell me more about it?
- Do you have any expectation from this visit in terms of English language learning? Yes-Can you tell me more about it?
- Is there anything you worry about regarding using English during this visit? Yes-Can you tell me more about it?
- Have you prepared yourself for this visit in any way? Yes-Can you tell me more about it?
- How do you feel about staying with the host family?
- What images do you have of the foreign country in terms of culture, people, etc?

Appendix 3: Guidelines for classroom observation

Themes	Aspect of student English language learning
General observation of the classroom environment	What is the overall classroom atmosphere? Where does the particular student seat?
Participation in class Activities	What students are doing in class regarding English speaking, listening, reading and writing? Any particular activities such as a drill; giving an oral presentation, methods of testing, spelling exercise, speaking exercise, etc. The nature of the activity: is it choral work, pair/group discussion, role play, or individual seat work? How active is his/her participation in comparison to classmates? Is it just a repeating or really use English?
Verbal communication (the quantity and quality of communication)	How much does he/she communicate? (Number of talking with the teacher, number of talking in the pair work) The extent to which the participant engages in extended discourse or restricts his/her utterances to a minimal length of one sentence, clause or word. Volunteer answering, volunteer asking questions or just being asked by the teacher to speak.
Verbal and non-verbal expressions and behaviour showing anxiety	Any sign of anxiety such as avoiding eye contact with the teacher; looking down, nervous or embarrassed facial expression and laughter, blushed face, stuttering or stammering as they speak, playing with their hair, clothes, or other manipulable objects, squirm in their seats, generally appear nervous and fidgety. Does the student's gesture seem relaxed or tense, focused or not paying attention, confident or confused? Is any image-protection behaviour caused by anxiety: smiling and nodding frequently, giving frequent communicative feedback such as "uh-huh".
Avoidance behaviour (Not willing to communicate)	Not willing to volunteer answers, avoid attempting difficult or personal messages in English, fewer initiations of conversations, less participation in conversations, shorter speaking periods when in front of an audience, missing class and postponing homework.
Difficulties in participating in classroom activities	Students' difficulties in understanding what the teacher said, word/sentence production, etc. Not being able to make self understood by the teacher and the peers Freeze up in role-play activities or when called on to perform Report that they "know a certain word but "forget" it during a test or an oral exercise. Students' responses to the perceived errors they made and to the teacher's error collection, if any.

Appendix 4: Guiding interview questions for post-class observation interview

<p><i>Starting questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you feel in today's classes? • What do you think of your teacher? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you think of his/her way of teaching? - What do you think of his/her way of teaching compared to that of Taiwanese English teachers? - What do you think of your interaction with him/her? • What do you think of your classmates in the group work / your partner in the pair work? • How do you feel about the activities you have done today? (Pair work, role play, presentation, choral work, etc)?
<p><i>Observed participation in class activities and Verbal communication(both quantity and quality)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you feel about your English performance in today's classes? • How do you feel about your overall English proficiency after today's classes? • What do you think of your participation? • How did you feel when you couldn't /could perform well on classroom tasks in speaking, listening, reading, and writing? • I noticed that you seemed to not/ actively participate in the class? Why was that? How did you feel? • How did you feel when you were speaking English in class? • How did you feel when you volunteered answering or asking questions?
<p><i>Verbal and non-verbal expressions and behaviour showing anxiety</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you feel about your English proficiency compared to your classmates? • Did you have to think a lot and make sure your sentence is correct before you said it? • How did you feel when you were called on to speak English? • How did you feel when you spoke English in front of the peers and teacher? • How did you feel when you realized you made an error, if any, in pronunciation, grammar, etc? • How did you feel when the teacher corrected the errors, if any, you made? • How did you feel when the teacher approached you to see how you are doing in exercise? • What do you think of how your teacher and peers feel about your contribution / participation / errors in classes today? • What do you think of their evaluation of your English? • Did you feel that the class moved so quickly and you worried about getting left behind? Yes -- how did you feel? No--- how did you feel? • Is there any classroom activity you did today made you feel the most nervous/ relaxed?
<p><i>Avoidance behaviour (Not willing to communicate)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I noticed that you seemed to keep quiet in the pair work / did not volunteer to answer / avoid eye contact with the teacher / miss one of the classes or postpone homework, etc. Am I right? Yes-Can you tell me why and how did you feel?
<p><i>Difficulties in participating in classroom activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you encounter any difficulty in communicating in English with the teacher and the peers? Yes -How did you feel? No --- How did you feel? • How did you feel when you couldn't communicate effectively with the teacher and the peers (e.g. when you couldn't understand what they said or they couldn't understand what you said?) • What do you think the causes of these difficulties?

Appendix 5: Guidelines for outside classroom observation

Themes	Aspect of student English language use
Use of English (Quantity)	Number of occasions of talking in English with international friends, administrative staff of language school, local people and host family member.
Use of English (Quality)	The extent to which speakers engage in extended discourse or restrict their utterances to a minimal length of one sentence, clause or word.
Initiations of English conversations	Number of initiations
Avoidance behaviour (Not willing to communicate)	Avoiding speaking English when needed (asking friends or me for help) Avoiding talking with the host family, Avoiding going out or talking with international friends Avoiding eye contact while speaking
Difficulties in English conversations	Difficulty in expressing him/herself fully Not being able to make himself/herself understood Not being able to understand when spoken to Difficulty in responding to native English speakers or international friends Nonverbal gestures or facial expressions which communicate without the use of words
Verbal/non-verbal expressions and behaviour showing anxiety	Nervous or embarrassed facial expression and laughter, blushed face, stuttering or stammering as they speak Image-protection behaviour caused by anxiety: smiling and nodding frequently, giving frequent communicative feedback such as "uh-huh".

Appendix 6: Guiding interview questions for on-going interviews

<p><i>Observed use of English(quantity and quality)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you feel when you spoke English? • When you talked to the native speaker (such as asking information like price, direction, ordering food, etc.), how good you think you have done it? How did you feel when talking? • When you talked to your international friend, how good you think you have done it? How did you feel when talking? • How do you feel about your English communication with your host family? How did you feel when you talked to them? • When do you feel most comfortable speaking English? • When do you feel most uncomfortable speaking English?
<p><i>Initiations of English conversations (Willing to communicate)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I noticed that you seemed to be willing / not willing to communicate in English as much as possible. Am I right? Yes-Why was that? How did you feel?
<p><i>Avoidance behaviour (Not willing to communicate)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I noticed that you seemed to avoid (not unwilling) / initiate talking to the local people /your international friends. Am I right? Yes- Why was that? How did you feel about it? • You asked your friend or me to say an English sentence for you, why was that? How did you feel about it? • I noticed that you seemed to prefer going out with Taiwanese friends/ international friends instead of international friends/ Taiwanese friends. Am I right? Yes-Why is that? How did you feel about it?
<p><i>Difficulty in English conversations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I noticed that you seemed to have difficulty / have done a good job in expressing yourself fully/ making yourself understood/ understanding and responding to the native speaker. Am I right? Yes-How do you feel about it? • What do you think the cause of these difficulties?
<p><i>Verbal/Non-verbal expressions and behaviour showing anxiety</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I noticed that you seemed to be nervous / relaxed speaking with native speakers / international friends. Am I right? Yes-Can you tell me why? • I noticed that the person you spoken to seemed to be impatient / encouraging. Am I right? Yes-How did you feel? • How did you feel about your English speaking skill while talking to native speakers/ international friends? • What do you think of how the people you talk to and the peers beside you feel about your English proficiency while you talked? • How did you feel when you realized you made an error, if any, in pronunciation, grammar, etc?

Appendix 7: Guidelines to students on writing diaries

Dear students:

I am writing to invite you to participate in an exercise involving writing daily diaries during your stay in America. This information will be used strictly for the purposes of a research project that I am undertaking. One of the main objectives of this research is to find out your English language learning experiences during this short-term study abroad trip. Your account and diaries will be kept confidential and anonymous and you will have the chance to edit them and remove any information you may want to. Kindly write honest, detailed information and express yourself freely in Chinese. I will come and collect your diary every Saturday and return to you on the next Monday. Feel free to consult me if you have any queries about this project.

- *Please describe any pleasant experiences that you have had today that have made you feel confident or feel that you had succeeded when you tried to use English to communicate with people or when you learned something new during your English class (e.g. reporting positive L2 use events taking place both in and outside classroom, including host family experience).*
- *Please describe any unpleasant experiences that you have had today that have made you feel anxious or nervous when you tried to use English to communicate with people or have been asked to do something or learn something about English in class (e.g. reporting negative L2 use events taking place both in and outside classroom, including host family experience).*

When you are writing the diary for the day,

- Do not hesitate to write down any difficulties, concerns, and fears you have.
- You do not have to compel yourself to write down any positive or negative experience if there is not any on certain day. You can just write about what happened today and what you have been doing for the day. Any information related to your English language learning and use in any manner will be of interest.
- You may find it easier to carry a note book on which you record events (regarding English language learning and use) you consider significant as they take place, which you may put together later in the day.
- Feel free to describe your feelings and emotions during the time.
- Write as much as you can, even includes any vignettes, without pressure and do it at your free time.

Appendix 8: Guiding interview questions for follow-up interviews

- Can you remember any positive or negative experiences during this visit? How did they make you feel? The following are the possible prompts:
 - Friends: native or international friends?
 - Participating in local activities?
 - Classroom learning?
 - Living conditions: What are the positive and negative experiences of staying with the host family?
 - Contacts with the local people? In what form?
- What were your most positive and negative experiences of using English during the visit, if there was any?
- Did you have any difficulties in verbal communication in English?
 - in understanding, when with whom, how did you feel about it?
 - in speaking, when with whom, how did you feel about it?
- In which situations did you feel most at ease in communicating in the foreign language, if there was any? Why?
- How did you feel about your overall English in the end of this visit and how do you feel it now?
- How did you feel about your English language learning/use on the first couple days and the last couple days?
- Was there any change in your overall feelings during the three weeks in San Diego?
- Can you tell me, generally, how this study abroad experience has influenced your overall English language learning?
The possible prompt: Do you think you are more anxious / motivated towards English language learning and more confident about your overall English proficiency / your specific speaking, listening, reading, writing skill?
- Do you feel you have gained from this visit in terms of English language learning? Yes-Can you tell me more about it?
- To what extent do you feel that you have changed after this study abroad regarding your overall English language learning? (To what extent have your perceptions of English language learning/your English proficiency and your anxiety about English language learning changed?). The following are the possible prompts:
 1. How do you feel about your overall English proficiency and your particular English speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills?
 2. What do you feel about your English proficiency compared to your classmates and friends?
 3. How do you feel when you do certain English activities such as speaking, listening, reading and writing?
- How does the actual experiences during this visit match the expectations/objectives and worries you had before the departure to America?

Appendix 9: Timeline for fieldwork in USA

Participant	Interviews (minutes) OG (On-going Interview) PO(Post-class observation interview)	Class Observations (hours)	Diary entry
Kai	21 Jan. OG (8 mins) 21 Jan. OG (10 mins) 22 Jan. PO (10 mins) 23 Jan. PO (13 mins) 24 Jan. OG (12 mins) 28 Jan. OG (9 mins) 31 Jan. OG (17 mins) 4 Feb. PO (11 mins) 5 Feb. PO (12 mins) 7 Feb. OG (10 mins)	22 Jan. (1 hr) 23 Jan. (2.5hr) 4 Feb. (1 hr) 5 Feb. (1 hr)	20 Jan. 21 Jan. 23 Jan.
Total	10 interviews (112 mins)	4 observations (5.5 hrs)	3 entries
Jin	23 Jan. OG (10mins) 24 Jan. OG/PO (22mins) 28 Jan. OG/PO (17 mins) 29 Jan. PO (12 mins) 4 Feb. OG/PO (20 mins) 5 Feb. PO (13 mins) 7 Feb. OG (10 mins)	24 Jan. (1hr) 28 Jan. (1 hr) 28 Jan. (2.5 hr) 4 Feb. (1 hr) 5 Feb. (1 hr)	N/A
Total	7 interviews (104 mins)	5 observations (6.5 hrs)	0 entries
Chocolate	21 Jan. OG (8 mins) 22 Jan. OG (11 mins) 23 Jan. OG/PO (17 mins) 25 Jan. PO (25 mins) 28 Jan. OG (22 mins) 5 Feb. PO (15 mins) 6 Feb. OG (8 mins) 7 Feb. OG (13 mins)	23 Jan. (1 hr) 25 Jan. (1.5 hr) 5 Feb. (1 hr)	N/A
Total	8 interviews (119 mins)	3 observations (3.5 hrs)	0 entries
Christina	21 Jan. OG (11 mins) 22 Jan. OG/PO (15 mins) 23 Jan. PO (13 mins) 23 Jan. OG (13mins) 25 Jan. PO (15 mins) 29 Jan. OG (20 mins) 31 Jan. OG (13 mins) 4 Feb. OG (15 mins). 7 Feb. OG (10 mins)	22 Jan. (1 hr) 23 Jan. (1 hr) 25 Jan. (1 hr)	20 Jan., 21Jan., 22 Jan., 23 Jan., 24 Jan., 25 Jan 26 Jan., 27 Jan., 28 Jan., 29 Jan., 30 Jan., 31 Jan., 1 Feb., 2 Feb., 3 Feb., 4 Feb., 5 Feb., 6 Feb., 7 Feb., 8 Feb., 9 Feb.
Total	9 interviews (125 mins)	3 observations (3 hrs)	21 entries
Cynthia	21 Jan. OG (8 mins) 21 Jan. OG (10 mins) 22 Jan. PO (15mins) 23 Jan. OG (10mins) 23 Jan. PO (10 mins) 24 Jan. PO (10mins) 28 Jan. PO (9 mins) 29 Jan. PO (11 mins) 31 Jan. OG (15mins) 5 Feb. OG (10 mins) 5 Feb. PO (9 mins)	22 Jan. (1.5hr) 23 Jan. (1 hr) 24 Jan. (2.5hr) 28 Jan. (1 hr) 29 Jan. (1 hr) 5 Feb. (1 hr)	20 Jan. 21 Jan. 22 Jan. 23 Jan. 24 Jan.
Total	11 interviews (117 mins)	6 observations (7.5 hrs)	5 entries

Ulla	21 Jan. OG (8 mins) 21 Jan. OG (10 mins) 22 Jan. PO (10 mins) 23 Jan. PO (13 mins) 25 Jan. OG (11 mins) 28 Jan. PO (9 mins) 31 Jan. OG (19 mins) 4 Feb. OG/PO (14 mins) 5 Feb. PO (10 mins) 7 Feb. OG (8 mins)	22 Jan. (1 hr) 23 Jan. (2.5hr) 4 Feb. (1 hr) 5 Feb. (1 hr)	20 Jan., 21Jan., 22 Jan., 23 Jan., 24 Jan., 25 Jan 26 Jan., 27 Jan., 28 Jan., 29 Jan., 30 Jan., 31 Jan., 1 Feb., 2 Feb., 3 Feb., 4 Feb., 5 Feb., 6 Feb., 7 Feb., 8 Feb., 9 Feb.
Total	10 interviews (112 mins)	4 observations (5.5 hrs)	21 entries
Ryan	21 Jan. OG (8 mins) 21 Jan. OG (10 mins) 22 Jan. OG (10 mins) 23 Jan. OG (13 mins) 23 Jan. PO (14mins) 24 Jan. PO (14mins) 28 Jan. PO (9 mins) 28 Jan. OG (16 mins) 29 Jan. PO (13 mins) 30 Jan. OG (15 mins) 4 Feb. OG (13 mins). 5 Feb. PO (18 mins) 7 Feb. OG (13 mins)	23 Jan. (1hr) 24 Jan. (2.5hr) 28 Jan. (1 hr) 29 Jan. (1 hr) 5 Feb. (1 hr)	20 Jan. 21 Jan. 22 Jan. 23 Jan. 24 Jan. 28 Jan. 29 Jan.
Total	13 interviews (166 mins)	6 observations (6.5 hrs)	7 entries
Sam	21 Jan. OG (10 mins) 21 Jan. OG (10 mins) 22 Jan. PO (15 mins) 23 Jan. OG (11 mins) 24 Jan. PO (12 mins) 28 Jan. PO (10 mins) 28 Jan. OG (10 mins) 31 Jan. PO (11 mins) 4 Feb. OG (14 mins) 5 Feb. PO (20 mins) 6 Feb. PO (10 mins) 7 Feb. OG (9 mins)	22 Jan. (1 hr) 24 Jan. (2.5hr) 28 Jan. (1 hr) 31 Jan. (1 hr) 5 Feb. (1 hr) 6 Feb. (1 hr)	20 Jan. 21 Jan. 22 Jan. 23 Jan. 24 Jan. 25 Jan. 26 Jan. 28 Jan. 29 Jan.
Total	12 interviews (142 mins)	6 observations (7.5 hrs)	9 entries

Appendix 10: A sample excerpt of interview transcripts

Jan. 25th, 2008 – Post class observation interview - Christina

I: I noticed that in this class, the teacher sat nearest to you. How did you feel about it?

C1: Nothing. It's quite normal.

I: I noticed that since the teacher sat opposite to you, she always looked at you and saw how you were writing. How did you feel?

C1: I was a bit nervous when the teacher was looking at me.

I: I noticed that the teacher asked you and the Brazilian girl to demonstrate the dialogue on the handout. How did you feel when you were doing it?

C1: Nothing special. It's quite normal.

I: I noticed that your voice was louder than usual.

C1: Probably because I was just reading what was written on the handout. It's easier than normal conversation. I spoke in a low voice when I was not sure if my sentences were correct or not and I was nervous.

I: I noticed that the teacher complimented you from time to time. She said "very good, Christian!" How did you feel about it?

C1: I was a bit embarrassed. It's impossible that I am as good as the teacher said. The teachers in Taiwan wouldn't give us encouragement like this. I prefer Taiwanese teaching style. It is probably because of the culture differences. Sometimes I felt the teachers here were very exaggerated. I felt embarrassed and nervous when I heard the compliment because all other classmates heard that as well.

I: The teacher called you to speak one sentence. How did you feel when you were called?

C1: I didn't have special feelings about it.

I: How did you feel when you knew what to say and when you didn't know how to say?

C1: I was nervous when I didn't know what to say.

I: I noticed that many of your classmates were constantly checking the unknown words on the board or the handouts. I know you don't have an electronic dictionary. Did you ask the teacher or your classmates what those words were?

C1: The teacher in this class asked us not to use dictionary in class and she preferred that we asked her and then she would explain to us using easy words.

I: Did you ask the teacher then?

C1: Seldom.

I: Can you tell me why?

C1: Others would ask before I was thinking how to ask. They reacted faster and asked the teacher right away.

I: What would you do if nobody asked the teacher?

C1: I didn't ask either because the teacher thought that we all understood and said "ok" and then went to the next part. When she did so, I was always wondering how come she taught so fast.

I: What would you do if there was still time to ask?

C1: I still didn't ask because I didn't dare to do so.

I: Can you tell me why not?

C1: I didn't dare to do so.

I: Did you ask your classmates sitting next to you in that case?

C1: Yes, I did. I didn't feel that nervous when I asked the classmate.

I: I noticed that there are some people in this class who were very outgoing and active. They always chatted happily in class. It seemed to me that you were quieter compared to them. How do you feel about it?

C1: I feel I can't fit into the class. It seemed to me that they knew each other for a long time and they were very close. If I stayed here longer, probably I could be closer to them. I am a quieter person. I felt a bit nervous when they talked happily to each other, but I didn't say anything. I felt I was like an outsider.

I: The class was mainly playing the game "Cross words". I noticed that you didn't participate much and you didn't put on the words. Can you tell me why was that?
C1: Because I had no clue what to put on. If I knew what letter to put on, I would do so.
I: Did you ever play this game before?
C1: This was my second time. I had no clue how to play at the first time. I understood more this time, but I still didn't understand how to calculate the scores.
I: I noticed that your partner, the Brazilian girl, looked at you and said "Put on one letter!" because you didn't do so after a long time. Did you hear that?
C1: Yes.
I: How did you feel at that time?
C1: I was not sure what to put on. I felt insecure.
I: How do you feel about the class activity today?
C1: It's ok.
I: How do you feel about the game "Gross words"?
C1: I would like it a lot if I had the dictionary.
I: You had been through one week of classes. What class activity you like more and which one you don't like, if there is any?
C1: I don't like all of them because I don't have the dictionary. I don't like the game today because it's about guessing the words. Without the dictionary, I couldn't do anything.
I: How did you feel when you couldn't do anything due to a lack of dictionary?
C1: I hated that very much.
I: Besides the game, is there anything you don't like it either?
C1: Others are not that bad. This game needed the dictionary very much and I couldn't play it without it. For other activities, I could still participate without the dictionary.
I: What class activity you like more, if there is any?
C1: I like group or pair discussion and we say the answers together.

Appendix 11: A sample excerpt of observation notes

Classroom observation notes:

1/22 (Tue)-Core Class: Post-elementary- Cynthia and Sam

This is the first class today. The five Taiwanese students sat together in a row. There are other Brazilian, Italian, and Korean students in this class and most of them chose to sit next to the classmates from the same country as well. When the teacher asked the students to do the small group discussion, she rearranged the seating and put students into small groups consisting of different nationalities. The teacher was explaining how to do the discussion and sometimes asked students questions. Cynthia volunteered to answer the first question and she got it right.

Cynthia was grouped with a Brazilian girl and a Korean guy. In the beginning of the discussion, the other two students happily talked to each other, while Cynthia kept silent. She looked serious, not as confident and relaxed as how she was in yesterday's class. It seemed that she did not quite understand their conversation and felt confused because she frowned from time to time. The Korean guy once asked her "Do you understand?" But she didn't respond. Afterwards, she kept looking at the handout and but still didn't say anything. Her group mates continued talking to each other for most of the time. The teacher approached her group and explained to her how to do this exercise. She still seemed confused. Later on the Korean guy talked to her, but he seemed having difficulties communicating with Cynthia verbally. He wrote down what he wanted to say and showed it to her. They seemed to understand each other through this way and Cynthia smiled from time to time.

Later on, the teacher approached her group again and explained to the Korean guy about some sentences in the handout. Cynthia was looking at them and listening. In the meantime, the teacher asked their group one question. Cynthia volunteered to answer it and got it right. Basically the teacher took turns approaching each group and helped them with the discussion. The class is more advanced than yesterday's focus-2 class. The teacher spoke English faster and the content is more advanced and it's about grammar. Over all, Cynthia seemed not as relaxed and confident as she was in yesterday's class. She looked more serious.

Sam was grouped with one Brazilian, one Swiss, and one Taiwanese classmate. Their group was taking turns asking and answering questions to each other. When it was not Sam's turn, he kept checking vocabulary on the electronic dictionary. When the Brazilian girl asked Sam questions, he had embarrassed smiles, seemed nervous, and looked at Jean (the Taiwanese) for help. When the teacher approached their group and talked to Sam, Sam also seemed nervous and only responded with embarrassed smiles. He spoke Chinese to Jean from time to time. Later on it was his turn to answer questions from the Swiss and he could handle it. Sam seemed to understand the Swiss guy better. The teacher later on came and asked Sam one question in the handout: "What does your father do?" He waited for seconds and responded: "I don't know." Generally speaking, Sam spent most of time working on his dictionary and checking every word he couldn't understand in this group work.

After the group discussion, the whole class had to repeat question and answer sentences in the handout together. Sam seemed not knowing how to pronounce some words. He spoke slower, but tried hard. Cynthia seemed to handle this better. She could read the sentences at the same pace of the class. Then the class moved to a listening exercise: Listening to the dialogues on CD and filling the blanks in the handout. While listening, Sam did not write

down anything, but Cynthia did write from time to time. After first listening, the class discussed with their group about what they filled in. During this discussion, Sam also kept working on the dictionary and Cynthia continued keeping quiet. Then the teacher played the dialogue again. After the second listening, the teacher gave the whole class the answers. Sam seemed having difficulties in writing down what the teacher said and he copied what Jean wrote. Meanwhile Cynthia was noting down the answers the teacher gave them.

The teacher then gave every body another handout that is about the vocabulary of body parts (with pictures). The teacher explained with body language what each word meant. She then spoke each word out loud, and asked students to repeat after her and also point to the body part. Sam repeated out loud the vocabulary, but Cynthia spoke in a lower voice. However, Sam seemed not really knowing what those words meant and he had difficulties pointing to the right body part. He just followed Jean. Cynthia could point to the correct parts.

Appendix 12: A sample excerpt of diary entries

Sam's diary entry on Jan. 24th, 2008

It was raining this morning. I felt very cold, but I was very happy deep in my mind because I knew I was going to have lots of fun after class today.

Today's classes were very interesting and fun. We learnt some grammar today and played lots of games. Good! I like it. Teacher James always wants to listen to Taiwanese Hip Pop music, but I forgot to bring the CD for him. It's such a pity. Oh, I forgot to mention something in yesterday's diary. I was so surprised that Teacher Jennifer was replaced. I preferred her because I could understand her lesson more than the new teacher.

Gradually I realized I am more daring to speak out some English words. In the past I was always very afraid because I couldn't speak English. I did not dare to look at people's eyes. Learning English here has built up my confidence and independence. I am no longer pessimistic. I no longer felt sad about my poor English or avoid it; instead, I now want to practice English as much as I can. I envy Chocolate so much every time I saw Chocolate talking with local people. I wanted to say something as well, but I did not know how to and I could not, either. I can only say that Chocolate is so passionate about English. I can't compete with him now, but I believe one day I can be as good as him.

This afternoon we went to the beach and I saw so many birds and dogs. There were so many nice shops there and I found many good stuff.....you know me and you know what I would do, hehe!

I visited Chocolate's home stay tonight and his host family is so nice. The host father is very handsome and the host mother is very pretty. The couple are very young. We had dinner together and the hostess said to me that I could practice English with her and asked me to try to say something. But my English is too bad and I did not really understand her English. I felt very embarrassed. The lucky thing was Chocolate and Kai helped me to go through the communication difficulties. Chocolate's room is very big and comfortable with a big bed in it.

I had a good time at Chocolate's home stay and I decided to depart when it got late. Chocolate accompanied me to the bus station. When we were waiting for the bus, he taught me some English. Although I don't like some of his behaviour, but I still think I can learn a lot from him. So, he is still a good friend of mine.

When I was about to transfer bus, I realized that there was no bus because it was too late. My God!!! I couldn't believe it. The buses in Taiwan ran late up to 12 am. I panicked....I didn't know how to use the mobile phone here and there was so dark there without any lights. I was thinking to take a taxi but I realized I didn't have enough money for it. So I decided to try to memorize the bus route and walk home. While I was walking, I felt better and better. I couldn't understand all the words I saw on my way and it was so dark. I felt it's very exciting. I took out my camera and took photos of the night view of San Diego. I ran into an intersection and saw a cop car stopped at the red light. I yelled to them "help me", but they suddenly drove away when the light turned green....."My goodness", I told myself.

Then I continued walking and appreciating the beautiful night view of San Diego. I realized that the sky became very clear and the moon came out. I also saw lots of stars. I suddenly felt very relaxed. At the same time I saw the familiar surroundings and I knew I was arriving home. Our teacher called me because she was worried about me. She is so thoughtful. But when she told me my hostess was very worried, I suddenly lost my mood and ran home. I sweated a lot, but I finally got home. I was so excited because I went through an adventure.

Linda opened the door for me and said she was very happy she could still see me today. She sounded like she was worried about me a lot. The only thing I could say was "I am sorry" and I repeated the sentence so many times. Today is a really wonderful day and I have done so many things. I feel happy everyday.

Appendix 13: Examples of initial coding

Example 1:

Part of Interview transcript of Sam on Jan, 28th, 2008:

Q: How did you feel about your performance of doing dialogue presentation in front of the whole class?

S: I felt that I did it poorly. Other pairs wrote more than ten sentences and my pair just had three to four sentences in our dialogue. It was too short. The other thing was that I was too nervous when I presented the dialogue. I hoped that I could have practiced more and I could do it without looking at the notes. The dialogue we wrote was very easy, but I just needed to read it while I was presenting, so I felt that my performance was not very good.

Q: What did you think the main reason for your poor performance?

S: Probably because I was too nervous. I was nervous also because we suddenly had 7 or 8 students in our class whom I have never seen before. I didn't know their names and suddenly the teacher asked us to present the dialogue in the front, which I had never done it before. I didn't know what to say and how to make up a dialogue. It was quite difficult for me.

Coded as:

34. Sources of anxiety → Anxiety → Effects of anxiety

Insufficient preparation for speaking

Working in an unfamiliar learning environment (having unknown classmates)

Unfamiliar class task



Nervous when presenting it



Poor performance

Poor self-perceived class performance

Example 2:

Part of interview transcript of Chocolate on Jan, 22nd, 2008:

C2: When the class was very quiet or all of us were very passive, I didn't know what to do and I became quiet as well. Therefore, the class atmosphere is very important. If everybody in class is very active and more enthusiastic, I will dare to talk. I would feel anxious in a passive and quiet class and also keep quiet in class.

Coded as:

10. Sources of anxiety → Anxiety → Effects of anxiety

Passive and quiet class atmosphere



Anxious



Keeping quiet in class

Appendix 14: List of cause of anxiety codes

Note: Participant's name:

C1: Christina, C2: Chocolate, C3: Cynthia, S: Sam, U: Ulla, R: Ryan, K: Kai

1. Incomprehensive listening C1, S, R, J, C2, K, U, C3
2. Being called on in class whether prepared or not C1, S, R, U, C3
3. Not being called on in class (feeling being ignored by the teacher) R
4. Not knowing what to respond when being called on C1, R, C3
5. Fear of speaking English C1, S, R, U
6. Fear of speaking English to native English speakers / international peers C1, S, R, J, K
7. Feeling inferior to peers or native English speaker spoke to C1, S, R, J, K, U
8. Fear of making mistakes C1, S, R, J, C2, K, U
9. Realized I made a mistake while speaking C1, S, R
10. Fear of teacher/ classmates/ host family / local people's negative evaluation C1, S, R, J, C2
11. Not understanding the class content (Difficult class content) C1, S, R, J, C2, K, U
12. Working in an unfamiliar learning environment C1, S, R, J, K, U, C3
13. Performing unfamiliar class tasks S, R, C2
14. Poor (oral) English proficiency C1, S, R, J, C2, K, U, C3
15. Poor self-perceived (oral) English proficiency C1, S, R, J, C2, K, U
16. Fast speaking of local people C1, R, K, C2 /Host family K, J /international classmates K, J, U, C3 / teacher S, R, C2
17. Teacher's error correction J
18. Low class participation (ex: Felt like an outsider in class; No sense of belonging) C1, S, R, J, C2, K, U, C3
19. Teacher's personal characteristics / Teacher's teaching C1, S, R, J, C2, K, C3
20. Negative experience of talking with native English speakers (local people, hostess) S, R, C2
21. Fear of oral communication (worrying about possible communication difficulties) C1
22. Oral communication difficulties (not being able to make myself understood or understand spoken English) C1, S, R, J, C2, K, U, C3
23. Reality mismatching expectation C1, S, J, U
24. Perfectionism R
25. Continuous comparison with others and competitiveness R, C2
26. Shyness C1, S, K, U
27. Fear of being laughed by others due to mistakes made or inaccurate pronunciation C2
28. Encountering many unknown words in class C1, S, R, J, U, C3
29. Over concern about performance C1, R, J, C2
30. Host family / local people's higher expectation of my oral English proficiency C1, C2
31. Insufficient preparation for speaking C1, S, R
32. No Chinese allowed in class R, S
33. Not being able to respond to local people's spoken English (in time) U, C2
34. Lack of confidence C1
35. Silence in the pair work (Both doesn't know what to say) C1
36. Trying hard to think of some words to say in the pair work C1
37. Lack of dictionary in class C1
38. Talking to non-Asian classmates (Culture distance) C1, R
39. Not knowing what to say but the partner was waiting for the response C1
40. Having international classmates in class C1
41. Not having international classmates in class S, C2
42. Not knowing what to say during the group discussion C2
43. Passive and quiet class atmosphere / passive and quiet partner C2
44. When it's almost my turn to speak English in class R, J

45. Concern about my accent while speaking English J
46. Poor class performance S, R, J, K U
47. Poor performance in tests S, R
48. Silence in class (nobody responded to teacher's question) R
49. All the people in class were watching me and waiting for my response, but I didn't know how to respond R
50. Teacher was checking the homework but I didn't do it C2
51. Language testing anxiety S, R, C2
52. Being the only Taiwanese in the group work S, R
53. Fear of asking the teacher or international classmates questions in class C1, J, K, U
54. Competition in class games C2
55. Strong motivation for learning and practicing English but the environment not facilitating it C1, S, C2
56. Culture difference in terms of teaching styles C1

Appendix 15: List of effect of anxiety codes

Note: Participant's name:

C1: Christina, C2: Chocolate, C3: Cynthia, S: Sam, U: Ulla, R: Ryan, K: Kai

1. Poor oral performance (oral communication difficulty) C1, S, R, J, C2, U, C3
2. Poor class performance R, J
3. Impairing long-term memory retrieval and vocabulary production S, R, K
4. Avoiding voluntary participation/speaking/ responding in class C1, S, R, J, K
5. Avoiding asking teacher / international classmates questions C1, J, K, U
6. Low class participation (in the game, small group discussion, etc.) C1, S, R, J, C2, K, U, C3
7. Hoping the teacher wouldn't call on me C1, R, U
8. Giving up learning in class R
9. Putting head down and avoiding eye contact with the teacher R
10. Dozing off in class R
11. Skipping the class R, K
12. Keep quiet in class C1, S, R
13. Avoiding mistakes instead of focusing on learning C1, S, R, J
14. Avoiding (didn't dare) or never initiating talking to host family C1, S, R, K, C3
15. Avoiding (didn't dare) or never initiating talking to local people S, R
16. Avoiding (didn't dare) or never initiating talking to international friends C1, S, R, J, K
17. Avoiding talking in English (prefer to gather around Taiwanese) U, R, S
18. Giving up the incomprehensive part (not intention to figure it out) U, J, K, R
19. Avoiding host family R, K
20. Trying best to think of some word to say C1, R
21. Studying hard after the class S, J
22. More class participation (pressure to speak out more) S
23. Suddenly feeling English is so important S
24. More motivated to learn English (wanting to improve English) C1, S, C2, U
25. Trying best to understand spoken English K, U
26. Eager to express myself sooner J, U
27. Thinking a lot and making sure the sentence is correct before saying it C1, S, R, J, K
28. Speaking in a low voice C1, K
29. Impairing English language learning C1, S, R, C2
30. Low self-perceived English (oral) proficiency S, R, U
31. Low self-perceived class performance J, U
32. Low self-perceived English language learning ability J
33. Pretending I understood when I didn't/ pretending nothing happened when encountered communication difficulty S, R
34. Low self-perception / self deprecating thoughts S, R, U
35. Thinking of something not related to the class/ not being able to concentrate in class R, C2
36. Asking other Taiwanese to say it for me U
37. Negative affects on self-confidence C, R, J, K, U, C2
38. Feeling not wanting to learn English R
39. Regrets at not learning English well before U, S, R
40. Not bothering to cope with the difficulties, just wanting to go back to Taiwan U
41. Motivation to learn and practice English being impaired C2, R, K
42. Working hard to win the competition C2

Appendix 16: Grouping cause of anxiety codes into themes

Note: Participant's name:

C1: Christina, C2: Chocolate, C3: Cynthia, S: Sam, U: Ulla, R: Ryan, K: Kai

Theme 1: Anxiety due to fear of negative evaluation or fear of losing face in front of others

- Fear of making mistakes C1, S, R, J, C2, K, U
- Realized I made a mistake while speaking C1, S, R
- Fear of teacher/ classmates/ host family / local people's negative evaluation C1, S, R, J, C2, K, U, C3
- Teacher's error correction J
- Fear of being laughed by others due to mistakes made or inaccurate pronunciation C2
- Over concern about performance C1, R, J, C2
- Poor performance (in class pair work, group discussion, test, etc) S, R, J, C2
- Concern about my accent while speaking English J
- Host family / local people's higher expectation of my oral English proficiency C1, C2
- All the people in class were watching me and waiting for my response, but I didn't know how to respond R
- Not knowing what to say but the partner was waiting for the response C1
- Not knowing what to say during the group discussion C2
- Teacher was checking homework but I didn't do it C2

Theme 2: Anxiety at the prospect of speaking English in front of the teacher and (international) peers / speaking to native English speaker or international peers outside classroom

- Fear of asking the teacher or international classmates questions in class C1, J, K, U
- Fear of speaking English C1, S, R, U
- Fear of speaking English to native English speakers / international peers C1, S, R, J, K
- Fear of oral communication (worrying about possible communication difficulties) C1
- Insufficient preparation for speaking C1, S, R
- When it's almost my turn to speak English in class R, J

Theme 3: Anxiety resulting from poor language performance / proficiency

- Poor (oral) English proficiency C1, S, R, J, C2, K, U, C3
- Poor class performance S, R, J, K, U
- Poor performance in tests S, R
- Incomprehensive listening C1, S, R, J, C2, K, U, C3
- Oral communication difficulties (not being able to make myself understood or understand spoken English) C1, S, R, J, C2, K, U, C3
- Not knowing what to respond when being called on C1, R, C3
- Encountering many unknown words in class C1, S, R, J, U, C3
- Silence in the pair work (Both doesn't know what to say) C1
- Not knowing what to say but the partner was waiting for the response C1
- Not knowing what to say during the group discussion C2
- All the people in class were watching me and waiting for my response, but I didn't know how to respond R
- Not being able to respond to local people's spoken English (in time) U, C2

Theme 4: Anxiety due to low self-perception (ex: poor perceived English proficiency) and low self-esteem (ex: feeling inferior) / a lack of confidence

- Feeling inferior to peers or native English speaker spoke to C1, S, R, J, C2, K, U, C3

- Poor self-perceived (oral) English proficiency C1, S, R, J, C2, K, U
- Lack of confidence C1

Theme 5: Anxiety due to the teacher / host family/ local people's behaviour and /or aspects of the language classroom and outside classroom L2 environment (including home stay)

- Being called on in class whether prepared or not C1, S, R, U, C3
- Not being called on in class (feeling being ignored by the teacher) R
- Not understanding the class content (Difficult class content) C1, S, R, J, C2, K, U
- Fast speaking of local people C1, R, K, C2 /Host family K, J /international classmates J, K, U, C3 / teacher S, R, C2
- Low class participation (ex: Felt like an outsider in class; No sense of belonging) C1, S, R, J, C2, K, U, C3
- Teacher's personal characteristics / Teacher's teaching C1, S, R, J, C2, K, C3
- No Chinese allowed in class R, S
- Having international classmates in class C1
- Not having international classmates in class S, C2
- Passive and quiet class atmosphere / passive and quiet partner C2
- Competition in class games C2
- Silence in class (nobody responded to teacher's question) R
- Language testing anxiety S, R, C2
- Lack of dictionary in class C1
- Competition in class games C2
- Negative experience of talking with native English speakers (local people, hostess) S, R, C2

Theme 6: Anxiety due to aspects of personality

- Perfectionism R
- Continuous comparison with others and competitiveness R, C2
- Shyness C1, S, K, U

Theme 7: Anxiety related to ambiguity and uncertainty / working in an unfamiliar learning environment

- Working in an unfamiliar learning environment C1, S, R, J, K, U, C3
- Performing unfamiliar class tasks S, R, C2
- Being the only Taiwanese in the group work S, R

Theme 8: Anxiety resulting from cultural difference

- Talking to non-Asian classmates (Culture distance) C1, R
- Culture difference in terms of teaching styles C1

Theme 9: Anxiety resulting from strong motivation

- Strong motivation for learning and practicing English but the environment not facilitating it C1, S, C2
- Trying hard to think of some words to say in the pair work C1
- Reality mismatching expectation C1, S, J, U

Appendix 17: Grouping effect of anxiety codes into themes

Note: Participant's name:

C1: Christina, C2: Chocolate, C3: Cynthia, S: Sam, U: Ulla, R: Ryan, K: Kai

Theme 1: Anxiety causes poor performance

- Poor oral performance (oral communication difficulty) C1, S, R, J, C2, U, C3
- Poor class performance R, J
- Impairing long-term memory retrieval and vocabulary production S, R, K

Theme 2: Anxiety causes avoidance behaviour / reduced WTC (Willingness to communicate)

- Avoiding voluntary participation/speaking / responding in class C1, S, R, J, K
- Avoiding asking teacher / international classmates questions C1, J, K, U
- Low class participation (in the game, small group discussion, etc.) C1, S, R, J, C2, K, U, C3
- Putting head down and avoiding eye contact with the teacher R
- Skipping the class R, K
- Hoping the teacher wouldn't call on me C1, R, U
- Asking help other Taiwanese to say it for me U
- Avoiding (didn't dare) or never initiating talking to host family C1, S, R, K, C3
- Avoiding (didn't dare) or never initiating talking to local people S, R
- Avoiding (didn't dare) or never initiating talking to international friends C1, S, R, J, K
- Avoiding talking in English (prefer to gather around Taiwanese) U, S, R
- Pretending I understood when I didn't/ pretending nothing happened when encountered communication difficulty S, R
- Avoiding host family R, K
- Avoiding mistakes instead of focusing on learning C1, S, R, J
- Keeping quiet in class C1, S, R

Theme 3: Anxiety impairs self-confidence, leads to low self-perceived English (oral) proficiency / class performance / English language learning ability, and low self-perception and self defeating thoughts

- Negative affects on self-confidence C1, R, J, K, U, C2
- Low self-perceived English (oral) proficiency S, R, U
- Low self-perceived class performance J, U
- Low self-perceived English language learning ability J
- Low self-perception / self deprecating thoughts S, R, U
- Regrets at not learning English well before U, S, R
- Speaking in a low voice C1, K

Theme 4: Anxiety negatively affects learners' short-term motivation to learn or use English

- Feeling not wanting to learn English R
- Motivation to learn and practice English being impaired C2, R, K
- Giving up learning in class R
- Giving up the incomprehensible part (not intention to figure it out) U, J, K, R
- Dozing off in class R
- Not bothering to cope with the difficulties, just wanting to go back to Taiwan U

Theme 5: Anxiety interrupts the English language learning process

- Thinking of something not related to the class/ not being able to concentrate in class R, C2

- Impairing English language learning C1, S, R, C2

Theme 6: Facilitating anxiety

- Trying best to think of some word to say C1, R
- Trying best to understand spoken English K, U
- Studying hard after the class S, J
- More class participation (pressure to speak out more) S
- Suddenly feeling English is so important S
- More motivated to learn English (wanting to improve English) C1, S, C2, U
- Eager to express myself sooner J, U
- Working hard to win the competition C2

Theme 7: Anxiety increases the planning time in communication

- Thinking a lot and making sure the sentence is correct before saying it C1, S, R, J, K

Appendix 18: All the symbols used to indicate sources of data

J 123, J124, J128, J414 - Jin's interview on Jan, 23rd, 24th, 28th, and April, 14th, 2008
K122, K123, K124, K131- Kai's interview on Jan, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 31st, 2008
U121, U122, U131- Ulla's interview on Jan, 21st, 22nd, 31st, 2008
R1220, R121, R122, R123, R124, R128, R129, R24, R25, R27, R416
Ryan's interview on Dec, 20th, 2007, Jan, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 28th, 29th, Feb, 4th, 5th, 7th,
April, 16th, 2008
RD120, RD121, RD123, RS128- Ryan's diary entry on Jan, 20th, 21st, 23rd, 28th, 2008
S1221, S121, S122, S123, S124, S128, S129, S131, S24, S26, S27, S417
Sam's interview on Dec, 21st, 2007, Jan, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 28th, 29th, 31st, Feb, 4th, 6th,
7th, April, 17th, 2008
SD120, SD121, SD123, SD124, SD125, SD128, SD129
Sam's diary entry on Jan, 20th, 21st, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 28th, 29th, 2008
C11227, C1121, C1122, C1123, C1124, C1125, C1127, C1128, C1129, C1131, C24,
C1422
Christina's interview on Dec, 27th, 2007, Jan, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 31st,
Feb, 4th, April, 22nd, 2008
C1D120, C1D121, C1D123, C1D128, C1D129, C1D131, C1D28, C1O123
Christina's diary entry on Dec, 20th, Jan, 21st, 23rd, 28th, 29th, 31st, Feb, 8th, and Observation
of Christina on Jan, 23rd, 2008.
C21219, C2121, C2122, C2123, C2125, C2128, C225, C227, C2421
Chocolate's interview on Dec, 19th, 2007, Jan, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 25th, 28th, Feb, 5th, 7th, April,
21st