

THE RELATION OF ACADEMIC WRITING ANXIETY AND ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT IN JAPANESE LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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Abstract

Learning a foreign language is a complex multi-variable process. One of the variables that influences the language acquisition process is the phenomenon of anxiety. This phenomenon of anxiety in the language acquisition process can shape learners' perceptions and attitudes towards academic integrity. Moreover, it leads to learning troubles and results in academic misconduct in higher education (Bretag et al., 2019). The problem of anxiety is occasionally even stronger for ideographic languages such as Japanese, particularly to those who have less interaction in daily life with that language.

Most of the studies on anxiety are related to alphabetic languages such as English, French, German and Spanish. Samimy (1994) emphasizes that it is important to focus on the distinctive features of the target language when discussing the factors of anxiety. Although, there are numbers of works that study the anxiety of the Japanese language learning process (e.g. İrim & Özşen, 2018; İshibashi, 2011; Motoda, 2000), it is difficult to find studies scrutinizing the relationship between language learning anxiety and academic misconduct, especially in Japanese.

Although there are studies evaluating the relationship between anxiety and misconduct (e.g. Cutri et al., 2021; Tindall & Curtis, 2020), due to the differences from alphabetic languages in many aspects with its grammar, writing system, culture, and history, it is not

appropriate to deal with academic misconduct issues in a general and single framework. Therefore, this study mainly aims to establish a solid evaluation ground that meets the realities and features of the Japanese language and to analyze the current relationship of Japanese learners' anxiety with academic misconduct issues that occur in the learning environment.

This paper is the first step in ongoing research and will be extended by making it available to a larger audience.

In this study, 3 goals are set in. Firstly, the reasons for the anxiety of writing in Japanese language and the consequences of the anxiety of students who are majoring Japanese language at the undergraduate level have been identified. Secondly, the knowledge and perceptions of Japanese L2 learners regarding academic misconduct through the notion of "plagiarism" is scrutinized through 5 sub-categories. Participants were asked if they had heard of the concept of plagiarism, if the given concepts were considered as plagiarism by the students, how students position the concept of plagiarism (i.e. legal issue, moral issue, technical issue, etc.), who was responsible for the plagiarism, and what factors cause plagiarism. Lastly, revealing whether there is a relationship between Japanese learners' anxiety on writing (Japanese) and their tendency to commit academic misconduct (in Japanese) will be the third goal of this study.

To fulfill the first aim, a Japanese-specific anxiety scale has been developed to measure Japanese L2 students' anxiety about Japanese writing skills. According to KMO value (0.882>0.50) the anxiety scale is considered adequate, and Bartlett's value is significant ($p=0,00<0,05$). The data in this section was obtained using a 5-point Likert scale. Factor analysis technique has been applied to develop the anxiety scale that transforms a large number of variables into a limited number of meaningful independent factors. For the second aim, a structured questionnaire was prepared and the participants completed it. This questionnaire consists of questions that reveal the Japanese L2 learners' knowledge and perceptions of academic integrity through the concept of "plagiarism" and also causes of it. To see if the items were consistent with each other, Cronbach's alpha value was calculated and found to be 0.65 (declarative knowledge) and 0.66 (causing factors of plagiarism questionnaires) and these values are acceptable for the reliability (Ursachi et al., 2015). The data show that students (51.4%) are not acquainted with the concept of plagiarism and cannot agree whether a given situation involves plagiarism and also see the plagiarism as a moral issue

rather than legal or technical one. Besides, from the student's point of view (more than half), the biggest role / cause of plagiarism lies with the teacher and university administrators. Regarding the relationship between these two parameters, it can be said that anxiety-causing situations also cause academic misconduct. The lack of Japanese writing skills among students required revisions to the writing skills course in the Japanese language teaching process as a program, teaching material and method. Students cannot fully grasp the facts of academic integrity because they cannot internalize writing, which is one of the four basic language skills. These problems are the consequence of a lack of education in the Japanese curriculum. Education policy, sanctions and curriculum revisions are needed to address these deficiencies and raise awareness of academic misconduct. Lastly, while it is clear that there is a link between anxiety in writing skills and plagiarism, the tendency between them becomes clearer when this study is conducted with a larger audience. This work was supported by Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, The Scientific Research Coordination Unit, Project number: SYL-2022-3875

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