LANGUAGE CLASSROOM RISK-TAKING BEHAVIOR IN A PERFORMED CULTURE-BASED PROGRAM

THESIS

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By

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ABSTRACT

While several previous studies have investigated the role of risk-taking in language learning and factors that influence risk-taking in language learning, it is difficult to apply the findings of these studies to language teaching where the performed culture approach (PCA) is used, in particular because of PCA's focus on performance. The intent of the current study is to investigate the relationship between language learning and risk-taking in PCA, and factors that affect risk-taking in PCA instruction.

The current study used a questionnaire and observation as the means of data collection. Questionnaires were distributed to Japanese language students at a mid-western university during autumn and spring quarters. Based on the results of the autumn quarter questionnaire, four students were selected for observation as case studies.

The findings of the current study suggest that risk-taking behavior is significantly correlated with language performance ability in PCA. In PCA, teaching style and classroom/group dynamics do not seem to significantly affect students' risk-taking behavior. At the early stage of learning, when students are being initiated to PCA and the daily grading system, a system of daily grading seems to have a debilitating effect on risk-taking behavior among students who worry about how their performance will affect their grade. However, a system of daily grading seems to also have a facilitating effect on risk-taking behavior, since it encourages thorough preparation for class, and
consistently being sufficiently prepared for class seems to have a facilitating effect on students' risk-taking behavior.

Based on the findings of this study, recommendations are provided for further research. Pedagogical implications are also discussed, including the recommendation to assess students' study techniques throughout the academic year, and the recommendation to provide students with days in which their performance does not affect their grade during the initial stage of their learning, in order to encourage students' risk-taking behavior.
Dedicated to Jeneal

and to my family
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Risk-taking and language learning

This study investigates the significance of learners’ risk-taking behavior to learning Japanese in a program of instruction that follows the performed culture approach (PCA). In particular, is there a relationship between risk-taking behavior and success in learning? What features in performed culture instruction may affect students’ risk-taking behavior?

The relevance of risk-taking to language learning can be explained in part by noting Beebe’s (1983) observation that “you take a risk every time you open your mouth in a foreign language, or... in any learning situation where you are called on to perform” (p. 39). The kinds of risks involved include looking ridiculous, feeling frustrated, not being able to care for oneself, alienation, and loss of identity (Beebe, 1983, p. 40). In a language classroom setting other risks are involved, including receiving a bad grade, a reproach from the teacher, a smirk from a classmate, or some kind of self-inflicted punishment or embarrassment (Beebe, 1983, p. 40).

These risks are certainly compounded when the language in question is one for which the culture is distant from the base culture of the learners. If learning to speak a new language involves risk, then learning to communicate in a new culture, for which
successful learning often involves significant changes to one’s lifestyle (Walker, 1989, p. 121), must involve even greater risk. In particular, the risk of “loss of identity” (Beebe, 1983, p. 40) becomes greater as one steps farther away from familiar ways of thinking, speaking, and acting.

Several previous studies have shown that in a language classroom setting taking risks in using the target language is related to greater language ability¹. Rubin (1975) sought to identify characteristics and behaviors of successful language learners. She interviewed “good language learners” and language teachers, observed language classrooms in Universities in California and Hawaii, and observed her own language learning experience. It is unclear how good language learners were identified. Among the characteristics and behaviors identified as those associated with good language learners, the following four relate to risk-taking: 1) being willing to appear foolish in order to communicate and get the message across (Rubin, 1975, p. 43); 2) using the language when not required to do so (Rubin, 1975, p. 44); 3) being comfortable with uncertainty and willing to try out guesses (Rubin, 1975, p. 45); and 4) being willing to make mistakes in order to learn and communicate (Rubin, 1975, p. 47).

Ely (1986) looked at discomfort, risk-taking, sociability, and motivation in students enrolled in first and second quarter university level Spanish classes. It is unclear what pedagogical approach was used in these classes. The majority of the data were gathered through self-report. The study found that among discomfort, risk-taking, sociability, and motivation, risk-taking was the best predictor of voluntary participation, and voluntary

¹ See section 2.2 for a more in-depth discussion of previous studies related to risk-taking and language learning.
participation was subsequently found to be a positive predictor of proficiency (Ely, 1986, p. 18).

Samimy and Tabuse (1992) looked at several affective variables and their effect on student final grades among students enrolled in first-year university-level Japanese language courses. Data were gathered through self-report, using a questionnaire adapted from Ely’s (1986) study. Samimy and Tabuse found that among the variables of age, sex, number of years in college, number of years learning Japanese, risk-taking, discomfort, sociability, motivational type, strength of motivation, attitude toward the language class, and concern for grade, risk-taking was the best predictor of student final grades during autumn quarter (Samimy and Tabuse, 1992, pp. 386-387). In spring quarter, strength of motivation was the best predictor of student final grades (Samimy and Tabuse, 1992, p. 388).

The studies mentioned above suggest that risk-taking in foreign language learning leads to greater foreign language ability\(^2\). However, it may be difficult to apply some of these findings to language classrooms taught with the performed culture approach\(^3\) to teaching East Asian languages (PCA). In PCA, all students are required to participate in class. As a result, the act of volunteering to participate takes on a less significant role in the language learning process than in an average language classroom\(^4\). Furthermore, PCA has a strong focus on learning the target culture. As mentioned previously, learning a truly foreign culture may involve greater risk than learning a culture similar to one’s

\(^2\) See section 2.2 for a discussion of the evidence that risk-taking in foreign language learning leads to greater foreign language ability.

\(^3\) See section 2.4 for the theoretical background and essential components of PCA.

\(^4\) See sections 1.2 and 2.3 for discussion of participation and risk-taking in PCA.
base culture. If learning a truly foreign culture does involve greater risk, then risk-taking behavior may play a more significant role in the language learning process in PCA than in other programs where learning a foreign culture is given less attention.

However, if risk-taking behavior does, in fact, account for individual differences in PCA to a significant degree, then some investigation into what encourages students to take risks and what deters students from taking risks in PCA would be beneficial. Understanding which factors affect students’ risk-taking behavior in PCA would make it possible to fine-tune the approach in order to encourage risk-taking behavior.

Furthermore, teachers could know how to encourage their students to take language risks. Students could be made aware of what may discourage them from taking risks in the language classroom and the importance of taking risks anyway.

Some previous research has investigated factors that may influence students’ language classroom risk-taking behavior. Ely (1986) and Samimy and Tabuse (1992) both looked at language classroom discomfort. In Ely’s study the target language was Spanish, while in Samimy and Tabuse’s study, the target language was Japanese. Both studies looked at university-level language classes. Both studies found that language classroom discomfort was negatively correlated with language classroom risk-taking.

Bang (1999) also looked at factors that may influence language students’ risk-taking behavior. Participants in the study were all Korean EFL students enrolled in university-level English classes in Korea. It is unclear what pedagogical approach was used. Data were collected through observation and through self-report, by means of a questionnaire.

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5 See section 3.3 for a discussion of behaviors likely to constitute risk-taking in PCA.

6 However, some researchers have suggested that encouraging risk-taking may not produce desirable results (Beebe, 1983; Ely, 1986).
and participant diaries. Risk-taking was treated as “learner’s initiative or voluntary participation” (Bang, 1999, p. 9). Bang found four major factors that facilitated risk-taking and four major factors that were debilitating to risk-taking. Major facilitating factors were 1) pair/small classroom group activities; 2) sufficient preparation for class; 3) positive attitude in learning; and 4) strong motivation (Bang, 1999, p. 134). Major debilitating factors were 1) cultural beliefs or practices; 2) instructor’s attitude and teaching style; 3) anxiety; and 4) limited opportunities due to large class size (Bang, 1999, p. 144).

Again, it may be difficult to apply these findings to PCA. In Bang’s (1999) study, risk-taking behavior was treated as voluntary participation. As mentioned above, in PCA voluntary participation has a less significant role in the language learning process than in a less performance-oriented classroom. Furthermore, Korean students may behave differently than American students because of cultural differences (cf. Beebe, 1983, p. 59; cf. Bang, 1999, 143-147). It is therefore unclear if the factors identified by Bang would have the same effect on student risk-taking behavior in PCA.

It is also possible that other factors not identified in previous research as influencing students’ risk-taking behavior may have a significant effect in PCA. One possibility is the daily grading system. In PCA, it is typical to give students daily performance grades. However, it is possible that under this grading system students with strong desires for high grades may refrain from taking language risks in the classroom for fear that mistakes would negatively impact their grades. It is therefore possible that a strong desire for a high grade could be a debilitating factor in PCA, even though this factor was not
identified in previous studies as having a significant effect on students’ risk-taking behavior.

Sections 1.2 and 1.3 elaborate on the difficulty of applying previous research on language classroom risk-taking behavior to PCA and the relevance of language classroom risk-taking behavior to language learning in PCA. Section 1.2 discusses voluntary participation and teaching of culture in PCA, and how these aspects of PCA make it difficult to apply previous findings. Section 1.3 discusses factors that may have an effect on student risk-taking in PCA. Section 1.4 summarizes the research questions the current study seeks to answer.

1.2 Voluntary participation, teaching culture, and risk-taking behavior in PCA

In PCA, classroom activities center on situated interactions in cultural contexts. The teacher’s role is similar to that of a theatrical director. The teacher gives students roles and situations in which they are to perform, and then guides those performances. Students are expected use pedagogical materials to learn the linguistic forms as well as cultural information behind language use, just as an actor is expected to know their lines by the time they come to a rehearsal with the director (Christensen and Noda, 2002, pp. 18-20; Christensen and Warnick, 2006, pp. 58-61).

Since student performances are the focus of class, the classroom tends to be student-centered. Students do the majority of the speaking (or reading or writing), and must perform well to make the grade. Any student who desires not to participate will be disappointed—all students are expected to perform. The teacher ensures that both the
passive student and the overly eager student receive equal opportunities to perform in class (Christensen and Noda, 2002, p. 19; Christensen and Warnick, 2006, pp. 60-61).

Since, in PCA, the teacher tries to give every student an equal opportunity to participate, the act of volunteering to participate does not play as important a role in the learning process as in a less performance-oriented language classroom. In PCA, the student who volunteers to participate and the student who does not volunteer to participate both participate equally in an ideal classroom. This is not to say that volunteering to participate is not advantageous or rewarded in PCA; it is merely to point out that in PCA one would expect voluntary participation to account for individual learner differences in performance ability to a lesser degree than in a typical language classroom.

Since voluntary participation has been a significant factor in how language classroom risk-taking behavior relates to students’ performance ability in some previous studies, it is difficult to apply these findings to PCA. Bang (1999) treated risk-taking behavior as “learner’s initiative or voluntary participation” (Bang, 1999, p. 9). In Ely (1986)’s study, risk-taking behavior’s effect on performance was seen through the intermediary of voluntary participation. Risk-taking behavior was found to be positively correlated with voluntary participation, which was in turn found to be positively correlated with performance (Ely, 1986, pp. 6, 18-20).

The teaching of culture in PCA also differs from that of typical language programs. PCA was developed because most approaches to language teaching fail to address the most critical issue in learning those languages: culture (Christensen and Noda, 2002, pp. 8, 13; Christensen and Warnick, 2006, pp. 9-11). Thus, PCA differs not only from
programs which teach languages for which the culture is less foreign for American learners, such as Spanish and French, but also from many East Asian language programs which do not place heavy emphasis on behavioral culture (Hammerly, 1982).

In light of PCA’s focus on culture, it may be difficult to apply even the findings of Samimy and Tabuse (1992) to PCA. Samimy and Tabuse investigated risk-taking behavior’s effect on students’ final grades without using voluntary participation as an intermediary or treating voluntary participation as a manifestation of risk-taking behavior (Samimy and Tabuse, 1992, p. 383). However, it is unclear if culture was taught and performed in this program to the extent that it is taught and performed in PCA. As mentioned previously, the risk involved in communicating in a foreign culture may be much greater than the risk involved in communicating in a familiar culture. While there is evidence to suggest that an early form of PCA was used in the program Samimy and Tabuse investigated, PCA was not firmly established until after this investigation was conducted. It is therefore difficult to apply the findings of this study to PCA as well.

Since PCA is now more firmly established as a program\(^7\), it is possible to investigate the role of language classroom risk-taking behavior in the language learning process in PCA.

\(^7\) The articles by Walker (2000) and Walker and Noda (2000) form a large part of the theoretical foundation of PCA, and it is likely that around the time of the publication of these articles that PCA became a more firmly established program.
1.3 Factors that may affect risk-taking behavior in PCA

The performed culture approach typically uses a daily grading system. Students are graded each day on how well they are able to perform. These daily grades provide learners with encouragement to prepare for class seriously and perform well in class consistently. Learners are thus held accountable for their preparation and performance. These daily grades typically count for more than half of the students’ final grade, helping to emphasize to students the importance of learning to perform in a culturally appropriate manner (Christensen and Noda, 2002, pp. 20-21; Christensen and Warnick, 2006, pp. 66-67).

While a daily grading system effectively encourages students to take both preparation and performance seriously, it is possible that under such a system students with strong desires for high grades would refrain from taking language risks in the classroom. Since a risk that resulted in failure could be perceived to negatively impact a student’s grade, some students may avoid taking such risks when possible. Thus, a daily grading system could have a negative effect on students’ language classroom risk-taking behavior.

Teaching style is another factor that could influence students’ language classroom risk-taking behavior and may be significant in PCA. Bang’s (1999) study identifies instructor’s attitude and teaching style as a major debilitating factor in students’ language classroom risk-taking behavior in the program she investigated (Bang, 1999, p. 144).

In PCA, the negative effect an instructor’s attitude and/or teaching style have on students’ language classroom risk-taking behavior may be magnified. In PCA, teachers

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8 See section 2.5 for further discussion of factors that may affect risk-taking behavior in PCA.
9 For further information on daily grading, see sections 2.3 and 2.4.
are responsible for ensuring that students remember the personal experience of a series of successful performances (rather than culturally unusable ones). As a result, careful corrective feedback is given on every performance. The role of the instructor is not to bear information but to coach students as they use the new information in their performances. Given this requirement for coaching, it is conceivable that students perceive the abundant corrective feedback as a sign of a negative attitude in the instructor, rather than as a coaching attempt. Furthermore, it is possible that an instructor who gave this abundant corrective feedback in a negative manner would have a greater negative impact on students’ risk-taking behavior than an instructor with a negative attitude or teaching style in a program where students are given less feedback.

Two other factors that are less specific to PCA but which were still felt to be relevant to this investigation are classroom/group dynamics and personal study habits. Bang (1999) identifies sufficient preparation for class as a major facilitating factor in student risk-taking behavior (Bang, 1999, p. 134). Because students in PCA are encouraged to prepare carefully and are held accountable for this preparation (Christensen and Noda, 2002, p. 20; Christensen and Warnick, 2006, pp. 66-67) personal study habits may have a significant effect on students’ language classroom risk-taking behavior.

Beebe (1983) identifies receiving a smirk from a classmate as a possible risk one takes when trying to speak a foreign language in a classroom setting (Beebe, 1983, p. 40). In PCA each student’s performance should be the focus of the other students’ attention. Thus, how students respond to and interact with each other may have a significant effect on students’ language classroom risk-taking behavior.
It should also be noted that PCA forces students to take language risks to a degree. It is therefore possible that the above mentioned factors could have little effect on students’ risk-taking behavior because choosing not to take a risk is not always an option in PCA. As mentioned previously, students who do not volunteer to participate are asked to participate anyway. Additionally, students are required to use new linguistic elements when those elements are the focus of classroom instruction regardless of the level of facility students feel with these elements. A student who chooses to use a more familiar linguistic element over the new element which is the focus of class will be asked to try again using the new linguistic element. Thus, it is possible that since students must take risks with the language whether or not they feel inclined to do so, factors which may either encourage or discourage students from taking risks could have little effect on students’ risk-taking behavior.

On the other hand, using unfamiliar linguistic elements (such as soon-to-be introduced linguistic elements or previously introduced linguistic elements that one is not yet comfortable with) in class when they are not the focus of instruction would involve risk and probably not be required by the teacher, and yet would likely be beneficial to students’ language ability in the long run. Thus, while PCA requires students to take some risks in using the language, choosing to take risks beyond that which is required could still be beneficial, and knowing how to encourage students to do so could be beneficial as well.
1.4 Research Questions

In light of the uncertainties identified above concerning language classroom risk-taking and the performed culture approach, the current study seeks to address the following research questions:

1) What effect does language classroom risk-taking behavior have on student performance (as measured by daily performance scores) in PCA?

2) To what extent is language classroom risk-taking behavior influenced by the daily grading system of assessment in PCA?

3) To what extent is language classroom risk-taking behavior influenced by teaching style in PCA?

4) To what extent is language classroom risk-taking behavior influenced by classroom/group dynamics in PCA?

5) To what extent is language classroom risk-taking behavior influenced by personal study habits in PCA?
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Risk-taking and language learning

Beebe (1983) uses the following definition of risk-taking, which is based upon social-psychological literature related to risk-taking: “a situation where an individual has to make a decision involving choice between alternatives of different desirability; the outcome of the choice is uncertain; there is a possibility of failure” (p. 39). While situations most readily associated with risk-taking are gambling, skydiving, skiing, etc., risk-taking is also applicable to language learning (ibid). Whenever one decides to say something in a foreign language, particularly in the early stages of language learning, the outcome is uncertain and there is a possibility of failure. Thus, trying to learn a foreign language is also a risk-taking endeavor.

The main difference between activities such as gambling and skydiving and language learning is the kind of risk involved. Beebe (1983) suggests that looking ridiculous, feeling frustrated, not being able to care for oneself, alienation, and loss of identity are all risks involved in trying to learn a foreign language (p. 40). In a classroom language learning setting, other risks are involved. Beebe cites several: a bad grade, a fail on an
exam, a reproach from a teacher, a smirk from a classmate, embarrassment, or self-inflicted punishment (ibid).

In a foreign culture, the risk is compounded, particularly the risk of “alienation” and “loss of identity”. Consider this statement by Turner:

“Some of us are afraid of changing the language we speak, which is to say, of learning a foreign language…. There is a sense that language is a scary thing, and that we were lucky to have gotten through learning it the first time. This fear leads to that prevalent style of trying to learn a foreign language without changing or disturbing anything that is already in place….

At the deepest level, we feel that we will lose ourselves if we change our default concepts.” (Turner, 1991, p. 27).

If, as Turner suggests, there exists a fear of changing one’s default concepts, then it stands to reason that the more foreign the culture (i.e. the farther one must depart from one’s default concepts) the greater the risk of losing oneself, and the greater the risk involved in undertaking language (and culture) learning. The truth of Turner’s statement is borne out by this statement from a student of Japanese: “I want to know the language really well so that I sound just like an educated native speaker…I believe that we are all created equal: I am proud of the fact that I am not good at using the polite language in Japanese” (Walker and Noda, 2000, p. 194). Even though this student wanted to learn to communicate in Japanese, he was unwilling to depart from his native culture to do so.

Learning a foreign culture (i.e., learning to communicate in a foreign culture) also compounds the kinds of risks one encounters in the language classroom. One must learn not only a new way of speaking, but a new way of acting, and the more foreign the behavior the greater the risk of disassociation from one’s peers, not to mention the risk of a bad grade.
Given the above considerations, it seems apparent that language learning is a risk-taking endeavor, and that the risks involved are compounded when the target culture is foreign.

2.2 Previous studies on risk-taking and language learning

Several studies have investigated the role risk-taking plays in language learning. The studies by Rubin (1975), Naiman, Frolich, Stern, and Todesco (1978)\textsuperscript{10}, and Samimy and Pardini (1994) are qualitative studies whose findings relate to risk-taking and language learning. The studies by Naiman et al. (1978), Beebe (1983), Ely (1986), and Samimy and Tabuse (1992) are quantitative studies whose findings relate to risk-taking and language learning. In the following sections, I will review and discuss each of these studies.

2.2.1 Qualitative Studies

Rubin (1975) sought to identify characteristics and behaviors of successful language learners. The study was conducted by means of observations and interviews. “Good language learners” and language teachers were interviewed concerning characteristics and behaviors of good language learners. Classrooms in universities in Hawaii and California were observed, and Rubin also observed her own language learning experience. It is unclear whether or not the interviews and observed classes were recorded. It appears that the observed classrooms consisted of French, Hebrew, and ESL classes (Rubin, 1975, p. 45), although others may have been included as well. It is unclear how many good

\textsuperscript{10} The study of Naiman et al. (1978) is a two-part study, the first part being qualitative and the second part being quantitative.
language learners and teachers were interviewed. What level of proficiency had been obtained by good language learners and what level of instruction the languages were being taught at. It is also unclear how good language learners were identified and how language teachers were selected.

Among several behaviors and characteristics identified, the following four relate to risk-taking: 1) being willing to appear foolish in order to communicate and get the message across (Rubin, 1975, p. 43; cf. Beebe, 1983, p. 46); 2) using the language when not required to do so (Rubin, 1975, p. 44; cf. Beebe, 1983, p. 46); 3) being comfortable with uncertainty and willing to try out guesses (Rubin, 1975, p. 45; cf. Beebe, 1983, p. 46); and 4) being willing to make mistakes in order to learn and communicate (Rubin, 1975, p. 47; cf. Beebe, 1983, p. 46).

While Rubin does not mention risk-taking specifically, the four behaviors mentioned here all involve risks of the kind identified by Beebe (1983, p. 40). Smirk from a classmate, feeling embarrassed: 1; smirk from a classmate, bad grade, reproach from a teacher: 3 and 4. Beebe’s observation that “you take a risk every time you open your mouth in a foreign language” (Beebe, 1983, p. 39) relates to 2. Thus, exposing oneself to these kinds of risks, which are identified by Beebe as those related to language learning in the classroom, is characteristic of the good language learners Rubin investigated, and is probably characteristic of successful language learners in general.

Similar to Rubin (1975), Naiman et al. (1978) sought to answer the following question: “do good language learners tackle the language learning task differently from poor learners, and do learners have certain characteristics which predispose them to good or poor learning?” (Naiman et al., 1978, p. 2). In investigating this question, two
different studies were conducted: an interview study (qualitative) and a classroom study (quantitative). The interview study will be reviewed now, and the classroom study will be reviewed later with other quantitative studies related to risk-taking and language learning.

For the interview study, thirty-four interviewees were selected. These interviewees were selected because of their language ability. Thirty-two of the interviewees were considered to be successful language learners, while two interviewees were considered to be unsuccessful language learners. No proficiency tests were used to determine language ability. All interviewees were either a personal acquaintance of the researchers or had been recommended to the researchers as highly proficient in the target language. The interview consisted of two parts, the first part being semi-directed and the second part being directed\textsuperscript{11}. In the first part, interviewees were asked to describe their second language learning experiences, including kind or number of languages learned or attempted, the age at which the learning took place, the educational and socio-cultural context in which the language was acquired, and the strategies or techniques used or developed. In the second part, interviewees were asked to put themselves into a hypothetical language learning situation. It was hoped that previous experiences and insights and present views and intuitions would shape interviewee responses in this second part of the interview. All interviewee responses were recorded and later transcribed (Naiman et al., 1978, pp. 5-13).

As with Rubin (1975), Naiman et al. (1978) does not mention risk-taking specifically in relation to the interview study. However, two of the five strategies identified in the

\textsuperscript{11} See Naiman et al., 1978, pp. 106-109 for the actual questions used in the interview.
study as those used by good language learners relate to risk-taking: 1) good language learners actively involve themselves in the language learning task; 2) good language learners realize initially or with time that they must cope with the affective demands made upon them by language learning and succeed in doing so (Naiman et al., 1978, pp. 13-15). Strategy 1 encompasses several behaviors; those related to risk-taking are: a) responding positively to the given learning opportunities or identifying and seeking preferred learning environments and exploiting them; and b) adding related language learning activities to the regular program and/or intensifying their efforts. These two behaviors are similar to “using the language when not required to do so”, a behavior identified by Rubin (1975, p. 44). Strategy 2 is similar to being willing to appear foolish in order to communicate and get the message across (Rubin, 1975, p. 43).

While neither Rubin (1975) nor Naiman et al. (1978) mention risk-taking specifically, their findings have been interpreted here to suggest that risk-taking is a strategy of good language learners. This conclusion is supported by Ellis (1986). Based on the findings of Rubin (1975) and Naiman et al. (1978), Ellis lists nine strategies of good language learners, including “be prepared to experiment by taking risks, even if this makes the learner appear foolish” (p. 122).

The findings of Rubin (1975) and Naiman et al. (1978) are significant to risk-taking because they suggest that risk-taking can lead to success in language learning. While quantitative studies on risk-taking in language learning have shown a correlation between risk-taking and language ability (i.e. Ely (1986) and Samimy and Tabuse (1992))\(^{12}\), these

\(^{12}\) See section 2.2.2 for a discussion of quantitative studies on risk-taking in language learning.
studies are unable to establish a causal link between risk-taking and language ability. However, the studies of Rubin (1975) and Naiman et al. (1978), which are based on successful language learners describing how they obtained their language ability, suggest that risk-taking does lead to greater language ability.

However, the studies of Rubin (1975) and Naiman et al. (1978) are limited in that they are based on observation and self-report. It is possible that interviewees were not fully aware of the kinds of processes and strategies that led to their becoming highly proficient in a foreign language, and therefore could have either misreported what helped them gain high language ability or failed to report strategies of which they were not conscious (Ellis, 1986). There is also a tendency for research subjects to report to researchers what they feel the researcher wants them to say (Oller and Perkins, 1978a; Oller, 1982), and this tendency may have had an effect on the findings of Rubin (1975) and Naiman et al. (1978). It is also possible that observers could have made incorrect inferences about the kinds of strategies employed by learners (Ellis, 1986). However, even with these limitations considered, Rubin (1975) and Naiman et al. (1978) have provided valuable insight into how “good language learners” learn foreign languages and into the role of risk-taking in foreign language learning.

The study of Samimy and Pardin (1994) investigated adult language learners’ affective reactions to the community language learning approach to language teaching. Approximately 100 reflection papers from language students participating in university-level language classes taught with the community language learning approach were used as data. These reflection papers were collected over a six year period (1987-1992). Students were graduate students majoring in TESOL or foreign language education. The
majority of students were American, however students from China, Japan, Taiwan and Mexico also participated. It is unclear how students were selected to participate in the study. Students studied the language of their choice. All students studied languages they had never studied before, and studied at the beginning level. The languages studied included both commonly taught languages, such as French and Spanish, and less commonly taught languages, such as Japanese, Russian, Thai, Swedish, and Serbian. The instructors of the language classes included both native speakers of the target language and non-native speakers of the target language. All instructors had received extensive training in the community language learning approach, and were experienced in using the approach (Samimy and Pardin, 1994, p. 383).

Four researchers analyzed the reflection papers. The researchers consisted of two experts in community language learning and two graduate students not trained in community language learning. Each researcher was assigned 20-30 reflection papers at random for analysis. The following procedural steps were followed for the analysis process: 1) noting patterns and themes; 2) clustering and subsuming; 3) identifying contributing factors (ibid). Risk-taking was identified as one of five major categories of recurring and salient affective variables in learners’ learning experience. The other four categories identified were anxiety, motivation, self-esteem, and attitude (pp. 383, 390).

This study is significant in that it shows how important risk-taking is in the language learning process. The fact that risk-taking is listed among affective factors such as attitude, motivation, self-esteem, and anxiety, which have received considerably greater attention in research (Samimy and Pardin, 1994, p. 380), suggests that risk-taking may play a role of comparable significance in the language learning process.
However, a number of limitations to the study should be considered. The community language learning approach is designed to enhance language acquisition by responding in a facilitative way to affective barriers (Samimy and Pardin, 1994, p. 379). It is therefore possible that students who learn language through this approach deal with different affective variables than students who learn language through other approaches. Also, all the students were graduate students majoring in TESOL or foreign language education. It is probable that these students are high achievers with prior experience learning a foreign language. Students with no prior experience learning a foreign language and students who are not high achievers may behave differently. Thus, while the findings of Samimy and Pardin (1994) suggest that risk-taking plays a role of comparable significance to anxiety, motivation, attitude, and self-esteem in the language learning process, it may be difficult to apply these findings to risk-taking in PCA.

2.2.2 Quantitative Studies

Naiman et al.’s (1978) classroom study portion of their investigation into good language learners did not show risk-taking to be associated with good language learners. The classroom study looked at language learning among learners of French in grades 8, 10, and 12 from six different schools. The purpose was to identify learning strategies and techniques of both good and poor language learners. Based on the results of a proficiency test and teachers’ input concerning good and poor language learners in their classes, seventy-two students were selected for observation. The students selected included both good and poor language learners. Those selected for observation were observed in the classroom and were interviewed after the observations were complete.
Student participants' teachers were also interviewed. Teachers were asked to comment both on the results of their classes' proficiency tests and on the learning behavior and general characteristics of the selected participants.

Those selected for observation were also subjected to various cognitive style and personality tests. The cognitive style tests measured field dependence/independence, habit suppression, and categorizing behavior. The test for categorizing behavior, Pettigrew's Category-Width Scale, was felt by the researchers to include risk-taking (Naiman et al., 1978, p. 31). The personality tests measured intolerance of ambiguity, sensitivity to rejection, empathy, introversion/extroversion, and attitude.

It was found that "attitude and motivation were in many instances the best overall predictors of success in second language learning" (Naiman et al., 1978, p. 66). Categorizing behavior was not found to predict successful language learning, and indeed the majority of the cognitive style and personality tests did not correlate with successful language learning. However, the researchers felt this lack of correlation between the measured cognitive style/personality traits and successful language learning was more because the tests were not adequately measuring what they were designed to measure, rather than because there was no relationship between the variables (p. 67).

Another variable related to risk-taking, student certainty in hand-raising (whether or not a student would wait until he was certain he knew the response before raising his hand), was found to have little correlation with performance (Naiman et al., 1978, pp. 51-53), although poorer students tended to prefer certainty before raising their hands (p. 79).

This finding is significant to the study of risk-taking and language learning because it suggests that a significant risk-taking behavior, student certainty in hand-raising, has little
correlation with performance ability. It is also significant because Ely (1986)\textsuperscript{13} found that classroom participation, which was operationalized as the number of times a student asked or answered a question or provided information in the target language without being individually nominated to do so (Ely, 1986, p. 13), was a significant predictor of proficiency (p. 19). Thus, while it seems that volunteering a response is a predictor of proficiency, whether or not you prefer to be certain of your response before you volunteer is mostly unrelated to proficiency.

In interpreting these findings, some limitations should be considered. It is possible that those interviewed in Naiman et al. (1978) were unaware of the degree of certainty they preferred before raising their hand, and were unable to give an accurate response. It is also possible that student certainty in hand-raising is unrelated to how much a student actually raises his hand. This second possibility is suggested by the comparison of Ely (1986) and Naiman et al. (1978), since volunteering a response is a predictor of proficiency, while whether or not you prefer to be certain of your response before you volunteer is not. It may be that some students prefer certainty before raising their hand, but they perform well enough that they are almost always certain of their response. It may be that some students prefer certainty before raising their hand because they always know the answer. Otherwise, they may feel that they are raising their hand too much. Similarly, it may be that some students do not prefer certainty before raising their hand because have difficulty and would never raise their hand if they did. These considerations may explain how volunteering a response could be a predictor of

\textsuperscript{13} For a discussion of Ely (1986)'s study, see this section, below.
proficiency, while whether or not you prefer to be certain of your response before you volunteer could be mostly unrelated to proficiency.

Beebe (1983) investigated accuracy, avoidance, and interviewer ethnicity in relation to risk-taking. Twenty Puerto Rican bilingual (Spanish and English) third graders were interviewed for the study. Interviewers were a monolingual English-speaker, a Spanish-dominant Hispanic bilingual, and an English-dominant Hispanic bilingual. Each participant was interviewed four times, once by each interviewer, and once in a group of three participants and three interviewers. The group interview always occurred last. Risk-taking was measured by the amount of interviewee talk and the amount of information volunteering. Accuracy was measured by the number of correct T-units, divided by the total number of T-units. For avoidance, four different types of avoidance were used to measure avoidance. 1) Silence; 2) an answer of “I don’t know,” “I don’t remember”, or “No” in a situation where the child must have known the answer and would have had to honestly answer “Yes”; 3) repetition of the interviewer’s question with trailing-off intonation followed by no real response; 4) message abandonment, or the intentional failure to finish a response. Avoidance was measured by dividing the number of times an interviewee engaged in avoidance by the number of T-units produced by the interviewee.

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T-units were composed of 1) each independent grammatical predication; 2) each answer to a question, provided that the answer lacks only the repetition of the question elements to satisfy the criterion of independent predication; 3) each word such as “Yes” or “No” when given in answer to a question such as “Have you ever been sick?” Utterances that failed to meet one of these three criteria only because of grammatical error were still counted as T-units (Beebe, 1983, p. 63). The T-unit is an adaptation of Loban’s communication unit (as cited in Beebe, 1983, p. 63).
The study found that interviewees spoke more to the monolingual interviewer than to the bilingual interviewers. Similarly, interviewees engaged in avoidance more with the bilingual interviewer than with the monolingual interviewer. However, participants were more accurate with the bilingual interviewers than with the monolingual interviewer. The data were interpreted to suggest that risk-taking has an inverse relation with accuracy, although no strong conclusions were drawn (Beebe, 1983, pp. 56-57, 59).

The study of Ely (1986) investigated the role of several affective variables on classroom language learning, including how classroom participation is influenced by discomfort, risk-taking, sociability, and motivation. Participants were all students enrolled in first year Spanish courses at the university level. Data were gathered by means of a questionnaire. Data from seventy-five students were used (Ely, 1986, pp. 1, 7, 9, 17). Classroom participation was operationalized as the number of times a student asked or answered a question or provided information in the L2 without being individually nominated to do so (p. 13). Classroom participation was measured by two female native speakers of Spanish who had received extensive training in observation and coding and who were blind to the hypotheses of the study (ibid). Behaviors considered to be manifestations of classroom participation were: 1) responding to a question addressed to the group; 2) providing information without being asked to do so; 3) asking a question requested of the group by the teacher (e.g. “Can anyone ask Bill about his weekend?”); 4) asking a question without being asked to do so (ibid). Risk-taking was operationalized using the following four dimensions: 1) a lack of hesitancy about using a newly encountered linguistic element; 2) a willingness to use linguistic elements perceived to be complex or difficult; 3) a tolerance of possible incorrectness or inexactitude in using the
language; and 4) an inclination to rehearse a new element silently before attempting to use it aloud\textsuperscript{15} (pp. 7-9). Language class sociability was operationalized using the following four dimensions: 1) a desire to use the L2 for the purpose of becoming better acquainted with others in the class; 2) a preference for a learning situation in which there are a number of other people present; 3) seeking to create and maintain a sense of camaraderie in the language classroom; 4) interacting in the L2 is enjoyable (p. 9). It is unclear precisely how language class discomfort and strength of motivation were operationalized. The questionnaire included several items related to each variable. Each item was followed by a six-point Likert response scale (\textit{ibid}). The items written for each variable are as follows, with items that are negative on the scale marked with a minus sign:

\textbf{Risk-taking}
1. I like to wait until I know exactly how to use a Spanish word before using it. (-)
2. I don’t like trying out a difficult sentence in class. (-)
3. At this point, I don’t like trying to express complicated ideas in Spanish in class. (-)
4. I prefer to say what I want in Spanish without worrying about the small details of grammar.
5. In class, I prefer to say a sentence to myself before I speak it. (-)
6. I prefer to follow basic sentence models rather than risk misusing the language. (-)

\textbf{Sociability}
1. I’d like more class activities where the students use Spanish to get to know each other better.
2. I think learning Spanish in a group is more fun than if I had my own tutor.
3. I enjoy talking with the teacher and other students in Spanish.

\textsuperscript{15} The fact that Ely (1986) puts a minus sign after the questionnaire item related to “an inclination to rehearse a new element silently before attempting to use it aloud” (“In class, I prefer to say a sentence to myself before I speak it (p. 9) suggests that it is actually the absence of “an inclination to rehearse a new element silently before attempting to use it aloud” that is related to risk-taking.
4. I don’t really enjoy interacting with the other students in the Spanish class. (-)
5. I think it’s important to have a strong group spirit in the language classroom.

**Discomfort**
1. I don’t feel very relaxed when I speak Spanish in class.
2. Based on my class experience so far, I think that one barrier to my future use of Spanish is my discomfort when speaking.
3. At times, I feel somewhat embarrassed in class when I’m trying to speak.
4. I think I’m less self-conscious about actively participating in Spanish class than most of the other students. (-)
5. I sometimes feel awkward speaking Spanish.

**Motivation**
1. Outside of class, I almost never think about what I’m learning in class. (-)
2. If possible, I would like to take a second year Spanish course.
3. Speaking realistically, I would say that I don’t try very hard to learn Spanish. (-)
4. I want to be able to use Spanish in a wide variety of situations.
5. I don’t really have a great desire to learn a lot of Spanish. (-)
6. Learning Spanish well is not really a high priority for me at this point. (-)
7. I don’t really feel that learning Spanish is valuable to me. (-)
(Ely, 1986, pp. 9-11)

Among risk-taking, strength of motivation, discomfort, and sociability, risk-taking was found to be a significant predictor of classroom participation, while strength of motivation, discomfort, and sociability were not found to be significant predictors of classroom participation. Classroom participation was subsequently found to be a predictor of proficiency (Ely, 1986, pp. 18-20).

Some comparison of the studies of Ely (1986) and Beebe (1983) may be appropriate. In the study of Beebe (1983), risk-taking was operationalized as the amount of speaker talk. In other words, whether a student chose to speak or not, and how much they chose to say was treated as risk-taking behavior. In the study of Ely (1986), risk-taking was operationalized using how students talked or participated, rather than the amount of speaker talk. However, classroom participation (Ely, 1986) does have much in common
with Beebe’s operationalization of risk-taking. The four behaviors treated as manifestations of classroom participation in Ely (1986)’s study have much in common with interviewee talk and information volunteering, which were used as evidence of risk-taking in Beebe’s study.

The apparent discrepancy in how risk-taking behavior is treated in these two studies can be explained by considering the setting of each study. In the study of Ely (1986) the setting was a classroom. In the study of Beebe (1983) the setting was an interview. Since the kinds of risk-taking behaviors that typically manifest themselves in these settings are different, the operationalizations used were also different. However, Ely’s finding that risk-taking was correlated with classroom participation suggests that the kinds of risk-taking looked at by Beebe and Ely are related.

It should be noted that since Ely (1986)’s study relies on self-report as the means of data collection, limitations mentioned previously in relation to self-report also apply to Ely’s study.

Samimy and Tabuse (1992) conducted a study similar to that of Ely (1986). The same questionnaire used in Ely (1986)’s study was also used in the study of Samimy and Tabuse (1992), and, as in Ely (1986)’s study, it was distributed to first-year university level students. However, there are three major differences in the two studies. First, the questionnaire was distributed to learners of Japanese instead of learners of Spanish. Second, the questionnaire was distributed twice, once during autumn quarter and once during spring quarter. Third, Samimy and Tabuse investigated the effect of risk-taking, motivation, discomfort, and sociability on student grades, rather than on participation as in Ely’s study. The variables of age, sex, number of years in college, number of years
learning Japanese, motivational type, attitude toward the language class, and concern for grade were also investigated. It should also be noted that the presence of ACT and FACT classes\(^\text{16}\) (Samimy and Tabe, 1992, p. 385) suggests an early form of the performed culture approach may have been used (cf. Christensen and Noda, 2002, pp. 16-20; Christensen and Warnick, 2006, pp. 58-66).

The study of Samimy and Tabe (1992) found that among the variables investigated, risk-taking was the most significant variable in accounting for student grades in autumn quarter (Samimy and Tabe, 1992, p. 387). In spring quarter, motivation was the most significant variable (Samimy and Tabe, 1992, p. 388). It is unclear if risk-taking accounted for the same amount of variance in student grades in spring quarter as in autumn quarter.

One reason the findings of Samimy and Tabe (1992) are significant is that they showed that risk-taking can be a significant predictor of success in learning East Asian languages, such as Japanese. As previously mentioned, for native English speakers learning an East Asian language probably involves more risk than learning a cognate language such as French or Spanish. One would therefore expect risk-taking to play an even more significant role in language learning success when an East Asian language is involved. Samimy and Tabe (1992) provided evidence to support this hypothesis.

Another reason the findings of Samimy and Tabe (1992) are significant is that they showed that risk-taking can be a significant predictor of success without going through an intermediary such as voluntary participation, as was done by Ely (1986). These findings are particularly interesting when the findings of Beebe (1983) are considered. Beebe

\(^{16}\) For further information on ACT and FACT classes, see section 2.4

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found that risk-taking and accuracy had a negative correlation. Samimi and Tabuse found that risk-taking was positively correlated with success, as measured by student grades. One explanation for these two findings is that Beebe’s study may better show how risk-taking affects the accuracy of a specific utterance, while Samimi and Tabuse’s study may better show how risk-taking affects students’ language ability over time. It stands to reason that when one takes a risk in using the language, there is a smaller chance that the utterance will be accurate. However, if these inaccuracies are recognized and learned from then it would also stand to reason that one who takes risks will learn more, and be more proficient in the long-run. That risk-taking may have long-term benefits is supported by Beebe, who states “with students who do their risk-taking before the exam, not during it..., risk-taking is a safe form of explicit hypothesis testing. With proper feedback, it should pay off in the long run.” (1980, p. 180).

Another possible explanation is that the difference in how risk-taking was operationalized in each study (which has been discussed previously in relation to Ely’s study) accounts for the different findings. A third possibility is that student grades were not an accurate measure of student language ability in the program Samimi and Tabuse (1992) investigated.

While Samimi and Tabuse (1992)’s study suggests that risk-taking can be a significant predictor of success in learning an East Asian language, it is unclear to what extent culture, in particular behavioral culture (Hammerly, 1982), was taught in the program investigated. As has been mentioned previously, the learning of a language for which the target culture if truly foreign may involve greater risk than learning a language for which the target culture is similar to the base culture. If, in the program investigated
by Samimy and Tabuse, the learning of behavioral culture was not given emphasis. Then any risk involved in learning a truly foreign culture would not have been a part of the language learning experience of the students in that program. In PCA, the approach used by the program under investigation in the current study, the learning of behavioral culture is given heavy emphasis. The current study therefore seeks to investigate (among other things) the role that risk-taking plays in language learning when the target language and culture are truly foreign, and are both a focus of instruction.

2.2.3 Studies on factors that influence risk-taking

If students who take language risks typically are able to perform better, then research into which factors influence risk-taking would be beneficial in knowing how to encourage risk-taking behavior in students. Several studies have addressed this issue. The studies of Ely (1986) and Samimy and Tabuse (1992) both investigated the effect of language classroom discomfort on language classroom risk-taking behavior. In both studies, language classroom discomfort was operationalized as feeling discomfort, embarrassment, self-consciousness, awkwardness, and not feeling relaxed (Ely, 1986, p. 10; Samimy and Tabuse, 1992, p. 397). Ely found that language classroom discomfort was a significant negative predictor of language classroom risk-taking, accounting for 22% of the variance in language classroom risk-taking according to a stepwise regression (1986, p. 17). Moreover, Samimy and Tabuse found a significant negative correlation between language classroom discomfort and language classroom risk-taking using Pearson product-moment correlations in both autumn quarter and spring quarter (Samimy
and Tabuse, 1992, p. 389). In autumn quarter, the degree of correlation was -0.662. In spring quarter the degree of correlation was -0.671 (Samimy and Tabuse, 1992, p. 389).

Bang (1999) investigated factors that influence language classroom risk-taking behavior among Korean learners of English as a foreign language. All participants in the study were native speakers of Korean enrolled in a spoken English course at a Korean university. All freshman students at the university were required to take this course. The purpose of the course was “to provide the students with opportunities to develop English communication skills, mainly listening and speaking skills” (Bang, 1999, p. 44). All of the instructors were native speakers of English. Fifteen students, all freshmen, participated. Twelve of the fifteen participants had no prior experience learning spoken English. Data were collected by means of observation, a questionnaire, and participant diary entries. Participants wrote in the diaries twice a week for a fourteen week period. Risk-taking was equated with voluntary participation in class (Bang, 1999, pp. 44, 22).

Bang (1999) found that many participants’ risk-taking behavior changed markedly during the fourteen week period (Bang, 1999, p. 128). Four major facilitating factors (i.e. factors that facilitated risk-taking in students) and four major debilitating factors were identified. Major facilitating factors were (in order of importance) 1) pair/small classroom group activities; 2) sufficient preparation for class; 3) positive attitude in learning; and 4) strong motivation (Bang, 1999, p. 134). Major debilitating factors were (in order of importance) 1) cultural beliefs or practices; 2) instructor’s attitude and teaching style; 3) anxiety; and 4) limited opportunities due to large class size (Bang, 1999, p. 144).
Ely (1986), Samimy and Tabuse (1992), and Bang (1999) have all identified factors that influence language students’ risk-taking behavior. However, it may be difficult to apply these findings to risk-taking in PCA. As mentioned previously, the learning of a language for which the target culture is truly foreign may involve greater risk than learning a language for which the target culture is similar to the base culture. Thus, it may be difficult to apply the findings of Ely (1986) because the study investigated learners of Spanish. Additionally, if a language program does not put focus on the learning of behavioral culture (Hammerly, 1982), then any risk involved in learning a truly foreign culture would not be a part of students’ language learning experience in that program. Thus, it may be difficult to apply the findings of Samimy and Tabuse (1992) because the learning of behavioral culture may not have been a focus of instruction in the program investigated.

Furthermore, in Bang (1999)’s study, student participants were all native speakers of Korean. Because of cultural differences, Korean language students may behave differently than American students in terms of their risk-taking behavior (cf. Bang, 1999, pp. 143-147). Thus, it may be difficult to apply the findings of Bang (1999) as well.

The current study seeks to investigate how the daily grading system of assessment, teaching style, classroom/group dynamics, and study habits affect students’ risk-taking behavior in PCA. It should be noted that these are all external factors; in other words, they do not originate from within the student (Bang, 1999, pp. 128-129). Investigation into how internal factors (e.g. motivation, attitude, self-esteem, etc.) affect students’ risk-taking behavior in PCA would also be beneficial. However, such an investigation is beyond the scope of this paper.
The factors investigated in the current study were those felt to be the most relevant to language teaching in PCA. The factor “study habits” investigated in the current study includes “sufficient preparation for class” identified by Bang (1999). The factor “teaching style” includes elements of “instructor’s attitude and teaching style” identified by Bang (1999). In Bang (1999)’s study, instructor’s attitude and teaching style was broken down into several smaller categories: 1) instructor’s error treatment; 2) lack of acknowledgment toward learners’ English ability; 3) threatening and non-supportive attitude; 4) lack of preparation for class; 5) text-dependent teaching style; 6) inconsistency of lesson plan (p. 143). Categories 1-3 are felt to relate to risk-taking in PCA. The factor “classroom/group dynamics” relates to “classmates”, a minor debilitating factor identified by Bang (1999, p. 131). This factor was also broken down into smaller categories: 1) comparing oneself to other classmates; 2) intimidated by the active participants; 3) (un)familiarity of classmates (ibid). While the current study does not specifically address these three categories, that one’s classmates may have an impact on one’s language classroom risk-taking behavior was felt to be relevant to the current study\textsuperscript{17}.

2.3 The daily grading system of assessment

The daily grading system of assessment’s effect on language classroom risk-taking behavior has not previously been investigated. However, other aspects of a daily grading system of assessment which are relevant to the current study have been investigated.

\textsuperscript{17} See section 2.4 for further discussion concerning factors that may influence students’ risk-taking behavior in PCA.
Choi and Samimy (2002) investigated teachers’ and students’ attitudes towards daily grading and students’ affective reactions to daily grading, in particular their level of anxiety. Participants in the study consisted of randomly selected first-, second-, third-, and fourth-year university students studying Chinese, Japanese or Korean. All students attended the same university. Data were gathered by means of a questionnaire distributed at the end of fall quarter. The questionnaire contained thirty-one items which students responded to using a five point Likert-type scale. Responses were obtained from sixteen teachers (two instructors and fourteen teaching assistants) and ninety students (twenty-six first-year, twenty-seven second year, twenty-three third year, and fourteen fourth-year) (Choi and Samimy, 2002, pp. 25-28).

Choi and Samimy (2002) found that most student participants’ anxiety levels were moderate, although approximately 18% of students surveyed reported high levels of anxiety (pp. 30, 33). However, it was found that student attitudes towards the daily grading system of assessment were typically high (pp. 29-30, 33), and the mean response for the item “I am more motivated to study with a daily grading system” was also high (4.23 on a 5 point scale) (p. 29).

Ely (1986)’s and Samimy and Tabuse (1992)’s findings that language class discomfort level was negatively correlated with language class risk-taking is significant in light of the findings of Choi and Samimy (2002). Discomfort level, investigated by Ely (1986) and Samimy and Tabuse (1992), seems to have some similarity with anxiety level, investigated by Choi and Samimy (2002). Thus, it may be that a daily grading system of assessment could discourage risk-taking in students because of students’ heightened levels of anxiety. Thus, the current study seeks to investigate the effect the
daily grading system of assessment has on students’ language classroom risk-taking behavior.\footnote{See section 2.4 for further discussion concerning the daily grading system of assessment and risk-taking.}

2.4 The performed culture approach

The performed culture approach (PCA) was developed because foreign language education in North America has depended heavily on Western European and ESL pedagogies, which, while appropriate for Western European foreign language learning and ESL, fail to address the most critical issue in learning East Asian languages: culture (Christensen and Noda, 2002, pp. 8, 13; Christensen and Warnick, 2006, pp. 2, 9-11).

In addressing the issue of teaching culture, PCA relies on the concept of “remembering the future”: that successful language learners are able to take experiences of what is accepted and typical of the target culture and compile them into memories which they can rely on to guide how they will behave in a social environment that will occur in the future (Walker and Noda, 2000, pp. 190-191). The purpose of the PCA classroom is therefore to provide an environment where learners can acquire useful memories of interacting in the target culture (Walker and Noda, 2000, pp. 192-194).

Since the goal of the PCA classroom is to provide learners with memories of culturally appropriate interactions, classroom activities center on situated interactions in cultural contexts. In other words, performances are the focus of class. Learners acquire memories both of their own performances and the performances of others. However, it is learners’ own performances that are most meaningful, for as learners perform they
demonstrate not only that they know how to interact appropriately in the target culture, but that they can do interactions appropriately in the target culture.

Since useful memories are those which the learners can apply to future social interactions in the target culture, all performances are situated. For every performance, the time, place, appropriate script, roles of participants, and audience (Walker, 2000) should be clear to the learners. With these five elements understood, learners can apply what they experience in the classroom appropriately to future situations they encounter in the target culture.

In such a performance-based classroom, the teacher’s role is similar to that of a theatrical director. The teacher gives students roles and situations in which they are to perform, and then guides those performances. Students are expected to use pedagogical materials to learn the linguistic forms as well as cultural information behind language use, just as an actor is expected to know their lines by the time they come to a rehearsal with the director (Christensen and Noda, 2002, pp. 18-20; Christensen and Warnick, 2006, pp. 58-61, 69-70).

Since the teacher is responsible for ensuring that students come away from class with memories of culturally appropriate interactions, the teacher gives students careful corrective feedback on each performance. The role of the instructor is not to bear information but to coach students as they use new information in their performances. Since the instructor gives feedback on each performance, it is typical to have two or three students perform at a time. The students not performing are able to observe and learn from the experiences of others.
Students are also typically evaluated each day on their performance. These evaluations are given in terms of the student’s degree of preparation and how the student’s performance would meet with the expectations of natives of the target culture. These daily grades, as well as in-class feedback from the instructor, let students know how their performance matches the goal of culturally coherent communication. (Christensen and Warnick, 2006, pp. 66-71; Christensen and Noda, 2002, pp. 20-23)

Since student performances are the focus of class, the classroom tends to be student-centered. Students do the majority of the speaking (or reading or writing), and must perform well to make the grade. Students who desire not to participate will typically be disappointed—all students are expected to perform. The teacher ensures that both the passive student and the overly eager student receive equal opportunities to perform in class (Christensen and Noda, 2002, p. 19; Christensen and Warnick, 2006, pp. 60-61).

Classes where students perform in the target language and culture are typically referred to as ACT classes. These classes are typically conducted entirely in the target language. The ACT classes are typically supported by another kind of class, the FACT class. FACT classes include explanation and discussion of the target language and culture, usually in the students’ base language, and students are usually allowed to ask questions using the base language. The information learned in FACT classes is applied in the ACT classes. (Christensen and Warnick, 2006, pp. 58-66; Christensen and Noda, 2006, pp. 14-20)
2.5 Risk-taking and PCA

The study of risk-taking behavior is particularly significant to PCA, a pedagogical approach specific for East Asian languages. It has been mentioned that learning an East Asian language may involve more risk for native English speakers than learning a language closer to English in culture and form. In PCA, the learning of culture is given particular focus. It is therefore probable that language learning in PCA involves more risk than language learning in other approaches. It is possible that PCA’s success as an East Asian language teaching method\(^\text{19}\) may be partially related to how it deals with risk-taking behavior in the language classroom. If risk-taking correlates positively with learning, then students in PCA, simply because of the fact that they are required to take risks\(^\text{20}\), should perform better than students who are in a program of lower risk-taking requirements. It is also possible that students may be more successful in PCA if some of the risk involved was alleviated.

In fact, there are many aspects of PCA which may encourage or require risk-taking behavior. As has been previously mentioned, in PCA each student is given an equal

\(^{19}\) Evidence for PCA’s success as an East Asian language teaching method can be found in that many students who have learned an East Asian language through PCA have gone on to extended careers in the target culture (M. Noda, 2007, personal communication). This seems to be a significant measure of success, particularly in light of the fact that many students who scored highly on the ACTFL OPI (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Oral Proficiency Interview) were unable to successfully navigate interpersonal relationships in the US/China Links internship program in China (Shepherd, 2005, pp. 131-132, 138-140; E. Shepherd, 2007, personal communication). Further evidence for PCA’s success as an East Asian language teaching method is found in that many fifth-year Japanese language students of the program investigated in the current study pass level 1 of the Nihongo Noryoku Shiken (Japanese language proficiency test), and almost all fifth-year Japanese language students of the program investigated in the current study pass level 2 (M. Noda, 2007, personal communication).

\(^{20}\) See below, this section, for a discussion of how PCA requires students to take risks.
opportunity to perform (Christensen and Noda, 2002, pp. 19-20; Christensen and Warnick, 2006, pp. 60-61). Consequently, the act of volunteering to perform takes on a less significant role in the learning process than in a typical language classroom. Typically, all students will be asked to participate, whether they volunteer to participate or not. Students who constantly volunteer are (ideally) given the same number of chances to participate as students who never volunteer.

The act of choosing to participate is a significant risk-taking behavior, as is suggested by a number of studies (Rubin, 1975; Naiman et al., 1978; Beebe, 1983; Ely, 1986; Bang, 1999). Since, in PCA, students are invited to participate rather than choosing to participate and refusing to participate is detrimental to one’s grade, all students are essentially required to take the risk of speaking (cf. Beebe, 1983, p. 39). Since all students are essentially required to participate, the act of choosing to participate should not account for learner differences in PCA. Rather, all students benefit from participation\(^{21}\).

Another factor in students’ risk-taking behavior that may be relevant to PCA is study habits. In PCA, students are encouraged to prepare for class carefully and seriously. The daily grading system helps encourage this behavior (cf. Christensen and Noda, 2002, p. 20; Christensen and Warnick, 2006, p. 66). This emphasis on good preparation may help

\(^{21}\) However, not all students respond well to required participation. Some students claim that they can perform well at home, just not in class (M. Noda, personal communication, 2007). It is possible that students who would otherwise refrain from taking risks in the language classroom may not receive the same benefits of participation when it is required of them as students who would choose to take risks in the language classroom even if it were not required.

On the other hand, requiring participation from students who would otherwise refrain from taking risks in the language classroom may still be beneficial, although to a lesser degree.
encourage language classroom risk-taking behavior. Bang (1999) lists “sufficient preparation for class” as a major facilitating factor and “insufficient preparation for class” as a minor debilitating factor in Korean EFL students’ risk-taking behavior (Bang, 1999, pp. 134, 156). Thus, by requiring students to prepare well, students may be more likely to take language risks in class.

Another characteristic of PCA relevant to risk-taking behavior is feedback. In PCA, it is typical for the teacher to give students feedback each time they perform. It is possible that the large amount of feedback students receive may have a positive effect on students’ language ability in relation to risk-taking (Beebe, 1980, p. 180). With a large amount of feedback, it is likely that when a language risk leads to an error, students will be made aware of the error. Without that feedback it is possible that students will not recognize their errors and fossilization may occur. Thus, large amounts of feedback may increase the benefit students get from taking risks.

PCA’s emphasis on performance may also indirectly encourage risk-taking. It has been mentioned that the risk of “loss of identity” (Beebe, 1983, p. 39) may be greater when the culture of the language to be learned is distant from the students’ base culture. PCA’s focus on performance may address this issue. By using performance as the means of language learning (Christensen and Warnick, 2006) students become accustomed to taking on a different persona (Walker and Noda, 2000, pp. 196-197) when communicating in the target language. It may be that by acting out a role students are able to grow accustomed to using behaviors and language that seem strange from the base culture perspective without feeling that they are losing their own identity.

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22 See section 1.1, this paper.
However, there are aspects of PCA which may discourage students from taking language risks. One of these aspects is the daily grading system. In PCA, it is typical to grade students daily on their performance in class. There are several reasons why a daily grading system is used. One reason is to encourage good preparation and hold learners accountable for their preparation. By holding learners accountable for their actions in class, they are also held accountable for how they prepare for class (Christensen and Noda, 2002, p. 21; Christensen and Warnick, 2006, p. 66). Another reason is to provide feedback to the learner. This feedback tells the learner how their performance compared with the goal of culturally coherent communication (Christensen and Warnick, 2006, p. 66-67). A third reason is to encourage consistency. Under the daily grading system, no single grade will significantly affect the overall average. Consistency is necessary to obtain a high final grade (Christensen and Noda, 2002, pp. 20-21; Christensen and Warnick, 2006, p.67). A fourth reason is to give the teacher an idea of what the learner can do with the language (Christensen and Noda, 2002, pp. 20-21; Christensen and Warnick, 2006, p. 67).

While there are many benefits to a daily grading system, it may have a negative impact on students’ willingness to take language risks in class. Since students are graded each day on their performance, the possibility that an utterance could lead to a bad grade (Beebe, 1983, p. 40) is always present. Beebe suggests that in a testing situation, to avoid taking risks is the best strategy for being successful on the test (1983, p. 60). Since students are tested each day on their ability to perform, some students may adopt a strategy of not taking risks in an attempt to acquire a good performance score.
Feedback has been mentioned as an aspect of PCA which may increase the benefit students gain from taking language risks. However, this feedback may also discourage students from taking language risks. “Reproach from a teacher” is one of the risks Beebe lists as those related to learning language in a classroom setting (1983, p. 40), and “instructor’s error correction” is listed by Bang (1999) as an aspect of instructor’s attitude and teaching style that can discourage students from taking risks (p. 143). It is possible that students who interpret feedback as criticism may be discouraged from taking risks in the language classroom for fear of a “reproach” from the teacher. Student personality may be a significant factor in this area (cf. Beebe, 1980, p. 179; Beebe, 1983, p. 59).

However, it should be noted that most teachers in PCA receive extensive training in the approach, and are taught to give feedback in a positive manner. It is therefore possible that corrections do not come across as negative, and consequently do not have a negative impact on students’ risk-taking behavior. Another possibility is that since each student receives feedback, and the feedback is frequent, students may get used to it and perceive less of a risk.

The student-oriented nature of PCA (Christensen and Warnick, 2006, p. 60; Christensen and Noda, 2002, p. 19) may also have a negative effect on students’ language classroom risk-taking behavior. When students perform, typically two or three students perform at a time and the rest of the class observes. Having one’s peers watching one’s performance may discourage one from taking risks (cf. Bang, 1999, p. 134). However, since each student is given opportunity to perform (Christensen and Noda, 2002, pp. 19-20; Christensen and Warnick, 2006, pp. 60-61), students may become accustomed to this practice.
2.6 Summary

Previous studies have indicated that risk-taking behavior is characteristic of good language learners, and significantly accounts for learner differences. However, it remains unclear if these findings are applicable to PCA. It also remains unclear if factors identified in previous studies as affecting risk-taking behavior apply to PCA, and if there are factors which significantly affect risk-taking behavior in PCA which have not been identified in previous studies.

The current study seeks to investigate the role language classroom risk-taking behavior plays in language learning in PCA. It also seeks to investigate the effect that daily grades, teaching style, study habits, and classroom/group dynamics have on students’ risk-taking behavior. This investigation will help identify whether or not risk-taking behavior is a significant predictor of success in PCA, and which variables influence students’ risk-taking behavior in PCA.
CHAPTER 3

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

3.1 Overview

This study investigated the research questions identified in section 1.4, which are restated here:

1) What effect does language classroom risk-taking behavior (LCRTB) have on student performance (as measured by daily performance scores) in the performed culture approach (PCA)?

2) To what extent is LCRTB influenced by the daily grading system of assessment in PCA?

3) To what extent is LCRTB influenced by teaching style in PCA?

4) To what extent is LCRTB influenced by classroom/group dynamics in PCA?

5) To what extent is LCRTB influenced by personal study habits in PCA?

These research questions were investigated through means of a questionnaire and observation of student behavior during Japanese language classes. To answer the first research question, the questionnaire was used to establish the extent to which a student
engages in language classroom risk-taking behavior (LCRTB). The extent to which a student engages in LCRTB was represented by a LCRTB score. This score was compared with student performance as assessed by the student’s daily grades to determine the degree of correlation between the two.

To assess the effect that daily grades, classroom/group dynamics, teaching style, and study habits have on students’ LCRTB, answers to questionnaire questions regarding daily grades, classroom/group dynamics, teaching style, and study habits were compared with LCRTB scores. Selected students were also observed to investigate how classroom/group dynamics and teaching style affect their LCRTB.

3.2 Setting of the study

3.2.1 Participant population

All participants in the study were university students currently enrolled in undergraduate Japanese language classes at a large mid-western university. The Japanese language classes in question were all taught in a classroom setting using PCA. All participants were of at least 18 years of age. A total of forty-six students completed the autumn quarter questionnaire and signed the consent form. A total of forty students signed the supplemental consent form. A total of thirty-four students completed the spring quarter questionnaire.

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23 The university in question offered Japanese instruction in both an individualized instruction setting and a classroom setting, both of which used PCA. Investigation into risk-taking behavior in PCA in an individualized instruction setting was beyond the scope of this paper.
For purposes of statistical analysis\textsuperscript{25}, the surveyed population was divided into four
different groups: 1) 101 students, 2) 103 students, 3) 104, 206, 210/211, and 507 students,
and 4) 509, 510/511, 610, 612 students. The number of students comprising each of
these groups is as follows: group 1 = 24, group 2 = 17, group 3 = 20, group 4 = 19.
These particular divisions were made for two reasons: 1) so that no group would be
disproportionately small, and 2) it was felt that the greatest amount of change would
probably occur during students' first year in the program. It should be noted that with the
smaller sample sizes of these four groups the statistical analysis is not as accurate as it
would be with a larger group.

\textbf{3.2.2 Questionnaire distribution method}

Questionnaires were distributed during Japanese language classes. All students who
attended class the day the questionnaire was distributed received a questionnaire.
Likewise, all students who did not attend class the day the questionnaire was distributed
did not receive a questionnaire. Thus, all students who received a copy of the
questionnaire were enrolled in Japanese language classes. Approximately 160 copies of
the questionnaire were distributed.

At the time of distribution students were informed that the questionnaire and consent
form were regarding a study on risk-taking behavior in Japanese language classrooms.
Students were informed that their participation was voluntary, and that it would not hurt
or help their grade to participate. Students were informed that participation in the study
consisted of completion of two questionnaires, one immediately following the initial

\textsuperscript{25} See chapter 4 for the statistical analysis.
contact and one during spring quarter of the current academic year, as well as possible observation during Japanese language class. They were further informed that they may withdraw from the study at any time. Students were instructed that if they wished to participate in the study, they were to sign the consent form and complete the questionnaire and return the questionnaire and signed portion of the consent form either in person to the researcher or to a box located in the East Asian Languages and Literatures department office.

3.2.3 Timing of questionnaire distribution and collection

The first questionnaire was distributed during week 10 of fall quarter, between November 27th and December 1st. Collection of questionnaires was completed by December 8th. Forty-six usable questionnaires were returned.

The second questionnaire was distributed during week 5 of spring quarter, between April 23rd and April 27th. Collection of questionnaires was completed by May 7th. Thirty-four usable questionnaires were returned.

3.2.4 Selecting participants for observation

Four participants were selected for observation as case studies. It was intended that the two participants with the lowest LCRTB scores and the two participants with the highest LCRTB scores would be selected. However, one of the participants with the lowest LCRTB scores discontinued enrollment in Japanese language classes, and therefore was unavailable for observation. Thus, the participants with the two highest and the two lowest LCRTB scores who were available for observation were selected as case studies.
The following table summarizes the biographical information of the four participants\textsuperscript{26} selected as case studies for observation\textsuperscript{27}.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Current Japanese Course</th>
<th>Reason for taking Japanese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4\textsuperscript{th} Year</td>
<td>To fulfill a major requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2\textsuperscript{nd}/3\textsuperscript{rd} Year Intensive</td>
<td>To fulfill a major requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3\textsuperscript{rd} Year</td>
<td>To fulfill a major requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1\textsuperscript{st} Year</td>
<td>To fulfill a major requirement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Average Study Time</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Expected Grade (Autumn Quarter)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>30 Minutes - 1 Hour</td>
<td>3.0-3.29</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>15 - 30 Minutes</td>
<td>3.7-4.0</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>1 - 2 Hours</td>
<td>3.7-4.0</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise</td>
<td>15 - 30 Minutes</td>
<td>3.3-3.69</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Performance Score (Autumn Quarter)</th>
<th>LCRTB Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>96.8%</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>97.4%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Table 3.1: Case Studies’ Biographical Information}

\subsection*{3.2.5 Timing of observation}

The observations were performed between February 2\textsuperscript{nd} and April 5\textsuperscript{th}. Each participant selected for observation as a case study was observed three times.

\textsuperscript{26} All four case studies were native speakers of English, although this information was not asked for on the questionnaire.

\textsuperscript{27} Names other than the participants’ real names have been used in order to protect the identity of the participants.
3.2.6 Consent and participants' understanding of the study

Each student who received a questionnaire also received a consent form. The consent form contained detailed information regarding the study. It informed students that participation in the study was voluntary, that they could withdraw participation at any time, that there were no direct incentives to participate, and that the study would only indirectly benefit them if they continued to take Japanese classes after the close of the current academic year. The consent form told participants that the purpose of the study was to research the effect students’ risk-taking behavior has on their performance, to identify which factors contribute to students’ risk-taking behavior, and to investigate how those factors contribute to students’ risk-taking behavior. The consent form told participants that participation in the study would consist of completion of two questionnaires, as well as possible observation during class.

The consent form also contained information regarding confidentiality. Participants were informed that observation notes and questionnaire results would be codified so that participants would be de-identified in the analysis. Participants were also informed that they would not be mentioned by name in the study.

A second consent form was distributed later. This consent form asked for consent to use participants’ daily performance scores as data. It informed participants that data would be codified so that they would be de-identified in the analysis. For the complete consent forms, see Appendices B and C.
3.3 Manifestations of language classroom risk-taking behavior

3.3.1 Language classroom risk-taking behavior working definition

In identifying manifestations of LCRTB, the following working definition of LCRTB was used:

LCRTB: Behavior in which one acts despite the possibility of exposing weak points in one's language ability.

This working definition was felt to represent the idea of risk as it would pertain to a language classroom. It was also felt to include the four behaviors included in Ely (1986)'s operationalization of language class risk-taking (p. 7-9). It is noteworthy that this working definition suggests that risk-taking in the language classroom includes, albeit indirectly, the potential for lower evaluation in the language course.

Reference to voluntary participation in defining LCRTB (cf. Bang, 1999) was avoided for two reasons. First, it was avoided because in PCA opportunities for voluntary participation are limited. Second, it was avoided because focus on voluntary participation may rule out other possible ways in which LCRTB is manifested.

Furthermore, this working definition focuses on behavior rather than a mental state. The decision to focus on behavior rather than a mental state was made because behavior is observable, while mental states are not. This study therefore focuses less on students' mental states and more on the behavior that occurs as a result of a particular mental state. Research on students' mental states in relation to risk-taking behavior may be beneficial; however, it is beyond the scope of this paper.
This working definition of LCRTB also encompasses behaviors related to risk-taking identified in previous studies (Rubin, 1975; Naiman, et al., 1978; Beebe, 1983; Ely, 1986). For example: being willing to appear foolish in order to communicate and get the message across, using the language when not required to do so, being willing to try out guesses, and being willing to make mistakes in order to learn and communicate (Rubin, 1975) are all behaviors in which one acts despite the possibility of exposing weak points in one’s language ability.

3.3.2 Preliminary observations of students

Video recordings of classrooms taught with PCA were reviewed prior to establishing the questions in the questionnaire and conducting observations in order to identify possible observable manifestations of LCRTB28. All of the seven behaviors listed below as manifestations or possible manifestations of LCRTB were observed in students during these preliminary observations.

3.3.3 Manifestations of language classroom risk-taking behavior

Items 1 through 5 (below) are assumed to be manifestations of presence or lack of LCRTB, based on student observation. Items 6 and 7 are hypothesized to be manifestations of LCRTB. Items proposed to be related to an avoidance or a lack of risk-taking behavior are marked with a minus (-) sign. Each item is followed by an explanation of why that item was assumed or hypothesized to be a manifestation (or avoidance) of LCRTB as defined above, and how that item has been observed in students.

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28 These video recordings were available as part of the curricular improvement effort. All students who appeared in the video recordings had given written consent to be video taped for this purpose.
1. (-) Favoring linguistic elements which are more familiar over those that are less familiar

It seems likely that a student who favors more familiar linguistic elements over less familiar linguistic elements does so because he does not want to expose his poor ability in using those unfamiliar linguistic elements. In other words, he is avoiding less familiar items or activities because of the possibility of exposing weak points in his language ability. This item is therefore considered to be indicative of a lack of LCRTB.

Some difficulty arises in observing this behavior, for familiarity is subjective and therefore unobservable. While it is likely that newly introduced linguistic elements are less familiar than those which students have been using for some time, the degree of preparation a student puts in before class is going to affect how familiar that student is with a certain linguistic element. Therefore familiarity cannot be determined by how recently a certain linguistic element was introduced.

However, it seems that familiarity can be judged based on which linguistic elements a student resorts to when in difficulty. For example, in the preliminary observations a student was observed to say "tyotto tiisaka...tiisaku... tyotto ookii desu ka?" This utterance was taken to suggest that the affirmative form of the adjectival was more familiar to that student than the negative form. Consequently, the student that made this utterance was considered to have favored more familiar linguistic elements over less familiar linguistic elements in this instance.
2. Using linguistic elements in ways that have not yet been tried by others (as opposed to imitating other students that have already given a similar performance in the same context)

In the performed culture approach, it is not uncommon for several students to be asked to give performances in the same context. To copy a student who has already given a good performance (i.e., a performance for which the teacher gave little or no feedback) would involve less risk of error than trying a new utterance. Therefore, to not choose the copying option when it is available is considered an instance of acting despite the possibility of exposing weak points in one's language ability.

It should be noted that some students lack the language ability necessary to imitate their peers. It therefore becomes difficult to distinguish in observation between a student who does not imitate because he chooses to and a student who does not imitate because he is unable. However, awareness that one is exposing weak points in one's language ability seems to be present in both situations. While the degree of risk may be different between a student that can imitate and chooses not to in favor of saying something else and a student that cannot imitate and therefore has no choice but to say something else, there is certainly risk involved in both situations. Therefore, when students were observed to use linguistic elements in ways that had not yet been tried, the potential distinction was not pursued between students who could have imitated a previous utterance and students who were unable to imitate.
3. Using negotiation strategies to request clarification ("please say that again", "what does ___ mean?", etc.)

In using a negotiation strategy, the student is essentially indicating that something was not understood. The use of a negotiation strategy reveals that there was some failure in the communication process. Thus, to use a negotiation strategy is to act despite the possibility of exposing weak points in one’s language ability.

Whenever a student responded to an utterance with language indicating that they either desired the utterance to be repeated or desired an explanation of the meaning of a specific word, it was treated as an instance of using a negotiation strategy. Instances where students said “I don’t understand” in Japanese while maintaining eye contact with the person they were speaking to were also considered to be instances of using a negotiation strategy.

4. (-) Giving up on communication in Japanese (resorting to English, refusing to participate, etc.)

The decision to not speak involves very little possibility of exposing weak points in one’s language ability, and therefore to choose not to speak was treated as choosing not to engage in behavior in which one acts despite the possibility of exposing weak points in one’s language ability.

Instances where students said “I don’t understand” in Japanese and broke eye contact, instances where students used English to indicate a lack of understanding, instances
where students indicated in English, Japanese, or through gestures that the teacher ought to call on someone else were all considered instances of giving up on communication in Japanese.

5. Tolerance of possible incorrectness in using the language

Behavior indicative of a tolerance for possible incorrectness in using the language was considered LCRTB. It was assumed that a high tolerance for incorrectness would lead one to continue to take risks in using the language even after previous attempts had resulted in incorrect utterances. Thus, a tolerance for incorrectness in one's language use was considered to lead one to continue to act despite the possibility of exposing weak points in one's language ability.

A large amount of speaker error with a low amount of signs of frustration (e.g., apologizing, sighing, grunting ("ahh", "errgh", etc.)) was considered indicative of tolerance of possible incorrectness. Questions such as "What do you want me to say?" were taken as indicative of a strong desire to provide a correct response, and thus a low tolerance of possible incorrectness.
The following two items were hypothesized to be linked to language class risk-taking behavior, even though the link did not seem as straightforward as with the previous items.

6. (-) Hesitancy in using a certain linguistic element

It is probable that hesitancy is sometimes but not always an indicator of LCRTB. While a student may hesitate because he is loathe to expose weak points in his language ability, he may also hesitate merely because he is trying to remember a word. In the latter instance, the risk involved in speaking would seem highly dependent on whether or not the student remembers the word. If the word is remembered, the risk in speaking would be substantially less than if the word were not remembered. Thus, it is unclear if hesitation is always indicative of LCRTB or not.

Hesitation is fairly easy to observe in students. However, it should be noted there can be a great deal of variation in the degree of hesitation a student engages in.

7. (-) Engaging in behavior which seeks for confirmation that an utterance was correct (Raising of shoulders/hands, raised eyebrows, English-like rising intonation)

This behavior could be taken as indicative of LCRTB, since a student would probably not seek for confirmation that an utterance was correct unless he was uncertain if his utterance was correct or not. In other words, a student would not engage in behavior which seeks for confirmation that an utterance was correct unless he had acted despite the possibility of exposing weak points in his language ability.
However, this behavior may also be indicative of a lack of LCRTB. For instance, it seems possible that a high tolerance of possible incorrectness in one's language use could lead a student not to engage in behavior which seeks for confirmation that an utterance was correct, since correctness is not a major issue for that student. Thus, this item is hypothesized to be related to a lack of LCRTB, although the opposite is also a possibility.

Behaviors similar to those mentioned above have been identified in previous studies on language risk-taking behavior. In Ely’s operationalization of language class risk-taking, “a tolerance of possible incorrectness or inexactitude in using the language” and “a lack of hesitancy about using a newly encountered linguistic element” are listed as risk-taking behaviors (1986, p. 8). These behaviors coincide with items 5 and 6 above. Ely’s operationalization of language class risk-taking also lists “a willingness to use linguistic elements perceived to be complex or difficult” (1986, p. 8). This behavior coincides with item 1 above, and is also somewhat related to item 2. Beebe’s observation that substituting a simpler structure for a more difficult one heightens one’s chances of expressing oneself correctly (1980, p. 174), as well as Beebe’s operationalization of risk-taking in terms of the number times a difficult structure was attempted (1980, p. 176) relates to item 1. Beebe’s observation that “you take a risk every time you open your mouth in a foreign language” (1983, p. 39) is related to item 4 above. Rubin’s observation that the good language learner is willing to make mistakes in order to learn and communicate (1975, p. 47) is related to item 5.
3.4 Questionnaire design

3.4.1 Determining questionnaire questions

Fourteen items related to the seven traits either assumed or hypothesized to be manifestations of LCRTB were formulated.

Questions relating to language classroom risk-taking behavior

In writing questionnaire items related to the seven behaviors identified as manifestations of LCRTB, both negatively and positively worded items were written. Both negatively and positively worded items were used in order to minimize the effects of “self-flattery” and “approval motive” (Oller and Perkins, 1978a; cf. Oller and Perkins, 1978b; Oller, 1981; Oller 1982; Upshur, Acton, Arthur, and Guiora, 1978; Garner, 1980). The following is a list of the questionnaire items written for each behavior:

(-) Favoring linguistic elements which are more familiar over those that are less familiar

1. I try to say complicated sentences in class when I have the chance.

2. (-) When possible, I avoid using linguistic elements I have difficulty with while performing in class.
Using linguistic elements in ways that have not yet been tried by others (as opposed to imitating other students that have already given a similar performance in the same context)

3. I try to incorporate previously learned words and structural patterns in new situations in class, even when the focus of the activity is on more recently learned items.

4. (-) When performing in class, I try to imitate what other students have said in a similar context.

Using negotiation strategies (“please say that again”, “what does ___ mean?”, etc.)

5. When I don’t understand, I try to seek clarification in Japanese.

6. (-) When I don’t understand what was said to me in Japanese, I try to respond without seeking for clarification in order to hide the fact that I don’t understand.

(-) Giving up on communication in Japanese (resorting to English, refusing to participate, “I don’t understand (so call on someone else)”) 

7. (-) I sometimes use English in class to seek clarification on something I don’t understand.

8. (-) When I don’t understand, I try to get the teacher to call on someone else.
Tolerance of possible incorrectness in using the language

9. I try to use linguistic elements which I find difficult in class, even when I may be using them incorrectly.

10. (-) As much as possible, I avoid using linguistic elements when I don't feel confident that I can use them correctly.

11. (-) I sometimes wonder what the teacher wants me to say.

(-) Hesitancy in using a certain linguistic element

12. I usually speak without hesitation, even when I am not sure if what I am going to say is correct.

13. (-) When performing in class I am hesitant about using structural patterns that I am not sure I can use correctly.

(-) Engaging in behavior which seeks for confirmation that an utterance was correct

(Raising of shoulders/hands, raised eyebrows, rising intonation)

14. (-) If I am unsure if what I am saying is correct, I try to get the teacher to confirm whether or not what I said was correct.

Questions relating to study habits, daily grades, classroom/group dynamics, teaching style

Questions concerning study habits, daily grades, classroom/group dynamics, and teaching style were also included on the questionnaire. The following is a list of the
questionnaire items included concerning study habits, daily grades, classroom/group dynamics, and teaching style:

**Daily grades**

I would do anything (in terms of effort) to get an A in Japanese.\(^{29}\)

When I perform in class, I don’t worry about how my performance will affect my grade.

**Classroom/group dynamics**

Performing in front of a large group of students makes me more worried about making mistakes than performing in front of a smaller group.

I usually study with a group.

**Teaching style**

I worry more about making mistakes when speaking Japanese in front of some teachers than others.

I avoid asking certain teachers for help.

\(^{29}\) This item, which was taken as a measure of students’ desire for grade, was deliberately worded strongly in order to create some measurable variation in student responses.
Study habits

I find myself less worried about making mistakes in class when I feel well prepared.

I usually feel prepared to perform when I come to class.

I study an average of ___ before each ACT class. \(^{30}\)

- a. less than 15 minutes
- b. 15-30 minutes
- c. 30 minutes – 1 hour
- d. 1-2 hours
- e. 2-3 hours
- f. more than 3 hours

Questions relating to participants' biographical information

A section on participants’ biographical information was also included in the questionnaire. This section included the following seven biographical questions:

Age: ___

Gender: Male/Female

I am currently enrolled in the following Japanese language course: ___

Expected grade in the Japanese language course I am taking: ___

---

\(^{30}\) This item, since it was worded in the form of a multiple choice question, was included in the biographical information section of the questionnaire (see Appendix A).
I am a:

a. Freshman
b. Sophomore
c. Junior
d. Senior
e. Graduate/Professional student
f. Other

My current GPA is:

a. 3.7-4.0
b. 3.3-3.69
c. 3.0-3.29
d. 2.7-3.0
e. 2.3-2.69
f. 2.0-2.29
g. Below 2.0

I am taking Japanese:

a. To fulfill a requirement for my major
b. To fulfill a GE requirement
c. As a free elective choice
d. Even though it does not help me progress toward graduation

Codes were used in place of participants’ names as the means of cross-referencing participants. Codes were used for the following reasons: 1) to ensure that participants
would be de-identified in the statistical analysis. 2) to assure participants that their responses were confidential, and 3) to provide a means to identify participants who had been selected for observation (see section 3.7 below).

3.4.2 Organization of the questions on the questionnaire

Each questionnaire item was followed by a five-point Likert-type response scale. The options on the scale were labeled “5-agree strongly”, “4-somewhat agree”, “3-neutral”, “2-somewhat disagree”, “1-disagree strongly”. The items concerning biographical information and the item regarding amount of time spent studying before each ACT class were not followed by five-point Likert-type response scales because all these questions were either multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank in format.

Questionnaire items were organized so that items would be evenly dispersed. The following guidelines were used. Items concerning a certain topic (such as study habits, tolerance for possible incorrectness, etc.) were placed so that they would not occur adjacent to each other. Negatively worded items were placed so that they would not occur adjacent to each other. Items concerning study habits, daily grades, classroom/group dynamics, and teaching style were interspersed more or less evenly among the fourteen items concerning LCRTB; thus, roughly every third item concerns study habits, daily grades, classroom/group dynamics, or teaching style, while other items concern LCRTB.

The items which appeared under the biographical information section were not organized in any special way. See appendix A for the resultant questionnaire that was used.
3.5 Item total correlations and LCRTB scores

After collection of the first set of questionnaires was complete, item total correlations\textsuperscript{31} were performed to determine if any of the questionnaire items related to LCRTB did not provide good measures of the degree to which a student engages in LCRTB. First, responses for items which were considered to be related to a lack of LCRTB were altered so that they would read positively, in the following manner: 5=1, 4=2, 3=3, 2=4, 1=5. Correlations were then performed between participant responses for each item and total participant responses, for the eleven items assumed to be manifestations of LCRTB using the Pearson product-moment correlation\textsuperscript{32}. In other words, participants’ responses to the eleven items assumed to be manifestations of LCRTB were totaled, and correlations were performed between responses to each item and the total. The results of these correlations are given below in table 3.2\textsuperscript{33}.

\textsuperscript{31} Item total correlations are used to evaluate item validity when a number of items are meant to measure a single variable. Correlations are performed between participants’ response values for each item and the sum of participants’ response values for all items. A low item total correlation for a single item suggests that the item does not accurately measure the same variable as the other items.

\textsuperscript{32} All correlations performed for this study are Pearson product-moment correlations.

\textsuperscript{33} See section 4.1.1 for a discussion of the item total correlations values of items 1-11.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Degree of Correlation</th>
<th>p Value(^{34})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I try to say complicated sentences in class when I have the chance.</td>
<td>0.572</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>(-) When possible, I avoid using linguistic elements I have difficulty with while performing in class.</td>
<td>0.630</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I try to incorporate previously learned words and structural patterns in new situations in class, even when the focus of the activity is on more recently learned items.</td>
<td>0.305</td>
<td>0.039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>(-) When performing in class, I try to imitate what other students have said in a similar context.</td>
<td>0.408</td>
<td>0.605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>When I don’t understand, I try to seek clarification in Japanese.</td>
<td>0.466</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>(-) When I don’t understand what was said to me in Japanese, I try to respond without seeking for clarification in order to hide the fact that I don’t understand.</td>
<td>0.444</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>(-) I sometimes use English in class to seek clarification on something I don’t understand.</td>
<td>0.066</td>
<td>0.661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>(-) When I don’t understand, I try to get the teacher to call on someone else.</td>
<td>0.617</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I try to use linguistic elements which I find difficult in class, even when I may be using them incorrectly.</td>
<td>0.750</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>(-) As much as possible, I avoid using linguistic elements when I don’t feel confident that I can use them correctly.</td>
<td>0.762</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>(-) I sometimes wonder what the teacher wants me to say.</td>
<td>0.508</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: Item total correlations for items assumed to be manifestations of LCRTB

Next, correlations were performed for the additional three items hypothesized to be manifestations of LCRTB. The correlations performed were between the three items hypothesized to be manifestations of LCRTB and the totals of responses for the eleven

---

\(^{34}\) p is a measure of statistical significance. It shows the degree of probability that such a correlation could be obtained when, in fact, there is no correlation. Typically, a correlation is considered statistically significant when p<.05 or p<.01 (Aron and Aron, 2002, p. 58). For purposes of this study, p values less than .05 were considered significant.
items assumed to be manifestations of LCRTB used in the previous item total correlations. Thus, the responses to items hypothesized to be manifestations of LCRTB did not influence the item totals used for this correlation. The results of these correlations are given below in Table 3.3.\(^\text{35}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Degree of Correlation</th>
<th>p Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I usually speak without hesitation, even when I am not sure if what I am going to say is correct.</td>
<td>0.446</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>(-) When performing in class I am hesitant about using structural patterns that I am not sure I can use correctly.</td>
<td>0.426</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>(-) If I am unsure if what I am saying is correct, I try to get the teacher to confirm whether or not what I said was correct.</td>
<td>-0.215</td>
<td>0.152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3: Item total correlations for items hypothesized to be manifestations of LCRTB

Participants’ LCRTB scores, which are intended to measure the degree to which students tend to engage in LCRTB, were determined by adding participants’ responses to the twelve items for which \(p<.05\). In other words, the LCRTB score for a particular participant is determined by adding that participant’s responses to the twelve items which, according to the item total correlations, provided good measures of the degree to which a student engages in LCRTB. Those items for which \(p>.05\) were not included in participants’ LCRTB scores. The items not included in the LCRTB scores were #7 “I sometimes use English in class to seek clarification on something I don’t understand” and #14 “If I am unsure if what I am saying is correct, I try to get the teacher to confirm

\(^{35}\) See section 4.1.1 for a discussion of the item total correlations values of items 12-14.
whether or not what I said was correct.” Thus, the LCRTB scores contain participant responses to items related to the first six manifestations of LCRTB, but not the seventh (“engaging in behavior which seeks for confirmation that an utterance was correct”)\textsuperscript{36}. Since responses for each item vary between 0 and 5, values for the LCRTB scores can vary between 0 and 60. The Cronbach’s alpha\textsuperscript{37} for the LCRTB scores was calculated at 0.85. The LCRTB scores are therefore considered to be a valid measure of the degree to which students of Japanese in PCA tend to engage in LCRTB.

### 3.6 Observation of participants

#### 3.6.1 Practice observations

Three practice observations of classes were performed by the researcher so that the researcher could become familiar with the observation process. These practice observations were performed prior to the observations used for the case studies. Notes were taken during each practice observation, then discarded.

#### 3.6.2 Observation method

Each participant selected for observation as a case study was observed three times. Observations took place during the participant’s regularly scheduled Japanese class. When possible, the participant was observed for a few minutes before and after class as well. The number of times the participant was called upon, the total number of students

\textsuperscript{36} Manifestations of LCRTB numbers 1-5 are assumed to be manifestations of LCRTB. Numbers 6 and 7 are hypothesized to be manifestations of LCRTB. See section 3.3.3 for all seven manifestations of LCRTB.

\textsuperscript{37} Cronbach’s alpha indicates how well a set of test items measure a single variable. In general, a measure should have a Cronbach’s alpha of at least 0.6, and preferably close to 0.9 (Aron and Aron, 2002, p. 271).
in the classroom, and the coded identity of the teacher (if the class was taught by more than one teacher) were all recorded. The number of times the participant engaged in a certain behavior considered to be a manifestation of LCRTB (e.g., favoring linguistic elements that are more familiar over those that are less familiar, using negotiation strategies, etc.) was recorded. For the behaviors of favoring linguistic elements that are more familiar over those that are less familiar, using linguistic elements in ways that have not yet been tried, tolerance of possible incorrectness in using the language, and hesitancy in using a certain linguistic elements, the number of times a student engaged in a behavior considered to be opposite to the expected behavior (e.g., a marked lack of hesitancy, imitating other students, etc.) was also recorded.

Along with the number of times a certain behavior occurred, appropriate notes concerning the nature of that behavior were also taken. For example, the degree of hesitancy (large or small) or an explanation of why a certain behavior was considered to be tolerance of possible incorrectness in using the language may have been recorded.

Notes were also taken on any other behaviors which seemed noteworthy. Behaviors related to classroom/group dynamics and teaching style, such as how the participant interacted with his peers or how the participant responded to the teacher were given focus. However, other behaviors that seemed significant, such as speaking out when not called upon or saying something quietly to oneself (cf. Fiy, 1986) were also recorded.

It should be noted that the behavior “favoring linguistic elements that are more familiar over those that are less familiar” was difficult to observe in the case studies. Even though this behavior had been observed during the preliminary observations of students, the students observed as case studies and during the practice observations rarely
provided utterances in which it was possible to observe this behavior manifested.

Consequently, this behavior will not be mentioned in the descriptions of the case studies.

3.7 Recording of daily grades

Participants’ average daily grade scores for the fall and spring quarters in which the questionnaires were distributed were recorded as data. Only the daily grades of those participants who signed the supplemental consent form were recorded. The number of times participants were given zero as their daily grade, and the number of times it was possible for participants to attend class during each quarter were also recorded. This record was made using the Data Collection Sheet (Appendix D).

Participants’ daily grades were then adjusted so that absences would not have a negative impact on the average. Thus, participants’ average daily grade scores are composed only of those scores given when the person attended class and had the opportunity to perform.

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38 In the program investigated, students are only given zero for a daily grade if they do not attend class.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings from the questionnaire and observation are presented and discussed in the following two sub-sections.

4.1 The Questionnaire

4.1.1 Correlations between LCRTB items and LCRTB scores

The item correlations given above in tables 3.2 and 3.3 are restated below in table 4.1. Items 1-11 are those which were assumed to be manifestations of LCRTB. Items 12-14 are those which were hypothesized to be manifestations of LCRTB.

\[ \text{See section 3.5 for how the item total correlations were performed.} \]
<table>
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<td>-0.215</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.1: Correlations between LCRTB items and LCRTB scores**

Of the three items which were hypothesized to be manifestations of LCRTB, the items related to hesitation (#12 and #13) were found to be positively correlated with the other LCRTB items. This finding suggests that hesitancy in using certain linguistic
elements is, in fact, a manifestation of a lack of LCRTB. In other words, students who engage in other LCRTBs (tolerating possible incorrectness, favoring more unfamiliar linguistic elements, etc.) will be likely to use linguistic elements without hesitation as well, assuming that students were able to report their own behavior accurately. This finding also provides evidence that Ely (1986) was justified in including “a lack of hesitancy in using a newly encountered linguistic element” (1986, p. 8) in his operationalization of LCRTB.

It was hypothesized that engaging in behavior which seeks for confirmation that an utterance was correct would be negatively correlated with LCRTB. However, this item was found to be positively correlated to LCRTB\(^4\), although not significantly. It seems that this item is not, in fact, strongly related to LCRTB.

Item #7, related to the use of English, had been assumed to be a manifestation of a lack of LCRTB. However, the item total correlations showed that this item was not strongly correlated with other manifestations of LCRTB. This finding is rather surprising, since, for native speakers of English, choosing to speak English should involve far less possibility of exposing weak points in one's language ability than speaking Japanese. There are a couple possible explanations. One possibility is that this finding is due to significant differences in ability among the students surveyed. Since 1st year students would presumably be more likely to resort to English than 4th year students, some

\(^4\) Item 14 was hypothesized to be a manifestation of a lack of LCRTB. As such, student responses were altered to read positively. Thus, the negative correlation found in table 4.1.3 indicates that item 14 is actually a manifestation of LCRTB rather than a manifestation of a lack of LCRTB, as was hypothesized.
variation in responses may have been created which was not related to LCRTB, but rather to how far one had progressed through the program.

Another possible reason why item #7 does not correlate with other manifestations of LCRTB could be that most students who use English in class do so accidentally. A student who accidentally uses English to seek clarification on something would not be doing so to avoid speaking Japanese—it is simply an accident. If the majority of students who spoke English in class did so accidentally, this would explain the lack of correlation with other manifestations of LCRTB.

A third possible reason why item #7 does not correlate with other manifestations of LCRTB is that students are explicitly discouraged from using English in class, and using English in class can negatively affect a student's grade. Since using English in class may lead to a bad grade, using English in class may actually involve more risk than not using English in class. Other possible reasons why item #7 does not correlate with other manifestations of LCRTB may also exist.

To determine whether or not 1st year students were more likely to resort to English than students who had progressed farther through the program, the mean response for item #7 was calculated for each of four groups of students mentioned above in section 3.2.1 (101 students; 103 students; 104, 206, 210/211, and 507 students; and 509, 510/511, 610, 612 students). The results of the mean responses for item #7 for each of these groups are summarized in figure 4.1, below.
Figure 4.1: Mean values for item #7

As figure 4.1 shows, 1st year students (101 and 103) were actually slightly less likely to resort to using English than 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year students. Thus, item #7's lack of correlation with other manifestations of LCRTB cannot be related to 1st year students using English more than 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year students.

4.1.2 LCRTB and Students’ Performance Ability

The degree of correlation between participants’ adjusted average daily grade scores and their LCRTB scores was 0.339 ($p=0.033$) for autumn quarter, and 0.507 (0.002) for spring quarter. Thus, the greater the tendency to engage in LCRTB, the better the daily grade average. These data suggest that there is a significant relationship between LCRTB and students’ performance ability, consistent with studies on LCRTB in other programs (cf. Ely, 1986; Samimy and Tabuse, 1992).
However, it should be noted that correlation is not the same as causation (Aron and Aron, 2002, p. 270; see also Oller and Perkins, 1978a; Oller and Perkins, 1978b; Upshur et al., 1978). While it seems likely that taking risks in using the target language leads to better language ability (see section 2.2), it is also probable that having better language ability would lead one to take risks (cf. Beebe, 1983, p. 58). For example, a student who is consistently successful in communicating in Japanese may feel emboldened to take more risks. Likewise, a student who consistently fails to communicate what he intends may avoid even the smallest risk in an attempt to achieve some degree of success. It therefore seems likely that the relationship between LCRTB and language performance ability is one of bi-directional causation (Aron and Aron, 2002, p. 270) where LCRTB and language performance ability influence each other (see section 4.1.4 below).

4.1.3 Average LCRTB scores

LCRTB score averages were computed for each of the four groups of students mentioned above in section 3.2.1 to assess the degree to which the average student engaged in LCRTB at different stages in the program. The results are summarized in figure 4.2 below.
Figure 4.2: Average LCRTB scores

As figure 4.2 shows, the average LCRTB score stays fairly consistent as students progress through the program, although there is a slight increase. The average score is, in general, slightly above the middle score of 30. These data suggest that the average student studying under PCA engages in LCRTB slightly more than he avoids engaging in LCRTB.

Mean LCRTB scores were also computed for male and female participants. The mean LCRTB score for male participants is 34.04. The mean LCRTB score for female participants is 34.47. There appears to be no significant difference in mean LCRTB score between male and female participants.
4.1.4 Standard deviation in LCRTB scores

Standard deviation was also computed for each of the groups mentioned above in section 4.1.1. The results are given below in figure 4.3.

![Standard deviation among LCRTB scores](image)

**Figure 4.3: Standard deviation in LCRTB scores**

Figure 4.3 shows an overall slight increase in the standard deviation of LCRTB scores as students progress through the program. The increase suggests that as students progress through the program the degree to which they either engage in LCRTB or avoid engaging in LCRTB increases to a small degree. In other words, there is simultaneously more LCRTB and less LCRTB within each group of students.

The increase in standard deviation may support the claim that LCRTB and performance ability (as measured by average daily grade) have a bi-directional causal relationship. If LCRTB and performance ability have a bi-directional causal relationship,
then it would be expected that those who are less inclined to take risks would take fewer and fewer risks as they progressed through the program, and vice-versa for those who are inclined toward taking risks. For example, a student who did not take risks would be more likely to perform poorly, which poor performance would encourage the student to take fewer risks, which would in turn cause him to have an even worse performance, which would cause him to take fewer risks, etc. A similar effect would be expected in students who do take risks—the taking of risks would cause better performance, which would in turn cause them to take more risks, etc. Thus, the increase in standard deviation in LCRTB scores as students progress through the program may provide evidence that LCRTB and performance ability have a bi-directional causal relationship.

Standard deviations were also computed for male and female participants. The standard deviation for male participants was 5.93. The standard deviation for female participants was 7.32. This finding suggests that (in reference to LCRTB) male student participants were slightly more likely to be moderate risk-takers than female student participants. However, the difference is slight, and it is unclear whether this finding can be generalized to a larger population.

4.1.5 Correlation between daily grades, study habits, teaching style, and classroom/group dynamics and LCRTB scores

Correlations were performed between LCRTB scores and responses to questionnaire items related to daily grades, classroom/group dynamics, teaching style, and study habits for both autumn quarter and spring quarter questionnaires. The results of these
correlations are given below in table 4.2. The correlations that are significant\(^{41}\) are marked with asterisks.

\(^{41}\) A p value of <.05 was considered significant.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Autumn (n=46)</th>
<th>Spring (n=34)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>p Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I would do anything (in terms of effort) to get an A in Japanese.</td>
<td>-0.146</td>
<td>0.334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>When I perform in class, I don’t worry about how my performance will affect my grade.</td>
<td>0.418*</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Performing in front of a large group of students makes me more worried about making mistakes than performing in front of a smaller group.</td>
<td>-0.287</td>
<td>0.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I usually study with a group.</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>0.592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I worry more about making mistakes when speaking Japanese in front of some teachers than others.</td>
<td>-0.278</td>
<td>0.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I avoid asking certain teachers for help.</td>
<td>-0.182</td>
<td>0.226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I find myself less worried about making mistakes in class when I feel well prepared.</td>
<td>-0.001</td>
<td>0.995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I usually feel prepared to perform when I come to class.</td>
<td>0.307*</td>
<td>0.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Average amount of time spent studying before each ACT class. 42</td>
<td>-0.141</td>
<td>0.349</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: Correlations between LCRTB scores and student responses to questionnaire items concerning daily grades, classroom/group dynamics, teaching style, and study habits

\[42\] For this item, students indicated the range of time in which the amount of time they spent studying fell. In order to perform correlations using responses to this multiple choice item, the middle value of the selected range, in minutes, was substituted for the selected range. The following substitutions were made: less than 15 minutes: 7.5 minutes; 15-30 minutes: 22.5 minutes; 30 minutes – 1 hour: 45 minutes; 1-2 hours: 90 minutes. No participant marked “2-3 hours” or “more than 3 hours”.

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Correlations were also performed between average daily grades and responses to questionnaire items related to daily grades, study habits, teaching style, and classroom group dynamics for both autumn quarter and spring quarter questionnaires. Table 4.3 displays the correlation scores, in which significant correlations are marked with asterisks.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Autumn (n=46)</th>
<th>Spring (n=34)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td>p Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I would do anything (in terms of effort) to get an A in Japanese.</td>
<td>-0.114</td>
<td>0.484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>When I perform in class, I don’t worry about how my performance will affect my grade.</td>
<td>0.134</td>
<td>0.411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Performing in front of a large group of students makes me more worried about making mistakes than performing in front of a smaller group.</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>0.866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I usually study with a group.</td>
<td>-0.180</td>
<td>0.265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I worry more about making mistakes when speaking Japanese in front of some teachers than others.</td>
<td>-0.044</td>
<td>0.789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I avoid asking certain teachers for help.</td>
<td>0.092</td>
<td>0.572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I find myself less worried about making mistakes in class when I feel well prepared.</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>0.832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I usually feel prepared to perform when I come to class.</td>
<td>0.161</td>
<td>0.322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Average amount of time spent studying before each ACT class.</td>
<td>-0.119</td>
<td>0.466</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3: Correlations between average daily grades and student responses to questionnaire items concerning daily grades, classroom/group dynamics, teaching style, and study habits

The only item significantly correlated with LCRTB score in both autumn and spring quarters is item #22 “I usually feel prepared to perform when I come to class”. While the correlation is not high, it is significant. This finding suggests that those students who consistently prepare well for class tend to feel that they engage in LCRTB. This finding
also suggests that a daily grading system may have a positive effect on students’ LCRTB, through encouraging students to prepare well for class (cf. Choi and Samimy, 2002, p. 29).

It is interesting to note that the other two items related to study habits, item #21 “I find myself less worried about making mistakes in class when I feel well prepared” and item #23, average amount of time spent studying before each ACT class, were not significantly correlated with LCRTB. The degree to which students tend to engage in LCRTB appears to be generally unaffected by fear of making mistakes or by the amount of time students spend in preparing for class. The correlation between LCRTB scores and item #22, and lack of correlation between LCRTB scores and item #21, further suggests that these two items are not so closely related. It may be that preparing well does not necessarily mean that one is not worried about making mistakes in class. Consequently, it may be that students who engage in LCRTB in class do so regardless of whether or not they are worried about making mistakes.

The correlation between LCRTB scores and item #22 and lack of correlation between LCRTB scores and item #21 may be related to the findings of Naiman et al. (1978) and Ely (1986). Naiman et al. (1978) found that student certainty in hand-raising had little correlation with performance ability (pp. 51-53), while Ely (1986) found that voluntary participation, which was operationalized as the number of times a student asked or answered a question or provided information in the target language without being individually nominated to do so (p. 13) was a significant predictor of proficiency (p. 19). The findings of Naiman et al and Ely and the correlations between LCRTB scores and items #21 and #22 from the current study are similar in that the items related to the
learners’ mental processes (student certainty in hand raising; being less worried about making mistakes in class when feeling well prepared) were not significant, while the items related to learners’ behavior (voluntary participation; consistently preparing well) were significant. However, while these findings seem related, it is unclear at present how to interpret these findings.

It is interesting to note that both item #21 and item #22 are positively correlated with average daily grade in spring quarter. Thus, being less worried about making mistakes when one feels well prepared (item #21) and consistently preparing well (item #22) are significantly correlated with performance ability (as measured by average daily grade). The finding for item #21 supports Naiman et al.’s finding that good language learners succeed in coping with the affective demands made upon them by language learning (1978, p. 14). The findings for items #21 and #22 seem to support the idea that the best remedy to fight anxiety is to over prepare (so that you are less worried about making mistakes).

It is noteworthy that items #21 and #22 were not significantly correlated with average daily grade in autumn quarter. It may be that students who are fairly new to the language program investigated study differently than those students who are more familiar with the program. It also may be that in autumn quarter students were not yet consistent in how they studied and unable to accurately report their own study habits.

The correlation between LCRTB score and item #22 and lack of correlation between LCRTB score and item #23 suggests that these two items are also not closely related. These findings suggest that the amount of time one spends preparing for class is unrelated to whether or not one feels prepared to perform in class. Furthermore, the fact that item
item #23’s degree of correlation with daily grade was significantly negative in spring quarter seems noteworthy. This negative correlation with average daily grade suggests that in spring quarter students who perform well in class typically feel that they spend less time studying than those who perform poorly feel, a surprising finding. In autumn quarter item #23’s degree of correlation with daily grade was also negative, although not statistically significant. These findings may indicate that students who are successful use their study time effectively, while unsuccessful students do not.

Item #16 “When I perform in class, I don’t worry about how my performance will affect my grade” had a significant degree of correlation with LCRTB score in autumn quarter. This finding suggests that, in autumn quarter, students who are not concerned about how their performance will affect their grade tend to engage in LCRTB. Conversely, in autumn quarter worry about how one’s performance will affect one’s grade is associated with not engaging in LCRTB. Thus, it seems that in autumn quarter those students who are more concerned about their grade are less likely to take risks in class. This finding supports Naiman et al.’s finding that good language learners succeed in coping with the affective demands made upon them by language learning (1978, p. 14). It also suggests that in autumn quarter giving daily grades may have a negative impact on the degree to which a student engages in LCRTB among students who tend to worry about how their performance will affect their grade.

It is interesting to note that item #16 was not significantly correlated with LCRTB scores in the spring quarter questionnaire. This difference between the correlations in autumn quarter and spring quarter may suggest that students grow used to a daily grading system over time. Thus, it may be that worry about how one’s performance affects one’s
grade is a significant factor in predicting students’ LCRTB early in the academic year. but this may not be a significant factor later in the academic year, when students have become more accustomed to being graded daily on their performance.

It also seems relevant that item #16 was not significantly correlated with average daily grade. Thus, while item #16’s correlation with LCRTB in autumn quarter suggests that in autumn quarter a daily grading system may have a negative impact on some students’ LCRTB, it does not suggest that the daily grading system has a significant negative impact on a student’s performance ability. It appears that worry about how one’s performance will affect one’s grade can have a significant effect on one’s LCRTB, but has a less than significant effect on one’s performance overall.

It is interesting to note that not worrying about how one’s performance will affect one’s grade was significantly correlated with LCRTB score in autumn quarter, while other similar items (item #17 “Performing in front of a large group of students makes me more worried about making mistakes than performing in front of a smaller group” and item #19 “I worry more about making mistakes when speaking Japanese in front of some teachers than others”) were not significantly correlated with LCRTB score. It may be that, in autumn quarter, students are more concerned about how their performance affects their grade than how it affects their standing with their peers or with the teacher.

It is also noteworthy that item #15 “I would do anything (in terms of effort) to get an A in Japanese” was not significantly correlated with LCRTB scores or average daily grade. Thus, a perceived high level of effort put forth in order to receive a good grade seems to be unrelated to the level of engagement in LCRTB or the actual course grade.
This finding has an important implication in that some students may be putting forth a lot of effort into language study without seeing much result in terms of language ability.

There are a couple possible explanations for this finding. It may be the case that some students who are willing to put forth effort do not know how to study effectively. For example, if a student had poor study habits, the amount of effort put into studying would not be a good measure of the outcome of that studying. Similarly, a student with excellent study habits may be able to prepare sufficiently for class in a relatively small amount of time.

It also may be the case that performance ability is highly dependent on aptitude for language learning. Students with aptitude for language learning may be able to perform well after a minimal amount of studying, and students without aptitude for language learning may be unable to perform well even after a large amount of studying. Furthermore, it may be that student aptitude for language learning plays a larger factor in learning an East Asian language than in learning a cognate language, such as French or Spanish. Thus, it is also possible that aptitude for language learning plays a large part in accounting for individual learner differences in PCA.

A third possibility is that students who report that they “would do anything (in terms of effort) to get an A in Japanese” do not actually put forth a lot of effort. Since the answer to this item, as well as all of the questionnaire items, is based on the student’s perception rather than actual observed behavior, there is the possibility that a student could give an inaccurate response because of a misperception of the student’s own behavior. There also may be a tendency for poorer students to want to show that they really want an A, while more capable students may have a tendency to want to show that
they do well even though they aren’t trying to. These possibilities could also account for
the findings of item #15.

It is interesting that item #16 (“When I perform in class, I don’t worry about how my
performance will affect my grade”) was significantly correlated with LCRTB in autumn
quarter, while item #15 (“I would do anything (in terms of effort) to get an A in
Japanese”) was not. It should be noted that item #16 measures how worried a student is
about how their performance will affect their grade, while item #15 measures how much
a student wants to get a high grade. It is likely that some students want very much to get
good grades but do not worry about getting good grades, either because they are very
confident or because they feel they can learn from a poor grade or for some other reason.
The converse is also possible. Some students may not be willing to put forth much effort
into getting good grades, and yet worry terribly about how their performance will affect
their grade during class. Thus, while these items are related, they are not opposites.

The finding that item #23 (average amount of time spent studying before each ACT
class) is negatively correlated with average daily grade and LCRTB score43 is also worth
noting. It shows that, to an extent, those students who think that they put more time into
studying for class are typically less successful. As with item #15, these findings may be
related to student language learning aptitude, they may be related to students’ ability to
study effectively, and they may be related to students misreporting or misperceiving their
own behavior.

43 While the correlations between item #23 and average daily grade and LCRTB score in
both autumn and spring quarter were all negative, only the correlation between item #23
and average daily grade in spring quarter was statistically significant.
Items #19 “I worry more about making mistakes when speaking Japanese in front of some teachers than others” and #20 “I avoid asking certain teachers for help” related to teaching style were found not to be significantly correlated with LCRTB score. This finding suggests that teaching style does not have a significant impact on whether or not a student engages in LCRTB. However, teachers in the program examined all have undergone training in how to teach language with PCA. It may be that the teaching styles of the teachers in the program investigated were similar enough that no effect was seen. In other words, it is not that teaching style does not significantly affect LCRTB, but that in the program investigated individual differences among the teachers do not amount to significantly different teaching styles. It should also be noted that in the program investigated third- and fourth-year students are not exposed to as many different teachers as first- and second-year students. Thus, differences in teaching style may not be as relevant to the language learning experience of third- and fourth-year students as it is to first- and second-year students.

Items #17 “performing in front of a large group of students makes me more worried about making mistakes than performing in front of a smaller group” and #18 “I usually study with a group” related to classroom/group dynamics were also found not to be significantly correlated with LCRTB score. The finding for #17 suggests that experiencing stage fright or nervousness about performing in front of a group does not have a significant effect on whether or not a student engages in LCRTB. The finding for #18 suggests that studying with a group does not have a significant effect on whether or not a student engages in LCRTB.
The finding for #18 seems to be related to the findings of Samimy and Pardin (1994). Samimy and Pardin (1994) found that risk-taking was a recurring and salient affective variable in the language learning experience of learners studying under the community language learning approach (pp. 383, 390). The community language learning approach utilizes group support as a means of reducing anxiety in the adult language acquisition process (p. 381). Thus, the finding that #18 “I usually study with a group” was not correlated with LCRTB score may be related to the finding that risk-taking was a recurring and salient affective variable in the language learning experience of learners studying under the community language learning approach, since group support, a major tenet of community language learning, does not seem to be correlated with LCRTB.

It is noteworthy that, with the exception of item #16, those items that were significantly correlated with LCRTB score in autumn quarter were significantly correlated with LCRTB score in spring quarter, and those items that were not significantly correlated with LCRTB score in autumn quarter were not significantly correlated with LCRTB score in spring quarter. This finding suggests that (with the exception of item #16) factors that affect students’ LCRTB are fairly consistent.

4.1.6 Limitations

One of the concerns with item #15 “I would do anything (in terms of effort) to get an A in Japanese” was the wording. This item needed to be worded in such a way that there would be variation in student responses, and students with stronger desires for a high grade could be distinguished from students with weaker desires for a high grade. Student responses showed that there was a reasonable amount of variation. The mean response
value (5=strongly agree, 1=strongly disagree) was 3.8. The standard deviation for student responses was 1.06. These values suggest that there was, in fact, a reasonable amount of variation in student responses, and that this item did measure students’ desire for grade as well as their purported willingness to put forth effort for better grades.

Student responses to item #17 “performing in front of a large group of students makes me more worried about making mistakes than performing in front of a smaller group” may not have been precise, since classroom size stays fairly consistent throughout the quarter. In other words, students do not have the chance to experience performing in front of larger or smaller groups. Thus, students may not be fully aware of how class size affects their ability to perform.

Item #23, average amount of time spent studying before each ACT class, was meant to measure how much effort a student was putting into learning Japanese. However, it is not necessarily the case that time spent studying is equivalent to effort. A student may, for example, study four hours a day, but study with the TV on. In this instance, more time is being put into studying but not necessarily more effort. It may be the case that a student who studies seriously or with effective learning strategies for half an hour would, in fact, put more effort into studying than a student who studies for four hours but doesn’t focus. Thus, it is possible that this item was not a good measure of the amount of effort a student put into studying.

Some of the questionnaire items were worded negatively. However, this negative wording may have created confusing items, and some variance in participant responses may be related to not understanding what the item said (Oller and Perkins, 1978a; Oller, 1981). Other sources of variance relevant to the current study may include “approval
motive”, or a natural tendency to want to appear acceptable in the eyes of others. “self-flattery”, or the tendency for a subject to rate himself as having traits he feels are desirable, and “response set”, or the tendency for a subject to be consistent once he has committed himself to a certain view, regardless of his actual experience (Oiler and Perkins. 1978a, pp. 86-88).

The wording of the items concerning teaching style focuses on differences in teaching style between teachers teaching the same class. As mentioned previously, these items may not be very relevant to the language learning experience of third- and fourth-year students, who are not exposed to as many different teachers as first- or second-year students. Thus, some variation in student responses may be due to the number of teachers students were exposed to, rather than teachers’ teaching style.

It should also be noted that investigating teaching style in terms of how teachers are different from each other fails to address the issue of the teacher’s role as coach in PCA. Since, in PCA, the teacher is responsible for helping students to experience culturally appropriate performances, students typically receive corrective feedback on each performance. It is possible that some students may perceive this abundant amount of feedback as criticism or a negative attitude in the instructor, and this aspect of PCA may have an impact on students’ LCRTB. However, since all teachers in PCA are in the same coaching role, investigating teaching style in terms of how teachers are different from each other fails to address the issue of how this coaching-style of teaching affects students’ LCRTB.

In this investigation forty-four students returned the questionnaire in fall quarter, and thirty-six students returned the questionnaire in spring quarter. This small sample size
may have an effect on the validity of the findings of the study, and may make it difficult to generalize the results of the study to a larger population. Furthermore, the statistical analyses performed on the four student groups use even smaller sample sizes, and are therefore even less accurate and more difficult to generalize.

Only students who chose to complete the questionnaire participated. It is possible that students who did not complete the questionnaire were those less inclined towards extra work. Thus, the participants who completed the questionnaire may not be representative of the general population of PCA students in this respect.

As mentioned previously, there may be a tendency for poorer students to want to report a greater amount of study time or greater desires for a good grade and for more capable students to want to report a smaller amount of study time or smaller desires for a good grade. This tendency may also have an effect on the results of the study.

4.2 Observations

The observations were performed between February 2nd and April 5th. Each participant selected for observation as a case study was observed three times. The participants selected for observation were each enrolled in a different class, although this was not a consideration during the selection process (see section 3.6).

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44 See section 3.2.1
4.2.1 Case Study A

4.2.1.1 Biographical information, daily grades, and LCRTB score

Alice is 24 years old and female. She is enrolled in 4th year Japanese classes. She was observed on February 15th and 28th and on March 1st during Japanese 611, the second of a three-course sequence. She is taking Japanese classes to fulfill a requirement for her major. She reports her GPA as between 3.0 and 3.29 as of autumn quarter of the academic year when the data were collected. She expected to obtain a grade of B+ in the Japanese class she was enrolled in during autumn quarter. She studies an average of 30 minutes-1 hour before each class. Her LCRTB score was calculated at 50.1 out of 60. Her performance score for autumn quarter was 96.8%, the equivalent of an A. While this is considerably higher than the B+ she predicted for her own course grade, absences and tests and quizzes may have caused her final grade to be closer to the grade she predicted for herself.

4.2.1.2 Language classroom risk-taking behavior

Alice engages in behavior that suggests a high tolerance of possible incorrectness in using the language. She typically does not show signs of frustration when she is unable to provide a correct response. In fact, she freely laughs at her own mistakes. She also freely guesses at the correct answer, even after several wrong attempts. However, Alice will also give up on communication, although this behavior was not observed frequently.

45 The biographical information for the case studies is taken from the first questionnaire, distributed during week 10 of autumn quarter of the current academic year (see section 3.2.3).
Alice freely uses negotiation strategies. These strategies tend to involve fairly detailed information on what was and was not understood. For example, “I understand X, but Y does not make any sense to me.” “Is X the context?” “Did you say X?”

Alice often hesitated when speaking. However, the amount of hesitation was not exceptionally large. She would usually say something before the amount of hesitation became exceptionally large.

Alice tends to engage in behavior that seeks for confirmation that an utterance was correct. Raised intonation, looking at the teacher immediately after saying something to another student, and directly asking the teacher if what she said was correct were all observed.

Alice sometimes imitates other students’ performances when the opportunity is present. However, in the fourth year Japanese class opportunities to imitate another student’s performance in a similar context are limited, and opportunities to observe this behavior are likewise limited. It is therefore unclear whether this behavior is consistently present or not.

4.2.1.3 Classroom/group dynamics and teaching style

Alice seems to have a gregarious personality. She talks to all of her fellow students before class starts. After class starts she will still talk to other students, usually in Japanese. She laughs openly when other students make humorous mistakes. She is also usually the first to offer correction to her fellow students.

46 The actual Japanese used was not recorded and is unavailable.
Alice was not observed as being particularly affected by her teacher’s teaching style, although she seems uninhibited in asking the teacher questions during class.

4.2.1.4 Other behaviors of note

Alice has a tendency to speak out in class when she is not called on. This behavior was not observed in any other student in her class to the degree it was observed in Alice. In this regard, she stands out from the other students.

Alice has a tendency to whisper to her neighbor and rummage in her bag while other students are performing. She does not seem to mind that her actions may be disruptive.

Alice is usually the first one to answer any question directed to the class by the teacher.

4.2.2 Case Study B

4.2.2.1 Biographical information, daily grades, and LCRTB score

Beth is 20 years old and female. She is enrolled in 2\textsuperscript{nd}/3\textsuperscript{rd} year intensive Japanese classes. She was observed on February 5\textsuperscript{th} and 12\textsuperscript{th} and on March 1\textsuperscript{st} during Japanese 310/311, the second set of a six-course, three quarter sequence. She is taking Japanese classes to fulfill a requirement for her major. She reports her GPA as between 3.7 and 4.0 as of autumn quarter of the current academic year. She expected to obtain a grade of A in the Japanese class she was enrolled in during autumn quarter. She studies an average of 15-30 minutes before each class. Her LCRTB score was calculated at 50 out of 60. Her performance score for autumn quarter was 97.4%.
4.2.2.2 Language classroom risk-taking behavior

Beth rarely hesitates when speaking. She usually speaks at a natural speed, and her speech seems much smoother than the other students in the class. However, Beth’s mistakes in using the language, which are rare, are usually preceded by hesitation.

When Beth receives feedback or correction, she does so without any signs of frustration. However, while this behavior is considered to be indicative of a high tolerance of possible incorrectness, the fact that Beth does not often provide incorrect responses should be taken into account. Since Beth does not often provide incorrect responses she therefore does not often receive correction or feedback, much less repeated correction or feedback. It is therefore unclear how she would act in a situation where she repeatedly failed to provide a correct response.

Beth often uses linguistic elements in ways that have not yet been tried\(^{47}\). However, this may be related to the way the teachers would often call on Beth when other students were unable to produce a correct utterance. It remains unclear whether or not Beth would choose to imitate a student who had already given a good performance in the same context.

Beth does not usually engage in behavior that seeks for confirmation that an utterance was correct. Again this behavior may be related to Beth’s high level of ability.

Beth does not give up on communication, and she rarely uses negotiation strategies. However, her performances are usually good enough that she does not need to give up on communication or use negotiation strategies. Thus, these two behaviors may be absent.

\(^{47}\) Some recorded examples of linguistic elements used in ways others had not yet tried: “naruhodo”, “ryoogai no tokoro”, “iti-man-en satu de ni-man-en onegai simasu”.
not because of B’s risk-taking behavior, but because Beth did not find herself in the kind of situation where these behaviors are typically manifested.

4.2.2.3 Classroom/group dynamics and teaching style

Beth is a fairly quiet student who does not interact much with her fellow classmates. She usually talks to one other student before class, who sits next to her, but not to anyone else. Once class starts, she is very focused: her eyes stay mostly on the teacher or the student who is performing. She does not speak to other students during class unless directed to do so by the teacher.

Two teachers teach Beth’s class, but her behavior remains consistent with both of them. She does not speak to the teacher without raising her hand first. When the teacher directs a question to the class, she nearly always raises her hand, but will not speak unless she is called upon. Both teachers tend to call on Beth when other students are unable to perform correctly in a certain context.

4.2.2.4 Other behaviors of note

The most notable behavior about Beth is her lack of error. She nearly always provides a correct response, unlike the rest of the class. When Beth does make errors, they are mostly self-corrected. She only rarely is corrected by the teacher.

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48 Classes taught by teacher #1 were observed twice, and classes taught by teacher #2 were observed once.
Beth occasionally will speak quietly to herself while other students are performing. This behavior was listed by Ely (1986) in his operationalization of language class risk-taking.

4.2.3 Case Study C

4.2.3.1 Biographical information, daily grades, and LCRTB score

Cathy is 26 years old and female. She is enrolled in 3rd year Japanese classes. She was observed on February 21st and 23rd during Japanese 508, the second of a three-course sequence, and on April 5th during Japanese 509, the third course of the same sequence. She is taking Japanese classes to fulfill a requirement for her major. She reports her GPA as between 3.7 and 4.0 as of autumn quarter of the current academic year. She expected to obtain a grade of B- in the Japanese class she was enrolled in during autumn quarter. She studies an average of 1-2 hours before each class. Her LCRTB score was calculated at 22 out of 60. Her performance score for autumn quarter was 83.2%.

4.2.3.2 Language classroom risk-taking behavior

Cathy’s behavior indicates a high tolerance for incorrectness. She will keep trying to produce a correct utterance, even after repeated failures and corrections. She does show signs of frustration at repeated mistakes, but only rarely. She occasionally responds to correction positively by saying “oh, I understand”.

Cathy only occasionally uses negotiation strategies. The most frequently used negotiation strategy is “please say that again”. This strategy is usually used when she is not paying attention and does not hear the question addressed to her.
Cathy almost never gives up on communication. She will continue trying to produce a correct utterance, even after repeated failures.

The amount to which Cathy hesitates when speaking varies. Some days, Cathy is among those students in her class who hesitate the most. Other days, she is among those students in her class who hesitate the least.

Cathy occasionally engages in behavior which seeks for confirmation that an utterance was correct, but not often.

Cathy tends to imitate other students who have given good performances in the same context when the opportunity arises, but these instances did not occur very often in the 3rd year Japanese class.

4.2.3.3 Classroom/group dynamics and teaching style

Cathy is a quiet student. She always sits next to one other student, and talks to her before class starts. She seems to be very close to this student, who is not as quiet as Cathy. Cathy will talk to others as well, but not a great deal. She laughs with the rest of the class when something amusing happens, but not loudly.

Two different teachers taught Cathy’s class. She seemed more relaxed with one teacher than with the other.

4.2.3.4 Other behaviors of note

No other notable behaviors were observed in Cathy.

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49 Classes taught by teacher #1 were observed twice, and classes taught by teacher #2 were observed once.
4.2.4 Case Study D

4.2.4.1 Biographical information, daily grades, and LCRTB score

Denise is 19 years old and female. She is enrolled in 1st year Japanese classes. She was observed on February 15th, 19th, and 28th during Japanese 102, the second of a three-course sequence. She is taking Japanese classes to fulfill a requirement for her major. She reports her GPA as between 3.3 and 3.69 as of autumn quarter of the current academic year. She expected to obtain a grade of B in the Japanese class she was enrolled in during autumn quarter. She studies an average of 15-30 minutes before each class. Her LCRTB score was calculated at 21 out of 60. Her performance score for autumn quarter was 81.8%.

4.2.4.2 Language classroom risk-taking behavior

Denise engages in behavior which suggests a low tolerance for possible incorrectness in using the language. In situations where she is unable to produce a correct utterance even after repeated correction, she often makes noises of exasperation, such as “errgh” or “ahh”. However, sometimes she is able to smile at her own mistakes.

Denise occasionally gives up on communication in Japanese. However, sometimes she will keep trying to produce a correct utterance even after repeated correction.

Denise uses negotiation strategies on occasion. Her negotiation strategies are limited to “please say that again” and “I don’t understand”. She will rarely use a negotiation
strategy more than once. If she is unable to understand after using a negotiation strategy, she will usually give up on communication.

Denise sometimes imitates other students’ performances and sometimes gives a performance not yet tried by others.

Denise occasionally engages in behavior that seeks for confirmation that an utterance was correct. This most often manifests itself as a raised intonation at the end of an utterance.

Denise sometimes hesitates when she speaks. However, this hesitation was not markedly more or less than other students in her class.

4.2.4.3 Classroom/group dynamics and teaching style

Denise is not markedly quiet, nor is she overly talkative. She does not usually try to talk to other students before or during class, but she will engage in conversation if addressed. She will laugh when other students laugh, but does not try to get others to laugh.

Denise will occasionally volunteer to perform for the teacher. This behavior usually occurs when a couple students have provided incorrect responses. When volunteering to perform, Denise will try to get the teacher’s attention by raising her hand or making eye contact. However, sometimes she will give up on this behavior before someone is called on.

Denise was observed with three different teachers. For one of the teachers, Denise seemed quieter and tried to get the teacher’s attention less (i.e., there was less hand-raising and less making of eye contact) than for the other two teachers.
4.2.4.4 Other behaviors of note

Denise was occasionally observed speaking quietly to herself during class.

4.2.5 Comparison and discussion of case studies

Alice and Beth are distinctly different, despite both having high LCRTB scores. Alice is gregarious, Beth is quiet. Alice sometimes makes mistakes, Beth almost never makes mistakes. Alice often speaks out in class, while Beth never speaks out unless she is called on. This distinction between Alice and Beth suggests that LCRTB, as it has been operationalized in this study, is not strongly related to accuracy (cf. Beebe, 1980; Beebe, 1983).

However, there is one notable similarity between Alice and Beth. Both Alice and Beth are students that stand out from their classmates, albeit for different reasons. Alice speaks out in class much more frequently than her classmates. Beth’s performance in class is much more accurate than that of her classmates. Thus, a willingness to engage in behavior that one’s peers do not engage in may be related to a high degree of LCRTB.

Beth and Cathy are similar in many regards, despite Beth’s high LCRTB score and Cathy’s low LCRTB score. Both are quiet during class. Both have one friend in class whom they usually sit next to. Both talk to their friend before class, but are not as close to their other classmates. These behaviors seem to suggest a degree of introversion in both Beth and Cathy. This similarity between Beth and Cathy suggests, as was suggested by a comparison of Alice and Beth, that LCRTB is not strongly related to introversion/extroversion.
Denise is an interesting case study in that her LCRTB score stands out as being quite low, and yet nothing else about her behavior stands out. She is not overly talkative or quiet. She sometimes shows frustration at her mistakes, she sometimes gives up on communication, she sometimes uses negotiation strategies, and she sometimes volunteers information for the teacher; but none of these behaviors are pronounced enough to make her stand out from her classmates. However, the fact that she does not stand out from her classmates may be significant. Just as Alice and Beth, who both have high LCRTB scores, engage in behavior that makes them stand out from their classmates, so Denise, who has a low LCRTB score, does not engage in any behavior that would make her stand out from her classmates. Thus, Denise’s behavior suggests, as was suggested by a comparison of Alice and Beth’s behavior, that a willingness to engage in behavior that one’s peers do not engage in may be related to a high degree of LCRTB.

One reason that “willingness to stand out from one’s peers” may be related to LCRTB is that many of the risks mentioned by Beebe (1983) (e.g. looking ridiculous, loss of identity, alienation, smirk from a classmate) are related, at least in part, to disassociation from one’s peers. If one is willing to be different from one’s peers, then these risks may be inconsequential.

Furthermore, if a willingness to disassociate from one’s peers typically stems from a desire to associate with a peer group from another culture, then “willingness to stand out from one’s peers” may suggest a strong integrative motivation (Gardner and Lambert, 1972, as cited in Gass and Selinker, 2001).

In each of the case studies, both behaviors considered indicative of LCRTB and behaviors considered indicative of a lack of LCRTB were observed. No behaviors
considered to be manifestations of risk-taking were both consistently present in the high LCRTB case studies and absent in the low LCRTB case studies. Upon observation, case study Alice stands out as a risk-taker because of her large amount of speech. However, none of the other case studies engaged in behavior which would make it obvious whether they were a risk-taker or not. This lack of observable difference in the LCRTB of Beth, Cathy, and Denise suggests that the unobservable mental state of the case studies may have played a large part in how they reported their own behaviors on the questionnaire.

It is notable that Beth was not observed behaving differently with different teachers, while Cathy and Denise were observed behaving differently with different teachers\(^{50}\). This is an interesting finding, since Beth had a high LCRTB score, while Cathy and Denise both had low LCRTB scores. This finding is particularly interesting when the statistical analysis of the questionnaire is considered. Questionnaire items #19 “I worry more about making mistakes when speaking Japanese in front of some teachers than others” and #20 “I avoid asking certain teachers for help” were found not to be significantly correlated with LCRTB score. Thus, while the observations of the case studies suggests that low risk-takers may behave differently with different teachers and high risk-takers may not, the questionnaire results suggest otherwise: that behaving differently with different teachers is unrelated to one’s degree of risk-taking.

In interpreting these findings about teaching style, a number of limitations should be considered. One is that students may not be aware that they behave differently with different teachers, and thus may misreport their own behavior on the questionnaire.

\(^{50}\) Alice was only taught by one teacher. It was therefore not possible to observe how she behaved with different teachers.
Another is that only three case studies were observed being taught by different teachers. and with such a small number it is very difficult to generalize these results to a larger population. It may be merely chance that Beth behaved the same with different teachers while Cathy and Denise did not. It may also be that the differences observed in the case studies were not pronounced enough for the students’ themselves to be aware of.

It is also notable that how the case studies interacted with their peers did not seem to be related to their LCRTB score. Alice, who had a high LCRTB score, was very outgoing and talked to every one of her fellow students. Beth, who had a high LCRTB score, and Cathy, who had a low LCRTB score, were both quiet, and tended to only speak to one or two of their fellow students. Denise, who had a low LCRTB score, was somewhere in the middle. She would talk to some of her peers, but was not as quiet as Beth and Cathy or as outgoing as Alice. This finding, that how the case studies interacted with their peers was unrelated to their LCRTB scores, is consistent with the findings of the statistical analysis of the questionnaire. Questionnaire items #17 “performing in front of a large group of students makes me more worried about making mistakes than performing in front of a smaller group” and #18 “I usually study with a group” related to classroom/group dynamics were found not to be significantly correlated with LCRTB scores.

Table 3.1 above, which summarizes Alice, Beth, Cathy, and Denise’s biographical information, is given again here as table 4.4.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Current Japanese Course</th>
<th>Reason for taking Japanese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4th Year</td>
<td>To fulfill a major requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2nd/3rd Year Intensive</td>
<td>To fulfill a major requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3rd Year</td>
<td>To fulfill a major requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1st Year</td>
<td>To fulfill a major requirement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Study Time</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Expected Grade (Autumn Quarter)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice 30 Minutes - 1 Hour</td>
<td>3.0-3.29</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth 15 - 30 Minutes</td>
<td>3.7-4.0</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy 1 - 2 Hours</td>
<td>3.7-4.0</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise 15 - 30 Minutes</td>
<td>3.3-3.69</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Score (Autumn Quarter)</th>
<th>LCRTB Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice 96.8%</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth 97.4%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy 83.2%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denise 81.8%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: Case studies’ biographical information

It is notable that all the case studies were female. This lack of male presence in both low and high LCRTB scores suggests that male students may be more inclined to be moderate risk-takers, while female students may be more inclined to be either high or low risk-takers. The questionnaire results also suggest this (see section 4.1.4).

It is also notable that all the case studies were Japanese majors. It seems likely that the students who are Japanese majors would be, in general, more motivated to perform well than students enrolled in Japanese classes for other reasons. It is therefore possible that both a high degree of LCRTB and a low degree of LCRTB are the result of a strong desire to perform well.
4.2.6 Limitations

While the current study focuses on observable behavior, some insight may have been gained by investigating the mental state of the students. Additional research into how one’s mental state is related to LCRTB may provide additional insights into how risk-taking is related to language learning.

The current study selected the participants with the two highest LCRTB scores and the two lowest LCRTB scores who were available for observation as case studies. These participants were all female, were all studying Japanese to fulfill a requirement for their major, and were all between the ages of 19 and 24. Additional research into LCRTB among male students, students of different ages, and students studying Japanese for reasons other than to fulfill a requirement for their major may provide additional insights into different students’ risk-taking behavior in language learning.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Overview

The current study investigated the significance of learners’ risk-taking behavior to learning Japanese in PCA. Specifically, it investigated the following research questions, restated here:

1) What effect does language classroom risk-taking behavior have on student performance (as measured by daily performance scores) in PCA?

2) To what extent is language classroom risk-taking behavior influenced by the daily grading system of assessment in PCA?

3) To what extent is language classroom risk-taking behavior influenced by teaching style in PCA?

4) To what extent is language classroom risk-taking behavior influenced by classroom/group dynamics in PCA?

5) To what extent is language classroom risk-taking behavior influenced by personal study habits in PCA?
5.2 What effect does language classroom risk-taking behavior have on student performance (as measured by daily performance scores) in PCA?

The results of the study suggest that there is a relationship between LCRTB and student performance in PCA. Among Japanese students studying under PCA in the program investigated, a positive correlation was found between LCRTB scores and average daily grades: 0.339 (p=0.033) in autumn quarter and 0.507 (p=0.002) in spring quarter.

However, it remains unclear whether engaging in LCRTB leads to better performance ability, or whether good performance ability leads one to engage in LCRTB, or a combination of both. Further research is needed before any strong conclusions can be drawn concerning causation and LCRTB and performance ability. Specifically, research regarding the long-term effects of risk-taking on performance ability and research on how classroom success influences students’ willingness to take risks in the language classroom would be advisable.

The degree of significance of the correlations between LCRTB scores and average daily grades gives evidence to support the hypothesis that risk-taking behavior may play a more significant role in learning an East Asian language than in learning a language for which the culture is less foreign. However, further research is needed before any conclusions can be made in this area. A study which compares the role of risk-taking behavior in language learning between an East Asian language and a language for which the culture is much more similar to English, such as Spanish or French, may be appropriate.
The finding that LCRTB scores and average daily grades were significantly correlated, and the finding that case study Beth had both a high LCRTB score and high accuracy is also a significant finding in relation to Beebe (1983). Beebe found that risk-taking and accuracy had an inverse relationship (Beebe, 1983, pp. 56-57, 59; cf. Beebe, 1980, p. 180). However, the current study found that average daily grade (which measures students’ performance ability in terms of the degree to which difficulty, discomfort, or miscommunication would be caused for native speaker (Christensen and Noda, 2002, pp. 20-23; Christensen and Warnick, 2006, pp. 66-69), and includes not only accuracy of grammar but also accuracy of pronunciation, accent, cultural appropriateness, etc.) and LCRTB score were positively correlated. One possible explanation of these findings is that Beebe’s study may better show how risk-taking affects the accuracy of a specific utterance, while the current study may better show how risk-taking affects students’ language ability over time (see section 2.2), although this explanation does not account for case study Alice’s behavior. Another possible explanation is that the different treatments of risk-taking account for the differences. A third possible explanation is that risk-taking and performance ability are only correlated in a classroom setting. Additional research on how risk-taking affects language learning outside the classroom would be beneficial in understanding these findings.

5.3 To what extent is language classroom risk-taking behavior influenced by the daily grading system of assessment in PCA?

Item #16 “When I perform in class, I don’t worry about how my performance will affect my grade” was significantly correlated with LCRTB scores in autumn quarter (0.418, p=0.004). However, this item was not significantly correlated with average daily
grade. Thus, while the giving of daily grades may have a significant negative impact on whether or not some students engage in LCRTB in autumn quarter, it does not seem to have a significant negative impact on students’ performance ability. However, the long term effects of LCRTB on performance ability, particularly the degree to which discouraging LCRTB in the early stages of language learning affects language ability later on, remain uninvestigated, and additional research in this area would be advisable. Furthermore, additional research on which types of students are most affected by worry about their grade as well as how student behavior changes under different systems of grading and feedback would also be advisable.

The finding that item #22 “I usually feel prepared to perform when I come to class” was significantly correlated with LCRTB in both autumn and spring quarters is also relevant to how the daily grading system of assessment affects LCRTB in PCA. This finding suggests that a daily grading system may have a positive effect on students’ LCRTB by encouraging students to consistently prepare well for class (cf. Christensen and Warnick, 2006, pp. 66-67; Christensen and Noda, 2002, pp. 20-21; Choi and Samimy, 2002, p. 29). However, additional research on the daily grading system and LCRTB, and additional research on how the daily grading system encourages consistent effective preparation for class would be advisable.

Item #15 “I would do anything (in terms of effort) to get an A in Japanese” was not found to be significantly correlated with LCRTB or average daily grade. This finding suggests that some students who are willing to put forth effort to get good grades are unable to acquire good grades. It is possible that language learning aptitude plays a more important role in language learning in PCA than effort put into study. It is also possible
that success in learning an East Asian language is highly dependent on the aptitude for
language learning of the student. Another possibility is that the effort some students put
into studying is not put forth effectively. Additional research into how effective and less
effective students study as well as research into the role of aptitude in language learning
in PCA would be advisable.

5.4 To what extent is language classroom risk-taking behavior influenced by teaching style in PCA?

Questionnaire items #19 “I worry more about making mistakes when speaking
Japanese in front of some teachers than others” and #20 “I avoid asking certain teachers
for help” were found not to be significantly correlated with LCRTB score (see section
4.1.5). However, case studies Alice and Beth, who both had high LCRTB scores, were
not observed behaving differently with different teachers, while case studies Cathy and
Denise, who both had low LCRTB scores, were observed behaving differently with
different teachers (see section 4.2.5).

It seems likely that because teachers in the program investigated receive training on
how to teach in PCA, the teachers all had a similar teaching style and the effect teaching
style had on students’ LCRTB was minimized. However, minor differences in the
behavior of the case studies with low LCRTB scores were still observed, which may
suggest that even though differences in behavior due to differences in teaching style were
small, they were still present. Further research into PCA programs where teachers have
not received training in the approach may be beneficial in better understanding how
differences in teaching style affect students’ LCRTB.
In regard to these findings about teaching style, a number of limitations should be considered. One is that students may not be aware that they behave differently with different teachers, and thus may misreport their own behavior on the questionnaire. Another is that only three case studies were observed being taught by different teachers, and with such a small number it is very difficult to generalize these results to a larger population. In other words, it may be merely chance that Beth behaved the same with different teachers while Cathy and Denise did not.

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, the current study failed to address how the coaching style of teaching typically used in PCA affects students’ LCRTB. Additional research into how the coaching style of teaching affects students’ LCRTB as compared with programs where students receive less feedback from the teacher may also be beneficial in understanding factors that affects students’ LCRTB.

5.5 To what extent is language classroom risk-taking behavior influenced by classroom/group dynamics in PCA?

Questionnaire items #17 “performing in front of a large group of students makes me more worried about making mistakes than performing in front of a smaller group” and #18 “I usually study with a group” related to classroom/group dynamics were found not to be significantly correlated with LCRTB score. The finding for #17 suggests that experiencing stage fright or nervousness about performing in front of a group does not have a significant effect on whether or not a student engages in LCRTB. The finding for #18 suggests that studying with a group does not have a significant effect on whether or not a student engages in LCRTB.
The observations of the case study led to similar findings. Alice, who had a high LCRTB score, was very outgoing and talkative, while Beth, who also had a high LCRTB score, was quiet. Cathy, who had a low LCRTB score, was also quiet. Denise, who also had a low LCRTB score, was somewhere in the middle, being neither markedly quiet nor talkative with her peers. These findings from the observations of the case studies, together with the findings on classroom/group dynamics from the questionnaire, suggest that how one interacts with one’s peers does not significantly affect one’s LCRTB. However, given the limitations in regard to the case study observations and the questionnaire (see sections 4.1.6 and 4.2.6), further research is needed in this area before any strong conclusions can be drawn.

5.6 To what extent is language classroom risk-taking behavior influenced by personal study habits in PCA?

Item #22 “I usually feel prepared to perform when I come to class” was significantly correlated with LCRTB score in both autumn and spring quarter questionnaires. This finding suggests that consistently preparing well for class leads one to take more language risks in class. This finding also suggests that preparing well for class is beneficial to students on several different levels: not only because it helps them perform better, but also because students who prepare well are more willing to take risks in using the language. However, additional research regarding the type and amount of preparation that leads students to engage in LCRTB would be advisable. Further research on whether risk-taking actually causes better performance would also be advisable.

An unexpected finding was that item #23 (average amount of time spent studying before each ACT class) was negatively correlated with both LCRTB and average daily
grade\textsuperscript{51}. This finding suggests that students who spend more time studying typically perform worse than those who spend less time studying. It is possible that success in learning an East Asian language is highly dependent on the aptitude for language learning of the student. It is also possible that successful students are able to use their study time effectively, while unsuccessful students spend time studying but do not make effective use of that time. Again, additional research into the role of language learning aptitude in learning an East Asian language and study methods employed by effective and less effective language learners in PCA would be advisable.

5.7 Other findings

An interesting finding from the case studies was that the greatest similarity in Alice and Beth was that they both stood out from their classmates. Furthermore, the only notable aspect of Denise’s behavior was that she did not stand out from her classmates. These findings suggest that a willingness to engage in behavior that one’s peers do not engage in, or a willingness to stand out from one’s peers, may be related to a high degree of LCRTB. Further research on how willingness to stand out from one’s peers is related to risk-taking and language proficiency would help clarify the significance of this variable.

The current study also identified a behavior as related to LCRTB which had not been previously identified as related to LCRTB. This behavior is “using negotiation strategies

\textsuperscript{51} While the correlations between item #23 and average daily grade and LCRTB score in both autumn and spring quarter were all negative, only the correlation between item #23 and average daily grade in spring quarter was statistically significant.
to request clarification”. This is a relevant finding to the study of risk-taking behavior in language learning in general, as well as to the study of risk-taking behavior in PCA.

5.8 Pedagogical Implications

The findings in regard to teaching style (i.e. the lack of correlation between questionnaire items related to teaching style and how case studies behaved with different teachers) suggest that, in the program investigated, teaching style differences do not have a significant affect on LCRTB (see sections 4.1.5, 4.2.5, and 5.4). While further research is necessary before any strong conclusions can be drawn, these findings seem to suggest that teacher training in PCA (which all the teachers in the program investigated had completed) helps teachers to teach in a similar and consistent fashion. It therefore seems that by employing a teacher training program, language programs that use PCA can ensure that their teachers all teach in a similar and consistent fashion.

The findings in regard to daily grading suggest that in autumn quarter, being graded daily may have a negative effect on the LCRTB of some students. A possible alternative may be to not have all daily performance scores count on the students’ final grades. On those days for which the daily performance score did not count toward students’ final grade, students would be able to take risks in using the language in a situation where they would receive feedback without fear of a mistake negatively affecting their grade. However, since not having students’ performance scores count toward their final grade may have a detrimental affect on students’ preparation, it may be appropriate not to inform students that the daily grade given on a particular day will not count towards their final grade until they arrive at class that day. Not knowing when the daily grade would
not count towards the final grade, students would be required to prepare for each class as if their performance would count towards their final grade. However, not having all daily grades count towards students’ final grades may be most beneficial to students’ LCRTB early in the academic year (see section 4.1.5).

The findings from the statistical analysis of the questionnaire in regard to study habits suggest that consistently preparing well for class leads one to take language risks in class. It therefore may be possible to encourage risk-taking in students by encouraging them to consistently prepare well for class.

The findings from the statistical analysis of the questionnaire in regard to study habits also suggest that some students may not understand how to study effectively in PCA (see sections 4.1.5 and 5.6). In the program investigated, students are given explicit instructions in the form of oral instruction and a written document on how to study appropriately, but it is unclear how many students actually pay attention to the oral instruction or read the document. Some form of assessment to determine how well students understand correct study techniques may be appropriate. It may also be appropriate to conduct this assessment repeatedly during the academic year.

It may also be appropriate to have students who are doing poorly meet individually with an instructor for coaching on how they study. Such a session could be treated similar to a performance class—the student performs (i.e., studies) and the teacher gives the student feedback on his or her performance. In this kind of session, students would be able to experience first-hand how effective study is accomplished. However, offering or requiring these kinds of sessions may place high demands on teachers’ time, since adequately assessing the effectiveness of a student’s study may take considerable time.
LIST OF REFERENCES


Rubin, J. (1975). What the “good language learner” can teach us. TESOL Quarterly, 9, 1, 41-51.


APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE
Name:__________________________

Code (pre-assigned) ___________
Code (pre-assigned) ______________

Age: _____ Gender: Male / Female

I am currently enrolled in the following Japanese language course
(example: Japanese 102): ______________

Expected grade in the Japanese language course I am currently taking:_______

I am a:
  a. Freshman
  b. Sophomore
  c. Junior
  d. Senior
  e. Graduate/Professional student
  f. Other

My current GPA is:
  a. 3.7-4.0
  b. 3.3-3.69
  c. 3.0-3.29
  d. 2.7-3.0
  e. 2.3-2.69
  f. 2.0-2.29
  g. Below 2.0

I am taking Japanese:
  a. To fulfill a requirement for my major
  b. To fulfill a GE requirement
  c. As a free elective choice
  d. Even though it does not help me progress toward graduation

I study an average of ____ before each ACT class.
  a. less than 15 minutes
  b. 15-30 minutes
  c. 30 minutes – 1 hour
  d. 1-2 hours
  e. 2-3 hours
  f. more than 3 hours
For each of the following statements, please indicate whether you agree or disagree by circling the corresponding number on the following scale:
5-agree strongly
4-somewhat agree
3-neutral
2-somewhat disagree
1-disagree strongly

I try to incorporate previously learned words and structural patterns in new situations in class, even when the focus of the activity is on more recently learned items.
12345
agree strongly somewhat agree neutral somewhat disagree disagree strongly

I sometimes wonder what the teacher wants me to say.
12345
agree strongly somewhat agree neutral somewhat disagree disagree strongly

I find myself less worried about making mistakes in class when I feel well prepared.
12345
agree strongly somewhat agree neutral somewhat disagree disagree strongly

When possible, I avoid using linguistic elements I have difficulty with while performing in class.
12345
agree strongly somewhat agree neutral somewhat disagree disagree strongly

I usually speak without hesitation, even when I am not sure if what I am going to say is correct.
12345
agree strongly somewhat agree neutral somewhat disagree disagree strongly

I usually study with a group.
12345
agree strongly somewhat agree neutral somewhat disagree disagree strongly

When I don’t understand, I try to seek clarification using Japanese.
12345
agree strongly somewhat agree neutral somewhat disagree disagree strongly

When performing in class, I try to imitate what other students have said in a similar context.
12345
agree strongly somewhat agree neutral somewhat disagree disagree strongly

I avoid asking certain teachers for help.
12345
agree strongly somewhat agree neutral somewhat disagree disagree strongly

I try to say complicated sentences in class when I have the chance.
12345
agree strongly somewhat agree neutral somewhat disagree disagree strongly

I sometimes use English in class to seek clarification on something I don’t understand.
Performing in front of a large group of students makes me more worried about making mistakes than performing in front of a smaller group.

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As much as possible, I avoid using linguistic elements when I don’t feel confident that I can use them correctly.

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I would do anything (in terms of effort) to get an A in Japanese.

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When performing in class I am hesitant about using structural patterns that I am not sure I can use correctly.

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When I perform in class, I don’t worry about how my performance will affect my grade.

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When I don’t understand, I try to get the teacher to call on someone else.

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I try to use linguistic elements which I find difficult in class, even when I may be using them incorrectly.

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I usually feel well prepared to perform when I come to class.

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If I am unsure if what I am saying is correct, I try to get the teacher to confirm whether or not what I said was correct.

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When I don’t understand what was said to me in Japanese, I try to respond without seeking for clarification in order to hide the fact that I didn’t understand.

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I worry more about making mistakes when speaking Japanese in front of some teachers than others.

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<td>disagree strongly</td>
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Thank you!
APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM
The Ohio State University Consent to Participate in Research

Study Title: Language classroom risk-taking behavior in classrooms where voluntary participation is limited
Researchers: Mari Noda
Sponsor: N/A

This is a consent form for research participation. It contains important information about this study and what to expect if you decide to participate.

Your participation is voluntary.
Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and will receive a copy of the form.

Purpose:
The purpose of this study is (1) to research the effect that students’ risk-taking behavior has on their performance in a Japanese language classroom where a performance-based teaching style is used (such as that used at OSU), (2) to identify which factors contribute to students’ risk-taking behavior in such a classroom, and (3) to investigate how those factors contribute to students’ risk-taking behavior in such a classroom. The information gathered in this study will be helpful in improving the quality of language teaching in performance-based teaching environments. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are currently enrolled in Japanese language courses at the Ohio State University.

Procedures/Tasks:
Participation in this study will include the completion of a questionnaire, once now and once again towards the end of the current academic year. The questionnaire will be the same each time. You will be requested to answer questions about both your behavior inside the classroom and your study habits. You will also answer questions about your biographical information.

This study also includes observation of selected participant’s behavior during ACT classes during this academic year. The identity of those selected for observation will not be given to any participants, as this may affect the results of the study. You may feel slightly more nervous to have an additional observer in your ACT class, but as a student in the Japanese language program, you should be used to seeing observers in class. The
researcher will not have any input on your course grade. No audio or video recordings will be made as part of observation.

**Duration:**
The questionnaire, which you will complete twice, should not take more than 30 minutes each time. Observations will take place during class, and will not require any extra time from you.

You may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision will not affect your future relationship with The Ohio State University.

**Risks and Benefits:**
Participation in this study will not put you at any foreseeable risk. The information gathered through this study will be helpful in improving the quality of language teaching. The study will only benefit you directly if you continue to take language classes after the close of the current academic year.

**Confidentiality:**
You will be asked to identify yourself on the questionnaire, and the identity of those who participate in observation will be known to the researcher. However, both the observation notes and the questionnaire results will be codified so that participants will be completely de-identified in the analysis. No participant will be mentioned by name in the study. The identity of participants will be kept in a separate file for a period of five years and then will be safely discarded.

Efforts will be made to keep your study-related information confidential. However, there may be circumstances where this information must be released. For example, personal information regarding your participation in this study may be disclosed if required by state law. Also, your records may be reviewed by the following groups (as applicable to the research):

- Office for Human Research Protections or other federal, state, or international regulatory agencies;
- The Ohio State University Institutional Review Board or Office of Responsible Research Practices;
- The sponsor, if any, or agency (including the Food and Drug Administration for FDA-regulated research) supporting the study.

**Incentives:**
You will not be paid to participate in the study.

**Participant Rights:**
You may refuse to participate in this study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you are a student or employee at Ohio State, your decision will not affect your grades or employment status.

If you choose to participate in the study, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. By signing this form, you do not give up any personal legal rights you may have as a participant in this study.

An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at The Ohio State University reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research.

**Contacts and Questions:**
For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study you may contact Mari Noda (noda.1@osu.edu) or Stephen Luft (luft.14@osu.edu).

For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

If you are injured as a result of participating in this study or for questions about a study-related injury, you may contact Mari Noda (noda.1@osu.edu) or Stephen Luft (luft.14@osu.edu).
Signing the consent form

I have read (or someone has read to me) this form and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form.

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<th>Signature of subject</th>
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Investigator/Research Staff

I have explained the research to the participant or his/her representative before requesting the signature(s) above. There are no blanks in this document. A copy of this form has been given to the participant or his/her representative.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Printed name of person obtaining consent</th>
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APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM 2
Supplemental Consent to Participate in Research

Study Title: Language classroom risk-taking behavior in classrooms where voluntary participation is limited
Researchers: Mari Noda
Sponsor: N/A

This is a supplemental consent form for research participation. It contains important additional information about your participation in this study.

Your consent is voluntary.

Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to consent. If you decide to consent, you will be asked to sign this form and will receive a copy of the form.

Purpose of the Supplemental Consent Form:
One of the primary purposes of this study is to research the effect that students’ risk-taking behavior has on their performance in a Japanese language classroom where a performance-based teaching style is used (such as that used at OSU). Your daily performance scores (or daily grades) constitute a record of your performance. You are being asked to consent to disclose this information so that it can be used to determine if risk-taking behavior has an effect on performance.

Confidentiality and Risk:
Participants’ daily performance scores will be recorded using the same codes used to identify participants on the questionnaire. The data will be codified so that participants will be completely de-identified in the analysis. Thus, the disclosure of your daily performance scores involves no foreseeable risk.

Participant Rights:
You may refuse to disclose your daily performance scores without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you are a student or employee at Ohio State, your decision will not affect your grades or employment status.

Contacts and Questions:
Please refer to the original consent form for information regarding the study or your participation in it. For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study you may contact Mari Noda (noda.1@osu.edu) or Stephen Luft (luft.14@osu.edu).

For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.
**Signing the consent form**

I have read (or someone has read to me) this form and I am aware that I am being asked to disclose my daily performance scores for a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to disclose my daily performance scores to be used in the research study in question.

I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. I will be given a copy of this form.

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**Investigator/Research Staff**

I have explained the research to the participant or his/her representative before requesting the signature(s) above. A copy of this form has been given to the participant or his/her representative.

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APPENDIX D

DATA COLLECTION SHEET
## Data Collection Sheet

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