

# **A study of L2 learners' individual differences: The relationships between foreign language anxiety, acculturation, and study abroad experience**

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Choi, Jong-gab. "A study of L2 learners' individual differences: The relationships between foreign language anxiety, acculturation, and study abroad experience." *Studies in English Language & Literature* 44.2 (2018): 321-348. This research examines the relationships between L2 learners' individual differences, such as level of foreign language anxiety, degree of acculturation, and previous study abroad experience. For the current study, a total of 132 university students majoring in diverse subjects responded to a paper-based questionnaire consisting of the three parts: 1) the Background Questionnaire, 2) the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) and 3) the EFL Student Acculturation Questionnaire (ESAQ). In order to analyse the collected data, correlations and independent sample *t*-tests were employed. The results showed that the higher the degree of acculturation, the lower the level of foreign language anxiety. It was also found that learners' previous study abroad experience has an impact on their feeling of anxiety towards L2 learning and their attitudes towards the target language culture. (Yonsei University)

**Key Words:** individual differences, second language learning, foreign language anxiety, acculturation, study abroad experience

## **I. Introduction**

A variety of factors influence the acquisition of a second or foreign language

(L2)<sup>1</sup>, and one of the significant factors is learner characteristics (Cohen, 2010). Individual learner variables determine the way in which a student approaches L2 learning, and each language learner has a different personality and learning style. These individual differences are “enduring personal characteristics that are assumed to apply to everybody and on which people differ by degree” (Dörnyei, 2005). Studying learners’ individual differences is essential since it is necessary to find out the key factors affecting L2 learning and to help students achieve satisfactory results in learning. In this sense, it can be assumed that both researchers and language teachers should be aware of the effects of individual differences on language learning.

Many researchers have studied the relationships between diverse L2 learners’ individual differences and L2 learning (e.g., Jiang, Green, Henley & Masten, 2009; Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012). Among various learner characteristics, anxiety is one of the personality characteristics that may affect L2 learning. Although it is not easy to define anxiety, and in fact, the concept of anxiety is defined differently by various scholars, it can be generally described as subjective feelings of uneasiness, tension, frustration, apprehension, or worry (Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012; Zheng, 2008). According to Zhang and Zhong (2012), anxiety related to learning a foreign language has been identified as one of the most important predictors of language learning and performance. Many foreign language learners have experienced some degree of anxiety in their learning process (Elaldi, 2016). In addition, Lababidi (2016) points out that foreign language anxiety (FLA) may have a negative and detrimental impact on students’ L2 language achievement.

FLA is responsible for learners’ negative emotional reactions to language learning, since they have had to deal with a totally foreign language and culture. It may be natural that FLA is experienced when the target language differs from the local language. In this sense, L2 learning and teaching may be inaccurate and incomplete

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<sup>1</sup> L2 is a language that is not the native language of the speaker, and reference to a second and/or foreign language is abbreviated to L2 in the current study.

without an understanding of the target language culture. Therefore, it is important for learners to have positive attitudes towards the target language culture when studying L2. According to Damen (1987:140), “the process of acculturation involves dealing with new ways and systems of beliefs and patterns of an unfamiliar cultural group”. In the field of ESL, one of the main focuses is how the construct of acculturation affects an individual's language learning capabilities (McClintock, 2014).

A study abroad experience (SAE) is another factor of individual difference, and it may be similar to past language learning experience stated by Altman (1980). While anxiety and attitudes to the target language culture are learner-internal factors, SAE is a learner-external factor. However, it can be assumed that learners' experiences of studying in English-speaking countries may have an important positive influence on individual difference variables involved in L2 learning (Bialystok, 1997). In other words, SAE is going to be a factor affecting the degree of FLA and acculturation.

There have been many studies investigating the effects of different individual variables on L2 learning and, in fact, diverse learner characteristics were found and categorised in various ways. However, previous research on learner characteristics tended to examine one variable independently of other variables, and, consequently, less attention has been given to the interplay between various individual factors and the interaction between learners' individual and contextual factors (Gan, 2011). Many of these individual differences interact with one another, and it is difficult to study only one individual difference without exploring its relationship with the others. Therefore, it is valuable to study the relationship between L2 learners' language anxiety, their level of acculturation, and their previous study abroad experience. For the current study, the research questions are as follow:

RQ.1: What is the relationship between FLA and acculturation?

RQ.2: Does L2 learners' previous study abroad experience have an effect on FLA?

RQ.3: Does L2 learners' previous study abroad experience have an effect on

acculturation?

II. Literature Review

2.1 L2 learners' individual differences

Many L2 studies have conducted investigations into what makes good language learners. In this regard, it is hypothesised that individual differences are significant predictors of success in second language learning (Dörnyei, 2005). Ehrman, Leaver, and Oxford (2003) concluded that studies on individual differences in an L2 setting would enable instructors to identify why individuals learn L2 differently. It is necessary to investigate the factors that have an impact on L2 learning because as Lightbown and Spada (2013) suggest, learners have certain characteristics that lead to more or less successful language learning. In fact, a number of studies have examined the effects of various learners' individual characteristics on L2 learning, concluding that individual learner differences play a crucial role in the acquisition of second language (e.g., Dörnyei, 2009; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Skehan, 1991; Yang, 2012).

There are a variety of learner differences such as intelligence, aptitude, motivation, and learning styles, and many researchers suggested various taxonomies of a language learner's individual characteristics influencing second language learning. Table 1 below shows different classifications of language learners' individual variables.

<Table 1> Taxonomies of language learners' individual differences

Scholars (Year)	Classifications of individual differences
Altman(1980)	Age, Sex, Language learning experience of the past, The native language proficiency, Character, Linguistics-Motivation

	and attitude, Intellectual factor, Cognitive strategies and methods
Skehan (1989)	Linguistics, Language learning strategies, Motivation- Cognition and emotion, Character, Intelligence, Cognitive styles, Anxiety
Oxford & Ehrman (1992)	Aptitude, Motivation, Anxiety, Self-Esteem, Tolerance of Ambiguity, Risk-Taking, Language Learning Style, Age, Gender
Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford (2003)	Learning styles, Learning strategies, Affective variables (ambiguity tolerance, motivation, anxiety, self-efficacy)
Ellis (2004)	Motivation, Language aptitude, Personality, Anxiety, Learning style, Learning strategies, Learner beliefs
Dörnyei (2005)	Personality, Ability / Aptitude, Motivation, Learning styles, Language learning strategies, Anxiety, Creativity, Self-esteem, Willingness to communicate (WTC), Learner beliefs

Regarding previous empirical studies, while many researchers have studied the effect of one learner variable on L2 learning, few researchers have studied the interaction or relations between learners' individual differences. For example, Yang (2012) studied the relationship between language anxiety, acculturation, and an L2 motivational self-system with 108 Taiwanese students learning English, and found that four variables, that is, the L2 self, preservation, hours spent on English listening comprehension practice, and self-perceived English proficiency, contributed significantly to the prediction of foreign language anxiety. Moreover, in a case study with 18 university ESL students in Hong Kong, Gan (2011) found that the different levels of success for ESL learners could be the outcome of dynamic interactions of different learner factors such as language learning attitudes, strategies, and motivation.

## 2.2 Foreign language anxiety

Language anxiety is one of the learners' individual characteristics and it belongs to personality, along with other factors. Zafar and Meenakshi (2012) suggest that personality determines what people feel comfortable with, and that an L2 learner

tends to make choices of strategies and skills according to his or her personality. They also present five personality characteristics, such as *extroversion* vs. *introversion*, *self-esteem*, *inhibition*, *risk-taking*, and *anxiety*, while stating anxiety can play an important role in L2 learning if it interferes with the learning process.

Many researchers defined foreign language anxiety (FLA) differently (e.g., Clément, 1980; Young, 1992; Zhang, 2001). For example, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986:128) regarded FLA as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process”. In addition, MacIntyre (1998:27) defined FLA as “the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language”. In other words, FLA is a subjective feeling of unease when one learns a foreign language. While speaking or writing a new language, a language learner may suffer with FLA.

Horwitz et al. (1986) argue that three components of FLA have been identified: 1) communication apprehension, arising from learners’ inability to adequately express mature thoughts and ideas; 2) fear of negative social evaluation, arising from a learner's need to make a positive social impression on others; 3) test anxiety or apprehension over academic evaluation. In response to this classification, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) maintain that communication apprehension and fear of negative social evaluation are the main factors in L2 learning; however, test anxiety or apprehension was a general problem and it is independent from FLA.

There have been various studies examining the FLA phenomenon in the field of L2 learning. For example, Liu and Huang (2011) investigated the relationship between FLA, motivation, and performance in English with 980 Chinese college students through a 76-item survey. The results showed that in general, the participants did not feel anxious in English and were moderately motivated to learn English and that FLA and English learning motivation were significantly negatively correlated with each other. It was also found that both FLA and English learning motivation were significantly correlated with learners’ performance in English. In

addition, Elaldi (2016) studied FLA levels of Turkish university students using a Likert scale questionnaire. A total of 118 preparatory students majoring in English Language and Literature participated in the first phase of the study in 2011, and only 98 participants were included in the second phase of the study conducted in 2015 while continuing from preparatory class to fourth grade. It was observed that language anxiety levels were found at moderate levels in both the preparatory class and the fourth grade, but learners had slightly higher anxiety levels in the fourth grade than they had in the preparatory class. In addition, it was found that gender is an effective factor for FLA, indicating FLA among males was found to be higher than among females.

### 2.3 Acculturation

L2 learners' attitudes to the culture of the target language may contribute to their success in learning. Many scholars have emphasised the importance of understanding culture for language learning. For instance, as Lado (1986) points out, when a language is taught for its educational values, understanding the cultural contents associated with the language is significant. Kramsch (1993) also maintains language and culture are bound together, and it is impossible to separate those two concepts from each other.

Acculturation is the process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between cultural groups and their individual members (Berry, 2005). Nguyen (2017) states that learners' cultural awareness can be shown as their perceptions and understanding of both the target language culture and their own culture. In addition, Gardner (1979:193-194) speculates, "the student's harmony with his own cultural community and his willingness or ability to identify with other cultural communities become important considerations in the process of L2 acquisition".

According to Schumann (1978) who developed the acculturation model, social

distance refers to the learner as a member of a social group that is in contact with another social group whose members speak a different language. He enlists various factors that shorten the social distance such as social dominance, enclosure, attitude, and congruence. Among them, he points out that three integration strategies, *assimilation*, *preservation*, and *adaptation*, yield varying degrees of acquisition of the target language. In response to this classification, Yang (2012) explains that *assimilation* measures an adoption of cultural norms, values, and lifestyles of the target language group, *preservation* assesses the attributes of maintaining one's own cultural values while, at the same time, rejecting those of the target group, and *adaptation* measures an adjustment to the target language groups' cultural norms while, at the same time, keeping their own cultural values. The desirable condition for SLA may be when learners try to assimilate into a target language group and adapt the target language culture.

Several studies have examined how L2 learners' degree of acculturation impacts L2 learning. For instance, in their study with Spanish-speaking students who learnt English as L2 in Canada, Masgoret and Gardner (1999) found that the participants' assimilation, assessed by linguistic and cultural assimilation, affects self-rated L2 proficiency. In addition, Jiang, Green, Henley, and Masten (2009) investigated the relationship between acculturation and L2 acquisition in Chinese-English late learners. A total of forty-nine Chinese international students were asked to complete the Stephenson Multigroup Acculturation Scale that was used to assess the participants' acculturation progress towards the ethnic society and the dominant society. The results showed that acculturation relates to speaking proficiency but not pronunciation.

## 2.4 Study abroad experience

Learners' previous study abroad experience has been shown to have an impact on their L2 learning, and in particular, this experience can significantly influence



learners' L2 productive skills (Sasaki, 2011; Taguchi, 2013). Especially for learners in EFL contexts, where students do not generally use English outside the classroom, and in situations where English classes mostly consist of reading and listening, it is more likely that study abroad experience will have an effect on their L2 speaking and writing.

Moreover, it can be assumed that study abroad experience immerses students in the native speech community and that learners' exposure to the presumably rich linguistic environment is responsible for the progress in their use of the target language (Segalowitz, Freed, Collentine, Lafford, Lazar, & Diaz-Campos, 2004). According to Taguchi (2013), for learners having study abroad experience, idiosyncratic interlanguage usage of routines will be moved to more conventional, target-like usage. In other words, a study abroad context is considered advantageous for the acquisition of routines, in that it provides learners with plentiful opportunities for exposure and practice in daily interaction. Therefore, it can be hypothesised that study abroad experience will have effects on foreign language anxiety and acculturation, since the large amount of exposure and practice in learners' previous study abroad experience may facilitate automatic processes of L2 learning.

There have been different studies on the relationship between acculturation and L2 learning (McClintock, 2014) and L2 anxiety (Garcia de Blakeley, Ford & Casey, 2017; Yang, 2012). However, as far as the researcher recognised, there are few correlation studies between the two variables (Yang, 2012), and there is no study with Korean students, especially including the SAE variable. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the relationships between these three learner individual characteristics.

On the basis of the rationale and the results of previous empirical studies, it may be reasonable to hypothesise that the level of foreign language anxiety has a negative relation with the degree of acculturation. In addition, learners' previous study abroad experience may influence the degree of acculturation and the level of foreign language anxiety.

III. Methods

3.1 Participants

The data for this study was collected from freshman to senior students with different majors at three universities. A total of 132 students from the three universities participated in this study. The mean age of participants was 22.2 (SD = 2.1), and the age range was 19-28. Of the 132 students, 42 students were male and 90 students were female. In terms of the participants' overall language proficiency level, their scores fell into the third grade and the fourth grade in the English section of the College Scholastic Ability Test (CSAT). Detailed demographic information is presented in Table 2 below.

<Table 2> Demographic information of the participants (N=132)

Age	Mean(SD)	22.2(2.1)
	Range	19-28
Gender	Male	42
	Female	90
Year of study	Freshman	48
	Sophomore	25
	Junior	26
	Senior	33
SAE	Yes	44
	No	88

3.2 Data collection

3.2.1 Instruments

Participants were asked to complete a paper-based questionnaire, which consisted of

three parts: (1) the Background Questionnaire, (2) the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), and (3) the EFL Student Acculturation Questionnaire (ESAQ).

### *The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale*

In order to measure FLA, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) was employed for the current study. FLCAS consists of 33 questions, and learners' communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation were assessed on the basis of five-point Likert scales, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Although Woodrow (2006) points out that a questionnaire sensitive to issues in the Asian language learning contexts was needed, FLCAS is a valid and reliable scale that has been consistently used in a variety of previous studies (e.g., Aida, 1994; Bailey et al., 1999; Elkhafaifi 2005; Liu, 2006; Phillips, 1992; Wang, 2010; Zhao, 2007). Total anxiety scores for the scale range from 33 to 165 points.

### *The EFL Student Acculturation Questionnaire*

The EFL Student Acculturation Questionnaire (ESAQ) developed by Yang (2012) was used to assess the participants' levels of acculturation. Three factors are included in the questionnaire: assimilation, preservation, and adaptation. For the current study, a total of 16 items were included in the questionnaire, and the survey was measured by a five-point Likert scale with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 5 indicating strongly agree. Total acculturation scores for the scale range from 16 to 80 points.

### *Study Abroad Experience*

For the current study, information about participants' study abroad experience was obtained along with demographic information. To investigate any study abroad

experience, two questions were asked, such as whether they had had learning experiences in English-speaking countries or similar classroom environments and if they had, when and how long they had studied.

### 3.2.2 Procedures

In order to recruit participants for the current study, first, the researcher explained the purpose and the procedures of the study in class. Then, the students who wanted to participate in the study were asked to sign the consent form, and the researcher handed in the questionnaire to the participants. While filling the questionnaire, the participants were allowed to ask questions, if they had any. Even though the amount of time it took a participant to complete the survey varied slightly, the average time it took to complete the questionnaire was about 20 minutes. The consent form and the questionnaire were collected after the participants completed the questionnaire.

## 3.3 Data analysis

For data analysis, first, all of the Likert scale data obtained from the participants were entered into the IBM SPSS (24.0) program. It is worth noting that for FLCAS, when items were negatively worded, responses were reversed and recorded, and consequently, a high score represented high anxiety. For instance, item 2 (I don't worry about making mistakes in language class) and item 22 (I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for language class) were reverse-scored. Out of a total of 33 questions, there are 9 negative worded items, and for these items, the option strongly agree was given a score of 1 while strongly disagree was given a score of 5.

To examine the relationship between the participants' FLA and the degree of acculturation, Pearson product-moment correlations were used. The relationships between subcomponents of FLA (communication apprehension, fear of negative social evaluation, test anxiety) and subcategories of acculturation (assimilation,

preservation, adaptation) were investigated using the SPSS program. In addition, in order to investigate the effects of SAE on L2 learners' FLA and the degree of acculturation, several independent sample *t*-tests were employed.

## IV. Results

### 4.1 The relationship between FLA and acculturation

In order to answer the first research question 'What is the relationship between FLA and acculturation?', Pearson product-moment correlations were employed. Tables 3 and 4 below show descriptive statistics of two variables, FLA and acculturation, based on the results of the survey.

<Table 3> Descriptive statistics of FLA

N=132	No. of items	Min.	Max	Mean	SD
CA	11	11	54	32.7	8.7
FoN	7	7	32	20.1	4.6
TA	15	18	68	41.0	9.8
FLA	33	41	149	94.0	21.4

# CA = communication apprehension; FoN = fear of negative social evaluation; TA = test anxiety

<Table 4> Descriptive statistics of acculturation

N=132	No. of items	Min.	Max	Mean	SD
Assimilation	6	10	29	21.8	3.8
Preservation	4	7	18	12.8	2.4
Adaptation	6	17	30	23.2	2.8
Acculturation	16	37	75	57.8	7.3

Table 5 below shows the result of correlations between FLA and acculturation including subcomponents of each variable.

<Table 5> Correlations between FLA and acculturation

	CA	FoN	TA	FLA	Assi.	Pres.	Adap.	Accu.
CA	1	.826**	.762**	.945**	-.290*	-.284**	-.403**	-.397**
FoN		1	.720**	.881**	-.232*	-.300**	-.398*	-.370**
TA			1	.912**	-.279*	-.229**	-.392*	-.370**
FLA				1	-.296*	-.286**	-.425*	-.409**
Assi.					1	.515**	.549**	.899**
Pres.						1	.333**	.722**
Adap.							1	.775**
Accu.								1

\* $p < .01$ , \*\* $p < .001$

There was a significant relationship between the degree of FLA and the degree of acculturation,  $r = -.409$ ,  $p < .001$ . In other words, anxiety for foreign language learning appears to be negatively related to learners’ foreign language cultural awareness. It was also found that all of the three acculturation-related variables were negatively correlated with FLA, and among them, adaptation was the largest correlate of FLA ( $r = -.425$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Moreover, the three subcomponents of FLA were negatively related to acculturation, showing a similar degree of relationship ( $r = -.397$ ,  $-.370$ ,  $-.370$  respectively).

4.2 Effects of previous study abroad experience on FLA

Of 132 participants whose data was used for inferential statistical tests, 44 students had studied abroad before they participated in the current study, while the other 88 students had no study abroad experience at all. As mentioned before, it can

be hypothesised that the 44 participants are distinctively different from the other 88 participants in terms of exposure to English. Even though there were differences in the length of time the participants were educated in English immersion environments, the participants in the 'having experience' group had had more opportunities to speak and write in English than the ones in the 'no experience' group. In general, the students in the 'no experience' group had engaged in four hours of English classes per week before entering university. Almost all of their lessons would typically have been provided by a Korean teacher in L1 Korean and would have focused on reading and listening skills. In other words, they would have had very few chances to develop productive skills in L2 English. In this context, with FLA and acculturation, the 'having experience' group had had less anxiety of learning foreign language and were more open to a degree of acculturation.

To examine the effect of prior study abroad experience on learners' FLA, an independent sample *t*-test was employed. Table 6 shows the means and standard deviations of FLA with the subcategories of FLA by two SAE groups.

<Table 6> Means of FLA for two experience groups

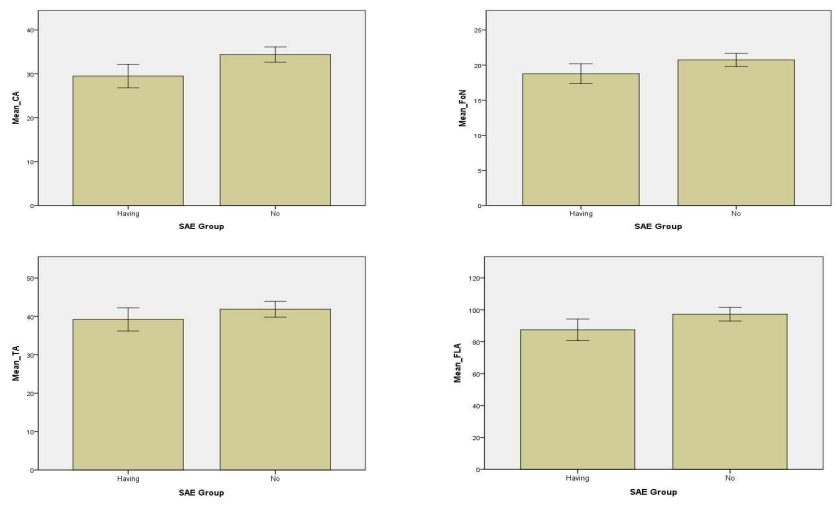
	Having experience (N=44)	No experience (N=88)			
	Mean(SD)	Mean(SD)	t	df	p
CA	29.5(8.8)	34.4(8.2)	-3.165	130	.002
FoN	18.8(4.6)	20.7(4.4)	-2.361	130	.020
TA	39.2(10.0)	41.9(9.7)	-1.466	130	.145
FLA	87.5(22.2)	97.3(20.3)	-2.545	130	.012

# CA = communication apprehension; FoN = fear of negative social evaluation; TA = test anxiety

The independent sample *t*-test showed that participants having prior study abroad experience felt less anxious towards foreign language learning ( $M = 87.5$ ) than those having no experience ( $M = 97.3$ ), and this difference was significant  $t(130) =$

-2.545,  $p < .05$ . In order to examine how substantial the effect was, the effect size was calculated. According to the guideline for effect size suggested by Cohen (1988), it can be said that the effect was medium,  $r = .46$ .

Moreover, the significance of the differences between the two SAE groups on each subcategory of FLA was investigated through independent sample  $t$ -tests. Participants with SAE felt less anxious in all of the three areas, communication apprehension (CA), negative social evaluation (FoN), and test anxiety (TA) ( $M = 29.5$ ;  $M = 18.8$ ;  $M = 39.2$ , respectively) than those with no SAE ( $M = 34.4$ ;  $M = 20.7$ ;  $M = 41.9$ , respectively). However, the difference in test anxiety was not significant ( $p > .05$ ), while there were significant differences in communication apprehension and negative social evaluation ( $t(130) = -3.165$ ,  $p < .01$ ;  $t(130) = -2.361$ ,  $p < .05$ , respectively) with medium effect sizes ( $r = .58$ ;  $r = .42$ ). Figure 1 below presents the bar charts of the means of each measure by the two SAE groups.



<Figure 1> Means of FLA for each of the two experience groups



### 4.3 Effects of previous study abroad experience on acculturation

To explore whether the means of the degree of acculturation in each SAE group were significantly different or not, an independent sample *t*-test was carried out. Table 7 shows the means and standard deviations of acculturation with the subcomponents of acculturation by each SAE group.

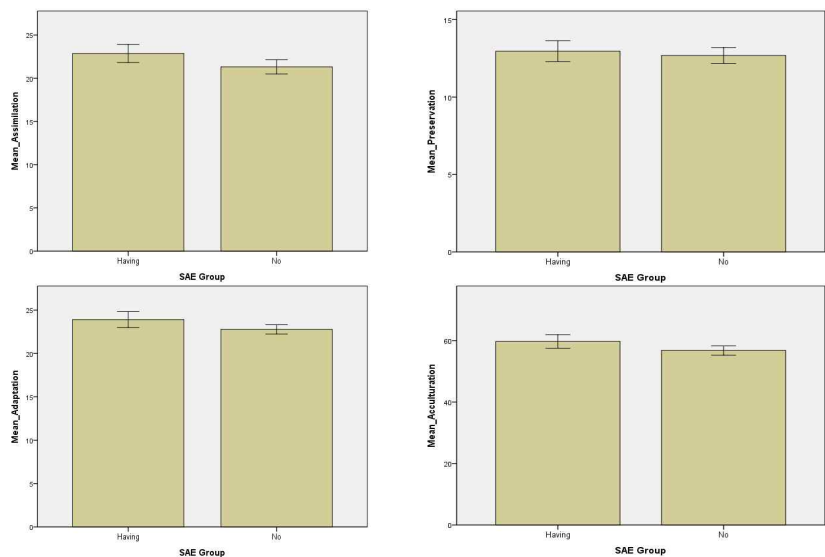
<Table 7> Means of acculturation for two experience groups

	Having experience (N=44)	No experience (N=88)			
	Mean(SD)	Mean(SD)	t	df	p
Assimilation	22.9(3.5)	21.3(3.9)	2.233	130	.027
Preservation	12.9(2.2)	12.7(2.4)	.621	130	.536
Adaptation	23.9(3.5)	22.8(2.6)	2.266	130	.025
Acculturation	59.7(7.2)	56.8(7.1)	2.233	130	.027

The independent sample *t*-test showed that participants having prior study abroad experience tended to adapt to culture more ( $M = 59.7$ ) than those with no experience ( $M = 56.8$ ), and this difference was significant  $t(130) = 2.233$ ,  $p < .05$ . In addition, to examine how substantial the effect was, the effect size was calculated, and it can be said that the effect was medium,  $r = .41$ .

For subcomponents of acculturation, the independent sample *t*-tests were employed, and the results showed that the group of participants with SAE got higher scores on assimilation and adaptation ( $M = 22.9$ ;  $M = 23.9$ , respectively) than the group of participants with no SAE ( $M = 21.3$ ;  $M = 22.8$ , respectively). It was found that there were significant differences between the two groups ( $t(130) = 2.233$ ,  $p < .05$ ;  $t(130) = 2.266$ ,  $p < .05$ ), showing medium effect sizes ( $r = .43$ ;  $r = .40$ ). On the other hand, the difference of the tendency towards preservation between the two SAE groups was very little ( $M = 12.9$ ;  $M = 12.7$ ), and, in fact, the *t*-test result showed that there was no significant difference ( $p > .05$ ). Figure 2 presents the bar

charts of the means of acculturation and each subcomponent of acculturation between two SAE groups.



<Figure 2> Means of acculturation for each of the two experience groups

V. Discussion and Conclusion

It may be valuable to study more about language learners’ individual differences because knowing which factor influences language learning has implications for language learning. The differences are intricately interlocked with each other, so it is necessary to study more about the interplay or relations among various learner individual variables. For L2 learners, it is necessary to obtain both knowledge of linguistic competence and knowledge of cultural competence, since as Kramsch (1993) points out, language and culture are embedded in each other. Furthermore,

language learners with foreign study experience have a high level of contact with target language speakers and exposure to the target language culture, and, consequently, have the opportunity to gain optimal linguistic knowledge (Rafieyan, Golerazeghi, & Orang, 2015).

The current study examines the relationship between the degree of FLA and the degree of acculturation and the effects of L2 learners' previous study abroad experience on a feeling of anxiety in L2 learning and on learners' awareness of the target language culture. Three main points have emerged from the results. First, anxiety for foreign language learning appears to be negatively related to the amount of learners' foreign language cultural awareness. This result is consistent with Yang's (2012) study, noting that the higher the degree of foreign language cultural awareness, the lower the level of anxiety for foreign language learning. It was also found that among the three acculturation-related variables, adaptation was more negatively correlated with FLA compared to assimilation and preservation. It can be said that those who are likely to adjust to the target language groups' cultural norms feel less anxious about L2 learning than those who are likely to maintain their own cultural values while rejecting the target language cultural values.

Second, previous study abroad experience has an impact on learners' feelings of anxiety about foreign language learning. Participants with SAE tend to feel less anxious than those with no SAE in communication anxiety and negative social evaluation anxiety. However, as the result showed, the difference on test anxiety was not significant between the two SAE groups. This result may be related to the fact that while communication apprehension and fear of negative social evaluation are the main factors in L2 learning, test anxiety is likely to be a general problem, which can be independent of FLA (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). It is assumed that learners' previous experience of studying abroad affects L2 learning-related anxiety more than general anxiety.

Third, learners with prior study abroad experience tend to have more positive attitudes towards the target language culture than those with no experience. To be

more specific, the group of participants with SAE got higher scores on *assimilation* and *adaptation* than the group of participants with no SAE, while the difference of the tendency to *preservation* between the two SAE groups was very little. That is, experiencing study abroad in the past has an impact on the tendency to adjust or adapt to the target language groups' cultural norms and values; on the other hand, it does not affect the tendency to maintain one's own cultural values while at the same time rejecting those of the target group. Since it is easy for learners to get access to a variety of materials to help them know other cultures in a highly globalised world, language learners are not likely to reject other countries' cultural values, whether they have previous experience learning abroad or not.

In terms of implications for language teachers, helping L2 learners to have a strong sense of belonging to the culture of the target language may be essential for the development of L2. For this, L2 teachers need to be sensitive to what aspects of the target language culture that they present to their students. Moreover, teachers in L2 classrooms need to employ a variety of teaching techniques for making students aware the target language culture such as incorporating the target culture in the lesson materials to facilitate the acculturation approach or giving learners maximum exposure to different accents or speech styles of the target language. Consequently, creating a learning environment in which students become used to target language input and output may reduce their anxiety in foreign language learning and encourage them to enhance L2 learning.

Even though this research contributes to the study of individual difference while scrutinizing the interplay between FLA, acculturation, and SAE, there are several limitations. First, this is a small-scale study. Further study needs to be conducted with a large number of students, in order to obtain more reliable quantitative results. Second, unbalanced numbers between the two SAE groups may affect the result. It may be worthwhile to study with the same numbers in the SAE groups in the future. Third, the participants for this study majored in various subjects, and the level of anxiety in English may be different according to what they are studying.

For instance, the students majoring in English may feel less anxious toward English learning, since they have recent experience of attending English classes. Therefore, if only learners majoring English were recruited, the results would be different.

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## Appendix

### <Survey Questions>

#### 1. 외국어(영어) 학습 불안감

1. 나는 영어 수업 시간에 영어로 말을 할 때 자신이 전혀 없다.  
①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
2. 나는 영어 수업 시간에 실수하는 것을 걱정하지 않는다.  
①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
3. 나는 영어 수업 시간에 교수님이 나에게 질문하시려는 것을 알았을 때 떨린다.  
①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
4. 나는 교수님이 영어로 말씀하시는 것을 이해하지 못할 때 불안해진다.  
①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
5. 나는 영어 수업을 더 듣는다 해도 전혀 부담되지 않을 것이다.  
①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
6. 영어 수업 시간에 수업과 관계없는 것을 생각하고 있는 나 자신을 발견한다.  
①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
7. 나는 다른 학생들이 나보다 영어 능력이 더욱 뛰어나다는 생각을 한다.  
①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
8. 나는 영어 수업 시간에 시험을 볼 때 보통 편안하다.  
①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
9. 나는 영어 수업 시간에 미리 준비하지 않고 말을 해야 할 때 매우 불안해진다.  
①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
10. 나는 영어 수업 시간에 낙제 점수를 받을까 걱정한다.  
①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
11. 나는 일부 사람들이 왜 영어 수업에 대해 초조해하는지 이해할 수 없다.  
①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
12. 나는 영어 수업 시간에 너무 긴장되어 내가 아는 것도 기억할 수 없다.  
①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

13. 나는 영어 수업 시간에 자발적으로 질문을 답하는 것이 창피하다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

14. 나는 영어 원어민과 영어로 대화를 해도 불안하지 않을 것이다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

15. 나는 교수님이 수정해주시는 것을 이해할 수 없을 때 초조해진다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

16. 나는 비록 영어 수업을 잘 준비한다 해도 영어 수업이 걱정된다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

17. 나는 종종 영어 수업을 빠지고 싶은 생각이 든다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

18. 나는 영어 수업 시간에 영어로 말을 할 때 자신감이 있다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

19. 나는 영어 교수님이 내가 실수할 때 마다 수정해주실까 걱정 된다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

20. 나는 영어 수업시간에 질문을 받으려 할 때 심장이 두근거리는 것을 느낄 수 있다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

21. 나는 영어 시험공부를 하면 할수록 더욱 혼란스러워진다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

22. 나는 영어 수업을 잘 준비해야 하는 부담감을 느끼지는 않는다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

23. 나는 늘 다른 학생들이 나보다 영어 회화를 더욱 잘 한다고 느낀다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

24. 나는 다른 학생들 앞에서 영어로 말을 할 때 그들을 많이 의식한다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

25. 나는 영어 수업의 진도가 빨리 따라가지 못할까 걱정한다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

26. 나는 영어 수업이 다른 수업보다 더욱 긴장되고 초조해지는 느낌이 든다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

27. 나는 영어 수업 시간에 영어로 말을 할 때 초조해지고 혼란스러워진다.  
 ①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
28. 나는 영어 수업을 들으러 갈 때 자신감과 여유가 있는 느낌이 든다.  
 ①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
29. 나는 영어교수님이 영어로 말씀하시는 모든 단어를 이해할 수 없을 때 초조해진다.  
 ①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
30. 나는 영어로 말을 하기 위해 배워야 하는 문법규칙의 양(수량)에 압도된다.  
 ①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
31. 나는 영어로 말을 할 때 다른 학생들이 비웃을까 두렵다.  
 ①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
32. 나는 영어 원어민들이 주변에 있어도 불안하지 않을 것이다.  
 ①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
33. 나는 영어 교수님이 내가 미리 준비하지 않은 것을 질문하실 때 초조해진다.  
 ①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

## II. 문화 적응(영어 문화에 대한 태도)

1. 나는 영어노래(팝송)를 듣는다.  
 ①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
2. 나는 영미권 사람들보다는 한국 사람들과 친해지는 것을 선호한다.  
 ①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
3. 나는 나 스스로 한국어와 영어 모두 능숙하게 의사소통한다고 생각한다.  
 ①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
4. 나는 영미권 문화보다는 아시아(한국) 문화 가치를 더 잘 받아들인다.  
 ①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
5. 나는 영어 원어민들과 친구가 되고 싶다.  
 ①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
6. 나는 아시아(한국) 문화와 영미권 문화 각각 나름대로 독특함이 있다고 생각한다.  
 ①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.
7. 나는 아시아(한국) 문화 가치와 영미권 문화 가치를 이해한다.  
 ①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

8. 나는 영어 원어민들처럼 생각하고, 말하고, 행동하고 싶다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

9. 나는 영미권(문화의) 사람들보다 한국(문화의) 사람들을 더 신뢰할 수 있다고 느낀다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

10. 나는 아시아(한국) 문화 가치들보다 영미권 문화 가치들을 좋아한다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

11. 나는 다른 문화를 가진 사람들에게 그 문화 기준에 따라(맞추어) 다르게 행동한다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

12. 나는 한국 문화 및 영미권 문화 사람들과 모두 친구가 될 수 있다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

13. 나는 한국 문화와는 다른 문화권 나라에서 살 수 있다고 생각하지 않는다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

14. 나는 영미권 문화의 TV 프로그램과 영화를 본다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

15. 나는 영미권 문화의 가치와 생활양식을 존중한다.

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

16. 나는 영미권 국가에서 사는 것을 좋아한다(선호한다).

①전혀 그렇지 않다. ②그렇지 않다. ③보통이다. ④그렇다. ⑤매우 그렇다.

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