

Anxiety and Self-Confidence in Ancient Language Studies

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1 Introduction

In order to shed light on anxiety pertaining to language learning from a wider perspective, we have conducted research (2011 and 2014) on anxiety in several ancient languages classes. The research revealed that students learning ancient languages such as ancient Greek, Hittite, ancient Egyptian and Latin languages experienced high levels of anxiety. The degrees of anxiety were higher than those from previous studies, whose subjects were native-English-speaking students learning a foreign language, such as Spanish or Japanese. The ancient languages dealt with in our research exist almost solely as languages for reading, and one of the main goals to attain in the classrooms was to be able to read the target language. So, at the same time as we looked at general language anxiety, we also focused particularly on anxiety pertaining to reading. The degrees of the ancient language learners' reading apprehension were high. It was also found that reading anxiety was negatively associated with strength of motivation for learning the Greek language, and that the Latin learners with a higher level of reading anxiety received a lower grade. Reading anxiety was highly positively associated with general language anxiety, and for the Latin learners, it was negatively related with another type of anxiety, i.e. facilitating anxiety. In our research, we also examined facilitating aspects of language anxiety, and found that this type of anxiety was highly negatively associated with general, debilitating anxiety in the Latin classroom, and positively related with strength of motivation in the Latin, Hittite, and Egyptian language classrooms.

Preceding the above-mentioned research, as a variable which may be related to language anxiety, Kitano (2001) and MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Donovan (2002) examined self-perception of target language ability, and they found that it was negatively associated with anxiety among native-English-speakers learning a foreign language. Takahashi's study (2008) of Japanese speakers in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom supports these findings. It seems that language learners who self-perceive having higher proficiency show lower levels of anxiety in the classroom. Based on the results from the series of research we have conducted and the previous research conducted by other researchers, we assume that lack of confidence is one of the reasons why language learners experience high levels of anxiety in the classroom. Confidence may be a key factor to reducing anxiety.

The present study aims to investigate whether or not there is a relationship

between confidence and ancient language anxiety. As well as examining general language anxiety, we will focus on anxiety pertaining to reading, for the reason that, for our subjects (Japanese university students in a medium-sized city), the target ancient languages (Latin and Egyptian) cannot be an oral communication tool or means of writing. Besides, in the classroom, one of the main goals to attain is to be able to read the language, or more likely, translate texts into Japanese. We will look at confidence in a general sense, i.e. confidence in the subjects' academic study. In the target language classrooms, most of the class time is spent on learning grammar and vocabulary, and translating texts into Japanese. Although some time may be spent on learning the pronunciation of words, speaking or listening is not likely to be included in class activities. Since some aspects of language learning were excluded, language learning confidence, which may include these excluded aspects, is not applicable to ancient language learning. Moreover, because of the nature of the target languages, our students may regard the courses more as general liberal arts subjects instead of foreign language courses. Therefore, it may be reasonable to look at their confidence in overall academic study. We will also look at achievement in the target language, in relation to confidence.

Before going into our study details, we will give a very brief explanation of the Latin and ancient Egyptian languages, for this may be helpful for readers not familiar with them. The Latin language was the official language of the Western Roman Empire (the 8th century BC to 476 AD). After the Empire collapsed, it was used in the academic, legal, and religious fields until the 19th century AD. It is a descendant of the ancient Proto-Indo-European language. It employs the Roman alphabet and is still used largely in biological taxonomy. As for the ancient Egyptian language, it is a northern Afro-Asiatic language whose history is the second longest (after the Sumerian language), and it was used from 3200 BC to the 4th century AD. It employs hieroglyphs composed of some 500 symbols.

2 Research Questions

The research questions of the present study are the following:

1) Do learners of ancient languages have particularly high confidence in their general academic study? ; 2) Is confidence negatively related to debilitating language anxiety? ; 3) Is confidence positively related to facilitating language anxiety? ; 4) Is confidence negatively related to reading anxiety? ; and 5) Is confidence positively related to achievement in the ancient language course?

3 Methodology

3.1 Subjects

The subjects were Japanese students enrolled in two foreign language courses at Niigata University; 35 in 'Foreign Language Special A (Latin)' and 19 in 'Foreign

Language Special C (Ancient Egyptian).’ The 35 students in the Latin language classroom were from eight different faculties: Humanities, Engineering, Law, Education, Economics, Agriculture, Science and Medicine. The 19 students in the ancient Egyptian language classroom were from seven different faculties: Humanities, Engineering, Law, Education, Economics, Science and Medicine. In both classrooms, students were freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors. Both of the courses were one-semester courses starting in April and ending in August. The classes met once a week and lasted 90 minutes. The students were required to take language courses of any kind offered, and they chose the Latin or ancient Egyptian language from several other different language courses available, both modern and ancient. All subjects were native speakers of Japanese and of Japanese nationality.

3.2 Measurement instruments

The data was gathered in the first semester in 2014. In June, a questionnaire including the Academic Behavioural Confidence Scale (24 items), the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (32 items), the Facilitating Anxiety Scale (10 items), the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (20 items) was introduced to the subjects during class time. All the scales except the Facilitating Anxiety Scale were originally written in English, and translated Japanese versions of the scales were used. The Facilitating Anxiety Scale was originally written in Japanese. All the scales were modified for use in the ancient languages classroom, such as replacing the term “English language” in the original versions with “Latin language” or “ancient Egyptian language.” The students were asked to complete the questionnaire within 15 minutes. The questionnaire items are presented in Appendix.

Sander and Sanders (2006) developed the Academic Behavioural Confidence (ABC) Scale in order to measure self-confidence in academic study in higher education. This scale can be used to gain an understanding of students’ confidence in themselves as learners, and it is a useful survey tool in pedagogical research. It consists of 24 items and starts with an introductory clause asking “How confident are you that you will be able to:” followed by latter parts of the sentences such as “Study effectively on your own in independent / private study,” “Produce your best work under examination conditions,” or “Respond to questions asked by a lecturer in front of a full lecture theatre.”

The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) was originally a 33-item scale developed by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986). In the present study, one item on the scale was removed because it was not suitable for the situation of learning ancient languages (“It frightens me when I don’t understand what the teacher is saying in the target language”). Therefore, the total number of items used was 32. The scale was designed to elicit foreign language learners’ self-reports regarding anxiety, and it is the most widely used anxiety measurement instrument. An example of an item on the scale

was “I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my Latin language class.”

The 11-item Facilitating Anxiety (FA) Scale was created by Takahashi (2004) in order to measure anxiety which facilitates learning in the foreign language classroom in Japan. An example of an item on the scale was “I can read the text aloud better when I am conscious that other students are listening to me.” One item which we thought unsuitable for the ancient language learning situation was removed (“I enjoy taking a difficult listening quiz more than an easy one”), and the total number of items in the scale was 10.

In 1999, Horwitz further developed an anxiety scale with other researchers (Saito and Garza), which focuses on anxiety arising from reading a foreign language. The Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS) elicits students’ self-reports of anxiety covering various aspects of reading, their perceptions of reading difficulties in their target language, and their perception of the relative difficulty of reading as compared to the difficulty of other language skills. An example of an item on the scale was “I get upset when I’m not sure whether I understand what I am reading in the Latin language.”

For all the scales, a five-point Likert response scale was used for each item. A student’s endorsement of “strongly agree” was equated with a numerical value of 5, “agree” with 4, “neither agree nor disagree” with 3, “disagree” with 2, and “strongly disagree” with 1. A higher score on the scales indicated a higher level of measured attributes. All the scales included some reversed items, and for these items, the numerical values were reversed when computed.

As a language achievement measurement, final grades of the target language courses were used. In the classrooms, the students took a 15-minute quiz every week which covered what they had learned the previous week. Final grades consisted of the total score of all the quizzes (80%) and points for attendance (20%).

On completion of the data collection, first, all the scales were tested for reliability. After reliability was established, a series of correlation analyses were performed amongst the scales and the achievement in the Latin and ancient Egyptian languages.

4 Results

Table 1 shows the internal consistency of the scales using Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the present study.

Table 1 Reliabilities of the scales

	ABC 24 items	FLCAS 32 items	FA 10 items	FLRAS 20 items
Latin N=35	.92	.87	.83	.75
Egyptian N=19	.88	.90	.74	.83

*N=number of subjects

*ABC=Academic Behavioural Confidence Scale; FLCAS=Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale; FA=Facilitating Anxiety Scale; FLRAS=Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale

In their study, Sander and Sanders obtained a high level of internal consistency of the ABC scale ($\alpha = .88$, $N=284$, 2003). In the present study, the alpha was .92 for the Latin learners and .88 for the Egyptian learners, and therefore, the present alphas were the same or higher than that obtained by Sander and Sanders. This measurement scale was found to be reliable for measuring self-confidence pertaining to general academic study at university.

Reliability of the FLCAS was .87 for the Latin learners and .90 for the Egyptian learners. In the previous studies, we obtained alphas of .92 for 28 Latin learners (2014) and .89 for 22 Egyptian ones (2011). The present alphas were slightly lower or almost the same as the ones before, and this measurement scale was also found to be reliable for measuring debilitating anxiety pertaining to ancient language learning.

For the Latin learners, the present alpha of the Facilitating Anxiety Scale (.83) was considerably higher than the one from our previous study (.73, in 2014). For the Egyptian language learners, the alpha of .74 was almost the same as that from our previous study (.73, in 2011). As for the Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale in the present study, the alpha of the Latin learners (.75) was considerably lower than the one from the previous study (.84), but the alpha of the Egyptian learners (.83) was considerably higher than previous one (.79). Saito et al. reported the alpha of this scale to be .86 in their original study of 383 students. The lower numbers of students in the present study may be one reason for the lower alphas. We regard the overall present alphas as high enough (with relatively fewer subjects), and so the FA Scale and the FLRAS were found to be reliable.

The statistical data of the measurement scales are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Statistical data of the scales

	ABC 24 items PR=24-120	FLCAS 32 items PR=32-160	FA 10 items PR=10-50	FLRAS 20 items PR=20-100
Latin N=35	M: 82.26 SD: 14.12 R: 44-108	M: 96.11 SD: 15.56 R: 55-121	M: 25.77 SD: 6.41 R: 15-40	M: 57.69 SD: 8.55 R: 40-79
Egyptian N=19	M: 80.94 SD: 9.90 R: 52-93	M: 94.35 SD: 14.50 R: 59-126	M: 27.18 SD: 4.07 R: 21-36	M: 59.65 SD: 8.76 R: 39-75

*N=number of subjects; M=mean average score; SD=standard deviation; R=range; and PR=possible range

*ABC=Academic Behavioural Confidence Scale; FLCAS=Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale; FA= Facilitating Anxiety Scale; and FLRAS=Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale

In the previous study by Sander and Sanders, the mean response over the 24 items of the ABC Scale was 3.83, among British university students. Although we did not show them in the table above, we calculated the mean responses of the Scale, and they were lower than that of Sander et al.'s subjects: 3.43 for the Latin learners and 3.37 for the Egyptian learners. This may suggest that, judging from the mid-point of the scale (72), the present students' confidence was fairly high (mean average scores of 82.26 and 80.94), but it was considerably lower compared to their British counterparts.

For the FLCAS, the students in the Latin course showed a slightly higher mean average score (96.11) than the Egyptian learners (94.35), indicating that the Latin learners experienced higher levels of debilitating anxiety than the Egyptian ones. The present mean average score of the Latin learners was almost the same as the one from the previous Latin learners (96.50). On the other hand, the present Egyptian learners showed lower levels of anxiety (94.35) compared to those from the previous Egyptian course (98.00). The Egyptian learners showed lower levels of debilitating anxiety and higher levels of facilitating anxiety (27.18) than the Latin learners (25.77) in the present study. The relationship is the reverse of the previous study (Egyptian: 24.36, Latin: 25.07). The mid-point for this scale was 30, and the results revealed that, although the subjects experienced this type of anxiety, it was not high.

As for anxiety pertaining to reading the target language, the Egyptian learners showed a higher mean average (59.65) than the Latin learners (57.69). The relationship between the two was the same as in the previous study: the Egyptian learners experienced considerably higher levels (61.32) of reading anxiety than the Latin learners (54.11). When reading Latin texts, the learners were more relaxed than Egyptian language learners. The present learners' (of both languages) levels of reading anxiety were considerably higher than those of students in Spanish, Russian, and Japanese

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classes (M=52.9, N=383) in Saito et al.'s study in 1999. It was found that the present subjects were experiencing higher levels of reading anxiety.

We carried out item analyses of the measurement scales in order to investigate particular attributes of the four affective factors (academic confidence, debilitating and facilitating anxiety, and reading anxiety) in the ancient language classrooms. The items which received the highest and the lowest endorsements were examined. For the ABC Scale, the following were the items with the strongest endorsements (the mean average endorsements are marked in parentheses):

Item 6: Attend most taught sessions. (Latin: 4.29, Egyptian: 4.35)

Item 24: Attend tutorials. (L: 4.11, E: 3.88)

Item 18: Be on time for lectures. (L: 4.11, E: 3.88)

Exactly the same items were endorsed most strongly for both Latin and Egyptian learners, and all of them were dealing with "being there." The subjects in the study had confidence in attending at university classes, tutorials or lectures.

The following were the items with the lowest endorsements (the mean average endorsements are marked in parentheses):

Item 10: Ask lecturers questions about the material they are teaching, during a lecture. (L: 2.14, E: 2.35)

Item 14: Read the recommended background material. (L: 2.60, E: 2.24)

Here again, the same two items had the lowest endorsements for both Latin and Egyptian learners, although they were in reverse order. The subjects did not have confidence in asking questions during the class time (Item 10). Also, they did not believe in reading materials recommended by the lecturers (Item 14). Probably, they were not willing to spend money on unnecessary extra materials.

For the FLCAS, the following were the items with the strongest endorsements:

Item 15: I would not be nervous speaking the Latin / ancient Egyptian language with native speakers. (reversed item) (Latin: 4.14, Egyptian: 4.47)

Item 35: I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak the Latin language. (L: 4.09)

Item 25: I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class. (reversed item) (L: 3.91, E: 4.06)

The subjects in both language classrooms shared the strongly endorsed items except for Item 35, which showed a medium endorsement among the Egyptian learners (3.12). The Latin language's complicated grammar rules may have caused the learners

to endorse this item very strongly. Items 15 and 25 were also strongly endorsed by the ancient Greek, Hittite and Egyptian learners in our previous studies. Previous Latin learners also endorsed Item 15 strongly. Apparently, ancient language learners felt most anxious speaking the target language with imagined native speakers. This is probably because they were not trained to speak the target language: they learned the language for reading only. The strong endorsement of Item 25 indicated that the students in both language courses felt that they had to prepare well for their class. During class time, the students took a weekly 15-minute quiz, and therefore they had to prepare for the quizzes every single week.

The following were the items with the lowest endorsements:

Item 18: I often feel like not going to my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class.

(Latin: 1.74, Egyptian: 1.64)

Item 31: I feel more tense and nervous in my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class than in my other classes. (L: 1.74, E: 1.88)

Again, exactly the same two items showed the weakest endorsement. The students in both language courses did not mind attending the classes, just as they answered in the academic confidence scale (Item 18). Probably, they did not want to fail the courses: they knew that attendance points would be included in their final grades. The present subjects did not think that the language class was particularly more anxiety-provoking than their other classes (Item 31). Both of these items showed the weakest endorsements in our previous study of ancient Greek, Hittite and Egyptian learners and of Latin learners.

As for the Facilitating Anxiety Scale, the following was the only item endorsed stronger than 4.00 by the Latin learners, and no other item was endorsed stronger than 3.50. For the Egyptian learners the same item showed the strongest endorsement but with somewhat weaker mean average.

Item 10: When I start a test, nothing is able to distract me. (L: 4.06, E: 3.76)

The same item also showed the strongest endorsement in our previous studies of ancient Greek, Hittite and Egyptian learners and of Latin learners. It seems that ancient language learners were able to concentrate well when taking tests. Another possible reason for this was that the only tests in all of these classes were the 15-minute quizzes conducted every week. The previous and present subjects may have got used to taking them.

The item with the lowest endorsement was the following:

Item 21: I enjoy taking a difficult exam more than an easy one. (L: 1.89, E: 2.06)

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Again, this is the item endorsed lowest in the previous study dealing with the three ancient languages and with the Latin language. The only test given to the present subjects was the weekly quiz, covering the grammar and/or vocabulary they had learned the previous week. Although they coped well with the quizzes, they preferred easier ones to challenging ones.

For the FLRAS, whose focus is on debilitating anxiety pertaining to reading, the following items produced the strongest agreement:

Item 9: I usually end up translating word by word when I'm reading the Latin / ancient Egyptian language. (L: 3.66, E: 3.76)

Item 20: You have to know so much about ancient Egyptian history and culture in order to read the ancient Egyptian language. (E: 3.65)

No single item was endorsed stronger than 3.80. Item 9 was also most strongly endorsed by the subjects in the other ancient language classrooms in our previous study. The students translated the target language word for word into Japanese when they were reading, and this is presumable since translation was one of the main activities in those classes. The Egyptian learners thought they had to have some knowledge of history and culture in order to learn the language, but this was not true of the Latin learners (Item 20).

The students in both classes shared the item with the strongest disagreement. It was:

Item 4: I feel intimidated whenever I see a whole page of the Latin / ancient Egyptian language in front of me. (L: 1.83, E: 2.18)

Although many of them experience debilitating anxiety when reading the target language, they did not feel intimidated by a whole page of the language, and this is good news for the teachers. The item 4 was the item which also showed the lowest endorsement in our previous studies.

On the other hand, the Latin and Egyptian learners did not share the item with the second strongest disagreement. For the Latin learners it was:

Item 17: I don't mind reading to myself, but I feel very uncomfortable when I have to read the Latin language aloud. (L: 2.00)

For the Egyptian learners, it was:

Item 12: I enjoy reading the ancient Egyptian language. (reversed item) (E: 2.24)

The Latin learners did not like to read texts aloud in front of their classmates. Probably they did not want their classmates to listen to their pronunciation. Apparently, Egyptian learners were not enjoying reading given texts in the classroom.

After reliability was established, in order to investigate the relationships between all the variables, correlation analyses were performed amongst the scales and with regards to language achievement. Tables 3 and 4 present the results from the correlation analyses for each language.

Table 3 Correlations (Latin)

Variables	ABC	FLCAS	FA	FLRAS	Achievement
ABC	-	-.449**	.507**	-.593**	.419*
FLCAS	-.449**	-	-.410*	.626**	-.210
FA	.507**	-.410*	-	-.257	.120
FLRAS	-.593**	.626**	-.257	-	-.132
Achievement	.419*	-.210	.120	-.132	-

* **= $p < .01$. *= $p < .05$.

Table 4 Correlations (Egyptian)

Variables	ABC	FLCAS	FA	FLRAS	Achievement
ABC	-	-.227	.641**	-.379	.645**
FLCAS	-.227	-	-.404	.738**	-.307
FA	.641**	-.404	-	-.540*	.264
FLRAS	-.379	.738**	-.540*	-	-.312
Achievement	.645**	-.307	.264	-.312	-

* **= $p < .01$. *= $p < .05$.

The Pearson-product moment correlation demonstrated that academic confidence (measured by the ABC Scale) was correlated with debilitating anxiety, facilitating anxiety, reading anxiety, and language achievement in the case of the Latin learners. It was significantly negatively correlated with debilitating anxiety and reading anxiety, while its correlation with facilitating anxiety and language achievement was positive. For the same group of students, debilitating anxiety was negatively correlated with facilitating anxiety and positively with reading anxiety, but no relationship was found between anxiety and achievement. Facilitating anxiety showed a negative relationship with debilitating anxiety and reading anxiety, but no other relationship was found between this and other variables.

As for the Egyptian learners, academic confidence was correlated with facilitating

anxiety positively, and with language achievement positively. For this group, debilitating anxiety was found to be related only with reading anxiety. Facilitating anxiety was correlated with reading anxiety (negatively) as well as with academic confidence (positively).

In our previous study, the FLCAS was also significantly highly correlated with the FLRAS (among the Greek, Hittite, and Egyptian language learners). This is reasonable because both scales measured debilitating aspects of anxiety; the FLCAS in a more general sense, with the FLRAS being more specific to reading.

5 Discussion of Findings

5.1 Academic confidence of the ancient language learners

Results from the present study showed that the students in the Latin and ancient Egyptian language classrooms had fairly high confidence in their academic study in general. The medium point of the total score of the Academic Behavioural Confidence (ABC) Scale was 72.0, and the mean average score was 82.26 for the Latin learners and 80.94 for the Egyptian learners. However, a comparison of overall ABC scores showed that the subjects in Sander and Sanders' original study (N=284) had considerably higher confidence than the present subjects. Sander and Sanders reported that over half of their subjects were medical students (N=182), and as predicted, they scored higher than the rest of their subjects (psychology students, N=102), and this raised the overall average. In the present study, the majority of the Latin learners (N=19 out of 35) were from the faculty of humanities, and the average score of these students was high (83.74). The rest of the 16 learners were from six different faculties. As for the 19 Egyptian learners, they were from seven different faculties. It seems pointless to calculate averages by faculty since the numbers of subjects in each faculty were small. Accordingly, difference in degrees of confidence by faculty remains to be seen.

Item analyses of the ABC Scale showed similarities between the confidence shown by the ancient language learners in the two different classes. This is reasonable since the scale measured confidence in general academic study, and it did not particularly focus on learning the target language. The students in both language courses were most confident in attending classes, tutorials or lectures. Also, they were not willing to ask questions during class time or read materials recommended by the lecturers.

Academic confidence showed a positive relationship with the subjects' achievements, in both of the language courses: those who had more confidence in their academic study obtained higher grades. Sander and Sanders did not investigate the relationship between confidence and academic grades, and therefore, we cannot compare the present results with the previous ones. The positive relationship, however, was something we had expected. Learning ancient languages was one of their academic studies, and so, the subjects with more confidence in general study probably had more confidence in the target language learning.

So what is the cause and effect relationship? Their confidence may have exerted a beneficial influence on their language achievements. Conversely, their lack of confidence may have exerted an unfavorable effect on their achievements. The achievement measurement we used was final grades, and the grades consisted of weekly 15-minute quizzes and attendance. Since the quiz was returned to the students the following week, students may have gained confidence every time they were given back the quiz. However, the confidence measured here was the one pertaining to general academic study, and therefore, good grades producing confidence may not be applicable. Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume that confidence may have had a favorable effect on grades.

5.2 Relationships between academic confidence and anxiety

The levels of debilitating language anxiety (measured by the FLCAS) among the Latin and ancient Egyptian learners were high. They were about the same level as Aida's subjects, being university-level Japanese learners in the United States ($M=96.7$, $N=96$, in 1994), which used all of the 33 items of the FLCAS. All in all, the levels of anxiety among our present and previous Latin and Egyptian learners were approximately the same. Moreover, results from the item analyses showed similar tendencies between the two groups of subjects: becoming the most apprehensive about speaking the language and preparing for the class; and experiencing the least anxiety about attending the class, and thinking that some other courses were more anxiety-provoking.

The subjects also experienced some levels of facilitating anxiety, but the levels were not high. They were about the same as or slightly higher than those of our previous studies of ancient language learners. However, the degrees were higher than those in Takahashi's previous studies of EFL learners. It seems that the ancient language learners became facilitatively more anxious in the classroom than EFL learners, especially when taking tests, but they did not necessarily enjoy taking them.

The subjects in the present study experienced some levels of reading anxiety. They lacked confidence in reading the target language, and most of them were not reading the language but reading the Japanese translation of the texts. Their levels of reading anxiety were considerably higher than those of the students in Spanish, Russian, and Japanese classes ($M=52.9$, $N=383$) in Saito et al.'s study in 1999. It may well be that, since the main goal of the language courses was to be able to read the target language, the subjects in the present study felt apprehensive when they thought they were not attaining the goal. Moreover, the Egyptian learners experienced higher reading anxiety than the Latin learners. This may be attributed to the subjects' familiarity with the target language. The Latin language uses the Roman alphabet, which is familiar to the subjects. On the other hand, the ancient Egyptian language uses hieroglyphs which may appear to be just symbols to the subjects, and probably they

were not at all familiar with them.

For the Latin learners, those with higher academic confidence had a lower level of debilitating language anxiety, a higher level of facilitating anxiety, and a lower level of reading anxiety. Their general academic confidence might have reduced anxiety in the language class, especially the one pertaining to reading the language, and might have given them a feeling of stimulation in a favorable way. This was not equally true of the Egyptian learners. But for them, higher academic confidence was at least associated with one variable positively: facilitating anxiety. It may well be that their confidence encouraged them to do better in the class.

6 Conclusions

The present study investigated academic confidence in relation to ancient language learning. The ancient language learners showed fairly high confidence in their academic study, although it was lower than that of university foreign language learners in the U.S. The present subjects had confidence especially in attendance: they were serious about attending classes probably because they did not want to fail their courses. On the other hand, they were not sure about asking questions during lectures. Teachers and educators should encourage their students to ask more questions during class time. Those subjects who had more confidence in their academic study received higher grades in the ancient language classrooms. Their confidence may have exerted favorable effects on achievements.

As for foreign language anxiety, interesting results were found: in both classrooms, students' responses showed similar tendencies with regards to the three types of anxiety (debilitating, facilitating and reading) regardless of the difference in the target languages. They felt most anxious when they imagined speaking the language. At the same time, they did not become apprehensive about attending the language courses. This point also appeared in their confidence in general academic study. The subjects also experienced some degrees of facilitating anxiety, but the levels were moderate. Their reading anxiety was high, probably because the main focus of the courses was associated more with reading than other activities. We also found some relationships between confidence and anxiety: for the Latin learners, confidence was negatively related to debilitating anxiety and reading anxiety, and positively associated with facilitating anxiety; for the Egyptian learners, it was found to be positively related to facilitating anxiety.

One of the limitations of the present study is that, although the reliabilities of the measurement instruments were satisfactorily high, the numbers of subjects were small, and therefore, the results cannot be overgeneralized. Comprehensive research with a large number of subjects is warranted. Moreover, further research into different ancient language classrooms may be interesting since not much research has been done in this area.

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Appendix : Questionnaire Items

[1] Academic Behavioural Confidence Scale (mean average endorsements of Latin / ancient Egyptian language learners)

How confident are you that you will be able to:

1 Study effectively on your own in independent / private study. (3.74 / 3.41)

2 Produce your best work under examination conditions. (3.09 / 3.12)

3 Respond to questions asked by a lecturer in front of a full lecture theatre. (2.94 / 3.06)

4 Manage your work load to meet coursework deadlines. (3.80 / 3.35)

5 Give a presentation to a small group of fellow students. (3.14 / 3.35)

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- 6 Attend most taught sessions. (4.29 / 4.35)
- 7 Attain good grades in your work. (3.11 / 3.12)
- 8 Engage in profitable academic debate with your peers. (3.09 / 3.35)
- 9 Ask lecturers questions about the material they are teaching, in one-to-one setting. (2.71 / 2.82)
- 10 Ask lecturers questions about the material they are teaching, during a lecture. (2.14 / 2.35)
- 11 Understand the material outlined and discussed with you by lecturers. (3.80 / 3.76)
- 12 Follow the themes and debates in lectures. (3.60 / 3.82)
- 13 Prepare thoroughly for tutorials. (3.40 / 3.47)
- 14 Read the recommended background material. (2.60 / 2.24)
- 15 Produce coursework at the required standard. (3.11 / 3.24)
- 16 Write in an appropriate academic style. (3.40 / 3.12)
- 17 Ask for help if you don't understand. (3.80 / 3.88)
- 18 Be on time for lectures. (4.11 / 3.88)
- 19 Make the most of the opportunity of studying for a degree at university. (3.66 / 3.76)
- 20 Pass assessments at the first attempt. (3.66 / 3.24)
- 21 Plan appropriate revision schedules. (3.54 / 3.12)
- 22 Remain adequately motivated throughout. (3.49 / 3.47)
- 23 Produce your best work in coursework assignments. (3.91 / 3.76)
- 24 Attend tutorials. (4.11 / 3.88)

[2] Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (mean average endorsements of Latin / ancient Egyptian language learners)

- 1 I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class. (3.4 / 3.41)
- 3 I don't worry about making mistakes in my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class. (reversed item). (3.34 / 3.41)
- 4 I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class. (2.74 / 2.41)
- 5 It wouldn't bother me at all to take more Latin / ancient Egyptian language classes (reversed item). (2.51 / 2.24)
- 6 During my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course. (2.86 / 2.76)
- 8 I am usually at ease during tests in my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class. (reversed item) (2.74 / 3.47)
- 9 I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class. (2.69 / 2.71)
- 11 I worry about the consequences of failing my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class. (2.89 / 3.53)
- 12 I don't understand why some people get so upset over Latin / ancient Egyptian language classes. (reversed item) (3.51 / 3.41)

- 13 In my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know. (2.43 / 2.41)
- 14 It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class. (3.23 / 3.12)
- 15 I would not be nervous speaking the Latin / ancient Egyptian language with native speakers. (reversed item) (4.14 / 4.47)
- 17 Even if I am well prepared for my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class, I feel anxious about it. (3.37 / 3.53)
- 18 I often feel like not going to my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class. (1.74 / 1.65)
- 19 I feel confident when I speak in my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class. (reversed item) (3.54 / 3.35)
- 20 I am afraid that my Latin / ancient Egyptian language teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make. (2.26 / 2.06)
- 22 I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class. (3.23 / 2.41)
- 24 The more I study for a Latin / ancient Egyptian language test, the more confused I get. (2.34 / 2.53)
- 25 I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class. (reversed item) (3.91 / 4.06)
- 26 I always feel that the other students speak the Latin / ancient Egyptian language better than I do. (3.00 / 2.41)
- 27 I feel very self-conscious about speaking the Latin / ancient Egyptian language in front of other students. (2.29 / 2.41)
- 29 My Latin / ancient Egyptian language class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind. (2.37 / 2.82)
- 31 I feel more tense and nervous in my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class than in my other classes. (1.74 / 1.88)
- 32 When I'm on my way to my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class, I feel very sure and relaxed. (reversed item) (3.51 / 3.12)
- 33 I get nervous when I don't understand every word the Latin / ancient Egyptian language teacher says. (3.00 / 2.47)
- 35 I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak the Latin / ancient Egyptian language. (4.09 / 3.12)
- 37 I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the Latin / ancient Egyptian language. (1.97 / 2.35)
- 38 I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of the Latin / ancient Egyptian language. (reversed item) (3.60 / 3.24)
- 39 I get nervous when the Latin / ancient Egyptian language teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance. (3.46 / 3.59)
- 40 I keep thinking that the other students are better at languages than I am. (3.77 / 3.59)
- 41 I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting. (3.66 / 3.71)

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42 I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class. (2.77 / 2.71)

[3] Facilitating Anxiety Scale (mean average endorsements of Latin / ancient Egyptian language learners)

2 I work most effectively under pressure when a task is given in my Latin / ancient Egyptian language class. (2.51 / 3.00)

7 Nervousness while taking a test helps me do better. (2.46 / 2.71)

10 When I start a test, nothing is able to distract me. (4.06 / 3.76)

16 I look forward to the Latin / ancient Egyptian language exams. (2.54 / 2.71)

21 I enjoy taking a difficult exam more than an easy one. (1.89 / 2.06)

23 The more important the Latin / ancient Egyptian language exam, the better I seem to do. (3.06 / 2.76)

28 I can read the text aloud better when I am conscious that other students are listening to me. (2.46 / 2.59)

30 I would like the teacher and other students to listen to my Latin / ancient Egyptian language pronunciation. (2.06 / 2.18)

34 I would like the teacher to correct my Latin / ancient Egyptian language mistakes in front of other students. (2.40 / 2.59)

36 I look forward to finding out how my Latin / ancient Egyptian language reports or composition will be evaluated by the teacher. (2.34 / 2.82)

[4] Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (mean average endorsements of Latin / ancient Egyptian language learners)

1 I get upset when I'm not sure whether I understand what I am reading in the Latin / ancient Egyptian language. (3.46 / 2.94)

2 When reading the Latin / ancient Egyptian language, I often understand the words but still can't quite understand what the author is saying. (2.83 / 3.59)

3 When I'm reading the Latin / ancient Egyptian language, I get so confused I can't remember what I'm reading. (2.51 / 2.82)

4 I feel intimidated whenever I see a whole page of the Latin / ancient Egyptian language in front of me. (1.83 / 2.18)

5 I am nervous when I am reading a passage in the Latin / ancient Egyptian language when I am not familiar with the topic. (2.37 / 2.59)

6 I get upset whenever I encounter unknown grammar when reading the Latin / ancient Egyptian language. (3.26 / 2.71)

7 When reading the Latin / ancient Egyptian language, I get nervous and confused when I don't understand every word. (2.77 / 2.59)

8 It bothers me to encounter words I can't pronounce while reading the Latin / ancient Egyptian language. (3.37 / 3.53)

9 I usually end up translating word by word when I'm reading the Latin / ancient Egyptian language. (3.66 / 3.76)

- 10 By the time you get past the funny letters and symbols in the Latin / ancient Egyptian language, it's hard to remember what you're reading about. (2.54 / 3.00)
- 11 I am worried about all the new symbols you have to learn in order to read the Latin / ancient Egyptian language. (2.77 / 3.35)
- 12 I enjoy reading the Latin / ancient Egyptian language. (reversed item) (2.49 / 2.24)
- 13 I feel confident when I am reading in the Latin / ancient Egyptian language. (reversed item) (3.40 / 3.29)
- 14 Once you get used to it, reading the Latin / ancient Egyptian language is not so difficult. (reversed item) (2.97 / 3.12)
- 15 The hardest part of learning the Latin / ancient Egyptian language is learning to read. (2.54 / 2.82)
- 16 I would be happy just to learn to speak the Latin / ancient Egyptian language rather than having to learn to read as well. (reversed item) (2.74 / 2.76)
- 17 I don't mind reading to myself, but I feel very uncomfortable when I have to read the Latin / ancient Egyptian language aloud. (2.00 / 2.71)
- 18 I am satisfied with the level of reading ability in the Latin / ancient Egyptian language that I have achieved so far. (reversed item) (3.57 / 2.94)
- 19 The Latin / ancient Egyptian language culture and ideas seem very foreign to me. (3.40 / 3.06)
- 20 You have to know so much about Latin / ancient Egyptian history and culture in order to read the Latin / ancient Egyptian language. (3.20 / 3.65)