

# **Learners' experiences of language anxiety during an English village course**

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## **Abstract**

This mixed methods study investigated language anxiety in 40 high school learners who attended a three-day intensive course at an English village in Japan. Data was obtained through written narratives, interviews, and a modified version of the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope, 1986), which was completed pre and post-course. The data revealed that participants' anxiety levels decreased following their course, with the greatest drops observed in learners with no experience of international travel. Qualitative data revealed four sources of anxiety, the most significant of which was oral presentations. The implications of this study include a tentative endorsement of English villages, as well as practical suggestions to reduce anxiety during English village courses.

*Keywords: learner anxiety, affect, English village, narrative frame*

It was announced in late 2014 that a government funded English village (EV) would be opened in Tokyo, the latest development designed to foster increased cross-cultural communicative confidence in Japanese learners in advance of the 2020 Olympic games (Osaki, 2015). It is unclear whether Tokyo has been spurred by the large scale adoption of EV facilities in South Korea during the mid-2000s, yet critics may point to the failings of that system in their evaluation of the current proposition in Japan. Krashen (2006, p. 1) in a critical letter to the Taipei Times wrote simply that “we have no idea if (EVs) are really helping children acquire English skills”. Krashen’s arguments for the failing of the EV system were three fold: that EVs are prohibitively expensive, that their limited capacity means they are only able to provide for an insignificant percentage of the learning demographic, and that they have had no formal evaluation through empirical study. These are valid complaints, and given the proposed investment in Tokyo, reinforce the need for a focused and thorough investigation into the potential pedagogic merits of EVs for Japanese learners. The reality remains eleven years after Krashen’s letter that little empirical research has been conducted within the EV context.

There has been some suggestion that English villages may have a role to play in lowering anxiety (Trottier, 2006). Prompted by this claim, the study herein aims to open the dialogue on the affective impact of EVs on learners by considering two issues. Firstly, by assessing whether a visit to an English village reduces the anxiety levels of Japanese secondary school learners; and secondly, by unmasking the sources of anxiety that exist at English villages for English learners.

## Literature review

### *English villages*

English villages are defined by their creation of a simulated environment, integrating aspects of western culture and language teaching. Generally they include western architecture and food, and a variety of shops, restaurants and hotel facilities that enable learners to immerse themselves in an English-only atmosphere (Seargeant, 2005). As a result, the purpose of English villages has been suggested to involve “students actually imagining themselves in the role of a fluent speaker in an ‘authentic’ environment” (McKay, 2011, p. 129).

Over the last 20 years, English villages have become more widely utilised in Asia (e.g. Osaki, 2015; Trottier, 2006; Trottier, 2008). The Korean government have most eagerly adopted the facilities, funding a series of English villages throughout the country to act as a cost-effective alternative to overseas study (Krashen, 2006; Trottier, 2008). Although they continue to be developed, English villages are not all alike, and to date, no study has compared the nuances of different facilities (Morris & Lankshear, 2015).

Literature on English villages has frequently been negative, though not on their pedagogic value, but on the supposed authenticity of the experiences offered (Krashen, 2006; Seargeant, 2005). That said, Trottier (2006) proposed that English villages may have a role to play in lowering language anxiety, describing them as “an engaging alternative source of English immersion which may ultimately increase learner motivation by helping to break down learner anxiety about English” (p. 278). No studies to date have however, investigated the impact that English village experiences may have on the anxiety levels of language learners, reflecting a significant gap in the literature that this study aims to fill.

### ***Language anxiety***

Language anxiety has been described as “quite possibly the affective factor that most pervasively obstructs the learning process” (Arnold & Brown, 1999, p. 8). Consistent with this remark, studies have shown that anxiety has a negative impact on grades and test performance (Aida, 1994; Horwitz, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994), self-confidence (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993) and self-esteem (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Oxford, 1999) and language anxiety has been associated with negative feelings such as uneasiness (Arnold & Brown, 1999). It is also understood that since learners must communicate with limited linguistic codes, anxiety levels in foreign language classes are higher than in other subjects (Cutrone, 2009; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989).

Language anxiety is not a personality *trait*, but is a *situation-specific* problem that manifests uniquely during situations of foreign language use (Horwitz et al., 1986). Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986), described language anxiety as consisting of three distinct performance anxieties: *communicative apprehension*, which refers to the fear of communicating with people; *test anxiety*, which refers to the fear of failure in examinations of performance; and *fear of negative evaluation*, which is a broad and immediate anxiety referring to the fear of negative evaluation from peers. This is a comprehensive and influential model which has seen success in correlating learner anxiety negatively with classroom outcomes (e.g. Aida, 1994; Asano, 2003; Burden, 2004; Goshi, 2005; Horwitz et al., 1986; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004).

Comparative studies have shown the levels and symptoms of anxiety in Japanese and non-Japanese learners to correlate. Keaten, Kelly and Pribyl (1997) found that the reported levels of communication apprehension in 1446 Japanese elementary and secondary school students were similar to American children, and that this apprehension increased steadily with age. In addition, Williams and Andrade (2008) noted that the physical, emotional, and

verbal symptoms of anxiety in Japanese learners were similar to those found in studies of non-Japanese students: for example, 67% of students suffered from a faster heartbeat, and 42.35% of students claimed that their mind went blank when they were anxious.

Studies in the Japanese context have also supported the conclusion that anxiety is detrimental to language learning. Asano (2003), found a statistically significant link between anxiety and proficiency in 70 freshman university students. Similarly, Matsuda and Gobel (2004) reported that higher levels of language anxiety resulted in weaker class performance among 252 university students. Oya, Manalo and Greenwood (2004) uncovered a link between anxiety and spoken English: the authors tested 73 adult participants during a story-telling activity, and found that those students who experienced anxiety during the task were more likely to make grammatical mistakes. Goshi (2005) suggested that language anxiety was linked to negative feelings about language learning in Japanese university students. Finally a study by Andrade and Williams (2009) into 243 first and second year university students in Japan found that 11% of participants considered themselves "hindered" by anxiety (p. 12). These studies support the conclusion that language anxiety should be minimised in the language classroom for Japanese learners of English.

### ***Sources of language anxiety***

Sources of anxiety are diverse (Oxford, 1999), but can generally be positioned into situational variables and learner variables (Andrade & Williams, 2009). Situational variables include such factors as classroom activities, the course level, language testing, competition and instructor behaviour (Andrade & Williams, 2009; Oxford, 1999), while learner variables include a learner's age, ability, gender, beliefs about the target language, self-esteem and learning style (Andrade & Williams, 2009). Since learners

attend English villages for only short periods, it is likely that situational variables will play a more salient role in learner anxiety during EV courses.

Of the many situational variables, speaking activities produce the most anxiety for language learners, particularly in Japan. In a study by Burden (2004), 59% of Japanese students claimed that they do not feel sure of themselves when they speak in English and 51.2% of participants claimed that they start to panic if they are called upon in class. Similarly, Williams and Andrade (2008), found that anxiety was most commonly associated with those tasks that involved speaking in front of others, such as having to deliver a self-introduction speech at the beginning of a course. One explanation for this speech anxiety in Japan may be the impact of competition. When learners compare themselves to better users of language they tend to have heightened anxiety (Oxford, 1999), and at least two studies have found that Japanese learners are particularly concerned that their peers are more proficient in using English (Andrade & Williams, 2009; Asano, 2003). Another explanation for this speech anxiety is what Cutrone (2009, p. 59) calls the “evaluation paradigm”: the culture of the Japanese school system primarily prepares learners for exams which may ultimately decide their future, and this immense pressure can make learners anxious about spoken mistakes. We can deduce that learners at an English village may well experience anxiety when speaking in and outside of the classroom, and particularly during oral presentations. Speaking forms a significant part of curriculums at English villages, and this suggests that sources of anxiety may be widespread.

### ***Research questions***

The literature review above suggests that there is a critical need to investigate the pedagogic viability of English villages, including their affective impact on learners. Currently no research has been conducted to ascertain the impact that English villages

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have on learners' levels of language anxiety, nor have studies attempted to delineate the sources of anxiety at English villages, a course of action which will enable English villages to better support the affective dimensions of learning.

Consequently, the research questions for this study are as follows:

- 1. Is there a change in language anxiety levels in learners following a course at an English village in Japan?*
- 2. What sources of anxiety exist at an English village in Japan?*

## **Methodology**

### ***Participants***

The participants were a single class of 40 students (35F, 5M, aged 15-16) at a national high school in Japan, who attended a course at an English village. The participating class were selected through convenience sampling since the learners were scheduled to attend the English village during the research period, and the English village had an established relationship with the chosen school, which afforded comprehensive access to the participants. Five participants were removed from data analysis due to absenteeism (3 students) and survey incompleteness (2 students).

### ***English village course***

The participants attended a three day course at an English village in rural Japan. The architecture and landscaping of this particular English village are modelled on an authentic British town, complete with a replica manor house, a pub, several souvenir shops, a tea room, and guest houses. 50% of the staff working in these facilities were non-Japanese English L1 speakers, and transactions generally took place in English. The participants stayed on site for the duration of their course.

During the course, the participants took ten classes conducted in English. The classes were primarily content based (cooking, drama, international culture etc.) or focused on oral presentations skills. The students gave a group presentation on the final day of the course for which significant preparatory work had been completed prior to the course at the participants' own school. All teachers were English L1 speakers from a variety of countries, and the students had different teachers for each class.

### ***Instruments, procedure and analysis***

#### ***Research question 1***

Participants completed a modified version of the 33-item *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale* (FLCAS) (Horwitz et al., 1986) three weeks prior to their course at the English Village, and again six weeks post-course at the participants' school. This scale was chosen for its previously recorded high internal validity scores (e.g. Aida, 1994; Asano, 2003; Burden, 2004; Goshi, 2005; Horwitz et al., 1986; Matsuda & Gobel, 2004). A published translation of the original FLCAS was found in Nagahashi (2007) and reverse translated to check for accuracy. Modifications to three items were made by Asano (2003) to suit the Japanese context, and were also included in this study.

The FLCAS is a 5-point Likert scale self-report instrument with items focusing on anxiety-inducing elements of language learning. Examples of items include *I keep thinking the other students are better at English than I am (item 7)*, and *I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says (item 29)*. The test provides an anxiety score between 33 and 165, with higher scores indicating greater language anxiety.

The Likert scale scores on the test were coded, with a score of 1 assigned to "strongly disagree" and 5 to "strongly agree". Nine negatively worded items were reverse coded to adhere to the principal that a high score indicated high anxiety (items

2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 18, 22, 28, 32). The data was collated and analysed in SPSS. Cronbach alpha scores were calculated for the pre and post-test and found to be 0.91 and 0.93 respectively, indicating very high internal consistency reliability.

### ***Research Question 2***

To answer research question 2, narrative frames were employed, which have been promoted as an efficient way to collect a large amount of information (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008). Participants were asked to describe a single anxiety-inducing event they had experienced during their course at the English village. The frame consisted of a series of sentence starters and question prompts that lead participants to write a coherent narrative. The participants were asked to complete their narratives in English on the final day of their course, after their final class. 28 of the received narratives were considered to have been successfully completed, and were subsequently analysed.

In addition to the written narratives, three participants, who self-selected their involvement, were interviewed during their stay at the English village about the incidents of anxiety they had been experiencing. Each semi-structured interview was recorded and lasted approximately 30 minutes. The students' data were recorded under pseudonyms.

The data obtained from both the narratives and the interviews were analysed iteratively through a content analysis. The data then served a "development function" (Dornyei, 2007, p. 165): the results were used to create a post-course survey, which assessed to what degree the experiences described in the qualitative data were experienced by the sample group as a whole.

## Results

### ***Research question 1: Is there a change in language anxiety levels in learners following a course at an English village in Japan?***

The mean FLCAS scores for all participants were found to be 93.9 on the pre-test and 86.5 on the post-test, a statistically significant drop of 7.4 points across the research period ( $p < 0.01$ , two tailed test). The results also indicated that greater FLCAS score drops were observed for those students without previous overseas experience (8.8 points -  $p < 0.01$ ) than for those with previous experience (5.3 points -  $p > 0.05$ , not statistically significant).

Table 1 shows the percentage of participants who chose to ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ with a given item on the pre and post-tests. That is, the number of students who felt at least some anxiety for the given item. The items of highest agreement were items 7 “*I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am*” and 23 “*I always feel that the other students speak the English language better than I do*”, which were positively agreed with by more than 60% of participants in both pre and post-tests.

While on the pre-test more than 40% of learners agreed with items that pertained to speaking and reading English in front of peers (item 1 “*I never feel quite sure of myself when I am reading aloud or speaking in my English class*”, item 9 “*I start to panic when I have to speak or read aloud without preparation in my English class*”, and item 24 “*I feel very self conscious about speaking English in front of other students*”), these three statements all saw decreases of more than 14% on the post-test. That is, at least six of the students in the class no longer indicated that they felt anxious speaking in front of the class.

### ***Research question 2: What sources of anxiety exist at an English village in Japan?***

#### ***Oral presentations***

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By far the most prevalent source of anxiety uncovered from the narrative and interview data was the learners' presentations on the final day of their course at the English village (21 of the 28 collected narratives). The most commonly cited reason for this anxiety was that participants were uncomfortable being observed when speaking in front of the class (11 of the 21 narratives):

*"Today I presentation speech in front of A group. I'm very nervous because they look at me. So I don't presentation well."* (Student 8)

*"I remembered my presentation. But I forgot to my presentation when stood up in front of everyone."* (Student 40)

Learners were asked to memorise their speeches. The pressure of this task also led to student anxiety which may have affected their performance. The difficulty of memorising a speech was cited as the cause of anxiety in four of the 21 narratives relating to the presentations.

Another factor that appears to affect learners is their own perception of their English speaking ability. Four of the learners cited this as the reason for their anxiety when giving their presentation:

Table 1: The percentage of students who indicated agreement with a given FLCAS score item.

<i>Item</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>Pre-Test</i>	<i>Post-Test</i>	<i>+/-</i>
1	I never feel quite sure of myself when I am reading aloud or speaking in my English class.	45.7%	28.6%	-17.1%
2	I don't worry about making mistakes in my English class. (Reverse coded)	45.7%	37.1%	-8.6%
3	I tremble when I know that I'm going to be called on in my English class.	20.0%	5.7%	-14.3%
4	It frightens me when I don't understand what the teacher is saying in English.	45.7%	37.1%	-8.6%
5	I wouldn't bother me at all to take more English language classes. (Reverse coded)	25.7%	22.9%	-2.9%
6	During my English class, I find myself thinking about things that have nothing to do with the course.	40.0%	42.9%	2.9%
7	I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am.	62.9%	60.0%	-2.9%
8	I am usually at ease during tests in my English class. (Reverse coded)	25.7%	17.1%	-8.6%
9	I start to panic when I have to speak or read aloud without preparation in my English class.	40.0%	22.9%	-17.1%
10	I worry about the consequences of failing my English class.	31.4%	25.7%	-5.7%
11	I don't understand why some people get so upset over English class. (Reverse coded)	37.1%	31.4%	-5.7%
12	In English class, I can get so nervous I forget things I know.	5.7%	2.9%	-2.9%
13	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class.	17.1%	20.0%	2.9%
14	I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers. (Reverse coded)	51.4%	48.6%	-2.9%
15	I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting.	31.4%	28.6%	-2.9%
16	Even if I am well prepared for my English class, I feel anxious about it.	5.7%	5.7%	0.0%
17	I often feel like not going to my English class.	14.3%	2.9%	-11.4%
18	I feel confident when I speak or read aloud in my English class. (Reverse coded)	31.4%	20.0%	-11.4%
19	I am afraid that my English teacher is ready to correct every mistake I make.	5.7%	2.9%	-2.9%
20	I can feel my heart pounding when I'm going to be called on in English class.	28.6%	20.0%	-8.6%
21	The more I study for an English test, the more confused I get.	25.7%	11.4%	-14.3%

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<i>Item</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>Pre-Test</i>	<i>Post-Test</i>	<i>+/-</i>
22	I don't feel pressure to prepare very well for my English class. (Reverse coded)	8.6%	8.6%	0.0%
23	I always feel that the other students speak the English language better than I do.	62.9%	65.7%	2.9%
24	I feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students.	45.7%	31.4%	-14.3%
25	English class moves so quickly I worry about getting left behind.	37.1%	25.7%	-11.4%
26	I feel more tense and nervous in my English class than in my other classes.	14.3%	8.6%	-5.7%
27	I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my English class.	11.4%	8.6%	-2.9%
28	When I'm on my way to English class, I feel very sure and relaxed. (Reverse coded)	40.0%	20.0%	-20.0%
29	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says.	17.1%	22.9%	5.7%
30	I feel overwhelmed by the number of rules you have to learn to speak English.	45.7%	48.6%	2.9%
31	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	17.1%	17.1%	0.0%
32	I would probably feel comfortable around native speakers of English. (Reverse coded)	22.9%	31.4%	8.6%
33	I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	45.7%	28.6%	-17.1%

*"I don't speak English well, so I felt so nervous. I thought that my heart is breaking."* (Student 3)

In the post-course questionnaire, 66% of participants claimed that the presentations on the final day made them feel "very nervous" and a further 29% claimed that they felt "a little nervous" (total = 94.3%). These results seem to indicate that oral presentations were a significant source of anxiety for the learners during their English village course.

**Table manners**

The second most cited source of anxiety occurred at meal times:

*“I felt nervous because I didn’t know many manners.” (Student 4)*

Learners were given some training in traditional British table manners. While this training is meant to be a cultural learning experience, it was mentioned in two narratives as a source of anxiety, and was also cited during the interview with Jane:

Researcher: *So at dinner you were nervous about manners?*

Jane: *Yeah the right manners, I am bad. I think I play bad manners and nervous. I always eat is {gestures elbows on table} but here is no.*

When quantified in the post course questionnaire, 54% of participants indicated that table manners during dinner times made them feel at least “a little nervous”, though only 3% of these indicated that they felt “very nervous”. Such results may indicate that table manners caused some anxiety in the participants.

### ***Arriving at the English village***

In their interviews, Sarah and Jane both mentioned that they had felt nervous when they first arrived at the English village:

Researcher: *How did you feel yesterday when you first came to (the English village)?*

Sarah: *I am nervous. Very nervous.*

Researcher: *Why did you feel nervous?*

Sarah: *I can’t speak English. Err. Little. I can speak little English.*

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This anxiety appeared to manifest itself only as the participants were on their way to the English village, and not prior to the trip. 46% of participants claimed that they felt some anxiety when arriving for their course (3% “very nervous”) in the post-course questionnaire.

### ***Using English outside the classroom***

One student noted in her narrative that she became nervous when she had to use English outside of the classroom:

*“I bought a gift for my friends and my family. So I want many extra bags, but I didn't know what I should say...I felt nervous because I didn't know what should I say in English.”* (Student 22).

A similar experience was noted by Jane:

Researcher: *Why did you feel nervous when you went shopping?*  
Jane: *Umm, I forgot the word. For example, “How much is this?”  
And “exchanged”.*

51% of participants claimed that interacting in English outside of the classroom made them feel nervous, and 11% of these claimed to feel “very nervous”. These figures must however, be read with caution, since the quality and frequency of interactions outside the classroom would have varied by participant.

## Discussion

### ***Research question 1: Is there a change in language anxiety levels in learners following a course at an English village?***

The participants saw a statistically significant average drop of 7.4 points in their FLCAS scores over an eleven week period, during which time they were subject to three days of intensive study at the English village. These results are very positive, and suggest that the English village may have a role to play in reducing classroom anxiety. While there has been no published research concerning the effects of EVs on anxiety, these results correspond with studies pertaining to the effect of short-term study abroad programs on learners. Students on six week overseas programmes have shown FLCAS drops of 13.5 points (Allen & Herron, 2003), almost twice the decrease in score seen in this study. Further research would be useful to ascertain whether a longer stay at an English village results in a larger drop in anxiety.

Since those with no previous study abroad experience saw greater drops in their FLCAS scores, the English village may, as proposed by Trottier (2006), function as a supportive introduction to overseas travel and study, and help to break misconceptions of the difficulties of overseas immersion. It may also be true from this result that any first time immersion experience (study abroad or English village) is particularly anxiety reducing, and that subsequent experiences result in smaller decreases in anxiety level.

### ***Research question 2: What sources of anxiety exist at an English village in Japan?***

More than 40% of participants claimed to be at least 'a little anxious' by the following five situations at the English village: the oral presentations on the final day of the course, oral presentation practice classes, table manners at dinner, interacting in English outside of the classroom, and arriving at the facility. While oral presentations

can be found in classrooms around the world, the other sources are likely specific to the English village experience.

Oral presentations provided the greatest source of anxiety in participants, with 94.3% of participants reporting to feel nervous during their presentation on the final day of the course. This comes as no surprise, since other studies have also found that speaking in class produces high anxiety in Japanese students (Burden, 2004; Williams & Andrade, 2008). The most cited reason behind learners' feelings of anxiety during oral presentations was that they were uncomfortable being observed by their peers. Such a conclusion was also highlighted by the FLCAS item agreement seen in the pre and post-tests, where statements such as "*I never feel quite sure of myself when I am reading aloud or speaking in my English class*" (item 1) received strong positive support. Interestingly, statements pertaining to peer observation as a source of anxiety saw 14% decreases in support in the post-test. It is possible that the English village may have been able to raise learners' confidence in speaking and reading aloud in front of their peers, though it is unclear whether this was as a direct result of the course at the English village, or a result of increased presentation experience. If it is the case that learners' confidence is raised simply through oral presentation practice, then such changes must surely be seen in oral presentations in the learners' school, and it would be useful to verify this in a future study.

Anxiety may arise through a learner's perception of their ability to complete a task in comparison with their peers (Williams & Andrade, 2008). In the case of the participants in this study, a high majority appeared to believe that their language skills were weaker than other students: more than 60% of participants agreed with the FLCAS statements "*I keep thinking that the other students are better at English than I am*" and "*I always feel that the other students speak the English language better than I*

*do*” in both the pre and post-tests, and it seemed that the English village had little effect on how learners compared their own language ability in relation to their peers.

A number of participants seemed to suffer from spells of low self-efficacy while at the English village. These were realised for example, during the learners’ attempts to memorise their oral presentations or when interacting in English outside the classroom. During such situations the participants felt nervous because of their perceived inability to complete the task at hand, or their lack of confidence in their English ability. The evaluation paradigm of the Japanese education system may well have influenced learners during these incidents (Cutrone, 2009), and parallels can be drawn to incidents of linguistic insecurity in study abroad programmes (Allen & Herron, 2003). Given that the participants were taking part in activities for perhaps the first time, it is not unsurprising that they may have been nervous as to their ability to accomplish a given task.

### ***Implications***

Oral presentations were the most significant source of anxiety uncovered during this research project and thus one implication for English villages, and secondary schools in general is that they should aim to reduce anxiety in these classes. Small group peer observation may help to reduce anxiety during presentations. Such activities help to foster confidence in learners, and give them greater opportunity to observe others prior to their final (and often assessed) presentations (King, 2002). Moreover, since anxiety was caused by memory issues, English villages should actively discourage memorisation of oral presentations, which in itself results in group boredom (King, 2002).

Issues of low self-efficacy and linguistic insecurity lead to anxiety during new tasks and experiences. Encouragement is crucial, and supportive comments from the

teacher may well improve learners' self-confidence. As Dornyei (2001, p. 190) explains: "a show of faith can have a powerful effect on them". In the case of English villages, such a show of faith could easily be introduced into orientation sessions where staff could take a few minutes to encourage learners to try to speak out as much as possible. Staff can also provide positive feedback when practical about the students' pragmatic use of English.

To raise self-efficacy, it is also important for teachers to provide experiences of success (Dornyei, 2001). At English villages, it is important for teachers to adjust the difficulty level of classes quickly and appropriately. In promoting success, staff also need to consider how to use error correction to promote mistakes as a positive learning experience (Dornyei, 2001; Oxford, 1999). Particular care should be taken when a learner is trying to communicate naturally outside of the classroom, and I would recommend that all conscious error correction be kept only to the classes at English villages, which would encourage fluency forming opportunities around the sites.

### ***Limitations***

The most significant limitation of this study is its lack of generalisability. That English villages are wholly unique, and that this study had only a limited sample size, means that it is difficult to generalise the conclusions to a larger population (Dornyei, 2007).

Furthermore, both the interviews and narratives were completed in English. The ability levels of participants meant that they may have misinterpreted questions, and provided answers that were not as detailed or as rich as the learners may have been able to provide in their own L1. Moreover, narrative archetypes vary by culture (Kohler Riessman, 2008). By asking learners to adhere to a western narrative structure, they could not be expected to produce detailed stories.

Despite the course at the English village being a substantial aspect of the participants' school year, one cannot say with certainty whether the changes observed can be directly attributed to their experience, or whether other factors were at play. Data was taken from the participants across an eleven week period in order to disassociate the results from the experience; however, it may well be that there were other internal and external influences at play during the research window.

### ***Conclusions***

Though a small study, the results obtained here indicate that there may be positive affective gains to be made from EV experiences; however, this research does not contend that any teacher with concerns about language anxiety should take their students to a course at an English village. English villages remain an expensive solution with many practical difficulties for schools and learners, and while the conclusions drawn in this research suggest that English villages may provide affective benefits for learners, the lack of supporting research and the severe limitations placed on the generalisability of the study mean that further research is required before confident statements can be made.

Instead this paper advocates that EFL teachers, providers and learners keep an open mind about the possibility of attending an English village. While researchers such as Krashen (2006) and Sergeant (2005) question their use, English villages certainly offer opportunities for learners to be exposed to more language than is available in the traditional classroom. It is hoped that this paper opens a dialogue about the use of English villages, with the goal of providing sound pedagogy for any future facility development.

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