

Biases in Self-Ratings of Second Language Proficiency: The Role of Language Anxiety

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Previous studies have shown a strong link between participants' apprehension about communicating and their perception of communicative competence in both native (L1) and second (L2) languages. This apprehension may intensify when participants communicate in the L2, especially if they believe their level of L2 competence to be very low. This study examines perceived competence in an L2 as a function of actual competence and language anxiety. Thirty-seven young adult Anglophone students, with widely varied competence in French, participated. They completed scales of language anxiety and a modified version of the "can-do" test, which assessed their self-perceptions of competence on 26 French tasks. They then attempted each of those tasks. We found that L2 language

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anxiety, perceived L2 competence, and actual L2 competence intercorrelated. However, regression analysis with actual proficiency level controlled showed that anxious students tended to underestimate their competence relative to less anxious students, who tended to overestimate their competence. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Throughout the process of acquiring a second language (L2), learners often assess their own developing abilities. Commonly, this self-assessment can facilitate their learning by helping them develop strategies to enhance their linguistic capabilities. For highly anxious learners, however, confronting their perceived limitations can be painful and demotivating (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). Although considerable research has suggested that learners can accurately assess their abilities (see Blanche & Merino, 1989, for review), errors in self-assessment do occur (Ready-Morfitt, 1991). Work in the field of social cognition has suggested that affective factors may systematically bias the self-assessment of language proficiency. The present study considers the accuracy of individuals' self-perceptions of competence in the L2 and the role that language anxiety plays in creating bias in these assessments.

Recent investigations have shown interest in how students view the language learning process and their developing competence. Studies have looked at learners' perceptions of language learning strategies (MacIntyre, 1994; MacIntyre & Noels, 1996; Oxford, 1990), learner's beliefs about language learning (e.g., Horwitz, 1988; Mantle-Bromley, 1995), the relations among anxiety, L1, and L2 learning aptitude (Sparks & Ganschow, 1991), and self-perceptions of second language competence (Dörnyei, 1995). Researchers have argued that evaluating self-perceptions of competence is an efficient mechanism for placing students at appropriate levels, saving both the time and the expense of formal testing (Leblanc & Painchaud, 1985; Ready-Morfitt, 1991). Self-perceptions of competence also are useful for informally assessing

mastery of particular skills (Yli-Renko, 1988) and may be a key component in any self-regulated learning program (Holec, 1979; Oscarson, 1984).

Therefore, one can reasonably assume that, given appropriate, specific assessment tools, learners should be able to accurately rate their own abilities. In their review of self-assessment of foreign-language skills, Blanche and Merino (1989) determined that, when the skills to be assessed are clear and detailed, "there is consistent overall agreement between self-assessments and rating based on a variety of external criteria" (p. 315; see also Clark, 1981; von Elek, 1982).

Nonetheless, self-assessments can err, failing to correspond with objective, external indices of proficiency. Clearly, language students sometimes underestimate or overestimate their language ability. Gardner, Lalonde, Moorcroft, and Evers (1987), for example, found that Grade 12 students who dropped out of their French program after the summer break did not differ significantly from the continuing students on objective proficiency measures. However, the drop-outs were significantly more anxious in French class and had significantly more negative self-evaluation of their speaking ability, despite evidence of little actual language attrition. Kraemer and Zisenwine (1989) found a tendency for self-rating of proficiency to decline as learners progressed from grades 4 through 12, despite the gains in L2 experience implied by advancing grade levels. They concluded that self-evaluations not only indicate proficiency but also probably assess some affective construct (see also Gardner & Smythe, 1975; Gardner, Smythe, & Brunet, 1977).

Apparently, objective and subjective indices of competence estimate linguistic proficiency differently. How closely do subjective and objective ratings of proficiency correspond, and does any discrepancy depend on affective states, such as language anxiety? Previous research has shown strong relationships between language anxiety and both subjective and objective indices of proficiency. For example, MacIntyre (1992) found a stronger canonical correlation between language anxiety and subjective proficiency

than between language anxiety and objective proficiency measures. Clément and his colleagues (Clément, Dörnyei & Noels, 1994; Clément & Kruidenier, 1985) have shown that perceived competence and anxiety are more closely related than are perceived competence and objective achievement. Several factor analytic studies assessing anxiety, self-ratings of competence, and objective achievement have found that anxiety and self-ratings often form a factor separate from achievement indices, although at times self-ratings define both factors (e.g., Clément, Gardner, & Smythe, 1977, 1980; Clément, Major, Gardner, & Smythe, 1977; Gardner, Moorcroft, & Metford, 1989; Gardner, Smythe, & Clément, 1979).

Several researchers have discussed the interrelations between anxiety, objective, and perceived competence. In their discussion of language aptitude, Sparks and Ganschow (1991) have proposed that language anxiety results from differences in students' L1 coding abilities that make L2 learning more difficult for some students. However, L1 coding deficits probably lead to anxiety after the learner perceives his/her competence to be lower than desired; after all, why would a student who didn't see a problem with his/her language learning become nervous about it (see MacIntyre, 1995a)? Several social psychological models of motivation suggest that self-perceptions mediate between actual competence and eventual achievement. Bandura's (1986, 1988) model of self-regulation has suggested that the perception of competence and the belief that one can control desired outcomes constitute critical components of one's expectations for success at a given task. Bandura has emphasized that *perceptions* of control (i.e., competence) determine the amount of effort expended in pursuing a goal. If expectancies are high, then one will expend greater effort, with greater likelihood of success. If, on the other hand, expectancies are low, one expends less effort, with concomitantly less success. Emotional tension, or anxiety, results from low self-efficacy evaluations. Researchers such as Eysenck (1979) and Schwarzer (1986) have emphasized the important role that self-

related cognitions play in anxiety-provoking situations. Their research demonstrates that anxiety-provoking (i.e., threatening) situations produce self-related cognition that influences eventual success, especially on difficult tasks. That is, anxious language learners may focus their attention on their perceived inadequacies, the potential for failure, and the consequences of that imagined failure, rather than concentrating on the task itself. As a result, they divide their mental resources, apply themselves less well to the task at hand, and performance on the task suffers. In support of these hypotheses, MacIntyre & Gardner (1994a, 1994b) found that anxiety-arousal can interfere with the ability to take in, process, and produce an L2.

These findings and arguments make it unlikely that the mismatch between the subjective perception of competence and the objective indices results simply from "error" in predicting one's language ability. Rather, two biases may be operating in the L2 learning situation. The first bias, "self-enhancement," stems from a need to increase feelings of personal satisfaction and self-worth. Accordingly, individuals view themselves and their behavior in a positive light; in fact they may become unrealistically optimistic (Taylor & Brown, 1988, 1994). Taylor and Brown (1988) argued that this bias helps during the acquisition of new skills because it provides the impetus to invest the extra effort needed to confront a challenging obstacle (c.f. Bandura, 1986). Indeed, research has shown that overestimation of one's L2 skills is the most widely reported inaccuracy (e.g., Blanche & Merino, 1989; Heilenman, 1990; Oscarson, 1984). This finding also conforms with a good deal of research in psychology showing that "normal" individuals typically have positive self-perceptions. In particular, self-enhancement occurs when others scrutinize one's task performance and performance standards are ambiguous or not highly objective (Brown, 1986), which would be the case in language learning. Thus, we would expect self-confident learners to show a self-enhancing bias.

Other studies have found that, rather than self-enhancement, some individuals systematically underestimate

their abilities, what we may call “self-derogation” (DesBrisay, 1984; Ferguson, 1978; Holec, 1979; Hindler as cited in Blanche, 1988). This may more commonly happen to highly anxious or depressed individuals who have little faith in their capacities and their ability to control the environment. Fiske and Taylor (1991) proposed that “by leading the self to expect poor outcomes or poor performance, one lays the groundwork for defending against loss of self-esteem in the event of failure. . .” (p. 216). Norem and Cantor (1986) reported that self-derogation may help one control anxiety when performing a potentially ego-threatening task. Both quantitative (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989, 1991) and qualitative studies (Cohen & Norst, 1989; Price, 1991) have consistently shown using a foreign language in public to be such a task.

In summary, we expect perceived and actual L2 competence to be related yet not isomorphic and expect a moderate correlation between them. Further, we expect both perceived and actual L2 competence to negatively correlate with language anxiety. Finally, the study examines language anxiety and how it relates to biases in the discrepancy between subjective and objective ratings of L2 ability.

Method

Participants

We contacted students in English-language sections of a mandatory first-year philosophy class at a bilingual university. We made a brief presentation and asked volunteers to provide their name, phone number, and a brief rating of their L2 (i.e., French) competence. We paid participants \$7 (Canadian) for their time. Forty students participated but we discarded data for 3 individuals after testing because they indicated that French was their L1. The final sample included 37 Anglophones.

The participants were 29 women and 8 men, whose mean age was 20.9 years. They had had considerable exposure to French. Twenty-two of them had taken a French immersion program in elementary school for an average of 8.4 years; 14 were studying French at the university. As a brief index of self-reported competence, we requested single-item ratings for French speaking, comprehension, reading and writing ability. Each rating was on a 0–6 scale, where 0 represented no competence and 6 represented fluency. All 4 ratings showed a range of scores from 1–6. The median and mean of each rating indicated moderate levels of competence in speaking ($Mdn = 3, M = 3.2$), comprehension ($Mdn = 3, M = 3.8$), reading ($Mdn = 4, M = 3.5$), and writing ($Mdn = 3, M = 2.9$).

Materials

We tested students individually in sessions lasting about one hour. During the testing session, they completed a questionnaire followed by a series of French proficiency tests. All questionnaire items and testing instructions were in English. Two scales formed part of the questionnaire, a language anxiety measure and a scale of self-rated L2 proficiency.

Language Anxiety. We combined 19 items from Gardner's French use anxiety and French class anxiety scales (see MacIntyre & Gardner, 1988) to form a single measure ($\alpha = .92$). Ten items referred to the presence of language anxiety while using French. Nine items referred to a lack of language anxiety; we reversed scoring on these items prior to calculating the total score for the scale. Responses were on a 7-point Likert scale with the anchors "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree." A sample item is, "I would get nervous if I had to speak French to someone in a store."

Can-do. We administered the 26-item test (Clark, 1981) as in previous investigations, with seven supplemental items we had written to correspond more closely to the actual production tasks used ($\alpha = .98$, 32 items). Subscales examined proficiency in L2 speaking ($\alpha = .93$, 10 items), L2 reading ($\alpha = .86$, 5 items), L2 writing ($\alpha = .93$, 8 items), and L2 comprehension ($\alpha = .94$, 9 items).

We administered tasks corresponding to each of the areas of the can-do, using authentic materials in all cases. We chose the tasks to cover a wide range of difficulty (see Appendix). In all, 8 tasks tested L2 speaking skills, 7 L2 comprehension, 5 L2 reading and 5 L2 writing. For the speaking and writing tasks the questions were in English and responses had to be given in French; the questions were in English to avoid potential problems with students not comprehending the question, thus ensuring the answers focused on one specific L2 skill (i.e., speaking or writing). The reading and comprehension tasks presented the materials in French and requested responses in English; this avoided confounding the ability to comprehend spoken or written French with the ability to give oral responses in French (actually a type of French speaking task). In this way, the measures maintained their focus on each specific L2 skill. To maintain confidentiality, we advised students that they did not have to reveal any personal details during the can-do tasks but could invent information as they wished.

Procedure

Upon arrival at the testing room, students received the \$7 fee, signed a receipt, and read a consent form. At this time we reminded participants that they did not have to participate and could choose not to answer any questions if they wished. All participants who arrived for their appointment agreed to continue in the study. They then completed the questionnaire. Next, we administered the production tasks in blocks, according to the type of task (speaking, reading, etc.). We randomized the order of the blocks for each participant. Upon completion of the study, we thanked the participants and answered any questions about the study.

A bilingual judge rated the speaking tasks for both the number of ideas expressed and for the quality of the French. We adopted the categories for rating output quality from research by MacIntyre and Gardner (1994b); they defined output quality for

the speaking tasks by rating fluency (flowing speech without pauses), sentence complexity (use of complex rather than simple sentences), accented speech (the degree to which the speaker sounded like a Francophone), elaboration (richness of detail), grammar and similarity to Francophone colloquial expressions. The judge made each rating on a 7-point scale; we summed the ratings to create an overall index of the quality of the spoken output. Higher scores indicate higher quality speech.

A second bilingual judge rated the writing tasks, counting the number of ideas expressed and rating output quality. For these tasks, we defined output quality by the aggregate rating of grammaticality, sentence complexity, extent of elaboration, and similarity to a Francophone. The first writing task involved only listing items; therefore, the quality rating reflected only similarity to a Francophone. The fourth writing task was to fill out a highly structured job application form; we therefore did not rate it for extent of elaboration.

A third bilingual judge rated the reading tasks by the number of times the student expressed the correct translation of ideas. The task demanded that participants read the French text silently and recount its meaning in English. We defined output quality by 2 ratings: idiomatic fluency of expression and the tendency not to translate verbatim. These rating dimensions indicated the ability to read in French and to translate the ideas into everyday English.

The same judge who rated the reading tasks also rated the comprehension tasks. The students responded in English after listening to the complete French passage; the judge rated them only for the number of ideas correctly identified. We did not rate output quality for the comprehension tasks.

Results

The results presented below address two related questions:

1. What are the correlations among language anxiety, perceived competence, and actual competence (the latter defined by the amount and quality of output)?
2. Are biases in self-perception of competence related to language anxiety?

Intercorrelations among Proficiency Measures

To consider the first question, we computed indices of the number of ideas expressed, the quality of the output, and level of perceived competence for each task, and then computed the correlations among them. We also correlated the respondent's level of language anxiety with each of these variables. As can be seen in Table 1, all of the correlations are statistically significant, indicating that actual competence, perceived competence, and language anxiety are all interrelated.

The ratings of actual competence, ideas expressed and output quality positively correlated in the range of .72 to .84. These correlations indicate that those students who produced more output tended to produce better output. Perceived competence also significantly correlated with actual competence. For the ratings of the number of ideas expressed, the correlations ranged from .51 to .67, and for the ratings of output quality, the correlations ranged from .63 to .72. These results indicate that those who are more proficient tended to perceive themselves as more proficient. However, the variance shared (indicated by r^2) between the students' self-ratings of proficiency and the more objective ratings of proficiency was consistently below 50%. This suggests that subjective, self-rated proficiency relates substantially to actual proficiency, but the two are not isomorphic. We predicted this moderate level of correlation between subjective and objective ratings of proficiency.

All the correlations involving language anxiety were negative; as language anxiety scores increase, the ratings of ideas expressed, output quality, and self-rated competence decline. These relations were consistent across speaking, reading, writing and comprehen-

Table 1

Correlations among Ratings of Actual Competence, Perceived Competence and Language Anxiety.

	IE	OQ	SP	LA
Speaking				
Ideas Expressed (IE)	1.00			
Output Quality (OQ)	.84	1.00		
Self-rated Proficiency (SP)	.60	.63	1.00	
Language Anxiety (LA)	-.57	-.55	-.60	1.00
Writing				
Ideas Expressed	1.00			
Output Quality	.72	1.00		
Self-rated Proficiency	.51	.72	1.00	
Language Anxiety	-.54	-.51	-.59	1.00
Reading				
Ideas Expressed	1.00			
Output Quality	.73	1.00		
Self-rated Proficiency	.67	.66	1.00	
Language Anxiety	-.59	-.43	-.52	1.00
Comprehension				
Ideas Expressed	1.00			
Output Quality	n/a	1.00		
Self-rated Proficiency	.51	n/a	1.00	
Language Anxiety	-.54	n/a	-.55	1.00

Note: n/a; we did not rate the comprehension task for quality of output.

* $p < .01$; all other correlations are significant at $p < .001$.

sion tasks, indicating a robust relationship between language anxiety and measures of language achievement.

Assessing Biases in Self-evaluations

To address the second, more central question, of bias in self-perceptions of proficiency, we conducted 4 regression analyses, one for each of the 4 task areas. Each of these analyses began by using actual competence, defined by ratings of the number of ideas

expressed, to predict perceived competence. We calculated residual scores for use in the following analysis; a residual score represents the difference between a participant's predicted level of proficiency and actual level of proficiency. We based the predicted level of ability on the correlation between scores for self-rated proficiency and scores for proficiency provided by the bilingual judges, as shown in the regression analyses. A residual score = 0 indicates that scores on actual proficiency tasks completely predict the self-rated proficiency. In statistical terms, the participant made no error in predicting the actual score. A negative residual score indicates an underestimation of the actual proficiency level, which occurs because the predicted score for perceived competence is higher than the participant's self-rating. A positive residual score indicates that the self-rating overestimated ability, because the error in prediction lies above the regression line (i.e., a self-rated proficiency higher than predicted by actual proficiency).

To analyze the residual scores, we created high and low anxiety groups by a median split on the sum of the scores on the French class and French use anxiety scales. We conducted 4 planned comparisons (*t*-tests) of the high versus low anxiety groups, using the 4 sets of residual scores from the regression analysis as the dependent variables. The *t*-tests indicated that highly anxious participants had lower residual scores for the speaking ($t [35] = 2.17, p < .05$), writing ($t [34] = 2.75, p < .01$) and comprehension tasks ($t [32] = 2.35, p < .05$). Further, for those 3 tasks, the mean residual score for the high anxiety group was negative and the mean for the low anxiety group was positive (see Figure 1). This supports the hypothesis that anxious students tend to underestimate their ability and more relaxed students tend to overestimate their ability. The only task that did not show a significant difference between the high and low anxious groups was the reading task ($t [35] = 1.41, n.s.$). The mean residual scores followed the same pattern as the other 3 variables; the mean of the high anxious group < 0 and the mean of the low anxious group > 0 (Figure 1).

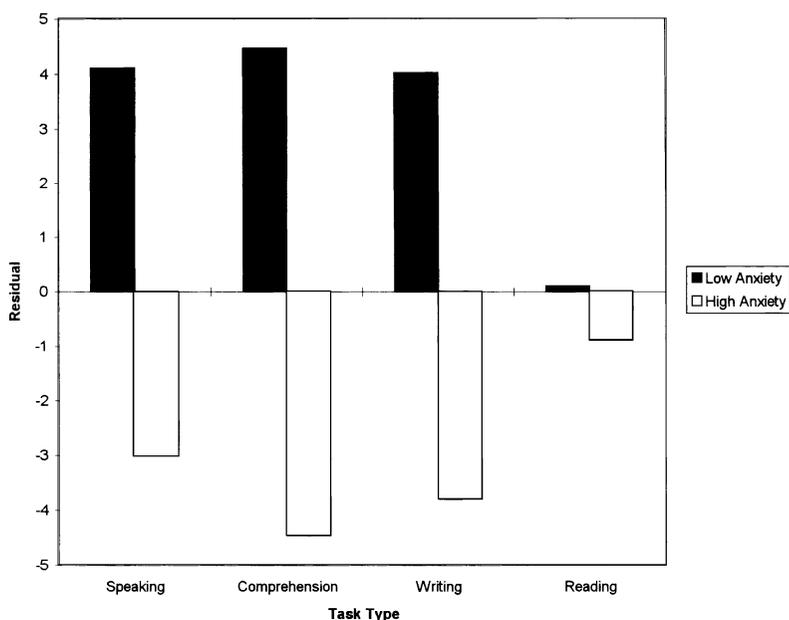


Figure 1. Mean residuals of high and low anxiety groups

Discussion

Previous studies have suggested that both self- and other-rated proficiency should closely correlate unless the 2 ratings are discrepant, such as correlating respondents' general proficiency ratings with scores on highly specific L2 performance tasks. The present study avoided this potential problem by asking participants for self-ratings of very specific L2 behaviors and then asking them to engage in exactly those behaviors. Further, all our materials were authentic instances of L2 usage. In addition, we sampled multiple instances of speaking, writing, reading, and comprehension, at various levels of difficulty, to avoid tying the conclusions to a specific experimental task.

The results replicate and extend previous research on language anxiety (see Horwitz & Young, 1991). They clearly show a negative correlation between language anxiety and the number of

ideas expressed for all 4 types of tasks (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991, 1994b; Steinberg & Horwitz, 1986). Specifically, compared with more relaxed students, anxious students tend to communicate less information. In addition, the consistent negative correlations between anxiety and output quality indicate that anxious students tend not to express themselves as well as more relaxed students. Thus, anxiety relates to both what the participants say and how they say it (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994b).

Consistent with the results of previous research, language anxiety correlated negatively with both actual and perceived proficiency in the L2 (Clément, Gardner & Smythe, 1980; Clément & Kruidenier, 1985). Given only this information, one might conclude that these affective reactions accurately reflected the students' abilities. Further examination of the data, however, reveals systematic biases in the perception of competence. The residual scores from the regression equations show a tendency for anxious students to underestimate their level of ability and for relaxed students to overestimate theirs—evidence that “self-enhancement” occurs in less anxious students and “self-derogation” in more anxious students.

Differentiating between the self-derogation and self-enhancement biases provides an avenue for understanding how higher levels of language anxiety endure. Clément (1980) argued that anxiety is closely associated with the perception of L2 competence. As experience and proficiency increase, levels of anxiety tend to decline (Gardner et al., 1989). When a student feels incompetent or expects to fail, anxiety probably results. Highly anxious students do not perceive their competence to be as high as a more objective analysis reveals it to be. The arousal of anxiety probably makes some students more reluctant to speak. If language learners do not choose to communicate, they cannot re-assess their competence.¹ Thus begins a vicious cycle, wherein the anxiety level remains high because the anxious student does not accept evidence of increasing proficiency that might reduce anxiety. Fur-

ther, more frequent speaking would probably increase the students' actual level of competence, given that current pedagogical approaches emphasize the development of conversational skills. We can assume that students who are reluctant to speak will not progress as rapidly as their more relaxed counterparts and more probably retain a relatively high level of anxiety. In this context, one can best view the link between anxiety and proficiency as reciprocal (MacIntyre, 1995b; Young, 1991).

The overestimation of competence may or may not be problematic. On the one hand, students who habitually overestimate their ability are more likely to fall short. On the other hand, if such failures are infrequent and/or do not distress the students, then a positive bias might actually aid the language learning process by increasing the student's willingness to communicate in the L2 (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). A belief in one's abilities to overcome set-backs could be the key to maintaining effort in the learning process (Bandura, 1986). Of the two biases, then, self-enhancement would probably facilitate language learning while self-derogation would impair progress.

Reading is the only skill that did not show a bias in the self-perception of proficiency. Participants showed a similar level of bias when rating their speaking, writing, and comprehension ability. Although one must cautiously interpret a nonsignificant result, the difference between the reading tasks and the others intrigues. This effect might relate to one's ability to control others' perceptions. Speaking, writing, and comprehension are more public and ego-involving activities, raising one's level of self-consciousness and reducing one's control over the environment. Speaking and writing usually require one to communicate with other people, which can provoke anxiety (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994b). Even attempting comprehension, which one can accomplish by passively listening to a conversation, can embarrass if one does not understand what the other people are saying and must interrupt to ask for clarification. Reading, the most private of the tasks, best allows for repetition and clarification with mini-

mal risk of embarrassment. When reading, one may review a passage many times, recover any missed information, and gain confidence in one's interpretation without publicly acknowledging having trouble. The ability to save face might explain why the ratings of reading proficiency do not show the bias displayed for the other tasks.

The present results have implications for the language classroom. A language instructor dealing with anxious students should be aware that apprehensive students may underestimate their ability, as described in Horwitz's (1988) discussion of learner beliefs. Some learners believe that they cannot learn or perform in a L2, creating negative expectations which in turn lead to decreased effort and accomplishment. By encouraging students to assess their performance in a more positive, or even optimistic light, teachers could raise learners' level of motivation and effort, possibly leading to better language learning outcomes (Gardner, 1985). A related strategy would encourage the students to concentrate on their ability to accomplish the task at hand. Individuals who can avoid ruminating over affective reactions can concentrate better on task demands, a strategy effective in reducing test anxiety (Sarason, 1980) and communication apprehension (Motley, 1990). The present findings point to the important role that self-perceptions play in anxiety and in achievement. Self-perceptions of language competence are not isomorphic with measured proficiency; affective factors may help cause the discrepancy. The results open the door to future research on the role of self-perceptions and expectancies in the language learning process, perhaps through an extension of constructs such as L2 confidence into the framework of self-efficacy (cf. Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). Moreover, attention to these issues may take an important step towards attenuating anxiety's negative effects on learners' motivation and eventual proficiency.

Note

¹The present study took ratings of perceived competence prior to the language tasks; it also would be interesting to have self-assessments done *after* task performance. Participants might be more accurate in their judgments if they had just completed their performance. However, post facto reporting might actually enhance the biases, because highly anxious students might focus on errors in performance and less anxious students might concentrate on their communicative successes. This forms an interesting avenue for follow-up investigation; we thank one reviewer for suggesting it.

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Appendix

Language Use Tasks

<i>Can do Item</i>	<i>Instructions for experimental task</i>
1. On the telephone, understand a native French speaker who is speaking slowly and carefully (i.e., deliberately adapting his or her speech to suit you).	1. Here is an audio tape of a telephone conversation in French. Listen to it and then tell us what they said.
2. Understand two native French speakers when they are talking rapidly with one another.	2. In this second conversation, the speakers will talk more rapidly. Again, listen to the conversation and tell us what they said.
3. In face-to-face conversation, understand a native French speaker who is speaking slowly and carefully (i.e., deliberately adapting his or her speech to suit you).	3. Here is a videotape of two people talking in French. Listen to it and then tell us what they said.
4. In face-to-face conversation, understand native French speakers who are talking to you as quickly and colloquially as they would to another French speaker.	4. In this videotape, the conversation happens more rapidly. Again, listen to the speakers and tell us what they said.
5. Understand very simple statements or questions in French ("Hello," "How are you," "What is your name," "Where do you live," etc.).	5. This is a tape used to teach (basic) French conversation. There will be pauses and you should respond as if you were talking to the person.

6. Understand French movies without subtitles.
7. Understand play-by-play descriptions of sports events on radio.
8. Understand news broadcasts on the radio.
9. Buy clothes in a department store.
10. Describe the educational system of your home province in some detail.
11. Describe the role played by parliament in the Canadian government system.
12. Order a complete meal in a restaurant.
13. Talk about your favorite hobby at some length, using appropriate vocabulary.
14. Give a brief description of a picture (e.g., photograph or picture in an art gallery) while looking at it.
15. Count to 10 in French.
16. Give directions in the street.
17. Understand cooking directions, such as those in a recipe.
6. This videotape has an excerpt of a French movie (*Cyrano DeBergerac*), without subtitles. What is happening in the movie?
7. Here is a passage from a hockey game on the radio. Do your best to translate it into English.
8. Here is a portion of a news broadcast. What are the stories about?
9. Describe what you are wearing today, in French.
10. In French, describe the provincial education system in some detail.
11. Describe the role played by parliament in the Canadian government system.
12. Order a complete meal, in French.
13. Talk about your favorite hobby or interest for three minutes in French.
14. Describe in French all that is happening in this picture.
15. Count to 100 by 10's in French.
16. Give directions from this room to the (nearby shopping centre) to somebody who speaks only French.
17. Here is a recipe for a French dish. Explain in English what you need to do to make it (*fondue aux tomates*).

18. Understand newspaper headlines.
19. Read personal letters or notes written to you in which the writer has deliberately used simple words and constructions.
20. Read popular novels without using a dictionary.
21. Read personal letters or notes written as they would be to a native speaker.
22. Make out a shopping list.
23. Fill out a job application form requiring information about your interests and qualifications.
24. Write a letter to a friend.
25. Leave a note for somebody explaining where you will be or when you will come home.
26. Write an advertisement to sell a bicycle.
18. Here are 7 newspaper headlines; explain what they mean in English (obtained from a French language daily newspaper).
19. Here is a postcard written in French; explain what it means (a postcard written in French to one of the authors).
20. The following passage is from a French novel; explain in English what is happening in the story.
21. This memo is written in French; what does it mean in English?
22. In one minute, list in French all the things that you would put in a refrigerator.
23. Complete the following job application listing in French (obtained from the local employment center).
24. In French, write a postcard to a friend describing the University.
25. Leave a note for somebody, in French, explaining where you are now and when you will return home.
26. Write an advertisement to sell the bicycle pictured below (photo obtained from a national catalogue).