TAIWANESE PRIVATE UNIVERSITY EFL STUDENTS' RETICENCE IN SPEAKING ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

The topic of this qualitative research concerned the reticence to speak English in a classroom setting for EFL students studying in private universities in Taiwan. Ten participants were interviewed 4 times and participated in a focus group discussion regarding reticence to speak English in a classroom discussion. Participants were second year English majors selected from a group of 22 students who volunteered to participate out of a class of 350 students. Participants were first asked to rate themselves regarding their motivation to and effort in learning English followed by the use of Q-sort cards to stimulate the students' thinking concerning important factors that contribute to their reticence in speaking English. Culture (face saving), personality (self-confidence), and classroom atmosphere were identified to be contributing factors in the participants' reticence to speak English.

Key Words: reticence, Chinese EFL students, foreign language anxiety, oral
        participation, peer pressure, EFL classroom participation

The globalization of the marketplace and the growing importance of the English language as a lingua franca in conducting business worldwide are the major reasons the number of English-as-a-second-language (ESL) students is increasing in institutions of higher learning in the US, Canada, Australia, and England. The same reason can be cited for the increasing numbers of English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) students studying the English language in institutions of higher learning in their respective countries. According to Verri (2003), knowledge is the key economic

resource of a country, and English plays an instrumental role in applying that knowledge in the marketplace. The marketplace demands proficiency in the English language, and people of all ages have responded to that demand by incorporating English language skills, with varying degrees of success, into their repertoire of knowledge. Students have flocked to English classrooms to develop their English language ability hoping that skill will enable them to function effectively in the current economic environment, and have done so in such numbers that there are now more non-native English speakers of English than there are natives.

As a result of English becoming a lingua franca, the teaching of English has become a multi-billion dollar global business. In the ESL and EFL classroom, reticence to speak English, however, remains a problem for students developing oral proficiency in the English language, especially as compared to the development of reading and listening skills. Jackson (2002) reported one phase of a 3-year ethnographic study in Hong Kong of reticence in the classroom after gathering data through personal interviews with 21 students from a total of 168 students in four business classes. Data were also gathered through 24 hours of videotaped classroom observation. Jackson (2002) found that second language learners articulated a concern about their ability to express thoughts in English due to their level of English proficiency. Lack of confidence, anxiety, and the fear of losing face were others factors that contributed to the students' reticence to participate in classroom discussions.

Language anxiety is an important issue to consider in students' reticence to speak English. According to Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986), anxiety comprises the three elements of test anxiety, communication apprehension, and negative evaluation. These researchers viewed second language anxiety as a complex mixture of beliefs, self-perceptions, behaviors, and feelings related to classroom learning indicating the complexity of the issue. Data for the study were gathered from 75 university students involved in a pilot study of the 33 item Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) at the University of Texas. These researchers report an alpha coefficient of .93 "with all items producing significant corrected item-total scale correlations. Test retest reliability over eight weeks yielded an r = .83 (*p* < .001)" (p. 129).In a later study, Horwitz (2001) indicated that language anxiety in language learning is situation specific and anxiety impacts achievement in developing oral language skills.

MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) computed correlations using the FLCAS in a quantitative study of 97 students attending a Canadian university. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) go so far as to say that anxiety is one of the strongest predictors of foreign language development. Much research into anxiety and its influence on oral proficiency has been conducted using Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) 33 item FLCAS which has proven to be both reliable and valid (Aida, 1994; Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999). Aida (1994) conducted a study of the FLCAS at the University of Texas with 96 students of Japanese the results of which support the reliability of the FLCAS. In this study Cronbach's alphas "yielded an interval consistency of .94" (p. 158). Factor analysis of principal components with varimax rotation was also conducted with all 33 items of the FLCAS. Seven factors produced an eigenvalue greater than one. "Factors that had an impact on students' anxiety in learning Japanese were speech anxiety and fear of negative evaluation, fear of failing the Japanese class, degree of comfort when speaking with native speakers of Japanese, and negative attitudes toward the Japanese class" (Aida, 1994, p. 163).

Woodrow (2006), in a mixed methodological study of 414 students studying English for Academic Purposes (EAP) at accredited language centers in Australia, found a negative relationship between "second language speaking anxiety and oral performance" (p. 314). This study involved the use of the Second Language Anxiety Speaking Scale combined with data gathered from interviews with 47 of the participants. Woodrow (2006) indicated that "Anxiety experienced in communication in English can be debilitating and can influence students' adaptation to the target environment and ultimately the achievement of their educational goals" (p. 309).

In a historical review of the literature, Dewaele and Furnham (2000) linked reticence to anxiety and to the psychological constructs of personality, and found that the more extroverted students displayed greater fluency in oral production than introverted students. Oya, Manalo, and Greenwood (2004), in a quantitative study consisting of 73 native Japanese speakers studying English in New Zealand, used Japanese language versions of the Maudsley Personality Inventory and the Spielberger State Anxiety Inventory to measure neuroticism, extroversion, and introversion. Oya, Manalo, and Greenwood (2004) found that fluency, accuracy, and complexity did not correlate significantly with the oral performance of extroverted or introverted

personalities. However, they stated that the "global impression of the participants' oral performance was found to significantly correlate with their extraversion scores," (p. 848).

Other factors have been identified as reasons for silence in the classroom. Zhou, Knoke, and Sakamoto (2005), in a qualitative study of 10 Asian graduate students (5 male and five female) studying in one Canadian university, found knowing when and how to participate in class was a significant factor in a student's reticence to speak English. They also found "according to the students in this study, familiarity with peer students may increase trust, motivation and feelings of comfort and safety in the classroom" (p. 297). Zhou, Knoke, and Sakamoto (2005) state, "Consistent with Confucian 'maxims of modesty,' for instance, Chinese students prefer less frequent participation and brief responses in class so as to avoid dominating the discussion and to avoid being labeled as a 'show-off' by their Chinese peers." (p. 289).

Liu and Littlewood (1997) conducted a quantitative study surveying 2,156 university students in Hong Kong. An ANOVA was used for analyzing the data. These researchers equated reticence to speak English to the students' confidence in their ability to participate orally in classroom discussions also stating that East-Asian/Chinese students' classroom participation is often related to the students' self-perception about their own English proficiency. Liu and Littlewood (1997) also found that acceptable behavior in the classroom was influenced by cultural meanings of acceptable behavior defined in terms of the collective nature of the Chinese culture.

In studies of Confucian heritage cultures (CHC), culture has frequently been cited by researchers to explain reticence in the classroom (Flowerdew and Miller 1995; Turner & Hiraga 1996: Spizzica 1997). Flowerdew and Miller (1995) collected data in a 3-year study in Hong Kong from interviews with 10 lecturers, 16 classroom observations, multiple focus group discussions with six to eight students, and interviews with 18 students. They identified four dimensions of culture relevant to student reticence. These dimensions included ethnic culture, local culture (setting), academic culture (lecture situation), and discipline culture (norms of an academic discipline. This framework of culture provides lecturers and students with the ability to be consciously aware of cultural influences on reticence. "Developing such an awareness provides for a mutual coming together, or cultural synergy, which can in turn lead to more effective communication in the cross-cultural lecture

theatre" (Flowerdew & Miller, 1995, p. 370).

Ho and Crookall (1995) found that remaining silent was one strategy used by Chinese students to avoid confrontation in the classroom. Twenty-one students enrolled at the City University of Hong Kong participated in a simulation activity called Project IDEALS designed to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning and develop "…autonomy in students from a cultural background that is almost diametrically opposed to autonomy" (p. 240). These researchers concluded that students must take personal responsibility for their learning to counter the influence of culture on reticence to participate in classroom activities.

Carson and Nelson (1996) conducted a study of peer response with 11 students in an advanced ESL writing class. Before the groups were initiated, three instructors played the role of student-writers and responders to assist the students in learning helpful peer response group behaviors. The students were then divided into three groups to discuss what they were feeling, thinking, and intending when various statements were made or responded to during the discussion. Carson and Nelson (1996) found that Chinese students engage in self-monitoring to avoid criticizing or disagreeing with the opinions of their classmates in order to maintain harmony in the group. "Their primary goal was to maintain group harmony, and this goal affected the nature and types of interaction they allowed themselves in group discussions," (Carson & Nelson, 1996, p. 9). Culture is another construct of importance to the issue of reticence in the classroom.

Whether or not students are reticent to speak English in a classroom setting because of a personality trait such as introversion or a psychological condition such as anxiety, silence in the classroom is documented as a hindrance to developing English oral language proficiency. There is also little doubt from this brief review of the literature that reticence to speak English in a classroom discussion is a complex issue involving elements of personality such as self-confidence, psychological constructs such as anxiety, and multiple cultural elements not easily resolved by instructor intervention.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this exploratory, qualitative study was to identify the factors influencing the Taiwanese private university students' reticence

to speak English from the perspective of the students since few studies in the past have identified these constructs in a Taiwanese EFL setting. Merriam (1998) expressed the importance of the participants' perspective in the statement that "The key concern is understanding the phenomenon of interest from the participants' perspectives, not the researcher's" (p. 6).

An assumption of the study was that the students could best explain their reticence to speak English even while using the English language to do so. Furthermore, it was assumed the existing relationship between the participants and researcher would encourage and enable the participants to express the reasons for their reticence to speak English in various contexts. Two keys to this research were the rapport between the researcher and the participants, and the ability of the participant to articulate their ideas.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The over-arching research question for the study was: What factors influence Taiwanese private university students' reticence to speak English in classroom discussions? Three questions guided the research and provided the framework for the study. The questions emerged during the planning stages of the research including the review of the literature. The questions provided direction for the semi-structured interviewing of the participants, and provided a structure for organizing and reporting the data gathered during the research process conducted over a 5 month period during the spring of 2007. The research questions asked were:

(1) What dynamics influence the students' participation in EFL classroom discussions?
(2) What characteristics of the students' personality impact willingness to participate in classroom discussions?
(3) What characteristics of the Chinese culture impact the students' willingness to participate in classroom discussions?

The following sections present the methodology used in gathering the data followed by a discussion of the major themes emerging from the data analysis. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the findings, outlines recommendations for professional educators and students, and describes the complexity of the issue of reticence to speak English in Taiwanese private university students.

METHODOLOGY

This study explored the students' reticence to speak English through four individual interviews and two focus group interviews with 10 second year English majors at a private university in Taiwan. The participants were selected from a group of 22 students who volunteered to participate in the study out of a class of 350 students, all of whom had been asked if they were willing to participate in the study. A 2 week window was open during which time any of the 350 students could volunteer to participate in the study.

Initial Interviews

After an initial personal screening of the 22 students who had volunteered to participate in the study, 10 of the most articulate students were selected to participate because of their ability to express themselves in the English language. In order to ease the anxiety of the participants in using the English language to convey their thoughts, an offer was made to have a translator present during the interviews. All 10 participants said that there was no need for a translator. The interviews were conducted in the office of the researcher. Tea was provided to promote a more relaxed atmosphere and more of a conversational style interview. Rubin and Rubin (1995) state that "Although qualitative interviews are more focused, deeper, and more detailed than normal discussions, they follow many of the rules of ordinary conversation" (p. 122). This researcher attempted to build on an established rapport with the participants, hoping by doing so to probe deeper into the anxieties of the participants' reticence to speak English through establishing a relaxed conversational atmosphere.

The study involved 5 female and 5 male participants as a means of assuring that the topic was discussed from the perspective of gender. The participants' ages included one 19 year-old, eight 20 year-olds, and one 21 year-old student. During the initial interview, the researcher asked each of the participants for permission to take notes and to tape record the interviews to which all the participants agreed.

The intention of the initial interview was to explain the purpose of the research. The nature of the questions to be asked and the expectations of the researcher were discussed in terms of the time involved in the research. The initial 30 to 45 minute interview allowed the researcher to develop rapport with each student by asking the participants to share

information regarding their background, interest, and purpose for learning English.

The initial interview also permitted the researcher to determine the ability and willingness of each participant to articulate his or her ideas. During the initial interview, the researcher explained to the students that only 10 participants would be selected from among the 22 volunteers encouraging those students genuinely not interested in the research, or for whatever reason, to decline participating in the research. Explaining the selection process provided students with a face-saving device necessary for many Taiwanese when they have or want to say "no" to a request. Seven of the students decided not to participate because of the time demands of their personal schedules. The remaining 15 volunteers were told that a random draw of names would identify the 10 participants chosen for the study, and these participants would be contacted by telephone to set a time for the second interview. The other volunteers were notified that they were not selected, but were asked if they would be willing to participate at a later date if after the interviewing process was completed, the researcher identified a need to include more participants. Three of the volunteers agreed to participate under such conditions.

The 22 volunteers who participated in the initial interview were told that their names would not be used in the publication of the research. However, the focus group discussion would result in the participants knowing the identity of one another and confidentiality in that regard could not be maintained. The participants were also told that no specific personal statements would be used in a way that would identify them individually except with what they chose to reveal during the focus group discussion. All of the participants expressed an understanding about confidentiality, and signed an agreement to participate. In this way, confidentiality and the anonymity of the participants was protected as much as possible. At the conclusion of each initial interview, a token gift was given to the 22 volunteers as a means of expressing appreciation for their interest in participating in the study. Gift giving is a custom of the Chinese culture used in this instance to express respect for the participants.

Second Interview

The purpose of the 1 hour, second interview was to generate ideas for discussion and to define the vocabulary to be used during the third

interview. An adapted Q methodology and Q sorting process described by Stephenson (1953) and Brown (1996) was employed to assist the participants in identifying issues influencing student reticence to participate in classroom discussions. This method was designed for use in the qualitative interviewing "warm-up" phase to stimulate thought and to act as a vehicle for preliminary discussion.

Potential reasons for a participant's reticence to speak English were identified through a discussion of the topic with colleagues in the Applied English Department at the researcher's university and through a discussion of the topic with students in two English Conversation classes taught by the researcher at the university. None of the students in the English Conversation classes participated in the research as an interviewee. These reasons, along with their definitions, were placed individually on 3 inch by 4 inch cards. (See Appendix A for a list of the Q-sort card reasons and definitions.) The participants were asked to sort a total of 24 Q-sort cards into three groups of eight cards each, without regard to the research questions, ranking each card in a group from 1st to 8th in terms of the seriousness of the issue in their reticence to speak English. The first group represented the eight most serious reasons for their reticence to speak English. The second group represented the next eight most serious reasons, and the third group represented the least serious problems for their reticence to speak English. For example, participants were asked using the Q-sort cards if self-confidence, English vocabulary, gender, peer pressure, teaching methodology, face saving, or even age influenced their reluctance to participate in classroom discussions. Participants were permitted to ask questions, ask for definitions of the meaning of any Q-sort card, and even to add additional issues to the set of Q-sort cards. The researcher was, thus, able to explore the rationale behind the participants' ranking of the Q-sort cards which were designed to facilitate communication flow.

The researcher recorded the participants' responses so that descriptive statistics could be used to compare with the themes that emerged from the analysis of the data gathered during the interview process. A table was used for each participant to record that participant's ranking of the Q-Sort cards assigning a value to each card between 1 and 24. These values were used to calculate the mean scores for each Q-Sort category. Appendix B reveals that the value of the ranking is a reversed score system where the most severe problem received a value of 1 and the least severe problem received a value of 24. Therefore, the lower the

mean score the more severe the problem is for that category.

Following the card sorting, the researcher explained that the purpose of the cards was to generate thinking about reticence to speak English and to encourage the participants to think about what issues were important to them before the third interview when they would be asked to describe their reticence to speak English. It is necessary to point out that the Q-sort cards were not always exclusive of other reasons that contributed to, for example, "willingness to participate," which most certainly was influenced by the participants' vocabulary, classroom atmosphere, and other factors. Whatever the reason for the participants' reticence to speak English and the non-exclusive nature of the reason, these reasons were considered important for the general purpose of generating thought and discussion concerning the participants' reticence to speak English.

Another purpose for the Q-sort cards was to triangulate the Q-sort cards with the over-all importance of the group participants' perceptions and to identify differences by gender. A mean score was calculated for each of the 24 Q-sort cards and for each gender. The scores were used to confirm the validity of the themes identified during the data analysis phase of the research process. For the sake of clarity, the lower the mean score for a category the greater the problem area since the cards ranked first were the issues identified by the participants as posing the greatest problems in their reticence to speak English in classroom discussions.

Independent sample t tests were also run comparing means by gender using the statistical software package SPSS 10.5. The t tests revealed whether or not there was a significant difference in the means by gender for each of the 24 Q-sort cards. However, it should be pointed out that the sample was too small for an appropriate use with inferential statistics and that the reliability of the t tests should be questioned from a statistical point of view. The difference in the mean scores would have to be large for any significance to appear, but three areas (age at $p = .020$, anxiousness at $p = .029$, and the number of years studied English at $p = .003$) did show a significant mean difference, and were used only in connection with the interviews to pursue the topics in more depth with the participants from the perspective of gender.

Third Interview

The third interview of 60 to 90 minutes was conducted with individual participants 1 to 2 weeks after the second interview. This

semi-structured interview began with the researcher asking the participant to describe a situation in which they were reluctant to participate, and to explain the reasons for their reluctance in speaking English. Next, the participants were asked to explain the reasons why they felt reluctant to speak English in particular situations such as with native English speakers or in large group discussions in the classroom. Reference was made to the eight highest rated reasons for their reluctance based on the Q-sort cards. Participants were asked to elaborate on each of the eight highest rated reasons as to the meaning, context, and as to when that reason became an issue to the participant. For example, the initial question was phrased, "You rated self-confidence as the single greatest hindrance to your willingness to participate. Can you explain the meaning of and provide an example of when this has occurred in your experience?" After each of the issues was discussed, the participants were asked to add to the discussion any ideas that might not have been identified by the Q-sort cards. Follow-up questions were asked during the interviews based on the responses of the individual participants to insure that the participants had exhausted their ideas related to any given question or issue.

Focus Group Discussion

Prior to the time of the member-checking final interview, two focus group discussions were conducted with the 10 participants. One focus group consisted of the 5 female participants and the second focus group consisted of the 5 male participants. The reason for having two focus groups was to provide an open and relaxed atmosphere in which only participants of the same gender and a small number of participants were present as a means of encouraging discussion. The researcher was concerned with the willingness of the female participants to contribute to a discussion in which there were male participants. Also, the researcher feared that the size of one focus group might prohibit participants from contributing to the discussion. Dividing the focus groups by gender appeared to be a natural accommodation for these concerns.

The purpose of the focus groups was three-fold: (1) The focus groups were used as a member-checking technique; (2) the focus groups were used as a technique to observe the interaction of the participants in a group discussion; and (3) the focus groups were employed to identity additional themes that had not emerged during the interview process. Although no new themes did emerge, the focus groups did validate the

themes that did emerge during the interviews. An additional benefit of the focus groups, not intended by the researcher, was the continued involvement and interest of the participants during the data analysis period before the final member checking interview was conducted.

The discussion in the focus groups was preceded by a statement made by the researcher introducing the participants to one another because prior to this time the participants were unaware of the others participating in the research. Since all of the participants were classmates, a relaxed atmosphere quickly developed as the students found enjoyment in discovering who participated in the study. The topic of the discussion was also introduced at this time. During the focus group, the participants were asked to identify the major reasons for their reticence to speak English. The participants were encouraged to discuss any new issues that they had not previously identified as a reason for their reticence to speak English, but as stated previously, no new themes emerged at that time. The focus group ended with the researcher thanking each participant for their contribution to the study and with an offering of a second token gift of appreciation.

Member Checking Interview

The fourth individual interview was a member checking, 1 hour interview, conducted after the tape recordings of all the interviews were transcribed, the data were coded, and the major themes were identified for each of the participants. Tutty, Rothry, and Grinnell (1996) state that "Member checking: Obtaining feedback from your research participants is an essential credibility technique that is unique to qualitative methods" (p. 113). The process of transcribing the interviews, coding the data, and identifying the major themes continued simultaneously with the interviews during the research process. Two months following the third interview, the member checking interview was used to confirm the content of what each participant had said during the interviews. Questions that arose during the analysis of the data received clarification and confirmation during the member checking interview. Finally, the participants were asked to make any additional comments that they wished to make concerning their reticence to speak English in any context. Participants were also asked to comment on the research process and asked what questions should have been asked that were not asked during the process as a means of assuring that the responses to the topic were thorough. The interviews ended with the researcher thanking each

participant for their contribution to the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following the completion of the four interviews and focus group discussions, data analysis continued for 2 months resulting in three major themes emerging: Personal factors, situational factors, and cultural factors related to the participants' reticence to participate in classroom discussions.

Table 1 exhibits the eight categories of Q-sort cards with the highest mean scores. Except for the categories "time on task" and "topic of discussion," these categories coincided with the major themes identified through the interviewing process. The table provides insight into the depth and breath of the interviewing process, and illustrates the variation of opinions among the participants concerning the seriousness of the problems related to their reticence to speak English. The variation can be observed through identifying that only four of the means were less than 10.2 while all of the other means for the 24 Q-sort cards ranged from 11.1 to 17.8.

Table 1.   Q-sort Card Collective Means

Rank	Factor	Mean
1.	Willingness to participate	3.4
2.	Vocabulary	5.3
3.	Gender	6.7
4.	Atmosphere	10.2
5.	Time on task	11.1
6.	Culture	12.2
7.	Topic of discussion	12.2
8.	Effort	12.4

Note. All means not in the table ranged from 12.5 to 17.8 from a high mean of 1 to a low of 24.

Not all of the topics discussed in the following description and analysis of the data had Q-sort card mean scores that merited the attention of the researcher. The content of the interviews, however, identified the intensity of the issue necessitating the discussion of the theme because of the repeated emphasis of the topic by a majority of the

participants during the interviews. A second sorting of the Q-cards during the final interview may have resulted in a different ranking of the topics. The second sorting was not done because it was thought unnecessary in the light of the close match between the first sorting and the themes that emerged during the interviews regarding personal, situational or cultural factors related to the participants' reticence to speak English in a classroom setting.

Reticence to Speak English: Personal, Situational, and Cultural Factors

The section on reticence to speak English in a classroom is divided into three parts including a discussion of the influence of personal, situational, and cultural factors influencing the participants' reticence to speak English.

Personal factors

The personal factors that influenced the participants' reticence to speak English included their English ability, classmate response, self-confidence, anxiety, experience speaking English, cultural environment, motivation, and effort to learn English.

English ability. Ling, a 2nd year English major, reported that her reluctance to participate in class discussions or to answer questions posed by the professor resulted from three concerns. When asked of her reluctance to participate Ling said her first reason for not participating was that, "My English is not good. I don't know the words to use. I don't want to be embarrassed." English ability, vocabulary, and the ensuing embarrassment are not mutually exclusive topics as indicated by Lynn's comment.

Ling indicated that her embarrassment related to her lack of English vocabulary. Vocabulary was identified in the Q-sort card activity as the second most common reason stated for not participating in classroom discussions with an over-all mean of 5.3 (6.4 for the male participants and 4.2 for the female participants). For this reason, vocabulary was identified as a major topic of discussion during the interviews. The inability to converse because of a lack of vocabulary was described by various participants as frustrating, and as a reason for their failure to speak English and for not participating in class. In this study, 9 of the 10 participants rated their English proficiency only as "fair," and indicated as Ling stated previously, that their English proficiency was "not good"

causing them difficulty in participating in classroom discussions.

Vocabulary was found to be an important factor in the participants' reticence to speak English especially when combined with "how to participate" in classroom discussions. Commenting on her English proficiency, Ling indicated that she chose not to participate unless the professor asked her a direct question, which was identified during the interviews as a common strategy used by the participants in dealing with the issue of knowing when and how to participate. When asked how she responded to direct questions, Ling stated that "I give easy answer." When asked what she meant by "easy answer" she said she always gave a short answer or said nothing if she did not know the answer. She said she knew that the teacher would ask someone else if she just remained silent long enough. Six of the participants identified this strategy as a common strategy in their repertoire for dealing with when and how to participate in class. However, the "when" aspect of the question was not a pertinent factor causing reluctance to participate for the students, but the "how" aspect especially related to vocabulary was pertinent.

Classmate response. The third concern Ling expressed as a problem had to do with how the other students in the class would respond to her comments. When asked what response she was afraid of, Ling said "…the other students will laugh at me." Asked to elaborate, Ling said another reason was that she feared the other students would think she was "showing off," which in the Chinese culture would be another source of embarrassment. A majority of the other participants in the study expressed the same concerns regarding the response of their peers to any comments they make in a class discussion or in answering a question the professor posed, and indicated that peer response created much fear for them.

Only one student, Jim, indicated that he "did not care" about what the other students in the class thought and did not care if his English was not perfect. He said, "I know my English is good so I don't think about classmates when I speak." For most of the students, however, fear of being wrong in answering a question, being laughed at, or fear of being considered a show off has had a debilitating influence upon their participation in class. Participation directly related to the norms of the Chinese culture such as "face saving" adding complexity to the issue of self-perceived English proficiency and reticence to speak English.

Table 2 compares the over-all mean with the means for the male and female participants in any category where one of the means was less than

10.5. When means were larger than 10.5, little importance was attached to the issue by the participants. The means that were 10.5 or less, particularly related to the gender differences, identified topics that needed to be discussed during the interviews. Anxiousness, age, and the number of years studying English were the only constructs that proved statistically significant using an independent sample t test to compare the means at a 95% confidence interval. Anxiousness ($p = .029$) referred to the nervousness students feel in a classroom where the males felt a higher level of anxiety. Age ($p = .020$) referred to changes occurring because of an increase in age. Females considered age to be a problem when they were younger. The number of years participants studied English was identified by the males ($p = .003$) as a serious consideration for their reticence to speak English.

Table 2.   Comparison of means

Rank	Topic	Collective	Male	Female
1.	Willingness to participate	3.4	1.6	5.2
2.	Vocabulary	5.3	6.4	4.2
3.	Gender	6.7	6.6	6.8
4.	Atmosphere	10.2	11.0	9.4
5.	Time on task (years studied English)	15.3	10.2	20.4
6.	Culture	12.2	10.2	14.2
7.	Topic of discussion	12.2	11.8	12.6
8.	Effort	12.4	10.2	14.6
9.	How and when to participate	12.5	10.0	15.0
10.	Anxiousness	13.0	8.2	17.8
11.	Living in a Chinese culture	12.7	15.4	10.0
12.	Age	15.3	21.4	9.2

The interviews revealed that the topics were gender sensitive, but the interviews did not reveal the reasons for the differences between the male and female participants or the disparity in the comparison of the male and female means in any of these categories. Whether willingness to participate is typically a greater problem for males than females, totally a matter of saving face, or is influenced by other factors must be identified in further investigation of the Taiwanese university students' reticence to speak English. Identifying the specific causes of male and female reluctance to speak English may provide a basis for developing a teaching strategy that could address the impact of gender regarding

participation in class.

Self-confidence. Self-confidence, degree of self-perceived anxiousness, and motivation were the three elements of personality identified as important factors in participation in classroom discussions. Having studied English an average of 8.5 years, many of the participants indicated that as their English proficiency improved their self-confidence grew and with that self-confidence their willingness to participate also increased. However, some of the participants indicated that as people get older, they become more confident in general and have a better idea of what they want to do with their lives indicating this could have something to do with their willingness to participate in class. Asked if age had anything to do with the change, the participants connected the age factor to the development of their English proficiency because of the increased length of time they were involved in learning English. Jeff had an interesting comment to make about age, however. He said, "…now I am in university and I must be more responsible for myself. I want to study abroad so I work harder to reach my goal." When elaborating on this idea, Jeff indicated that he worked hard to learn English in high school, but his reason for studying English has changed since he decided to study abroad for his master degree and as a result has taken a greater personal responsibility for learning English.

In general, becoming older was seen as a natural process that provided an increase in self-confidence further bolstered by improvement in their English ability. Self-confidence was recognized by the participants as an important factor in reaching their goal of English proficiency, and the increased self-confidence has given them hope that they can reach that goal. In fact, all of the participants indicated that they participated more often in university English level classes than they did in high school where the teaching of grammar and passing tests was emphasized. When asked how face saving related to self-confidence, the participants offered no remedies for their reticence to speak English, despite their increased self-confidence, admitting that they participate only when the situation offers no alternatives. Self-confidence alone is not sufficient to over-come the fear of being embarrassed or thought of as showing off by their peers, and the corresponding anxiety concerning peer response enhances their reticence to participate in class.

Anxiety. Five of the participants indicated that they still felt a degree of anxiety anytime they participated in an English conversation,

especially with a native English speaker in a classroom discussion. That anxiousness related more to their fear of embarrassment and frustration with not knowing how to express themselves than with other reasons that might have produced the anxiety. Performance is influenced by the level of anxiety felt by the individual and relates to task specific assignments.

The over-all mean for the category of anxiousness was 13.0, but for the male participants the mean was 8.2, and for the female participants the mean was 17.8. This difference was statistically significant at the 95% confidence interval ($p = .029$). The male participants experience a higher degree of anxiousness in a classroom setting than do the female participants. When analyzing the differences between the male and female participants while considering the categories of vocabulary, knowing how and when to participate, and anxiousness, it became obvious that there were important differences between the male and female participants. The male participants appear to have a more difficult time participating in class discussions than the female participants which was also confirmed during the interviews.

When asked how he coped with the anxiety, Feng told a story about one professor who assigned a conversation class the responsibility of interviewing three native English speakers outside of the university community. He indicated this experience reduced the anxiousness he felt speaking English with native English speaking people, and also built his self-confidence. During the member checking interview, the other participants were asked if they had participated in the same assignment. All of the participants were in the same class as Feng, or a different section of the same class with the same professor, and had a similar response to the assignment. Since an EFL environment does not provide as many opportunities to interact with native English speakers, the importance of experience in the development of self-confidence and oral proficiency in an EFL environment needs to be further investigated. These participants indicated they were more willing to speak with native English speakers after the assignment and less anxious while using English in any setting. Jack said that the assignment was "…one of the best things that ever happened to him." Anxiousness dissipated with experience, but in an EFL environment and because of self-imposed or cultural-imposed hindrances gaining practical experience is a difficult quest.

The large differences in the male mean of 8.2 and the female mean of 17.8 ($p = .029$) of anxiousness indicates that the male participants were

much more anxious about speaking English than were the female participants. The topic was infrequently referred to by the male participants during the interviews possibly because the topic was a difficult subject for the male participants to address. The impression the researcher gained through the interviews was that the male participants were no more anxious than the female participants. There may be many reasons for the higher level of male anxiety revealed by the Q-sort cards that need to be investigated through further research into the subject. If a difference between male and females does exist, the reasons may be cultural or personality oriented, but certainly this is an important question to ask in the future. Table 2 lists the means for 12 categories in 9 of which the male participants indicated a more serious problem than the female participants. As a result of this observation, further investigation into the specific reasons why male anxiety in speaking English is higher than females is warranted.

Experience speaking English. As part of an investigation of whether experience increases self-confidence and reduced anxiety, the participants were asked if and when they ever spoke English with their classmates outside of the classroom. Only one participant indicated that he spoke with classmates (friends) in English on a regular basis, and only one other participant indicated that they had ever spoken with a native English speaker outside of the university setting. Carl said that he had a Canadian friend that he spoke English with 2 or 3 times a week. He said, "I am not afraid to speak English with my friend now because I speak with him a lot." Experience does appear to make a difference in self-confidence and the degree of anxiety the participants feel during a conversation, but it also appears that the participants do not deliberately create opportunities to do so even with classmates unless compelled to do so through class assignments. When asked about seeking opportunities to use their English conversational skills, none of the participants indicated they had ever sought out such opportunities citing a lack of time, fear, and a lack of knowledge of where to seek out opportunities. Lack of opportunity and not creating an opportunity to speak English both must be interpreted as a hindrance to developing oral proficiency, the problem of which professors can address only in part with assignments in the classroom. Students must become aware of the importance of opportunity and experience in developing language proficiency if significant growth in English oral ability is to occur.

Cultural environment.   During the interviews, the male participants recognized the difficulty that living in an EFL environment posed in providing opportunities to speak English whereas the female participants seemed oblivious of the impact of living in a Chinese culture to opportunities to speak English. This corresponded with the importance the males placed on living in the Chinese culture with the Q-sort cards. The male participants' mean was 10 for the category while the female participants' mean was 15.4. When asked about the impact of living in the Chinese culture, Jim said, "It is too easy to use Chinese. If we lived in the U. S., we must use English more. That would help us to learn English faster. Here in Taiwan, we just always speak Chinese." Jack said, "Living here is only natural to speak Chinese." When asked to explain the comment, Jack said "everything is Chinese so we speak Chinese." Ling, on the other hand, said frankly that "It doesn't matter." The participants did not view the difference as a matter of gender or culture, however. Personality and individual preferences appear to generate the differences in personal opinions regarding the category of living in the Chinese culture. Characteristics of personality or background may influence the participants' preferences in this matter providing another topic needing further investigation.

One factor that seemed to make a difference in the participants' willingness to participate, however, was when all students in a class were subject to the same assignment. For example, two of the participants told of an oral presentation that they and their classmates were required to make after the assignment with native English speakers was completed as part of the assignment previously mentioned. Susan said, "We know everybody must speak… We must speak because we get a grade… But we know everyone makes mistakes and no one will laugh…" The collective nature of the Chinese culture related to group orientation as opposed to an individualistic orientation provided a strong support structure for a class which was confronted with the same challenge. This may be one way instruction can break down the reticence to speak, but in large classes the process is time consuming. In the case of interview assignment, the participants indicated that it took 3 weeks to complete the oral presentations because there were in excess of 60 students in the class. It does appear, however, that the classroom assignment reveals a positive relationship with the motivation and effort of the students. It also appears that experience makes a difference in willingness to participate. Asked how they felt about the oral presentation experience in

the class previously mentioned, Sharon said, "I am not so much afraid to talk now. It was good." Jack said, "We need more experience talking." Susan said, "I still worry about what my classmates think. It was good, but I am still afraid…" Reticence to speak English is a complex issue as the previous discussion reveals.

Motivation and effort. Motivation is possibly connected to the idea of creating opportunities to use the English language. During the Q-sort card activity, the participants were asked to rate their motivation to learn English on a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest level of motivation. The average score for motivation was 8.1. Interestingly, when asked to rate their degree of effort in learning English on the same scale, the average score for effort was only 5.2. This discrepancy was explained by the participants as a result of commitments to other responsibilities including part-time jobs, related class work at the university, relationships with classmates, or family responsibilities. When asked about the connection between motivation and effort, the participants were unable to identify a connection even while most admitted they had time to study English more if they were to make that time. While explaining the discrepancy, Jeff indicated he watched television too much and if he really wanted to study English more he said, "I could watch television less, but it is hard to do it." Motivation, effort, opportunity, and an underlying fear of losing face explain much of the reason why Taiwanese private university students do not make more progress in developing their English oral proficiency.

Intrinsic motivation is a personal issue the complexity of which has been researched thoroughly. The participants in this study revealed that few professors address the issue of motivation or "…try to motivate us," Jim said, "…they [the professors] just give us assignments and grades." The need to nurture intrinsic motivation in students addresses the broader issue of the responsibility that professors have in motivating students. The further this study delved into the rich, thick descriptions of the EFL environment, the more complex the issue of reticence in speaking English became for the researcher.

Situational factors

Situation factors that influenced the participants' reticence to speak English included class size and composition, classroom atmosphere related to instructor attitudes and teaching methodology, and previous high school experiences learning English.

Class size and composition. When the students were asked about class size, classroom atmosphere, and class structure, the participants indicated that they felt classes were too large and that large class size discouraged their participation. Sara said, "I don't like big classes, but all my classes are big so I don't talk in class." When asked about the size of her classes, Sara indicated that her smallest class had "more than 30 students" while her largest class had "more than 60 students." When asked about large classes that divided into small groups for discussions, the female participants indicated during the focus group session that they preferred to be in a group with people they knew and even then they would resort to using the Chinese language to discuss the issue. Two of the female participants indicated they did not enjoy small group discussions when classmates they did not like were members of their group because of issues related to peer pressure. When asked to expand on the idea, the participants indicated that because students take many classes together as a group in the Taiwanese university system, there are people "you don't like and have a conflict with." They would rather not have anything to do with these classmates in the classroom. When asked about cliques (peer pressure), all of the female students indicated that cliques were a problem. The male participants expressed no such concern although they did indicate that they resorted to using the Chinese language to discuss the topic or did not even discuss the topic unless the professor required a reporter from the group to summarize the discussion for the entire class.

Cliques appear to be a problem for the female participants, but not for the male participants. When cliques were discussed during the focus group discussions, the male participants indicated that they had no problems with cliques. The findings of this study in an EFL environment do not support the idea that familiarity encourages willingness to participate, especially on the part of the female participants, unless all members of a group are friends or are on friendly terms contrary to the findings of the Zhou, Knoke, and Sakamoto (2005) study previously mentioned. The influence of cliques in the Taiwanese private university setting needs to be further investigated.

Classroom atmosphere, instructor attitudes, and teaching methodology. Class atmosphere and structure also posed a problem for these participants most of whom differentiated between the native English speaking professors and the native Chinese speaking teachers they had for the 14 hours of English instruction that they received each week. The

participants indicated they enjoyed the native English speaking professors' classroom because native English speakers were more humorous, encouraged participation more often, and were more positive in their comments concerning the students' English ability than were native Chinese speaking professors. This finding coincides with Ngwainmbi's (2004) study of Chinese students in the classroom. Ngwainmbi used a participant-observer approach to collecting data during lectures in a university in Beijing over a 2 week period of time. Ngwainmbi stated, "This study reveals that American teaching style is interactive and is student-rather than professor-centered and the Chinese learner enjoys the interactive learning style," (p. 73). In talking about the native Chinese speaking professors, one participant, Feng said, "…the teacher always talk about grammar and do all the talking in class. We just sit and listen to them." Ling, said that most of the Chinese speaking professors use the Chinese language "…more than half of the time in class" which she did not think was helpful in developing her English proficiency, an idea with which many of the other participants concurred. When asked in which classrooms they participated more frequently in answering questions or in group discussions, the participants' were unanimous in answering that the native English speaking professors' classes offered more opportunity to participate even when the class was not a conversation class. Jack went so far as to say that the Chinese professors "…always teach the same way that all Chinese teachers teach." In explaining that statement, Jack indicated that in a Chinese teacher's classroom the teacher does "…all the talking and doesn't ask questions." When asked if that was true about all the native Chinese professors, his response was "mostly true." The participants felt they learned more English in a native English professor's class because they could practice their listening and speaking skills and become more confident in their English ability since the native English speaking instructors rarely, if ever, use the Chinese language with which to teach. The participants indicated that they preferred to have native English professors for the classes in which they enrolled.

High school experience. When asked about their experiences in high school, the participants generally stated that high school English teachers emphasize grammar and test scores too much. Mark said, "…that if students did not do good on the test, teachers would criticize them or punish them." This may have been the teacher's attempt to motivate the students, but for Mark it was not an effective technique. When asked, the

other participants described a similar situation. There was little opportunity for students to participate in class. Some of the participants felt that one reason for this was that the English ability of their teachers was not as good as some of the students in their classes. Another reason they gave, to explain what for the most part was considered a negative high school experience, was that test scores were the only factor that teachers were concerned with because the quality of high schools is determined by how many students are able to pass the university entrance exam. Sharon said that almost "…90% of the time, the English teacher used the Chinese language to teach English." Jeff said, "I learned more English from my cram school where I had a native English teacher than I did in high school." The participants expressed the idea that their university experience learning English was much improved over their high school experience.

An underlying theme that pervaded the interviews was the desire to participate more in English conversation classes as well as in other types of English classes, but when asked how professors could promote more participation none of the participants were able to offer concrete suggestions in over-coming the peer pressure that was perceived as the major reason for not participating in class despite the participants' obvious desire to learn English. The complexity of the issue involving cultural norms, personality, and teaching methodology may prove to be difficult to manage for many teachers of English.

Cultural factors

The section on Chinese culture describes the discussion of reticence to speak English in terms of personal relationships as a dimension of the collective nature of the Chinese culture and gender roles both of which were prominent themes discussed by a majority of the participants. The interviews conducted for this study indicated that acceptable behavior in the classroom was influenced by cultural meanings of acceptable behavior, but did not indicate that familiarity with classmates encouraged participation in classroom discussion. The desire for harmony in relationships is a Confucian principle that emerged as an important issue in the current study that related to the idea of acceptable behavior.

Participants were unable to identify cultural norms that influenced their reticence to speak English as shown by the Q-sort card average of 12.2. However, cultural norms did surface during the interviewing process including concerns regarding face saving, non-confrontational behavior (harmony), personal relationships, and, surprisingly, gender (a

separate Q-sort card category).

Personal relationships. When the participants were asked why being seen as showing off hindered their willingness to participate, a majority of the participants indicated their relationship with classmates was too important to risk damaging the relationship. The participants were more worried about the perceptions others had of them as individuals than they were of their own concerns about learning English. Susan had the following to say about the importance of her relationship with classmates: "We are classmates for 4 years and take most classes together. I don't want to lose friends because I talk too much in class." The collective nature of the Chinese culture is concerned with relationships in which people are taught to think more of others, or the group, than they are encouraged to think about themselves. Face saving and an unwillingness to be confrontational are part of the collective nature of the Chinese culture allowing conditions to exist that the participants do not like. Yet, they are unwilling or unable to change them. The collective nature of the Chinese culture and harmony in personal relationships are powerful forces in the students' reticence to participate in classroom discussions. Those personal relationships may involve gender as a dimension of the problem. For example, as evidenced in the Q-sort rankings, male and female relationships may contribute to the reticence to speak English and should be further investigated to identify the impact of personal relationships in willingness to participate.

Gender roles. Gender roles are incorporated in the idea of the collective nature of the Chinese culture and surprisingly there was a difference between the perceptions of those roles between the male and female participants. The mean score on the Q-sort cards for gender was 6.7 (females 6.8 and males 6.6), the third highest mean, but in the case of the importance of gender during the interviews, gender was minimized in importance by the females casting doubt on the accuracy of the mean score for the category. The female participants indicated no hindrances to participation existed as a result of the gender roles of the Chinese culture. However, all 5 male participants indicated they felt that the female gender role presented barriers because as Jack said, "Females are taught to be shy in the Chinese culture." The male participants perceived that the female participants might be taught to be more passive, inactive, or retiring in demeanor than the male gender in the Chinese culture. That the females did not perceive this cultural norm as a barrier to

participation may indicate that times are changing in the democracy of the Taiwanese people, and the changes historically in the role of the female gender in the Chinese culture is evident by the increasing number of females in the work place and in positions of authority throughout Taiwan. The difference may also be a matter of personality, or the perspective with which the male and female participants viewed the question because the female participants may have viewed the questions only from the perspective of the classroom environment. An interesting question does arise concerning as to why the female participants did not address the issue in the interviews which should be further investigated. Paradoxically, however, the means of the male participants led the researcher to believe that gender has a greater impact on the male participants than the female participants.

The reticence to speak English including the themes of classroom atmosphere, gender, personality, and culture are so intertwined that the complexity of the issue of reticence is evidenced by the frequent comments concerning issues related to culture by the participants.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The 24 Q-sort card score averages ranged from a high of 3.4 for willingness to participate to a low of 17.3 for academic ability with only willingness to participate, vocabulary, gender, and classroom atmosphere averaging less than 10.5. The averages indicate a degree of variability in the opinions of the participants concerning hindrances to participation in classroom discussions. The remarkable similarity in the causes of willingness to participate, which included concerns about embarrassment or being thought of as showing off, and the importance of personal relationships in the collective nature of the Chinese culture add credence to the strength and influence of these concerns in the behavior of the participants. Furthermore, the similarity in concerns about classroom atmosphere, teaching methodology, and the native language of the professor indicate a direction that future research needs to investigate more thoroughly. The dynamics of personality, culture, and classroom challenge the creativity of the professionals attempting to assist students in developing English proficiency.

The following five recommendations concerned with the role of the professional educator in the Taiwanese English university classroom and students are important considerations for establishing a learning

environment that copes with the complexity of the interactions occurring in the classroom.

- Professional educators and students need to be aware of the cultural influences on willingness to participate such as face saving and gender differences in order that strategies can be developed to overcome their influence on reticence in speaking English.
- Professional educators need to become aware of the individual characteristics of the personalities in the classroom and adopt instructional methodology suitable for the student type present in the classroom. Small group discussions, discussions concerning known topics, group projects, and role plays are methods that encourage more participation. Students need to be aware of their personality traits to be able to develop different coping strategies in the classroom.
- Professional educators and students need to be sensitive to and aware of the possible presence of cliques, interpersonal conflicts, and personal relationships that exist in the classroom because such conflicts influence the students' willingness to participate in classroom activities impacting the quality of the instruction and learning process.
- Professional educators need to be aware of motivational techniques and implement their use in an attempt to minimize factors that influence the students' willingness to participate. Small group discussion concerning known topics will enable more students to participate and enhance willingness to participate because of an increased interest in the topic and confidence in their knowledge of the topic. The professional educator must also be the catalyst for promoting learning goals over performance goals in the classroom. Students need to develop an intrinsic motivation that enhances their learning experience by focusing on learning goals rather than performance goals.
- And, professional educators need to be sensitive to "teacher talk" and the influence of negative and positive comments regarding the student's English language proficiency.

The challenge of the professional educator is to facilitate that change

in order to increase the opportunity and proficiency of English language learners in a Taiwanese university setting. Intrinsic motivation is a product of making learning relevant to the students, and making learning relevant is a responsibility of the teacher.

The following five recommendations address the specific needs of the Taiwanese EFL student.

- Students need to assume more responsibility in creating opportunities to speak English because of the difficulty in an EFL environment to do so. Yet, they seem unwilling to create opportunities to speak English. The problem can be addressed in the classroom where more assignments requiring interaction in the English language can be initiated.
- Students need to use metacognitive processes to reflect on their level of motivation and effort in learning English and the connection between motivation and effort. Engaging students in topics of high interest will make learning relevant and increase the level of motivation of the students.
- Students need to develop techniques for controlling anxieties related to cultural hindrances in their reticence to speak English especially in peer group relationships.
- Students need practical, real life experiences with the English language to develop self-confidence.
- And, students need to increase their willingness to participate by focusing attention on their own needs and goals for learning English, and become less concerned with what others think of their English ability.

Although students are aware of their reticence to speak English and the factors that influence that reticence, they are incapable or unwilling to act upon those factors and change behaviors or attitudes to those more conducive to encouraging participation in the learning environment. Furthermore, there appears to be different reasons for why male and female participants are unwilling to participate in classroom discussions as seen by the means of the Q-sort card for the male and female participants. The averages for willingness to participate, anxiousness, and knowing when and how to participate were higher for the males than for the females, and were between 5.0 and 12.2 points different. Vocabulary and age were two categories where the female averages were

larger than the male averages. The exploratory nature of this research among Taiwanese private university students has opened the door for the further investigation of many issues related to reticence to speak English on the part of these students.

Classroom atmosphere, personality, and cultural norms merge to create a complexity to the issue of reticence in speaking English that is difficult to resolve. Changes in the classroom atmosphere may improve participation, but so long as the cultural norm of saving face remains a priority to the students such changes by instructors are only minimally effective. Students must be willing to adopt a strategy diametrically opposed to the Chinese culture if a willingness to learn from one's experiences through participation in class becomes an attitude developed by the students. The same can be said of personality and self-confidence. But if there is one thing that history and personal experience has taught us, it is that cultural values and personality change very slowly. The challenge of future research is to identify specific causes of the reticence to speak English on the part of Taiwanese private university students, and to develop strategies that cope with these problems.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A. Q-Sort Cards

1. Age (Is your age a reason for your reticence to speak English?)
2. Gender (Is your gender a reason for your reticence to speak English?)
3. Grammar (Is your knowledge and use of English grammar a reason for your reticence to speak English?)
4. Pronunciation (Is your ability to pronounce English words correctly a reason for your reticence to speak English?)
5. Living in Chinese Culture (Is living in the Chinese culture a reason for your reticence to speak English because of the limited opportunities you have to speak English?)
6. Speaking with Classmates (Is the willingness or reluctance of your classmates to speak English a reason for your reticence to speak English?)
7. Academic Ability (Is how you think of yourself as a student a reason for your reticence to speak English?)
8. Classroom Environment (Is the atmosphere in the classroom a reason for your reticence to speak English?)
9. Teaching Methods (Are the teaching methods of your instructors a reason for your reticence to speak English?)
10. Teacher attitude and personality (Is the attitude and personality of the instructor a reason for your reticence to speak English?)
11. Student's Personality (Is your personality a reason for your reticence to speak English because you are shy or outgoing?)
12. Culturally Imposed Problems (Are cultural values, beliefs, or customs a reason for your reticence to speak English?)
13. Opportunity to speak in classroom (Is your reticence to speak English in the classroom a result of the limited opportunity a class provides for speaking English?
14. Anxiousness (Is feeling nervous or anxious a reason for your reticence to speak English?)
15. Self-Confidence of Student (Is your confidence a reason for your reticence to speak English?)
16. Time on Task (Is the actual time you have spent studying a reason for your reticence to speak English?)
17. Time on Task (Is the number of years you have studied English a reason for your reticence to speak English?)
18. Opportunity to speak with native speakers (Is not knowing or having limited contact with native English speakers a reason for your reticence to speak English?)
19. Knowledge of How & When to Participate (Is knowing when and/or how to participate in a classroom discussion a reason for your reticence to speak

English?)
20. Discussion Topic (Is the subject being discussed a reason for your reticence to speak English?)
21. Effort made to learn English (Is the effort you make learning English a reason for your reticence to speak English?)
22. Motivation to learn English (Is the level of your motivation to learn English a reason for your reticence to speak English?)
23. Willingness to Participate (Is your willingness to participate in a classroom discussion a reason for your reticence to speak English?)
24. Vocabulary (Is the size of your vocabulary a reason for your reticence to speak English?)

Appendix B. Q-Sort Card Responses

_____   _____
(STUDENT NAME)   (DATE COMPLETED)

Q-SORT CARD RESPONSES

NO.	MOST SEVERE PROBLEMS	SEVERE PROBLEMS	LEAST SEVERE PROBLEMS
1		9	17
2		10	18
3		11	19
4		12	20
5		13	21
6		14	22
7		15	23
8		16	24