

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

In this chapter I describe the study in detail, including information about the participants and context, instrumentation utilized for measurement, the research design, and the procedures to carry out the research. Additionally, I detail the data analyses, including preliminary analyses to determine the validity and reliability of the questionnaire instrument used and the main analyses to address each of the six research questions.

Participants

The participants in this study numbered 120 first-year university students at a large (approximately 20,000 students) private university in Western Japan. Nearly all of the participants were of Japanese nationality and 18 to 19 years of age. Participants were selected by their inclusion in a required English course taken by most first-year learners at this university. Each individual class ranged in size from 25 to 35 students, and four such intact classes of students taking this required course participated in this study. All courses were taught by the same instructor, who was also the sole researcher in this study.

Most of the participants in the study had a minimum of six years of formal English study as a component in their secondary education as required by the Japanese education system. Additionally, one of the three sections of the