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Turning a Disparate Asian Language Classroom into a Desirable Environment for Intercultural Learning Beneficial to All Students

Etsuko Toyoda
(etsuko@unimelb.edu.au)
The University of Melbourne, Australia

Kohleth Chia
(kohleth.chia@depi.vic.gov.au)
The University of Melbourne, Australia

Abstract

In Asian language courses, 'Asian' students predominate. Many educators dichotomise students into Asian and non-Asian, and perceive Asian students in Asian language classes as problematic and a threat to non-Asian students. Such stereotypical belief about 'Asian students' may adversely affect non-Asian students and those with little trace of Asianness, impacting their motivations and perceptions regarding Asian language learning. This article reports on a study examining students enrolled in a Chinese or a Japanese language course, and analyses their motivations for learning the language, and their perceptions about their respective courses. The results of the study indicate that a Chinese or a Japanese language course consists of students with varied degrees of Asianness (from non-Asian students to native speakers of an Asian language), and reveal different motivational and perceptional profiles according to students' degrees of Asianness. Based on the findings, the article suggests ways of turning the classroom into an environment more conducive to cross-cultural learning, beneficial to all students.

1 Background

In 2012, the Australian government released a white paper entitled "Australia in the Asian Century," which proposes an increased engagement with Asian countries. One of the goals stated is to equip young Australians with an Asian language in order to play an active role in the region. Asia has become the centre of attention, not only in Australia, but in the world. It is envisaged that there will be greater emphasis on the learning of Asian languages.

In Australia, the term 'Asian students' generally refers to those from East/Southeast Asia. In the current study, participant students with an Asian background named one of the Eastern or Southeastern countries (Mainland China, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Macau, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, or Vietnam) as their background country. Therefore, in this paper, the term 'Asia' refers to East/Southeast Asia, and the term 'degree of Asianness' indicates the strength of the connection to East/Southeast Asia.

Despite the government's aspiration to increase the number of Australians fluent in an Asian language (Garrett, 2010), the number of secondary students completing an Asian language course

has been decreasing (Lane, 2010; White, 2011). In the case of Chinese, 94% of students who come into contact with the language stop studying it by the last year of high school. Only those who speak the language at home continue (Lane, 2010). A cause of this alarming attrition may be that learning a LOTE (language other than English) is compulsory in some Australian schools and that unmotivated students withdraw once it ceases to be compulsory (Thomson, 2010). It is widely believed, however, that it is because students of non-Asian backgrounds struggle to master an Asian language and eventually give up competing with students of Asian backgrounds (Lane, 2010). At the university level, although enrolment has been increasing in most Asian language subjects, a large number of enrolled students are of Asian backgrounds (McLaren, 2011).

The Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA) reported, based on a nationwide survey of 2008–2009, that a significant part of the growth in students studying Chinese at the tertiary level is due to the surge of international students and of Australians of Chinese background seeking to enhance skills in their heritage language (McLaren, 2011). In the wake of this report, ASAA published their electronic newsletter *Asian Currents* (2011) with a headline "Chinese ghetto language warning." The word "ghetto" was taken from the above-mentioned report, which claimed that Chinese is facing a risk of becoming perceived as a ghetto language to be taken only by students of Chinese background. This claim may give the impression that Chinese courses are not beneficial for non-Asians.

The general view towards Asian students in Asian language courses is indeed negative. Commonly heard opinions are that Asian students have advantages in studying an Asian language because they are familiar with Asian language(s) and culture(s), and that non-Asian students are disadvantaged by having to study and compete with them. For instance, an expert in Chinese teacher-training claims, "For a good Anglo student, 500 hours of French may be enough to approach the level of a classmate from a French background. By Year 12, the same diligent, reasonably bright [second language] student has the Chinese characters of a Grade 1 student in China: they can't compete" (Lane, 2010, p. 1). In a similar fashion, Japanese language subjects have recently become very popular amongst students of Chinese or Korean background, who are likely to have some knowledge and skills in one type of the Japanese script, *kanji*, which originated in Chinese characters (Lane, 2010). Some experts in Japanese language education express concern that this popularity amongst Asian students may shake the perception of Japanese as a subject in which students of all backgrounds can compete fairly. Indeed, it is widely believed that learning an Asian language is too hard for non-Asians (Northwood & Thomson, 2010). The message seems to be that only Asian students benefit from Asian language courses and the situation is not fair to non-Asian students.

In an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, White made a radical proposal as a solution: "Instead of spending money on expensive schemes to expand the teaching of Asian languages in Australia, we spend the money on sending young Australians to live in Asia and learn a language there." (2011, p. 1) At first sight, this may appear to solve the 'problem' of spending money on teaching Asian international students an Asian language. However, those who apply for such a scheme may well be Australian students of Asian-backgrounds because they are the ones apt to have a strong aspiration to go to Asia. We have to ask who the 'young Australians' are. Legally, young Australians include local students of Asian backgrounds; many such students are already enrolled in Asian language subjects.

Proposals such as the above derive from the assumption that students can be classified dichotomously, that is, Asian versus non-Asian, or international versus local. There are numerous research papers reporting the differences between Asian international students and local students (e.g. Burns, 1991; Hellsten & Prescott, 2004; Ramburuth & McCormick, 2001; Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland, & Ramia, 2008; Soosay, 2009). In such comparisons, authors intentionally or unintentionally draw a picture of two types of students: newcomers with Eastern culture and domestic students with Western culture. Corresponding to such a dichotomous perception of Eastern and Western cultural values are tendencies to characterise Asian and Western students (Gan, 2009).

In fact, the degree of Asianness in Asian students varies greatly: those who received most of their education in an Asian country and have come to Australia as international students; those with Australian citizenship but who have received most of their education in an Asian country; those who have gone through Australian schools but hold a cultural identity as an Asian; those who are ethnically Asian but have little Asian language and culture and identify themselves as Australian. Indeed, there are a number of ethnic Asians who have been in Australia for at least three generations. The differences between this last group of students and non-Asian students are minor.

While some students may have attributes that could fit the stereotypical images of "Asian students with Eastern cultural values" or "local non-Asian students with Western cultural values," some may not fit in either category. We argue that Asian language learners at an Australian university comprise students with different degrees of Asianness, and have different motivations for learning the target language and different perceptions about their course. Specifically, we hypothesise that 1) different Asianness groups possess different motivations, 2) different Asianness groups exhibit different perceptions, and 3) there is correlation between Asianness and motivations/perceptions.

The aims of this study are: 1) to examine students with different degrees of Asianness (from non-Asian students to native speakers of an Asian language) and to investigate their motivations for learning the target language and their perceptions about the course; 2) to make pedagogical suggestions for turning the classroom into a desirable environment for intercultural learning beneficial to all students.

2 Study

2.1 Survey

For the investigation of the motivations and perceptions of students with different degrees of Asianness (from non-Asian students to native speakers of an Asian language), we collected data consisting of students' responses to an electronic survey. The first half of the online survey (see Appendix 1) consisted of questions to gather background information and the history of and proficiency in up to 5 languages learnt. The second half of the survey had two sections: the first section consisted of questions asking the reasons for studying the particular subject (motivation data), and the second section consisted of questions to investigate perceptions about the course (perception data). For motivation data, the reasons listed for participants to select were originally obtained from informal interviews of approximately 50 students enrolled in Asian language subjects. The informal interviews took place in classrooms before and after formal teaching times during the year prior to the current study. The questions asked in the informal interviews elicited reasons for taking the course and feelings towards it. Those reasons that occurred more than three times were included in the survey as motivational questions. On the survey, we asked students to tick any reason(s) for studying the language. For perceptions, adjectives representing either positive or negative feelings, which were also taken from the above-mentioned informal interviews, were listed together with a scale of 1–5: 1 being least and 5 being most. We asked students to indicate how strongly they could identify with each attribute. At the bottom of the survey, a free text box was provided for comments, and students were encouraged to express their feelings and opinions. There was no time limit on responding. Responses were automatically recorded by computer.

2.2 Participants

All students enrolled in Chinese or Japanese language subjects in an undergraduate degree program (254 enrolled in Chinese and 565 enrolled in Japanese; a total of 819 students) were invited to take part in a short online survey. Chinese and Japanese subjects were chosen because they are the most popular Asian languages studied at universities in Australia. Out of these 819 invited, 594 (72.5%) responded. Out of these 594, 491 (82.7%) completed the survey sufficiently. Out of these

491, 41 were excluded because they were deemed to be outside the scope (e.g. international students from other Western countries in which English is not the first language). This leaves us 450 (92.1% of 491) complete responses that are within our scope. These 450 responses were from 121 students enrolled in Chinese language subjects and 329 in Japanese language subjects. Figure 1 summarises this process. In the rest of this article, when we refer to the "total" number of responses/students we are referring to these 450 responses.

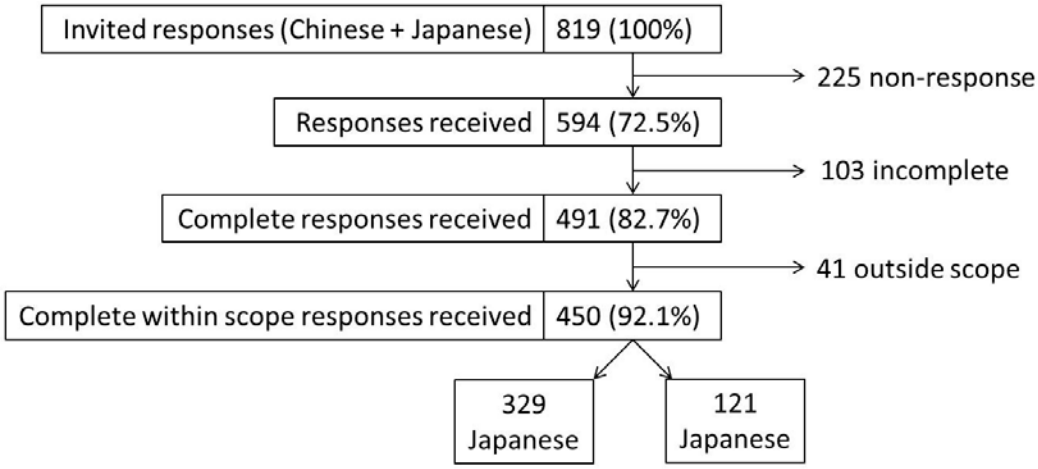


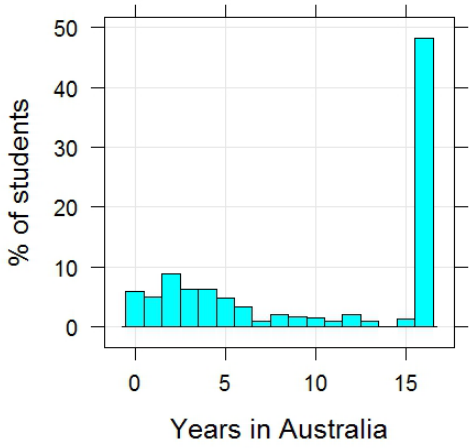
Fig. 1. How 819 invited responses turned into 450 useable responses (121 enrolled in Chinese courses, 329 in Japanese courses)

3 Exploratory data analysis

3.1 Degree of Asianness

Before testing our hypotheses, we must first establish that there is a varying degree of Asianness. Asianness is a latent variable that cannot be observed directly. Therefore, this must be derived from other variables.

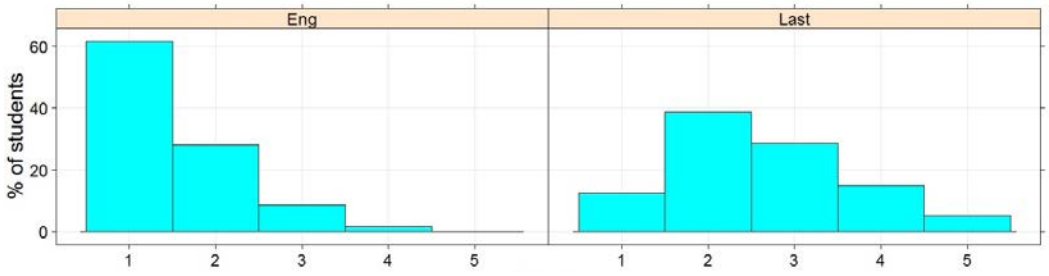
An obvious one would be the number of years the student participant has spent in Asia, or equivalently, and less ambiguously, the number of years spent in Australia (since the responses suggesting living in countries other than Asia and Australia have been excluded). Figure 2 shows the distribution of this number, from less than 1 year to more than 15 years. While there is a clear mode at >15 (41.6%), which is due to the local Australian participants, the percentage at the lower end is less concentrated. In fact, they are spread over the 15 years with a decreasing trend. This reinforces our claim that there is no simple distinction between "Asian" and "non-Asian."



Note: Minimum year=0 (effectively < 1 year) to maximum of year=16 (effectively > 15 years)

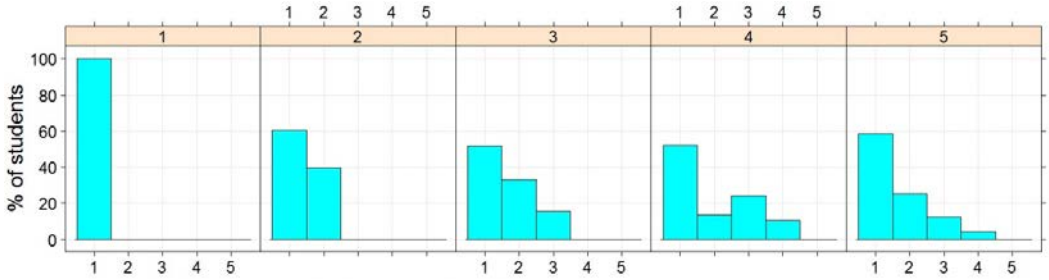
Fig. 2. Number of years spent in Australia.

Recall that participants were asked to list any languages (up to 5) that they have learnt and rate their corresponding proficiency in them. The participants' proficiency in English relative to the other languages provides another indication of their Asianness. The left panel in Figure 3 shows the percentage of students who reported English as their 1st most, 2nd most, …, 5th most proficient language. Similarly, instead of a bipolar distribution, we see a gradual decreasing trend. A limitation of this plot is that we do not know whether a position of, say 2, indicates a particular participant's least proficient language, or the 2nd most proficient language. Therefore, we can condition our plot on the total number of languages that the participants have learnt (whose marginal distribution is showed in the right panel in Figure 3). Figure 4 displays such a plot. For example, the 2nd leftmost panel indicates out of those who knew 2 languages (only), about 60% reported English as their most proficient language, while the remaining 40% reported otherwise. Reassuringly, a similar decreasing trend is observed instead of a bipolar spread, further reinforcing that Asianness is really a continuum rather than a Boolean (TRUE/FALSE) variable.



Notes: The left panel shows the distribution of the position of English. Position=1 indicates English is the participant's most proficient language, 2 indicates 2nd most proficient language and so forth; the right panel shows the distribution of the number languages that the participants have learnt.

Fig. 3. Distribution of the position of English and the number of languages learnt



Notes: Basically the same as the top left panel in Fig. 3, except it is conditioned upon the total number of languages that the participants have learnt. For example, the 2nd leftmost panel shows out of those who knew 2 languages, approximately 60% reported English as their most proficient language, while about 40% reported otherwise.

Fig. 4. Distribution of the position of English by number of languages learnt

What we have shown so far is indication that Asianness varies. However, it remains difficult to quantify the degree of Asianness. While the quantifying of Asianness might be a good further study to conduct, in the present paper we would adopt a crude approximation. More specifically, we would categorise students into three groups: Strongly Asian (SA), Moderately Asian (MA), and Least Asian (LA). We believe such categorisation is an improvement to the simple Asian/non-Asian dichotomy. Yet in this paper, we will not go any finer than three categories, because for the present analysis, having four or five categories (or even more) does not shed any extra light to our hypotheses. Besides, we believe true Asianness should be a continuous variable; therefore, if we are approximating it with a factor with finite categories, we might as well approximate it with the simplest one (with three categories).

3.2 Students with different degrees of Asianness

The background information obtained from the survey was used to determine students' degree of Asianness: Strongly Asian (SA), Moderately Asian (MA) and Least Asian (LA). Classification was made primarily on the students' educational history and their first and second languages and, secondly, on their nationality and country of birth. The education and language information was considered most relevant to the study. Occasionally, ambiguity arose, especially between SA and MA, in which case, nationality and country of birth determined the group to which the participant belonged.

The categorisation of students with different degrees of Asianness is as followed:

Strongly Asian (SA): Students who received their formal education mostly in an Asian country. The majority is multilingual, with stronger skills in an Asian language than in English, or balanced bilingual/trilingual in Asian language(s) and English. This group consists of international students from an Asian country and local students of Asian backgrounds who have been in Australia for only a few years.

Least Asian (LA): Those who are Australian-educated local students with little exposure to an Asian language. This group includes students who claim to be monolingual (English), and those with very low level of Asian language proficiency (average less than 2 on the ratings). By "monolingual" we mean those who have reported English as their first language, and at the same time, have not reported any other second language although, strictly speaking, no one is monolingual because all participants are enrolled in an Asian language class. This group consists of non-Asians and ethnically Asian students who were born and raised in Australia and have no or very little command of any Asian language. Although, ideally, the non-Asian Australian students and the ethnic Asian-Australians with limited contact with Asian language and culture should be analysed

separately since they may potentially be different from each other, they have been put together in this group as their numbers are too small to form separate groups.

Moderately Asian (MA): those who do not fit in SA or LA. These students received their formal education mostly in Australia. They are all bilingual/multilingual in English and Asian language(s) with a good command of Asian language(s).

Table 1 shows the number of participants in the subject cohorts (Chinese/Japanese) and the Asianness groups (SA, MA, and LA), together with the breakdown of the number of participants in the classification factors (education, language, nationality and country of birth).

Table 1. Distribution of participants by language cohort, Asianness group, and classification factors

		Chinese			Japanese		
		SA	**MA**	**LA**	**SA**	**MA**	**LA**
Total N		41	43	37	139	96	94
Country of longest education	**Australia**	0	43	37	0	96	94
	Asia	41	0	0	139	0	0
Languages	**Two or more**	12	13	0	24	22	0
	Stronger English	5	27	37	18	69	94
	Stronger Asian	24	3	0	97	5	0
Nationality	**Australia**	9	43	37	22	96	94
	Asia	32	0	0	117	0	0
Birth	**Australia**	0	31	35	4	80	94
	Asia	41	12	2	135	16	0

Table 2 shows the number of SA, MA and LA students in each Asianness group by level of language courses (5 being most advanced, 1 being beginner). For Chinese subjects, 16 SA students are enrolled at the most advanced course level (level 5), and the rest spread across the other levels. MA and, particularly LA, are more prominent in level 1 (beginner level). In the Japanese category, the demographic pattern looks different. Out of the total 139 SA, 86 are enrolled in level 1. The number of SA decreases as the level rises, particularly from level 1 to level 2. Similarly, LA shows a decrease as the level rises, but less than in the case of SA.

Table 2. Number of participants by subject, level and Asianness

Subject	Level	SA	MA	LA	Margin
Chinese	1	6	12	15	33
	2	7	7	8	22
	3	5	9	7	21
	4	7	7	6	20
	5	16	8	1	25
	Margin	41	43	47	121
Japanese	1	86	34	39	159
	2	23	16	31	70
	3	22	25	16	63
	4	8	19	7	34
	5	0	2	1	3
	Margin	139	96	94	329

4 Analysis

4.1 Differences in motivational profiles

First of all, we examine if different Asianness groups possess different motivations for studying the target language. For students who enrolled in a Chinese language course, Table 3 shows the proportions of those who answered "Yes" to the survey questions regarding motivation (i.e. ticking the reasons for studying the language). The proportions are broken down by Asianness group. To test our hypothesis that different Asianness groups possess different motivational profiles, we use a chi-squared test of the proportions. However, we are essentially carrying out 15 chi-squared tests (for the 15 motivational questions) to test a single hypothesis, namely, different Asianness groups possess different motivational profiles. We should therefore adjust the p-value to control for experimental error rate (the chance of committing a type I error on the single hypothesis). Hence, we adopted Holm's (1979) procedure for the adjustment. The rightmost column in the table shows the adjusted p-values. For readers seeking more explanation behind the adjustment, a non-technical survey can be found in Bender & Lange (2001).

Table 3 shows different Asianness groups responding differently to at least the questions regarding "travelling" and "discussion of difficult issues." Given that the sample size is only small to moderate (121 shared by SA, MA and LA, each having 2 possible responses [Y/N]), and Holm's adjustment is conservative, we believe there might be more significant differences than shown. However, to establish that different Asianness groups exhibit different motivational profiles, we really only need them to be different for at least one question. In other words, if the Asianness groups answer differently to at least one motivational question, we can then conclude that they possess different motivational profiles. In our analysis, we detected two significant differences. Therefore, we believe the difference in motivational profiles is safely established.

Table 3. Proportion of students in Chinese classes, broken down by Asianness group SA, MA and LA, that responded "Yes" to each of the questions regarding motivation

		SA	MA	LA	p-value
a.	I have studied this language before	0.76	0.74	0.49	0.25
b.	I like the sound of the language	0.39	0.37	0.32	1.00
c.	The structure of the language is similar to the structure of my language	0.22	0.19	0.05	0.90
d.	This language and my language share common script	0.27	0.16	0.08	0.90
e.	I have someone who can help me in studying this language	0.20	0.30	0.22	1.00
f.	Studying this language will help me get a good job	0.51	0.70	0.54	1.00
g.	Studying this language will help when travelling	0.51	0.84	0.76	0.05 *
h.	I like the traditional culture of this country	0.49	0.67	0.43	0.85
i.	I like the pop culture of this country	0.15	0.35	0.24	0.90
j.	I enjoy being in a non-English dominant environment	0.15	0.33	0.35	0.88
k.	I don't feel inferior in this subject in terms of the language use (no English language barrier problem)	0.17	0.19	0.08	1.00
l.	I feel comfortable in a class with many other Asian students	0.27	0.30	0.38	1.00
m.	I can be with other students from my own country/culture	0.37	0.26	0.11	0.40
n.	The relationship with teachers is comfortable	0.37	0.33	0.22	1.00
o.	I don't have to discuss difficult issues	0.24	0.00	0.08	0.02 *
p.	The teaching style is familiar	0.20	0.07	0.11	1.00

Note: The rightmost column is the p-value of the test that the three Asianness groups responded differently to the respective question, adjusted for multiple comparisons using Holm's technique.

We now repeat the above exercise with the Japanese cohort (see Table 4).

Table 4. Proportion of students in Japanese classes, broken down by Asianness group SA, MA and LA, that responded "Yes" to each of the questions regarding motivation to take the subject

	SA	MA	LA	p-value
a. I have studied this language before	0.38	0.70	0.65	0.00 *
b. I like the sound of the language	0.59	0.71	0.61	0.94
c. The structure of the language is similar to the structure of my language	0.29	0.14	0.04	0.00 *
d. This language and my language share common script	0.41	0.29	0.02	0.00 *
e. I have someone who can help me in studying this language	0.17	0.26	0.14	0.73
f. Studying this language will help me get a good job	0.25	0.38	0.31	0.91
g. Studying this language will help when travelling	0.75	0.71	0.69	1.00
h. I like the traditional culture of this country	0.71	0.79	0.67	0.94
i. I like the pop culture of this country	0.57	0.61	0.71	0.73
j. I enjoy being in a non-English dominant environment	0.20	0.25	0.28	1.00
k. I don't feel inferior in this subject in terms of the language use (no English language barrier problem)	0.19	0.15	0.03	0.02 *
l. I feel comfortable in a class with many other Asian students	0.34	0.28	0.14	0.03 *
m. I can be with other students from my own country/culture	0.20	0.16	0.03	0.01 *
n. The relationship with teachers is comfortable	0.39	0.36	0.23	0.40
o. I don't have to discuss difficult issues	0.16	0.15	0.14	1.00
p. The teaching style is familiar	0.14	0.12	0.17	1.00

Note: The rightmost column is the p-value of the test that the three Asianness groups responded differently to the respective question, adjusted for multiple comparisons using Holm's technique.

With a larger sample size (329), we detect more differences in the responses to motivational questions. Significant differences in the responses are observed in six motivational questions: "studied before," "similar structure," "common script," "no English barrier," "many other Asians" and "students from my own country/culture." These results reaffirm our hypothesis that different Asianness groups exhibit different motivational profiles.

4.2 Association between Asianness and different motivations

We have established that different Asianness groups exhibit different motivational profiles. What, then, is the association between them? To examine the association, we calculated the Goodman and Krusal's gamma (see Table 5). Goodman and Krusal's gamma is a measure of rank correlation between two ordinal variables. It ranges from -1 to 1 and its interpretation is similar to Pearson's correlation coefficient. That is, 0 indicates lack of correlation, while -1/+1 indicates negative/positive correlation. In our case, a positive/negative correlation indicates as the degree of Asianness increases/decreases, the likelihood of the response being "yes" increases/decreases.

Table 5 shows the gamma estimates and their corresponding p-value for the motivational questions. Note that the p-values are unadjusted because we are looking at the motivational questions separately, not combining the test results to test one single hypothesis. For a longer explanation, readers are again referred to Bender & Lange (2001).

Table 5. Association, as measured by Goodman and Krusal's gamma, between Asianness and questions regarding motivation

	Chinese		Japanese	
	gamma	p-value	gamma	p-value
a. I have studied this language before	0.38	0.01 *	-0.40	0.00 *
b. I like the sound of the language	0.09	0.57	-0.05	0.60
c. The structure of the language is similar to the structure of my language	0.40	0.04 *	0.61	0.00 *
d. This language and my language share common script	0.42	0.02 *	0.64	0.00 *
e. I have someone who can help me in studying this language	-0.05	0.80	0.03	0.78
f. Studying this language will help me get a good job	-0.05	0.75	-0.12	0.26
g. Studying this language will help when travelling	-0.38	0.01 *	0.10	0.35
h. I like the traditional culture of this country	0.06	0.72	0.04	0.70
i. I like the pop culture of this country	-0.18	0.31	-0.20	0.04 *
j. I enjoy being in a non-English dominant environment	-0.34	0.04 *	-0.14	0.20
k. I don't feel inferior in this subject in terms of the language use.	0.22	0.30	0.47	0.00 *
l. I feel comfortable in a class with many other Asian students	-0.16	0.32	0.34	0.00 *
m. I can be with other students from my own country/culture	0.44	0.01 *	0.47	0.00 *
n. The relationship with teachers is comfortable	0.23	0.17	0.22	0.03 *
o. I don't have to discuss difficult issues	0.55	0.01 *	0.06	0.68
p. The teaching style is familiar	0.27	0.23	-0.06	0.68

Note: The p-values are unadjusted.

We now look at factors that exhibit a significant correlation with Asianness ($p<0.05$). There are three motivations that are positively correlated with Asianness for both the Chinese and Japanese cohorts; they are "the structure is similar," "share common script" and "other students from my own country/culture." These results indicate students with a stronger degree of Asianness are more likely to have these as reasons for studying the language. Linguistic and cultural familiarities seem to be main reasons for studying the language for those with a stronger degree of Asianness regardless of the language (Chinese or Japanese). The reason "studied this language before" exhibits interesting results. While in the Chinese cohort, students with a stronger degree of Asianness are more likely to choose this as a reason than those with a lesser degree of Asianness, students in Japanese courses show an opposite direction of association. These results suggest that some students in the Chinese cohort study the language as the heritage language.

In the Chinese cohort, "not having to discuss difficult issues" is also shown to be positively associated with Asianness. Together with the above reasons that demonstrate a positive correlation, it appears that students with a stronger degree of Asianness in the Chinese cohort seek a stress-free learning environment. Again in Chinese, a negative correlation is found in the reason "studying this language will help when travelling," indicating students with a lesser degree of Asianness are more likely to study the language for this purpose than those with a stronger degree of Asianness. This reason seems to be an obvious one for students with little experience in Asia, but no significant association is detected in the Japanese category. The reason, "being in a non-English dominant environment," is also negatively associated with Asianness in the Chinese cohort. This result indicates that students with a stronger degree of Asianness enjoy being with other students from the same country/culture than do those with a lesser degree of Asianness (see above), who themselves, unlike the former, more enjoy being in a non-English dominant environment, which sounds contradictory.

For the Japanese cohort, the reasons implying a comfortable environment exhibit a significant correlation with Asianness. Students with a stronger degree of Asianness tend to select "other students from my own country/culture," "no inferior – no English barrier problem," "comfortable in a class with other Asian students" and "relationship with teachers is comfortable." For this cohort, "pop culture" is negatively associated with Asianness, indicating that students with a lesser degree of Asianness are more likely to be motivated to take the subject for this reason. On the other hand,

there is no significant association with Asianness for "traditional culture." In the Chinese cohort, neither "pop culture" nor "traditional culture" shows a significant association with Asianness.

4.3 Difference in perception profiles

Testing the hypothesis that different Asianness groups possess different perception profiles is slightly more complicated than the test for motivational profiles. This is essentially because motivational responses are "Yes/No" while perceptional responses are on a 5-point Likert scale. The test we carried out, then, is a test of difference in median.

Table 6 shows the median responses of each Asianness group to the perception of the courses. Note that since the questions are on a Likert scale, the median can only take one of the five points on the scale. However, it is unlikely that the true underlying median falls on the exact integer. This means, even if we see the same median being reported for a particular question, the true underlying median might still be different. The statistical test we carried out is the Krusal-Wallis rank-sum test, which tests the null hypothesis that at least one of the Asianness groups responds differently to the other groups. It can be thought of as the extension of the Mann-Whitney U test from 2-sample to n-sample. The Krusal-Wallis test uses the ranking of the data, rather than the median, to calculate the test statistics, which is why it can still detect a difference, even if the reported medians are the same. For more details on the test, readers are referred to Hollander & Wolfe (1973). Finally, we adjust the p-value for the purpose of multiple comparisons according to Holm's (1979) procedure.

Table 6. Median of different Asianness groups' responses to questions regarding perception of the subjects

	Chinese				Japanese			
	SA	**MA**	**LA**	**p-value**	**SA**	**MA**	**LA**	**p-value**
happy	4	4	4	0.05 *	4	4	4	0.00 *
comfortable	4	3	3	0.01 *	4	4	3	0.00 *
stressed	2	3	3	0.15	3	3	3	0.03 *
motivated	4	3	3	0.20	4	4	4	1.00
familiar	4	4	3	0.00 *	4	4	3	0.00 *
threatened	2	2	3	1.00	2	2	3	1.00
at home	3	3	3	1.00	3	3	3	0.00 *
rewarded	4	4	4	1.00	3	3.5	3	1.00
isolated	2	3	3	1.00	3	3	3	0.25
involved	4	3	3	1.00	4	4	3	0.01 *
relaxed	4	3	3	0.03 *	4	4	3	0.02 *
depressed	2	3	3	0.55	2	2	3	1.00
suited	4	3	3	1.00	3	4	3	0.00 *
confident	4	3	3	0.00 *	4	4	3	0.00 *

Note: The rightmost column lists the p-values adjusted for multiple comparisons using Holm's procedure.

Whether for the Chinese or Japanese cohort, the three Asianness groups responded differently to at least five perceptions: "happy," "comfortable," "familiar," "relaxed" and "confident." In the Japanese cohort, with its larger sample size, we are also able to detect differences in four other perceptions: "stressed," "at home," "involved" and "suited." The results support our claim that different Asianness groups exhibit different perception profiles.

4.4 Association between Asianness and perception of the subject

To test the association between Asianness and the perception of the courses, we carried out Goodman and Krusal's gamma test. Table 7 contains the association measure gammas and the corresponding unadjusted p-values.

Table 7. Association, as measured by Goodman and Krusal's gamma, between Asianness and perceptions of subjects.

	Chinese		Japanese	
		p-value		p-value
happy	0.35	0.01 *	0.33	0.00 *
comfortable	0.41	0.00 *	0.35	0.00 *
stressed	-0.31	0.01 *	-0.22	0.00 *
motivated	0.27	0.03 *	0.07	0.35
familiar	0.44	0.00 *	0.28	0.00 *
threatened	-0.09	0.51	-0.09	0.26
at home	0.15	0.27	0.17	0.04 *
rewarded	-0.04	0.77	0.06	0.50
isolated	-0.20	0.14	-0.15	0.07
involved	0.05	0.70	0.26	0.00 *
relaxed	0.36	0.00 *	0.22	0.01 *
depressed	-0.26	0.05 *	-0.10	0.23
suited	0.22	0.10	0.26	0.00 *
confident	0.48	0.00 *	0.33	0.00 *

Note: The p-values are unadjusted.

The perception data reveals an important pattern; students with a stronger degree of Asianness tend to have positive feelings and those with a lesser degree of Asianness are apt to have negative feelings. Both in the Chinese and Japanese cohorts, "happy," "comfortable," "familiar," "relaxed" and "confident" are positively correlated with Asianness, indicating that students with a stronger degree of Asianness are more likely to perceive the course positively than those with a lesser degree of Asianness. For the Chinese cohort, "motivated" also shows a positive correlation with Asianness. For the Japanese cohort, "at home," "involved" and "suited" are also positively correlated.

On the other hand, the "stressed" feeling is negatively correlated with Asianness in both the Chinese and Japanese cohorts, indicating that students with a lesser degree of Asianness are more likely to feel stressed than those with a stronger degree of Asianness. For the Chinese cohort, "depressed" is also negatively correlated with Asianness.

4.5 Summary

The first two hypotheses are supported: 1) Different Asianness groups exhibit different motivations; and 2) different Asianness groups exhibit different perceptions. The third hypothesis is partially supported: 3) there are associations between motivations/perceptions and the degree of Asianness.

Not unexpectedly, the results of the current study indicate that, regardless of the target language, students with a stronger degree of Asianness tend to study the language because of the linguistic similarity with their first language. The study has also revealed that those students with a stronger degree of Asianness feel relatively comfortable in class, which is also one of their main reasons for studying the target language.

On the other hand, students with a lesser degree of Asianness tend to study the language because of "otherness" (travelling, non-English-dominant environment, and pop culture). However, these students' perceptions towards their course tend to be negative.

While different tendencies in motivational and perceptional profiles are exhibited according to different degrees of Asianness, differences are also found between the two language cohorts. This supports the finding of Humphreys and Spratt (2008) that different languages have different motivational and affectional profiles.

In the following sections, we discuss motivational and perceptional profiles in association with the degree of Asianness and the studied language. Note that we believe true Asianness should be a continuous variable, therefore, when we refer to "students with a stronger/lesser degree of Asianness," we are addressing relative positions along the continuous spectrum of Asianness. Participants' comments (from the comment section of the survey) and findings from previous studies are also incorporated in the discussion. Where necessary, further detailed examination of the survey results is conducted.

5 Discussion

5.1 Why do students with a stronger degree of Asianness study Chinese/Japanese and how do they feel about it?

In both the Chinese and Japanese cohorts, a large number of students with a stronger degree of Asianness tend to select linguistic similarity as a reason for studying. This appears to be in accordance with the previously mentioned ASAA report (McLaren, 2011) and newspaper articles (Lane, 2010; White, 2011); many Asian international students and local students of Chinese background take a Chinese or a Japanese language subject. One may wonder why they choose to study Chinese or Japanese at an Australian university. Given that these students generally have come recently from an Asian country, learning Chinese or Japanese is, probably, not their primary aim in studying at an Australian university. If it were, they would have gone to China or Japan where they could have abundant experience of the target language and culture.

One might conjecture that these students study the Chinese or Japanese language as an easy option, that is, taking the subject with some expectation that they could achieve a high mark. Background knowledge of the language, language skills, and familiarity with the culture are advantageous. This is particularly true for Asian students from a Chinese-speaking country studying Chinese. Students with some Chinese knowledge are also advantaged in a Japanese course, as learning Japanese *kanji* is less intimidating for them than for non-Chinese students. However, concluding that "Asian students" take a Chinese or Japanese language subject as an easy option is not necessarily the whole story.

Firstly, not all students with a stronger degree of Asianness are Chinese speakers; some are not familiar with any form of the Chinese language. Also there is no Japanese native speaker with a strong connection with Asia learning Japanese. The first language for the students with a stronger degree of Asianness varies; our participants include Indonesian, Korean, Malay, Vietnamese and Thai speakers. Apparently, studying an Asian language is not necessarily an easy or advantageous option for all Asians.

Secondly, with regard to Asian students from a Chinese-speaking country studying Chinese, obtaining a high grade may not be their primary aim, although an easy option approach is not totally deniable. In our study, the Asian students from a Chinese-speaking country, with native or near-native skills in a form of Chinese, are placed in the most advanced courses, which involve reading relatively complex Chinese texts. These students may genuinely want to deepen their understanding of their own language and culture, and, for speakers of a dialect, of Mandarin. Our perception results suggest that, among students in Chinese language courses, those with a stronger degree of Asianness tend to be more "motivated" (perception) than those with a lesser degree of Asianness. This may be supporting evidence for the above argument.

In relation to the above, there is evidence that some students of Chinese background, particularly those who are Australian educated, wish to improve their heritage language in order to be connected to relatives, and to live up to their parents' expectations. Comments such as "As I am of Asian heritage, I am expected to know this language" and "Family expects me to learn this language" are heard from the Australian educated ethnically Chinese students in the Chinese cohort. There seem to be strong self-imposed motivation or family expectations to improve their heritage language skills (Comanaru & Noels, 2009). As Deusen-Scholl (2003) points out, the term "heritage language learners" has been used ambiguously. Not all students of Chinese background are motivated to improve their language ability simply because they are ethnically connected to the language. Deusen-Scholl (2003) separates "learners with a heritage motivation" from a more general term, "heritage learners." According to her, "learners with a heritage motivation" refers to those who seek to reconnect with their family's heritage through language (p. 222). Certainly, there are some "learners with a heritage motivation." By comparing the Chinese language development of heritage and non-heritage students, Xiao (2006) found that heritage learners surpassed their counterparts in speaking, listening, grammar, and sentence construction, but not in reading comprehension and Chinese character writing, which suggests that growing up using the language at home does not necessarily mean that they can also read and write. In our study, the survey data do indicate that many of the Australian educated English-Chinese bilingual/trilingual students have lower literacy skills than oral/aural skills in Chinese.

Thirdly, for students with a stronger degree of Asianness, linguistic similarity to the target language may be part of a bigger motivational category; that is cultural distance. While different scholars use this term in various ways, Svanes (1987) uses it to refer to the distance between a target culture/language and one's own. The cultural distance, according to Svanes (1987, p. 343), is determined by linguistic similarity to the target language, familiarity with the target culture, and closeness of cultural background to the target culture. Cultural distance may be the umbrella factor that explains the tendencies of students with a stronger degree of Asianness.

Lastly, but most importantly, some students with a strong degree of Asianness may have been compelled to take an Asian language subject in order to survive in an Australian university. It should be noted that international students, and those with the status of a local student who has been in Australia only for a few years are at the stronger end of the spectrum of Asianness. These students are unlikely to be very familiar with the Australian culture. English is a second language for the majority of these students. Also, they are unfamiliar with the Australian teaching and learning style, having had most of their schooling in an Asian country where there is a more passive-receptive style of learning (Sawir, 2005).

These students are handicapped in many ways compared to local students who are familiar with the language and the culture of Australia. A large body of research on international students points to the stress, anxiety, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, demoralisation, and withdrawal they experience (Burns, 1991; Mori, 2000), all of which are symptomatic of acculturation problems. Acculturation is defined as "a process that individuals undergo (usually later in life) in response to a changing cultural context" (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002, p. 349). In this process, newcomers face acculturation problems resulting from intercultural contact that cannot be dealt with easily or quickly by simply adjusting or assimilating to the new culture (Berry, 2005). The above mentioned problems are caused by, amongst other things, self- or parent-imposed learning pressure (Campbell & Li, 2008), limited time due to insufficient English ability and part-time work (Burns, 1991), and unsatisfactory achievement (Campbell & Li, 2008; Sawir, 2005). Amongst these, the language problem seems to be the primary cause. Research suggests that many international students from Asia studying in Australia face serious learning difficulties mainly due to their insufficient ability, or lack of confidence, in using English in the academic environment (Hellsten & Prescott, 2004; Robertson, Line, Jones, & Thomas, 2000; Sawir, 2005). The language barrier may have a direct adverse effect on academic performance (Mori, 2000). Without adequate English language skills, they are unable to comprehend lectures fully, take a proactive role in tuto-

rials, write good academic essays, or communicate well with other students and teachers in class (Cadieux & Wehrly, 1986).

Partly to alleviate their plight, students at the stronger end of Asianness may choose to take academic subjects in which they feel less stressed. Comments by some students in our study, such as "I like Japanese class because I don't have to use English" and "In this class, everyone has to use their second language" support this view. Indeed, the factor "comfortable class environment" is selected by students with a stronger degree of Asianness significantly more than by those with a lesser degree of Asianness.

The results from the perception section of the survey also support this argument. Students with a stronger degree of Asianness in both the Chinese and Japanese cohorts view their courses significantly more positively than do students with a lesser degree of Asianness. It is plausible that students with a stronger degree of Asianness, especially international students from Asia, who are likely to struggle in other subjects, find a safe-haven in Asian language classes. Asian language subjects at a university may be serving Asian international students as a cushion in the difficult transition to a new learning environment.

5.2 Why do students with a lesser degree of Asianness study Chinese/Japanese and how do they feel about it?

The findings from the present study suggest that students with a lesser degree of Asianness studying Chinese are motivated by being able to use the language for "travelling" and being in a "non-English dominant environment." Although "travelling" is also one of the main reasons among students studying the Japanese language, no significant association with Asianness is detected in the present study. This association with the degree of Asianness shown in the Chinese cohort is probably due to the fact that a large number of Asian students with a stronger degree of Asianness are heritage learners whose primary goal is not travelling. Another reason that exhibits a significant association with Asianness is "enjoy being in a non-English-dominant environment." It seems that, for students who have little connection with Asia, China and its language and culture appeal to them as out of the ordinary, or exotic. In designing curriculum, this aspect could be emphasised to attract more students with a lesser degree of Asianness.

For the Japanese cohort, "liking the Japanese pop culture" is more significant in students with a lesser degree of Asianness than in those with a stronger degree of Asianness. This indicates that the Japanese pop culture such as *anime* films may be a driving force in studying the language, for those who have little connection with Asia. The popularity of the pop culture and its application to Japanese language instruction have been much discussed recently (e.g. Armour, 2011). Thomson (2010) recommends the incorporation of the pop culture into the curriculum, since, according to her survey, many students are interested in it. The finding of the current study suggests that the pop culture may be a key to attract more students with a lesser degree of Asianness into a Japanese language course.

Perhaps, what is more important is how to maintain the interest of those students to continue. The study by Matsumoto (2009) suggests that developing intrinsic cultural interest is an essential factor for sustaining motivation. According to his study, students with cultural/linguistic backgrounds distant from the target culture/language are apt to surmount their linguistic difficulties with their profound interest in people and culture of the target language, not just a superficial attraction.

An interesting finding from the present study is that while, as expected, the students with a lesser degree of Asianness in Chinese courses claim that they have little prior experience in studying the language, in the Japanese cohort, the proportions of students with a lesser degree of Asianness selecting "I have studied the language before" are higher than those with a stronger degree of Asianness. This may be explained as follows. In the Japanese courses, there are many students with a good knowledge of Chinese. Whereas the Chinese-speaking students in the Chinese language courses would be placed in an advanced course, these students with Chinese linguistic knowledge in the Japanese language course are treated as beginner students if they have no prior

experience of Japanese. There are a number of students of Chinese background starting to learn the Japanese language from the beginners' level at university. At the same time, these students would certainly have an advantage in learning *kanji* because of the visual familiarity. There are also a few Korean background students, and they would have an advantage in understanding the syntax of the language, as it is similar to their own. Despite being "beginners" in the Japanese language, these students can, with Chinese or Korean linguistic knowledge, more easily learn the Japanese language than non-Chinese/non-Korean students. On the other hand, beginner students with a lesser degree of Asianness start with a blank slate (no knowledge to transfer to the Japanese language learning).

In Japanese courses in Australian schools/universities, the number of local students with a home background in Japanese has been relatively small, in contrast to Chinese courses. For this reason, Japanese courses were regarded as a normal foreign language learning environment where students from a range of backgrounds could study (de Kretser & Spence-Brown, 2010). However, this perception is undermined due to the recent surge of Chinese and Korean background learners in Japanese language courses. It is believed that these students have advantages in studying Japanese because they are already familiar with Asian language(s) and culture(s), and that non-Asian students are disadvantaged by the thought that they have to compete with them (Northwood & Thompson, 2010). It is plausible that non-Chinese, non-Korean background students feel that it is necessary to have some prior knowledge of Japanese in order to compete with students with Chinese/Korean knowledge. To restate, students with a lesser degree of Asianness who have no prior knowledge of Japanese are disinclined to take a beginner Japanese subject. This may be a reason for a large proportion of students with a lesser degree of Asianness selecting prior investment as motivation.

An interesting finding emerged from the motivation questions with regard to "studied this language before." In the Chinese courses, students with a lesser degree of Asianness claim to have little prior experience in studying the language, compared to their more Asian classmates. This is not surprising. However, it is surprising to see that the opposite trend is shown in the Japanese cohorts; that is, a *higher* proportion of less Asian students claim to have prior training in Japanese, compared to their more Asian classmates. This may be explained as follows. There is a large number of Chinese (to a lesser extent Korean) students starting to learn the Japanese language from the beginners' level at university. These strongly Asian students would have been placed in the beginner level classes because they have had no former training in Japanese. Their lack of former training contributes to the low proportion of claims of prior learning within students with a stronger degree of Asianness. However, due to the similarity between the Chinese script and the Japanese *kanji* (or for Koreans, the similarity in language syntax), these students would certainly have an advantage when compared to non-Chinese/non-Korean students also studying beginner level Japanese. This is of course not unknown to students with a lesser degree of Asianness. As a result, they may feel disadvantaged and consequently decline to take up the subject at all, unless they have had prior training in the language (albeit fairly limited) to "even the odds." In other words, those who dare to enrol would be those who have had some prior experience in learning Japanese, constituting the high proportion of claims of prior training within students with a lesser degree of Asianness. Note that the same does not apply to the Chinese courses because native Chinese students would naturally be placed in more advanced levels, thus leaving the beginner-level course students more homogenous in terms of prior learning experience.

In Japanese courses in Australian schools/universities, the number of local students with a home background in Japanese has been relatively small, in contrast to Chinese courses. For this reason, Japanese courses were regarded as a normal foreign language learning environment where students from a range of backgrounds could study (de Kretser & Spence-Brown, 2010). However, educators' concern that this perception is undermined due to the recent surge of Chinese and Korean background learners in Japanese language courses. It is believed that these students have advantages in studying Japanese because they are already familiar with Asian language(s) and cul-

ture(s), and that non-Asian students are disadvantaged by the thought that they have to compete with them (Northwood & Thompson, 2010). Our study supports this claim.

Noteworthy comments come from students with a lesser degree of Asianness expressing negative feelings towards their courses, such as feeling stressed, threatened, isolated and depressed in having to compete with Asian classmates and receiving little support from teachers. The statistics support this. These students, in both the Chinese and Japanese cohorts, tend to perceive their classes much more negatively than those with a stronger degree of Asianness. Judging from the comments these students make, it appears that there is a strong belief that "Asian students" can read and write Chinese characters, and therefore it is easy for them to learn Japanese and/or Chinese, and that "they" take an Asian language subject as an easy option. This view reflects the stereotypical view shared by the wider community. As examined and discussed above, "Asian students" are not one group of students who have the same amount of exposure to Asian languages and cultures. In fact, they are diverse in experience and competence, but happen to be of a similar appearance. It is worth pointing out that not only non-Asian students, but also ethnically Asian students who were brought up without much exposure to an Asian language and culture, can be negatively affected by this belief. It poses an unnecessary threat to the former and unjustified prejudice against the latter. This negative situation may be alleviated by redesigning curricula. In the pedagogical implication section, we make suggestions for turning a disparate classroom into a desirable environment for intercultural learning, beneficial to all students.

6 Limitations

This study sheds light on the relationship between students' Asianness and their motivations and perceptions. However, further research is needed in order to examine how students' course requirements influence their motivations and perceptions. The population from which the sample of this study was drawn includes not only those who are enrolled in the faculty of arts and taking the language subjects as part of their major or minor requirements, but also those who are taking Chinese or Japanese as part of a diploma in languages (extra language subjects on top of a degree) or breadth requirements (elective subjects). Aggregating all language students into a single cohort may have skewed the results. Another aspect to be examined is the stage at which students are in their degree. Students' purposes for study may vary across a wide spectrum. Students in their early years may seek a smattering of a language via an elective, and others in their later years may be seeking an advanced facility in the language, possibly with a specific career in mind.

7 Pedagogic implications

Not only students and parents, but also instructors and experts in education, believe that students of non-Asian backgrounds are disadvantaged in an Asian language class. There have been proposals to encourage the enrolment of more non-Asian background speakers, such as blocking heritage students from enrolling and making separate streams for students of Asian backgrounds and those of non-Asian backgrounds. Instead, we argue that an Asian language course can be transformed into an ideal intercultural learning environment while retaining a mix of student profiles.

As the results of this study indicate, students who have minimal contact with Asia experience psychological stress similar to that experienced by international students during acculturation (for international students' stress, see Ryan & Viete, 2009; Sawir et al., 2008). This is not because the other students are having an easy ride. It is the classroom culture itself, which is created by the subject matter (Chinese/Japanese language and culture), the instructors and all the students enrolled in the course, that creates stress. In other words, these students are in some sort of quasi study abroad experience. With appropriate support from instructors, their experience may be transformed into something more positive.

One important fact, of which students with non-Asian backgrounds should be made aware, is that “Asian students” are not one group of students with the same amount of exposure to Asian languages and cultures, just as 'local students” are not a homogeneous group of students. “Asian students” are diverse in experience and competence, but just happen to have a similar appearance. The actual source of their stress is only a group of students with Chinese or Korean background in a beginner course, which must be considerably smaller than the imaginary threatening group of “Asian students.” However, this would not completely remove their stress.

A crucial point for a transformation of an Asian language course is for experts in the education sector and students to be aware of the positive aspects of experiencing acculturation stress. Wherever people from different cultures gather, there is tension to some extent, and people in a minority group experience some degree of psychological stress (Paige, 2003). In this global age, young people need to be prepared for such psychologically intense situations. As Leask and Carroll (2011) point out, current difficulties in cultural interaction and collaboration, at least partially, lie in local students’ attitudes and behaviours. International students are already experiencing stress. All students, including those having little contact with Asia, also need to “move into potentially uncomfortable intercultural spaces, to challenge their stereotypes and prejudices and to move on from them” (Leask, 2005, p. 1). Chinese and Japanese courses certainly offer students opportunities for such challenge and growth.

Another essential prerequisite for the transformation is the reconsideration of study workload. At present, many Chinese and Japanese language courses focus on linguistic skills, and, in most cases, accuracy and appropriateness are emphasised (i.e. included in assessment criteria). As far as accuracy and appropriateness are concerned, students with a stronger degree of Asianness are likely to be at an advantage over those with a lesser degree of Asianness. In order to equalise the workload amongst students, a heavier weight in assessment could be placed on research, communication and analysis skills, as Scarino (2009) emphasises.

In order to have successful transformational outcomes, instructors themselves need to have good intercultural understanding, or cultural competence. Byram (1991) suggests that instructors with intercultural experience are more likely to conduct a successful intercultural learning class. Firstly, instructors should not be afraid to take a proactive approach in order to realise the transformation, for example by raising controversial cultural issues. Likewise, they need to create an environment where students cannot avoid talking to other students from different backgrounds, for instance by assigning group work. In the implementation of activities that are intended to encourage interaction between students with different backgrounds, it is desirable that students be exposed to other assumptions about the world, and become cognizant of other cultures without abandoning their own (Nieto & Booth, 2010). It is thus necessary for the instructor to create a non-threatening, cooperative, learning environment for all students. Instructors should function as facilitators who provide an environment enabling students to feel it acceptable to express their opinions because there are various worldviews and there are no inherently right or wrong views. Instructors need to monitor the flow of students’ speech so that they will not be led to stereotypical conceptions.

The central goals of intercultural learning are, as described in Gobel and Helmke (2010, p. 1572), “cultural awareness, acceptance of cultural differences, and interest in the specific culture of the target language as well as in intercultural topics in general.” The ability to understand cross-cultural differences and to accept such differences without being judgmental is crucial in this era of globalization because learners of Chinese or Japanese are likely to use the learnt language, not only with native speakers who belong to one culture, but also with people from various countries with various cultural values. Intercultural learning enables students to “recognise that people interpret communication and relationships through the frame of reference of their cumulative experience within their own language and culture” (Scarino, 2009, p. 69).

In every social interaction, speakers create a shared social world. In an Asian language course, by exchanging opinions between different groups of students using the target language, students can create an intermediate place belonging to no specific national culture, referred to as the “third

place" (Crozet, Liddicoat, & Lo Bianco, 1999). The third place is negotiated with every intercultural interaction and with every opportunity for new learning (Liddicoat, Chantal, & Lo Bianco, 1999). Today, it is indispensable for students to develop an ability to communicate with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. An Asian language subject at a university can take a more proactive role, rather than merely deliver language instruction, by transforming itself into an environment for acculturation not only for newcomers, but also for students of various backgrounds.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire: Students studying Asian language(s)

1. Subject name: Chinese, Japanese…..1,2,3,4 Other _____

2. Gender (choose): Female Male
3. Age (choose): under 20, 20-24, 25-29, 30 or more
4. Country of Birth (choose): Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan, Vietnam, Other _____
5. Country of longest education (choose): Australia. China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan, Vietnam, Other _____
6. Country of Current Nationality/Citizenship: Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan, Vietnam, Other _____
7. If not an Australian citizen, are you a legal permanent resident of Australia (choose): Yes No N/A

8. Years spent in Australia: less than 1, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, more____ yrs
9. Native tongue and Languages Other than English (LOTE) Ability – List the languages that you are familiar with and circle your level in each skill. If there is more than one, list them in order from your most fluent to least fluent language. For Chinese and other dialect speakers, please list dialects as well:

Nov 1= Beginner 2 = Lower intermediate, 3 = Higher intermediate 4 = Advanced 5 = Native like

Language	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
1.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
5.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
6.	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

10. What are the reasons for taking the Asian language subject(s) (please tick as many as applicable)?
    a. I have studied this language before
    b. I like the sound of the language
    c. The structure of the language is similar to the structure of my language
    d. This language and my language share common script
    e. I have someone who can help me in studying this language
    f. Studying this language will help me get a good job
    g. Studying this language will help when travelling
    h. I like the traditional culture of this country
    i. I like the pop culture of this country
    j. I enjoy being in a non-English dominant environment
    k. I don't feel inferior in this subject in terms of the language use (no English language barrier problem)
    l. I feel comfortable in a class with many other Asian students
    m. I can be with other students from my own country/culture
    n. The relationship with teachers is comfortable
    o. I don't have to discuss difficult issues
    p. The teaching style is familiar
    q. Others (please explain)

11. Please indicate how you feel about this subject compared to other subjects?
    Compared to other subjects, in this subject I feel ….

1. Much less 2. Somewhat less 3. Neutral/No Difference 4. Somewhat more 5. Much more

	1	2	3	4	5	
Less happy						More happy
Less comfortable						More comfortable
Less stressed						More stressed
Less motivated						More motivated
Less familiar						More familiar
Less threatened						More threatened
Less at home						More at home

Less rewarded						More rewarded
Less isolated						More isolated
Less involved						More involved
Less relaxed						More relaxed
Less depressed						More depressed
Less suited						More suited
Less confident						More confident

12. Please add any other feelings that you are experiencing in the subject.
13. Could you tell us more about your experience in your course?
14. Please write your email address if you would like us to send the results of the survey to you.
    Email: _____@_____

Thank you very much.