

研究ノート

Attitudes and Motivation for Learning English in Japan: Various Socio-Cultural Perspectives (Part 1: From the Meiji Restoration till the Showa Era)

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日本社会における英語学習に対するAttitudesとMotivation：
社会文化的視点からの一考察
(Part 1 明治維新から昭和時代まで)

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Abstract

Learning language is reflected in the many aspects of social and cultural intercourse. In Japan, after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Japan was eager to adopt western technology. It did so, in part, by sending some people to western countries to study. It was also geared to national economic and competitive interests so far as Japan's position in the international marketplace was concerned. Since the end of the Second World War, Japan has realized the fact that it is necessary for it to use and import resources. Such a world business market situation generates unique psychological pressure for Japanese to learn English. As long as Japan's economic situation which depends on world trade is not changed, the knowledge of English is important for the country's continuing success and productivity. This paper examines various factors which influence attitudes and motivation for learning English in Japan, from the Meiji Restoration till the Showa Era (1988), and further considers the rationale at that period for Japanese to study English at Intensive English Language Programs in the United States.

Keywords

Attitudes and Motivation for Learning English in 1990s, Intensive English Language Programs in the U.S., Second Language Acquisition, Intercultural Understanding

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I. Introduction

Learning language is reflected in the many aspects of social and cultural intercourse. The Northern Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (Born, 1977) stated, "We propose to treat language as a whole: its nature, its history, its relationship to culture, the acquisition of it, the immediate uses to which it can be put, and the development in our students of an appreciation for the gift of tongues (p.11)." Obviously this indicates a desire to place the second language study at the center of social psychology. In Japan, after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Japan was eager to adopt western technology. It did so, in part, by sending some people to western countries to study. It was also geared to national economic and competitive interests so far as Japan's position in the international marketplace was concerned.

In the following years, the Japanese profited by the study of western technology to the extent where, after the War, and during the past decades, Japanese economic growth has been remarkably rapid. Such rapid economic growth seems to rely on Japan's uniqueness. Japan consists of pieces of land surrounded by ocean: its islands are physically separated from others. Such separation and the present economic needs of the country have created a special, distinct national and international situation. Since the end of the Second World War, Japan has realized the fact that it is necessary for it to use and import resources. The world business market situation has generated a unique psychological pressure for Japanese to learn English.

Japan's particular circumstances with the above, then, highlights the importance of the learning of English and, in fact, learning English is one of the major steps which must be taken for the industrialization of the country. As long as Japan's economic situation, which depends on world trade, is not changed, the knowledge of English will be important for the country's continuing success and productivity. Thus, it is not at all difficult to understand that English is one of the most important subjects for Japanese university entrance examinations. The need to master English has also created a great number of English language schools in Japan and, at the present time, there is a continuing trend to learn English in Japan.

This paper examines various factors which influence attitudes and motivation for learning English in Japan, from the Meiji Restoration till the Showa Era (1988), and further considers the rationale at that period for Japanese students to study English at Intensive English Language Programs (IELPs) in the United States (U.S.).

II. Importance of attitudes and motivation in second language acquisition

The psychological implications of second language acquisition have been discussed in a large body of research. For instance, Gardner (1985) reported in his research that Jones (1966) developed Thurstone (1928)'s scale of attitudes toward learning.

Cooke (1978) reported the use of semantic differential ratings and social distance

judgments of various ethnic groups and his research indicated examples of the utility of the measures. Spolsky(1969) suggested the method of rating self-reported traits in order to compare individual identity with one's community. Lambert and Tucker(1972) used this method for students' training.

Lambert et al.(1960) initially used the matched guise technique to assess stereotypes for different groups. Anisfeld and Lambert(1964) and Lambert et al.(1966) reported a similar method is suitable to assess stereotypes of bilingual and monolingual children. Likert-type attitude scales (Likert, 1932) were frequently used for the area of second language acquisition.

Especially, Gardner(1985) researched the role of attitudes and motivation for second language learning. He states that "Considerable speculation about language learning is based on individuals' views derived from their experiences, preconceptions, and the like (p.5)." He wrote:

Social psychologists would expect that success in mastering a foreign language would depend not only on intellectual capacity and language aptitude but also on the learner's perceptions of the other ethnolinguistic group involved, his attitudes towards representatives of that group, and his willingness to identify enough to adopt distinctive aspects of behavior, linguistic and nonlinguistic, that characterize that other group. The learner's motivation for language study, it follows, would be determined by his attitudes and readiness to identify and by

his orientation to the whole process of learning a foreign language. We saw many possible forms the student's orientation could take, two of which we looked at in some detail: an "instrumental" outlook, reflecting the practical value and advantage of learning a new language, and an "integrative" outlook, reflecting a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group (p.132).

Also, many other researchers have suggested the importance of motivational factors. For example, Carrol(1962) suggests that three learners' characteristics affect achievement of second language: aptitude, general intelligence, and motivation, and two instructional variables: the opportunity the student has for learning and the adequacy of presentation of the material to be learned.

Yoshima and Sasatani(1980) have pointed out "English is a passport to success and a secure future in Japan. Proficiency in spoken English is accorded social prestige and social (instrumental) rewards in Japan (p.47)." Such social attitudes must affect Japanese students' motivation to learn English.

Gardner(1979) introduces that social scientists define an individual's attitude as "An evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent (pp.9-10)."

Also, the term motivation is defined by Gardner(1979) as "Motivation in the present context refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning the

language plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language. That is, motivation to learn a second language is seen as referring to the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in the activity (pp.9-10)."

In addition, an individual's personality has a strong influence on motivation. According to Rivers (1964), she has identified similar personality correlates of second language achievement, but, rather than suggest a direct link with proficiency, she implies that they will be mediated by motivation. She states, "...the previous history and personality of the individual are important and must be taken into account in endeavoring to understand his motivation. Such highly personal motives as fear or anxiety, learned through past experience, may combine with learned social motives, such as desire for status in a group and for social approval, creating complex reactions which can work powerfully toward progress in a foreign language or toward inhibiting oral language responses (p.82)." And later, Rivers states, "Because of the acquired motivation in our society to conform, he (i.e., the student) may prefer to tone down his accent and intonation to the average of the group (p.96)." Such comments clearly suggest that achievement in a second language should be related to such personality attributes as anxiety, status seeking, need for approval, social conformity, and moreover that these personality variables will be important to the extent that they influence motivational levels.

Hamayan, Genesee and Tucker(1977) have examined how personality factors like shyness,

conformity, stress, etc. affect the success of language acquisition.

Bartz's(1974) study of German students reported certain characteristics of personality traits for aptitude and creative ability. Brown(1977) noted influencing factors of cognitive style for success in second language acquisition. Oiler and Perkins(1978) reported that certain variables effect scores of language proficiency tests (reported in Brown, 1980).

Gardner(1985) states that "The majority of attitudes are undoubtedly developed and fostered in the home environment, supported by the atmosphere in the general community, and reinforced by an individual's peers (p.7)." Also, the investigations of Whiting and Child(1953); Lambert, Triandis, and Wolf(1959); and Campbell(1961) concludes that early child-training experiences can influence the structure of personality and can have long-term consequences that are seen even at the adult level.

Therefore, personality is developed by interaction with others. According to Cohen (1964):

We are all members of one group or many, no matter how fleeting, amorphous, and informal or how stable and organized these groups may be. In all our daily activities, we take positions, arrive at decisions, and carry out actions against a backdrop of other people with whom we are involved in a network of responsibility and mutual regard. Family, friends, classmates, teammates, instructors, counselors...these and many others constitute reference points for us, and our

opinions and actions are partly shaped by them. Every person depends upon others for his view of the world around him, for his standards of right and wrong, and for the establishment of his ideals and aspirations. Thus, we are all part and parcel of the social world about us; for human beings, social reality is an ever-present determinant of behavior (p.101).

Therefore, the first and longest belonging group is a family, so that the roles of family members have a strong influence on personality. According to Nakane(1970), "The Japanese household can be seen when a business enterprise is viewed as a social group. In this instance a closed social group has been organized on the basis of the "lifetime employment system" and the work made central to the employees' lives. The new employee is in just about the same position and is, in fact, received by the company in much the same spirit as if he were a newly born family member, a newly adopted son-in-law or a bride come into the husband's household (p.14)." As a company is functioned by each different position of staffs, Japanese family can be seen as father is a president, mother is vice president, and so on. Therefore, birth position gives an unwritten role which each member is expected to follow. As a result, in Japan, birth position still has a strong influence to define how one should act in a family. Consequently, birth position has influence to form personality through interaction with other family members.

In addition, Azuma, Kashiwagi, Holloway, Fuller, Hess, and Gorman(1990) pointed out the

family in Japanese society from the historical point of view as follows:

The historical centrality of the family in Japanese society is relevant to the contemporary socialization process. Through the Tokugawa period(1603-1868), the household was the most salient social unit. The individual was defined by membership in a particular family, not by personal traits. The household, not the individual, held property. Confucian thought legitimated the paternalistic, hierarchical form of family organization. Confucian texts reinforced norms of self-denial, obligation to the group and to those of higher status, and a commitment to the refinement of character, not the development of individual technical skills. This history of collective social structures is reflected in parenting practices. In Japan, nurturance of obligation and the inculcation of responsibility to the cooperative unit form the primary emphases of socialization. These behaviors are essential to successful family and classroom integration. Furthermore, Japanese parents stress the child's moral commitment to the group. In contrast, parents in the U.S. emphasize early mastery of verbal and self-help skills and encourage independence and individual expression of choice (pp.198-199).

Also, Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford(1950) have observed the following: "Our investigation demonstrated the correspondence between certain basic

psychodynamic process characteristics of a person and his outlook on a great variety of areas, ranging from the most intimate features of family life, to sex adjustment, through relationships with other people in general (pp.55-56)."

In addition, Hovland & Jain(1959) suggest sex differences affect attitudes and motivation. They state "Roles which the culture sex-types as male, lead men to be more variable in their responses to pressures toward attitude change. Women, because the culture encourages them to be acquiescent, are in general more susceptible to persuasion (p.27)."

According to Reischauer (1987), "Japan is still definitely a "man's world," with women confined to a secondary position. Their status, however, has changed greatly for the better during the past century, especially since World War II, and it will obviously continue to change. The provisions of the 1947 constitution, which is quite explicit about the equality of the sexes, tips the scales quite definitively toward increased equality and greater prestige for them (p.183)." Therefore, compared to the U.S., Japanese society has more distinctive gender roles. As a result, gender difference affects the formation of individual personality through social interaction.

Gagnon(1974) demonstrated that geographical area influences attitudes toward learning English as a second language. He demonstrates that certain areas have more positive attitudes toward learning English.

A newspaper article introduced a Japanese immigrant's life in the U.S. Ishikawa(1991) expressed his personal view of self-esteem and

motivation related to language learning. He also wrote about his experience of racism. He concluded that racism stems from communication breakdowns. Because usually, Japanese don't talk, on the other hand, Americans don't listen.

Ratliff(1988) supports Ishikawa's point of view about this, as follows:

Americans talk a lot more than Japanese in almost any situation. Americans see the verbal channel as the proper medium for the expression of opinions, emotions, humor, nuances of meaning...words as the essential mode of communication. Japanese pay much more attention to non-verbal forms of communication: posture, uses of eyes, costume, and, above all, the uses of silence. This fundamental difference in the use of language is perhaps the greatest impediment to successful cross-cultural communication between Americans and Japanese: in the absence of strenuous countermeasures on both sides, the Americans routinely end up doing nearly all of the talking (p.172).

According to Oskamp(1977), "He directs attention to personal experiences with parental influence. His research concludes that parents are the major determinants of children's attitudes, at least initially (p.108)." Lots of other research supports parents' strong influence toward development on children's personality or attitudes.

Also, Harding et al(1969) support that "There is considerable research which indicates that children's attitudes are

dependent in part upon those of their parents, and, although, as we have seen, there are many factors that can influence attitudinal development, there is general consensus that the parent plays a major role (p.72)." In addition, Milner(1981) proposed as follows:

Ethnic attitudes develop in children as a consequence of three overlapping processes. First, some attitudinal development occurs in children as a result of direct tuition from their parents. He states, "Parents undoubtedly do make explicit statements about their beliefs and attitudes on a variety of social issues, and there is usually an implicit encouragement for the child to feel likewise." Second, attitudes, develop through indirect tuition, "where attitudes are not consciously taught, but are implicit in what the parents say or do." In the process of identifying with the parents, children incorporate much of their value system. Milner proposes that "identification promotes the desire to emulate the parents, to appear grown-up by spouting adult ideas, and simply to gain approval by being like them." The final process is role-learning. As they grow and mature, children learn "to behave, feel and see the world in a manner similar to other persons occupying the same position (p.125)."

Therefore, parents' expectations strongly affect the children's attitudes as well as motivation toward language learning.

Even though students are initially highly

motivated for language learning, their motivation and attitudes are easily changed by a change of environments. Brown(1963) states that "For many other examples of attitude-change already studied, it is that a person's attitudes are not always something locked up within himself or built in attributes of his personality, but rather a function of his role within a particular group or series of groups. Since one of the functions of the mind is to enable the organism to adjust to a changing environment, we need not be surprised that it is precisely the statistically most "normal" people who are not only the most prone to absorb the attitudes current in their social milieu but are equally prone to relinquish them for others when the milieu changes (p.294)."

According to Tsuda(1991), the Japanese English learning boom is sometimes called "the third English conversational learning boom." The first boom came right after the World War II. The second boom was just after the Tokyo Olympics in 1964. The present boom has a strong relationship with their desire to become an international person. However, he points out the Japanese desire for English learning stems from an inferiority complex toward western superiority. He also points out the reason why Japanese think of English as an international language is the fact that most of the world's academic publications are written in English, as follows:

THE RATIO OF THE WORLD'S ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS WRITTEN IN ENGLISH (p.31)

SUBJECT	1965	1981	THE RATE OF INCREASE
CHEMISTRY	50%	67%	17%
BIOLOGY	75%	86%	11%
PHYSICS	73%	85%	12%
MEDICAL	51%	73%	22%
MATHEMATICS	55%	69%	14%
AVERAGE	61%	76%	15%

As a result, Japanese like non-English native people have psychological pressure toward English learning. If they fail English learning, they are under the impression that they will be unable to keep in touch with the mainstream of the world.

III. The Rationale for Japanese to study English at Intensive English Language Programs (IELPs) in the U.S.

Vogel(1983) commented that the increase in IELPs in Japan and the U.S. is related to the importance of the international relationship between the two countries. Vogel pointed out the importance of language development in college-age students in comparison with difficulty for older people.

According to Cazden(1989), IELP courses in Japan and the U.S. are reflected on the social and political movements, as well as concerning the improvement of teaching techniques. By the survey, Cazden concluded students tended to get a job which required English skills after attending IELPs.

Brown, et al. (1989) noted that IELP students are different based on their age of learning English as a second language from elementary

to high school. The contents of courses not only are different, but so is students' motivation in them. The IELPs use the most updated teaching techniques. However, Japanese schools usually emphasize grammar and reading in traditional language teaching styles. On the other hand, the teaching styles of IELPs offer more efficient ways to learn English for different standard and motivated students. Brown(1987) noted that many students are from the workplace and are highly motivated.

Noam Chomsky(1983), who is a sociologist in the U.S., studied about words, meanings, rationality, logic and symbols. He suggested words contain personal and cultural meaning which is created by environment or social interactions. He focused on the cognitive structure of the mind.

Language and words are developed by culture, history and experiences. In language learning, the use of phonetics, semantics, sound and morphological integration are utilized with great precision and draw upon analytical and symbolic abilities. This explained the reason why the acquisition of second language is difficult for older people compared to younger children.

Class distinctions in the U.S. reflect income

diversity and inequality, and this leads to racism against a certain community. Within such a community, the dialects are used. For example, Black English is one of the dialects different from standard of English for using business or academic. This kind of dialect makes confusion for English learners because it is English but just not different from standard. The learning English in Japanese schools doesn't meet this kind of experience, but students in U.S. IELPs easily encounter this. Chomsky noted that motivation to learn a language is related to economy and politics. The choice of second language is historically influenced by the power structure of important partner country economically and politically. Thus, Chomsky noted that students' progress and motivation toward language learning will vary depending on international affairs.

Grice(1987) pointed out that IELP students are taught English by using methods which may be used at other language schools. Also, the author indicated "a sense of wholeness" in IELPs. Lastly, Grice pointed out IELP teaching topics and areas of interest for the students are different from traditional language curricula. This supports that IELP students have their own motivation and career goals which Grice called "a unique learning experience."

Brown, et al.(1989) focused on socioeconomic and professional goals of the students to explain the cognitive growth of IELP students. In IELPs, the students' interest, motivation and achievement levels are affected by companies, or governments to which they belong.

Student demographics indicated older students enroll in IELPs more than conventional language schools. The mature IELP students' interest are more clearly defined or targeted. This could be related into their career goal for their companies or governments (Brown, 1989). Brown(1989) also noted that IELPs targeted for more mature and motivated students. Also, many companies and governments encourage and support learning a second language. Such large trend of learning language is created toward one direction which benefits for them. Brown(1989) commented on the on-going cultural context in which attitudes toward second language acquisition are supported, as are common values and norms of behavior.

There are important differences among traditional elementary and high school students, who study a second language, and IELP students, apart from age. "Mainstreaming" is especially known in the East, but it is less considered in the U.S. because IELP students' goals are so diversified. Brown(1989) noted that the IELP students, unlike the traditional second language students, seems to make "a paradigm shift" between native language and second language for moving back and forth, as well as culturally. On the other hand, the traditional language student seems to concern himself with reading and writing skills. Gazden(1989) and Vogel(1983) discuss about IELP methods which focus on similarities between two languages.

Lastly, Grice(1987), Brown, et al.(1989) and Vogel(1983) concluded English is a supplementary learning tool, not just a second

language for Japanese students in IELPs. The learning of English must be understood to survive from competition coming from two societies and economies. English acquisition is required for international and multi-corporate goals (Brisset, 1987). Contemporary shifts of the economic market increase the necessity for a women's work force. Such shifts encourage women to learn a second language for career advancement. Also, the relationship between Japan and the U.S. must influence personnel training in Japanese companies. Thus, the increase of needs to learn English is reflected in the increased number of students in IELPs.

IV. Conclusion

As Gardner and other social scientists point out, the social phenomena, forming personality, attitudes, motivation are all inter-related. As a result, the Japanese social phenomena of the present English learning boom must be reflected on the social movement. The increase of IELPs in both Japan and the U.S. implies the present world power structure.

Tsuda(1991) points out that English is not an international language because the non-English speaking population is much greater than the English native speaking population. However, he also points out most of the academic publishing and world scale conferences (even for the United Nation's conferences) are mainly conducted in English. Under such a global power structure, non-native English speakers get special pressure for English learning. Such a world power structure influences the English learning of Japan. The Japanese

Ministry of Education has announced that English will be taught in the 5th grade of public elementary school, as of 2020. English will also become a fully-fledged academic subject at the same time. This means that English will be introduced two years sooner than at present. This new 2020 curriculum will also have a stronger communicative focus.

As other scholars have already pointed out, there are significant correlations among language learning, personality, gender differences and motivation, furthermore value judgment. The learning of both languages does not guarantee to remove misunderstanding. However, it substantially increases the possibility for mutual understanding.

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