
Research and Teaching Notes

Are Japanese High School Graduates Really Equipped for University Language Study? A Call for

Research into the Study Habits of Japanese Students Studying English after Matriculation to University

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It is common knowledge that high school students who study English in Japan engage in study habits that promote their passing of the university entrance examinations. These study habits include attending juku (cram schools) or other preparation classes outside of high school and involve the rote memorization of grammatical structures and the learning of test-taking techniques. What has yet to be researched is what happens to students' English language study habits after matriculation to university when their need for juku and the goal of passing the university entrance examinations have gone. This paper presents information about what is known concerning Japanese high school students' study habits and asserts that these study habits are unsuitable for university study because of the change in student goals in this new learning environment. A call for research into Japanese university students' study habits is made so that language instructors may better equip students to deal with the new goals and activities presented to them from university life and from their university English courses and so that English language instructors at the university level will be more aware of the confusion Japanese university students may face in approaching the task of studying English.

Introduction

For many Japanese high school students who have plans to attend university, learning in high school (especially during senior year) means instruction aimed at preparing them for their university entrance examinations. The students learn what kind of questions will be on the examinations, how they will be expected to answer those questions, and how best to study and consequently pass what will be for many one of the most important events of their lives (Beauchamp, 1994; Vogel, 1978). The students are usually quite motivated to study for and pass these examinations, for they are judged and even manipulated by them (Anderson, 1975).

However, once the students have matriculated to university, their need for such focused instruction diminishes considerably. For them, cram schools like *juku* become just a memory of what it was like to be a student in the lower levels of the Japanese school system. They no longer have the need to attend such after school classes, and their desire to study techniques that will aid them in passing the entrance examinations to their university of choice has been fulfilled. What lies ahead of these students is a new life at the university level that will be challenging on many (albeit different) levels yet will likely be less demanding in terms of their time and energy as they essentially bide their time until graduation and their eventual entrance into the Japanese workforce.

Although information about the popularity of *juku* and the common study method of rote memorization on the part of Japanese high school students is internationally known, what is less well known (both internationally and domestically) are the study habits of those students who have advanced to university. These students' study habits remain unknown because of the lack of

research conducted in this area.

A search of the ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) database with keywords including “Japanese,” “study habits,” “learning strategies,” and “university” revealed only four articles that appeared potentially relevant to understanding the study habits of Japanese university students. Several of the articles listed from this search centered on teacher pedagogical practices in the classroom, particularly ways for teachers to promote and improve student learning autonomy. However, it was clear that few researchers have made attempts to examine how students perceive their own study habits at the university level, and that fewer still have tried to assess just how different study at the university level might be from study at the high school level.

It cannot be assumed that university students view, study for, and approach their university courses the same way they did their high school classes. Once students make the transition to university they are in an entirely new academic landscape. For instance, they no longer find themselves in the same *kumi* (組, classroom group) every day, surrounded by classmates they have probably known for years. There are no longer instructors pushing the students to study hard and do their best for the students’ upcoming university entrance examinations. The students at university are either on the threshold of adulthood (which, in Japan, officially begins at the age of 20) or they are already adults, meaning that they are expected to bear the responsibility of their own actions. They may thus occasionally skip their university classes if they are so inclined; there will be few repercussions should they do so and they will not be reprimanded harshly (if at all) by their instructors, as would more likely be the case for high school students. Similar to university students in other countries, Japanese university students, as adults, have relatively few people to whom they must answer.

That so little is known about the study habits of Japanese university freshmen should be more of a concern for university instructors in all disciplines, especially those who teach foreign languages such as English. For example, given the fact that the students had to study English so diligently in order to pass their university entrance examinations, many English language instructors at the university level are surprised at the students’ low levels of English language achievement (Benson, 1991). Looking at such achievement results, several questions arise but have no immediate answer: Why do university students who study English evince such poor language skills? Do the students no longer study with the same amount of effort they used for their university entrance examination preparation, or could the reason lie elsewhere? Is it possible that, for various reasons, the *manner* in which the students approach their English studies is different at the university level?

It is the aim of this paper to illustrate how little is understood about the study habits of Japanese students studying English at the university level, especially considering how much is known about how Japanese high school students go about their studies. It is suspected that, compared to when they were high school students, university students have different goals motivating their studies, which consequently translate into the need to acquire and use different study habits. These disparate goals are likely found in students’ approaches to other university subjects, but the focus of this paper will be on the students’ learning of English as a foreign language at university.

In order to more fully explore this theme of potentially differing goals at the university level and the likelihood of students being ill prepared to recognize and appropriately deal with such goals, I will now briefly relate what is known about high school students’ study habits as they concern the learning of English and what remains unknown about how university students approach their English studies.

What We Know: The High School Level

English is a necessary subject of study below the university level because English sections can be found on nearly all university entrance examinations (Bridges, 1998). In fact, many students cite the passing of the examinations to university as their primary motive for studying English in the first place (LoCastro, 1996). One cannot underestimate the importance of the university entrance examinations for high school students and the impact those examinations have on the schools, the curriculum, and on the individual students themselves. “More than any other single event, the university entrance examinations influence the orientation and life of most Japanese high school students, even for the many who do not go on to postsecondary education” (Leestma & Bennett, 1987, p. 44).

Often dubbed “examination hell” (*shiken jigoku* 試験地獄), the procedure of studying for university entrance examinations channels students’ efforts to a single point in life and causes them to decide what their life course will be (White, 1987). The literature is replete with depictions of how these examinations provide powerful motivation for the students due to the lifelong repercussions of this single event (Kida, Shwalb, & Shwalb, 1985; LoCastro, 1994; Matsumoto, 1994; Shimahara, 1979; United States Department of Education, 1991). As a result of understanding these repercussions, students will literally spend years preparing for the examinations.

Lynn (1988) discussed the two most powerful incentives for educational achievement in the Japanese school system: the entrance examinations to high school and to university, respectively. These examinations provide motivation to study primarily, says Lynn, because of the hierarchical ranking of Japanese universities. Because many major Japanese companies recruit new employees directly from the pool of graduating university seniors, the more prestigious the university one attends, the better the chances one can be picked up by better companies and organizations upon graduation (Simmons, 1990). This process of recruitment and employment makes good performance on the university entrance examinations the crucial first step to the future careers of most of the Japanese adolescent population.

In order to better their chances of passing the examinations, many high school (and even junior high school) students attend extra-curricular instruction in subjects ranging from English to mathematics. According to Johnson and Johnson (1996), sixty percent of high school students attend *juku* or some other form of classes outside of school, including preparatory schools known as *yobikô* (予備校). In these classes, the students learn not only content of the subjects being studied, but also testwiseness, which involves understanding examination directions and how to smoothly switch from one section of the examination to another. Brown and Yamashita (1995a) confess that learning testwiseness may be as or more important than students’ proficiency in English. Because of the benefits bestowed, if students wish to pass the entrance examinations to any of the more prestigious universities in particular, they will be at a distinct disadvantage should they not attend a *juku* or *yobikô* (LoCastro, 1991).

Consequently, one major aspect of the study habits of many Japanese high school students that cannot be overlooked involves their attending and studying at these schools. Students (and by extension, their parents) have other choices besides *juku* or *yobikô*, including home tutors (*katei kyôshi* 家庭教師) or lessons via computer software or Internet web pages. Regardless of the form of instruction, the main point is that for many Japanese high school students, a non-negligible amount of instruction often lies *outside of the high schools themselves*. LoCastro (1996) discussed why this would be so. For many high school students, English language instruction that occurs in

the high school classroom is seen as deficient for the purpose of passing the university entrance examinations. Students often see their high school English classes as only necessary for attendance purposes and seek practical instruction (e.g., instruction to aid them in passing the university entrance examinations) elsewhere.

What We Don't Know: The University Level

Why would one suppose that the English-language-learning study habits of university students would be different from those study habits practiced at the high school level? For one thing, the majority of students in high school have as their primary (if not singular) goal their matriculation to university. The passing of the university entrance examinations, which is needed for university matriculation in Japan, becomes the primary motive for the studying – and consequently the teaching – of English (Matsumoto, 1994). As many schools and teachers have as their goal the advancement of their pupils to university (Rohlen, 1983; Shimahara, 1979), the curriculum for many high schools becomes geared toward university entrance examination preparation. Washback from the university entrance examination system impacts the high school curriculum (Brown & Yamashita, 1995b, as cited in Browne & Wada, 1998; Kitao, Kitao, Nozawa, & Yamamoto, 1985; Lynn, 1988), meaning that what and how students study at the high school level is likely different from that at the university level where there are no more entrance examinations impacting students' studies. Additionally, because the high school curriculum places such excessive emphasis on university entrance examination topics and test-taking techniques, it comes as little surprise that many students actually lose interest in studying and scholastic endeavors after entering university, for they have become exhausted from the rigors of examination study and can even lose motivation and curiosity about course subjects (Wray, 1999).

A second reason university students' study habits would be different is due to the disappearance of the pressing goal of studying for and passing the university entrance examinations after matriculation to university. For many students, doing well enough to pass the examinations and enter university had been their primary goal, even as far back as the junior high school level. With this goal of entering university fulfilled, the students are likely to undergo changes that include setting new or "mature" goals such as the pursuit of newly desired cognitive and emotional states. The students' original motivation to study English was channeled by the system into "relatively narrow, easily testable aspects of English proficiency" (Berwick & Ross, 1989, p. 206). With this motivation and the need to study these aspects removed after matriculation, it is reasonable to assume that what the students will study – and why – would change.

The English-language-learning activities the students encounter at university are also likely to be different from the activities they previously encountered in high school. For instance, because the university entrance examinations are written tests that lack speaking sections (Vogel, 1978), high school students are engaged mostly in grammar and translation instruction (Berwick & Ross, 1989; Kitao et al., 1985; LoCastro, 1994, 1996). Such instruction propagates the use of and dependence on rote memorization (Browne & Wada, 1998; LoCastro, 1994; Tinkham, 1989) because those students who hone their test-taking skills by learning the most facts will be more likely to succeed on the examinations (Beauchamp, 1982).

The examinations, it should be added, also neglect the foreign language skill of listening (Bridges, 1998; Matsumoto, 1994). Communicative competence in English is therefore not a point emphasized in Japanese secondary education (LoCastro, 1991), although it is likely to be an

emphasized aspect of English-language education at university. As stated by Samimy and Adams (1991), at the high school level, “mechanical drills and memorization of vocabulary and grammatical items...become more important to the students than learning the language for communication purposes” (p. 77) because knowledge of English grammar and the ability to translate English into Japanese largely determines who will pass the university entrance examinations and who will fail (Teweles, 1995). University English instruction, however, often encompasses considerably more.

The New Learning Environment at University: Why Old Goals No Longer Hold

Prior to matriculation to university, the students’ main motivation to study (be it to study English or other subjects) was examination preparation (LoCastro, 1994). For some students, particularly those who did not plan to major in English or other foreign languages at university, English study was only a tool for university access (Samimy & Adams, 1991). Without the familiar goal of university entrance examination preparation and the subsequent advancement to university, students may feel at a loss as to how to proceed with their university studies. It is entirely possible that many students, upon matriculation to university, experience a lack of direction concerning what they need to do in order to “make it” at university, which includes their discovering and utilizing the best ways to study. Yet, with no *juku* to attend and with teachers no longer guiding them and telling them explicitly what and how they need to study, as was the case in high school, the students may become essentially rudderless in the waters of university life.

For entering university freshmen, the infamous “May crisis” (*gogatsubyō* 五月病) can set in, which is a period of time just after freshmen have entered university. Because in Japan entrance to university is difficult but progression through the years at university and subsequent graduation is relatively easy (Horio, 1988), coupled with the fact that the students have leisure time and no pressing goals to fulfill as they once did, there is no longer any reason for them to study as hard as they had for preparation for university entrance (Anderson, 1975). As a result, students may feel as if they have lost a certain amount of meaning and purpose in their lives as they go unchallenged (comparatively speaking) in their university courses. This feeling tends to hit students hardest in May, just after the new academic year has commenced.

To say that the students may feel lost when they enter university is not to say that they are thrust mercilessly into university life. Rather, the students are taking their first steps at university with nothing but the experience of regimented high school life to guide them. A lack of familiar *kumi*-related experiences encountered daily in high school and the loss of teachers to tell them exactly what they need to do and how to do it can consequently cause many students to become essentially “directionless” as they go about the process of studying for their classes. Wray (1999) describes how students can “complain that they have become so accustomed to an environment where everything is proscribed that they lack confidence and judgment for appropriate behavior and decision making” (p. 94), which, one may contend, can be encountered by students at university on the macro-level of choosing a major and selecting courses to the micro-level of daily university experiences and interpersonal encounters.

With the loss of the collectively-held goals of passing the university entrance examinations and placement in a university may come the loss of incentives to study. As Lynn (1988) discussed, goals can only act as incentives if they are (a) specific, (b) ordered in a temporal sequence of sub-goals, and (c) challenging. Below the university level, all three of these conditions are filled. Studying sufficiently to pass the university entrance examinations is a specific goal that, as

mentioned above, generates motivation and effort to study. The examinations can also be said to be part of the temporal sequence of sub-goals, for they are seen as a preliminary step in the acquisition of the main goal of securing desirable employment after university graduation. The final condition of being challenging is also fulfilled, for the Japanese believe that passing the university entrance examinations can only come about via hard work, diligence, and effort. "Pass with four, fail with five" is the mantra of many students and their parents, as it denotes the belief that those students who study each night with only four hours of sleep will be able to pass the examinations while those who sleep five hours will fail (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; White, 1987).

At the university level, however, these three incentive conditions no longer apply and are not replaced with other, different conditions. The specific goal of studying for the university entrance examinations has all but disappeared. One may contend that it is replaced by the need to study for the individual courses in which the students are enrolled, but this can hardly be considered a specific goal, as it differs little from what the students did in high school (e.g., their going to classes and completing homework assignments). Students may have a thesis or some other report that they must complete before being awarded a university degree, but such a report is unlikely to occupy their thoughts and actions the first year or two at university. Most of their courses probably do not prepare them for the report the way that most of their high school classes prepared them for their university entrance examinations.

Even the goal of graduation from university cannot realistically be considered a specific goal. Baring any extraneous circumstances, all students who enter university are expected to graduate. Grades therefore mean little when weighed against the prospect of graduating, and grades mean even less to prospective employers, who simply seek to hire graduates from the more elite academic institutions (Leestma & Bennett, 1987). Thus, the "goal" of graduating for Japanese university students is not so much one of making efforts and persevering to attain an end, but is rather one of biding time and looking good at job interviews toward the end of their final year at university.

Lynn's second condition of there being a need for a sequence of sub-goals in order for there to be incentives also appears to be lacking. The studying for and eventual passing of the university entrance examinations was a major goal with which all university-aspiring high school students could identify. After matriculation to university, there are few things that can be considered sub-goals, which, as Lynn describes them, are proximate goals in a causal chain that must be achieved in succession in order to reach the ultimate (distal) goal. At first glance, the graduation thesis (if the students are required to write one) may be considered one such sub-goal, but when carefully examined one finds that it falls outside the parameters of Lynn's definition of sub-goals.

Based on Lynn's definition, sub-goals should act like "stepping stones" on the way to a main goal. In Japan, the high school entrance examinations provide junior high school students access to high school. The university entrance examinations allow students entrance to university. The completion of each of these steps brings a student to a new and different level. The graduation thesis, however, is simply a *requirement* for graduation. Completion of the thesis occurs before the end of a university students' final year in school, the result of which can hardly be said to propel the student to a new and different level. Excluding the acquisition of knowledge and skills gained in the process of writing the thesis, as well as satisfaction in completing the requirement, there is no academic advancement to be had, nor does the academic status change for the student.

Finally, as the last of Lynn's requirements states that goals can only be incentives so long as they are challenging, one must consider what is (or is not) challenging for university students. As mentioned above, university study tends to be easier than high school study, as the rigor of

entrance examination study for university students has long since disappeared. Many company recruiters who visit universities in search of the next generation of trainees care for little else besides which university the students have attended, for the formula of *academic pedigree = academic ability = [true] ability* is their largest concern (Horio, 1988). The real challenge for the students, therefore, was found in their attempt to gain entry into the most prestigious university possible. Once in university, there are still likely to be a range of academic activities that will present the students with challenges, such as their studying to improve their TOEIC scores, but such challenges, I contend, will likely be undertaken because they are either requirements of the university or because undertaking and succeeding at such challenges results in students looking more attractive to potential future employers.

Besides the possible lack of incentives that may impact possible student goals, at the university level, that which the students experience can be said to be altogether new, thereby potentially adding an element of confusion for the students. For instance, the students (especially English-language majors) will be expected to enroll in courses designed to improve their conversation skills and to promote in-class discussion in English. The students may have only had native Japanese teachers instruct them in their English classes below the university level, so to be presented with native English instructors who will not focus solely on grammar and translation but who will also expect the students to converse in English in class is likely to be a new experience for many university freshmen. As the students needed only knowledge of English for the university entrance examinations, they were presented few, if any, chances to demonstrate their abilities in English up through the high school level (Kitao et al., 1985).

University students may consequently have little or no idea how to proceed with their studies after matriculation, as the need to hold a conversation in English in class becomes an entirely new requirement for them. Thus, not only do the students lack the need to study those things they have previously studied (e.g., things specifically to aid them in passing the university entrance examinations), but they are also expected to study things they have previously never studied (e.g., conversation), and thus must engage in activities in which they likely have no experience and no schema that may aid them in their cognitive approaches to their learning.

Current Indications and Future Directions

Some current research has been conducted that sheds light on university student concerns related to their language study. Such research may pave the way for directed future research on university students' study habits. Mimura, Monk, and Ozawa (2003) found that at the beginning of the academic year at a university in Japan, 331 language-learning students from varying academic years (out of a pool of 524 students, or roughly 63%) responded that they were motivated to study but that they were unsure of how to study. This was by far the most common response, with three times as many students choosing this response over the second-most-common response, which was being overly conscious about the scores and abilities of others (109 students, or roughly 21%). This most common response about being unsure how to study, when broken down by academic year, showed that nearly three-fourths (73%) of the first-year students (i.e., entering freshmen) expressed motivation for their studies but were not sure how to go about them.

This finding lends some credence to my suspicions about university students' study habits, namely that entrance to university is accompanied by students losing both (a) their old study methods, such as their attending *juku*, to which the students are familiar and with which they are most likely comfortable, and (b) the goals they had long possessed that presented them incentives

to study in the first place, which were the goals of passing the university entrance examinations and advancing to university. All the students had ever known were study habits that promoted the passing of their entrance examinations, but with the onset of their taking university classes that expect more and different things from them (i.e., the *production* of English in both spoken and written form), the students must abandon their former study habits and seek out and adopt new ones in order for successful learning to occur at the university level.

It would seem that even from their first semester at university, the students are placed into a learning situation that forces them to “change gears” because of the new and different learning goals at this higher academic level. If a majority of entering freshmen at other universities remark that they are unsure of how to go about studying, as they did in the Mimura et al. study, how can the students progress through the tasks presented to them in their language classes in their first and subsequent years at university without coming to terms with the fact that they need new ways to approach their studies? How long does it take them to realize that new study habits are needed and that they must establish new methods of studying? Are university students provided assistance by their academic institutions if they are not sure how to study, such as by being given advice or instruction on possible study methods, or are they left to their own devices? These are just a few questions that remain unanswered.

Future Research Directions

Taking into consideration what has been asserted thus far concerning altered student goals and the students’ lacking decisiveness in how to study English, future research into how university students approach their studies can take several directions. Two possible directions for such research, I propose, can include study of (a) language learner autonomy and (b) language learning styles. The implications and obstacles of each of these areas will now be briefly explored.

Language Learner Autonomy

If students confess to being unsure of how to approach their studies after matriculation to university and are not provided with information or assistance in that respect, one might be tempted to call their university learning autonomous. After all, the students are still presented with information in their classes (information that they are expected to absorb and in which, at some level, they are expected to demonstrate competency) and must find a way to deal with that information. However, a better understanding of autonomy must be had by researchers and instructors alike, especially in this most particular of settings.

Littlewood (1999) makes a distinction between *proactive* autonomy and *reactive* autonomy. Proactive autonomy is the kind of autonomy that usually comes to mind when discussing autonomy in the West, for it includes learners being in charge of their own learning, their determining their own objectives, selecting how they will go about achieving those objectives, and the subsequent evaluation of their performance and the goals attained.

Reactive autonomy is a second kind of autonomy that should be considered as well, especially in education situations. This kind of autonomy does not concern people creating their own directions, but “once a direction has been initiated, [this kind of autonomy] enables learners to organize their resources autonomously in order to reach their goal” (p. 75). This seems the more likely form of autonomy at the university level in Japan because, as Littlewood proposes, East

Asian students will not have experienced many learning contexts that encourage them to exercise proactive autonomy.

Littlewood also discusses developing autonomy for language learners in East Asian contexts. As a basis for much of his thinking, he takes the work of Ryan (1991), who had concluded that the ideal “facilitating environment” for autonomy includes the following four points:

1. Concrete support through the provision of help and resources
2. Personal concern and involvement from significant others
3. Opportunities for making choices
4. Freedom from a sense of being *controlled* by external agents

I would argue that *developing* autonomy in Japanese students learning English at university should not be an arduous task, as I believe that the students should have all of the preceding requirements in place, providing, of course, that the university in which they are enrolled is worthy of being called an institution of higher academic learning. The reasons for my believing that the students have these requirements are enumerated below.

1. Concrete support through the provision of help and resources

Any university in Japan worth its salt should have staff and faculty ready to assist the students. Above and beyond that, it naturally stands to reason that there should be a system of progression set in place that outlines what the students need each semester and year at university, and that the students will receive assistance in the selection of and progression through their classes in their major.

2. Personal concern and involvement from significant others

Related to the first requirement, there should be staff and faculty present who guide and/or advise the students. Such people should evince their concern and involvement at every step of the students’ progression through university. Parents and other family members are also likely present and involve themselves in a number of ways, from their paying of the students’ tuition, paying for a dorm room or apartment, or in some other way.

3. Opportunities for making choices

Students at university are likely given a broad range of choices, from macro-level choices like their choosing a major down to micro-level choices such as their deciding on elective classes. Freedom to make these choices and the resultant rewards represent one aspect of learning autonomy.

4. Freedom from a sense of being *controlled* by external agents

The same as students worldwide, those enrolled in a Japanese university are no doubt aware that a certain amount of what they must do as university students involves them fulfilling university requirements such as taking specific courses and gaining a specified number of credits. However, this fourth point more likely revolves around what occurs in the language classroom. In other words, it deals with the students having a sense of their learning what they want to learn and participating in class activities because they want to, not because they are being forced to. So long as the students perceive some flexibility in how they may approach their classes and, more importantly, so long as there is a lack of coercion on the part of instructors to “make” the students do this or that, the students can feel as if they are autonomous with their learning.

I would therefore propose that a fruitful avenue for future research related to language learning autonomy would be to first assess whether or not the four points related above are actually fulfilled at the university level in Japan. If they are fulfilled, it would be beneficial to understand the implications of their relations to how students identify and implement their language learning study habits. If they are not fulfilled, it would be beneficial to assess if those points are actually needed at university and, if so, how to go about providing the students with those points.

Language Learning Styles

The second avenue of potential research is that of learning styles. Holec (1981, as cited in Oxford, 1990) believes that people who study other languages are in charge of every aspect of their learning, from determining their learning objectives to defining and evaluating their progress. One can easily argue that the first step to understanding what Japanese university students believe and what they desire to achieve from their language studies is to assess how they go about the learning process. This can only come from directly taking stock of the methods students use to study and the benefits the students believe result from using those methods. In short, this means identifying and classifying the learning styles of the students.

Unfortunately, this identification and classification is not without its complications. The problem lies in how one defines and perceives learning styles. In a paper that addresses the topic of Japanese students' learning styles, Hyland (1993) states that a learning style can be referred to as "a person's natural, habitual, and preferred ways of learning" (p. 69). He then provides Keefe's (1987) popular definition of learning styles: "characteristic cognitive, affective, and psychological behaviors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact with, and respond to their learning environment" (p. 5).

At first glance, both of these definitions appear satisfactory and sufficient, as they intuitively encompass what it means to have a style or technique behind approaches to learning. Nevertheless, these definitions are not unproblematic when applied to students newly graduated from Japanese high schools. For such students, their "habitual," "preferred," and "stable" ways of approaching their learning may only be those methods they have used for years for university entrance examination preparation (e.g., rote memorization and constant reception of teacher authority). They may feel most comfortable with such methods and may feel uneasy or confused should they be asked complete tasks or attempt to learn via other approaches. If this is the case, students may not consider more personally beneficial and successful approaches to learning that do not include such previously used "habitual" methods. Just because a learning style is habitual does not necessarily make it appropriate for a particular learner.

Results from Hyland's (1994) survey with Japanese undergraduates showed that along with living in English-speaking countries, exposure to instructors who are native speakers of English worked to modify the students' learning styles. At the university level, students majoring in English as a foreign language are more likely to be exposed to native English instructors. However, it remains unclear if simple exposure to such instructors triggered a change in students' learning styles or if other factors were involved, such as general exposure to university life where entrance examinations no longer exist, which would, as a result, intuitively reduce the need for students to rely solely on memorization. Hyland (1993) even admits that though "it appears that foreign teachers may have an important influence on learning style preferences" (p. 80), the results of his study cannot be considered conclusive.

Talk of learning strategies involved with foreign language study usually centers on Oxford's

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). These strategies include Memory, Cognitive, Compensation, Metacognitive, Affective, and Social strategies. Mochizuki's (1999) use of the SILL with Japanese university students found that students do indeed use strategies for learning English, and that English majors used compensation, social, and metacognitive strategies more often than did science majors. Overall, the strategies the students used, from most frequent to least frequent, were: 1) compensation strategies, 2 and 3) cognitive strategies and social strategies, 4) metacognitive strategies, and 5) affective strategies. The implications for students using such strategies and what they mean for both instructors and students alike remains to be discerned.

Future research into the study habits of Japanese university students can therefore take the path of specifically examining what students' preferred methods of study are and, more importantly, why the students believe those methods are preferable. What is it about those methods that make them attractive? For instance, are the past study methods of memorization preferred because the students believe them to be helpful (which may be the case) or because they were the methods they were taught to use in junior high school and high school and because the students have not been exposed to any other study methods? Researchers and instructors are encouraged to ponder these and other questions so that students may be presented with a greater range of approaches more suitable to their individual styles and the unique conditions of their university courses and so that university language instructors may come to have a better understanding of the potential limitations behind their students lacking a sufficient arsenal of study habits.

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