

Japanese Students' Aversion for English and Their Learning Strategies

Marino Asakura

Abstract

English is the most important language in the international world and the author really likes English because it is fun to communicate with foreigners in English. However, there are many students who dislike English in Japan. In fact, some of the authors' friends at her university hate English. The author was shocked at such a situation and was interested in why there are two types of students, i.e., the ones who like English and the ones who dislike English. A questionnaire survey was conducted in May-July, 2012 and the participants were sixty-seven university students. The results indicated that an absolute difference between two types of students is whether they have one of the fundamental elements in English study or not, that is enough vocabulary. Acquiring enough vocabulary is important for students in order not to come to dislike English. And the results also indicated existence of two differences between two types of students in learning strategies: whether they are tough with failures or not, and whether they respect learning strategies or not. In addition, the results showed that students who have tolerance of failure have high scores in TOEIC. To raise TOEIC scores, it is important to continue to study patiently. In conclusion, it is very important to make English classes in schools full of learning and yet enjoyable at the same time in order not to make students dislike English. English teachers in junior high schools should establish good relations with students taking care of their adolescent hearts. And students who dislike English do not have the attitude of tolerance of failure because they have experienced very shameful situations in the classroom, so English teachers should be careful of own words in English class. As for inevitable failures, teachers should try to make students have tolerance of failure.

The relationship between pronunciation and motivation of Japanese EFL learners

Hideki Tani

Abstract

In Japanese English education, pronunciation is not regarded very important although acquiring proper pronunciation is actually an essential element. However, through personal experiences of

the present author, he suspects that there could be some the relationship between the improvements of the pronunciation skills of the Japanese EFL learners and their motivational change. The present study was thus conducted to investigate the existence of such a correlation. There are two research questions for this study (1) “Can short-term pronunciation practice improve the learners’ pronunciation skill?” and (2) “How much can pronunciation practice motivate learners to learn English?” Six university students participated in the study. The participants were asked to take four pronunciation tests and a questionnaire which asked the motivational aspects of the participants. After that, the present author provided them with four sessions of pronunciation lessons. Then, the same pronunciation tests and the questionnaires were taken by the participants right after the final pronunciation lesson. The pronunciation lessons improved the pronunciation skills of the participants. However, the improvements of the pronunciation skill did not lead to a statistically significant change in the motivational aspects of the participants. Although the present study could not find the link between the improvements of the pronunciation skill and the motivational change of the participants, the author observed some possibilities of having improved the learners’ motivation in the pronunciation lessons. Further studies with a larger scale need to be conducted to find out the relationship pursued in the study.

The Gap between Integrated and Unintegrated Productive Skills in English

Madoka Ogawa

Abstract

Recently, the focus of English education has been shifting to communication. According to MEXT (2009), four integrated skills need to be fostered in high school English classes. Some students, however, have difficulties to utilize English words in integrated manners even if they can translate the words from Japanese to English in word tests. In order to investigate the gap between the integrated and the unintegrated skills in English, this study on vocabulary was conducted. In this study, a pilot test, a speaking test, and a vocabulary test were conducted, and a questionnaire about their English education background was also administered. 30 participants were asked to cooperate with the study on a voluntary basis. As a result of the investigation, a statistically significant difference was found between the integrated and the unintegrated skills in English. Besides, the correlations of the vocabulary test, the speaking test, the amount of English exposed in high school

English classroom, and their TOEIC score were investigated in this study. However, the correlations among them could not be revealed because of the heavily skewed data which of the speaking test and the amount of English exposed in high school English classroom. In conclusion, it became clear that many learners who can translate words from Japanese to English in the vocabulary tests, but that they have difficulties to utilize the words in speaking.

Teachers' Oral Input in the Introductory English Classes in Junior High Schools

Anzu Sugimoto

Abstract

Since 2011, compulsory English education has been taught in public elementary schools in Japan. Because of this change, English in junior high schools is not the beginning of English education anymore. Recent first-year students have already had some English at the beginning of junior high schools. Therefore there should be some changes of English classes in junior high schools. The present research is conducted to investigate how much and what types of oral input teachers give in the introductory English classes in junior high schools and if the teachers' oral input has changed compared to the time when English was not taught in elementary schools (10 or more years ago). The research was conducted with a questionnaire and interviews with junior high school English teachers in Kyoto city. The questionnaire asks the teachers to score how often they used English utterances in the introductory classes in the present and in the past. The present research investigated that the teachers gave students oral input frequently for classroom management, explanation and introduction of words, phrases, and sentences, and small talk or casual communication with students in the present. The most frequently used functions are the same as the past and all the utterance types increased compared to the past. Significant differences were revealed for all the utterance types except two types (teaching cultural background and others). The teachers use more English at most times now than they did in the past. It was also found through the interviews that the most teachers have noticed different characteristics among students compared to ones in the past. In conclusion, Foreign Language Activities influences students' English abilities and their interests/attitudes toward studying English, which lead the teachers to increase their oral input in the class these days.

**The effect of audio information on the memorization of words
at the receptive level**
Sari Yamashita

Abstract

Vocabulary learning is one of the most important topics in English learning. Many learners have struggle with memorizing words, and have difficulties to express their feelings fully in English since they do not have enough vocabulary knowledge. Many researchers have done various kinds of experiments to find the best way of memorizing words. However, no concrete method has been found to be useful for English learners. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate to find the useful way for memorizing English words. In particular, this study focused on the power of listening, which Matsuno (2001) explained effective. To verify his opinion, the author asked 66 participants for cooperation, and divided them into three groups. These three groups of participants were asked to memorize 15 target words by using a different method given to each group, and took an immediate posttest immediately after memorizing them. Exactly one week after the immediate test, the participants took the delayed test. All in all, the results indicated that the method including the listening element can be relatively more effective only a short time and it does not prove to be effective for a long time.