

# 日本の大学生に、自ら興味をもち英語を学びたいという気にさせる学習方法と教え方で英語学習に興味をもたせる方法

## Improving Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation in Japanese University Students

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### 要 約

これまで、第二外国語としての英語教育の論文の中には、教わる側（生徒）にとってのレポートを数多く読んだことがあるのですが、教える側（先生）についての考えを論じたものは、すくないのではないかと。教わる側は、教える側から与えられる魅力によって、その興味を引き出され、積極的になれるのではないのでしょうか。

多くの大学生が英語学習に興味をもたない4つの理由

- 1) 大学生は、過去の受験学習につかれています。  
希望の大学へ入学できなかった。
- 2) 過去の学習の中に、悪い経験がある。
- 3) ネイティブな外国人教師の授業と、これまでの日本的な授業スタイルの違いに戸惑っている。
- 4) 外国人教師の思う大学生とはこういうもの（自ら学習したくて大学に来ている）という定義と日本の大学生（進級・卒業するためにやらなければならない、させられている）とのギャップがある。

よくなるための4つの方法

- 1) 議義要目と採点方法
- 2) 他の教師とのコミュニケーション
- 3) 教え方
- 4) 学生の興味をひく授業内容もまげてあげる。

最近の教え方など、先生同士相互の意見交換により、学生に興味をもたせる授業を研究する必要がある。学生と講義要目を一緒に考えさせることにより、自らのやる気を起こさせることができる。

Over the past twenty years teaching English to speakers of languages other than English has changed from an aspect of teaching, to a much researched and studied profession

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with specifically trained teachers teaching solely ESL, using specifically developed resources and studying subject related textbooks to hone their skills. Much emphasis has been placed on teaching and educational syllabus for ESL. Various researchers have put forward their views on successful teaching of ESL and how to improve teaching skills. There are two things I have noticed about research into ESL. Firstly, a large percentage of studies are concerned with or related to teaching, and only a small percentage to learning. By this I mean that research often looks at teachers and what they can do to improve their teaching, whereas little research is done on how students can improve their learning skills. We must remember that many ESL students are adults or high school aged and have the ability to comprehend how they are learning and will be responsive to information pertaining to improving their learning skills. The second point is that there are many different types of students who learn ESL and factors such as personal, social and reasons for study play a large part in the attitude of the student. This will in turn affect the style of teaching of the teacher. It is naive for a teacher to assume that they have their own style of teaching which works effectively for all types of students.

Many studies of ESL students are carried out in English speaking countries. If an ESL student is living in an English speaking country, not only do they have constant exposure to the language, but are often intrinsically motivated to learn in order to improve their quality of life. This notion of improving one's life quality is also an intrinsic motivational factor for ESL students in countries with low socio-economic levels. In these situations English is often regarded as a 'ticket out' or a chance for better employment.

Obviously if a student's intrinsic motivation level is high then the need for extrinsic motivation is less. (Ideally both levels should be high.) Money, too is a very strong motivational force. If students are paying for ESL lessons they will tend to be highly motivated, especially if it is their own money and in their own private time, as in the case of private conversation classes. These students will tend to be more intrinsically motivated than college or study school students whose fees are often paid for by their parents.

In this paper I wish to look at students who have a low level of intrinsic motivation and ways to promote ESL learning through a combination of extrinsic motivation and a raising of intrinsic motivation. The target group I have in mind are university students of English (not as a major), in Japan.

Japan is a country with a very high employment rate, with unemployment mainly by choice and said to be at around 2-3%. The country has a high socio-economic rate and more importantly the average citizen has a very high disposable income level. English study is compulsory at junior high school, senior high school and for the first and sometimes second year of university. While English study is compulsory for all students, the language itself will, for a vast majority of the these students, have no influence on future employment prospects and salary levels. This, along with no need to travel abroad in search of a better life or wage, leaves many people wondering 'why' they are burdened with the necessity of English study. While languages are available to Australian students, none are nationally compulsory. The situation in Japan is similar to the compulsory study of French in Canada. However while many Canadian students (especially from

western provinces) dislike studying French, at least there is a French speaking province within their country. The same cannot be said for Japan and English. This problem is compounded by the fact that in Japan, English is often taught by Japanese who themselves were raised in the Japanese education system and often know no other system. ESL is taught by these teachers (while their English is often far from adequate) the same way as Japanese teachers teach Mathematics, History or Japanese; as a process of difficult, laborious and uninteresting rote learning. I have often watched in amazement as high school students, who can barely introduce themselves in English, try to memorize (not understand) complex grammatical rules of English, or speak, in Japanese only, to people who have spent two years of university studying Shakespearian literature.

So the question I wish to raise in this paper is; How can, given these circumstances, teachers adapt their style and syllabus to motivate their students to firstly, enjoy studying English and secondly, actually reach a competent level of English communication? While intrinsic motivation levels differ from person to person, I shall try to describe what the level of motivation in average Japanese university students is.

At Shinshu University, where I lecture once a week, one of my colleagues produced a lengthy study in April 1997 titled, 'The Ideal Professor Report'. While this was not linked to ESL, it did provide some interesting insights into students' perception of teachers and education as well as their own personal motivation.

Students from eight different faculties were asked; 'I have dreamt of a job or activity I want to do in my adult life.' To this statement 63% replied 'yes' while 35% said 'no'. Results varied between faculties, Agriculture, Education, Arts and Medicine recorded more 'yes' votes, However Fiber Studies, Economics and Science and Technology recorded even results. Meskens 97 p59. These results show that Japanese students are often not driven by future dreams to put an effort into their studies. This has a direct correlation to their motivation levels and must be kept in mind when assessing the success of attempting to increase motivation levels in students.

In this report I will first, look at the motivation level in Japanese students, or more precisely the lack of this motivation. I will look at the reasons as to why this lack of motivation exists in so many university students. I will then secondly, discuss ways in which teachers may be able to increase both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in university students with specific reference to Nagano University, Nagano Prefecture, Japan, where I am a lecturer. From ideas contained in this paper I will present a list of suggestions to lecturers from the English department for discussion.

In looking at motivational levels in Japanese University students one should first consider reasons why so many students have a negative attitude toward studying English. I shall now try to explain four main reasons as to why this happens.

First; When Japanese students arrive at university they are mentally tired, wish to relax and enjoy their life and often have a sense of failure because they have failed to get into the university of their choice. Kelly provides an analogy, 'lives flow down rigid social waterways, and like the real canals in Japan, the current is fast, deep and irresistible.' Kelly 92 p172. Failure to get into the right universities brands them for life as government institutions and large companies generally only hire graduates from certain

select universities. Although the stoicism of the Japanese eventually enables them to accept their lot, acceptance is not immediate, especially only two months after the exams. They are tired from the intense pressure of studying in junior high school and high school which culminates in the university entrance exams. In some cases they have studied for a year or two after finishing high school, to get into a top university. They wish to enjoy extra curricular activities where they can make friends and establish relationships. Due to the pressure of study many sacrificed these opportunities in junior high school and high school. When they have been in a club, often the regime has been strict and austere. This is not to say that some university clubs are not strict and austere but many students want the choice between the two kinds.

Second; Whatever their degree of success or failure, students have often had a variety of experiences in ESL study, prior to coming to university, some of which result in negative attitudes, and subsequently low intrinsic motivation, or no motivation whatsoever.

Third; Students sometimes do not know how to react to or perform with a foreign teacher. They do have a cultural role model of expected teacher behavior. Students may realize that their education system has left them unprepared for cross cultural communication and this forces them to venture into the unknown. However, when confused or uncertain students will generally retreat to their Japanese cultural base.

Fourth; The perceptions and expectations of student behavior by many foreign teachers are vastly different to those of students themselves. Consequently many teachers are frustrated with the lack of responsiveness or spontaneity of many Japanese students. This is sometimes due to a lack of understanding of the Japanese culture and education system on the part of foreign teachers. There are a number of books available which give advice about techniques, materials and approaches that may help to overcome such problems. (Refer to Kelly '92 and Nozaki '92 in Wadden '92 in the bibliography). However, some teachers seek to impose a regime which forces students to speak and penalizes those who do not. The teacher will not be spoken to about their teaching style because it is very unusual for Japanese students to lodge a formal complaint. However, the teacher will probably be regarded as a bully and most likely still not get their desired response.

As I have mentioned, many students commence their university education after suffering negative experiences related to studying English at high school. I shall now look at these types of negative experiences which often occur within Keller's framework of 1-Interest, 2-Relevance and 3-expectancy. What follows these three is 4-Outcomes.

#### Interest.

The individual; Elementary school children have varying degrees of awareness of the existence of English as a different language but most regard words such as company names or trademarks as 'cool'. There is a fascination present when entering junior high school which is quickly replaced by a variety of negative attitudes as the teaching methods do not meet the prior conceptions.

The classroom; Particular problems are often highlighted by students, 1-Pronunciation. Of course the teaching of this varies from school to school but for Japanese used to a

mono-syllabic system, syllable timed English is difficult to understand. While some teachers offer listening practice of the text with tapes, there are few explanations of how to pronounce phonemes. Therefore an opportunity to heighten kinesthetic awareness is lost. Similarly there seems to be no overt explanation of the vowel system. Many of the junior high school texts have this information in the front or back but it is left to the students to comprehend it by themselves. The worst scenario is when the students are asked to transcribe the text in Katakana, resulting in serious negative transfer. Although the placing of the main stress in a word is taught, no information is given about the weakening of unstressed vowels. For some students who have more natural sound discriminatory ability or more opportunity to listen to English, the difficulties of the pronunciation are overcome, but for many it is a serious stumbling block. This problem is closely related to spelling.

Spelling; To encounter a language which is not written as it is pronounced, places an extra burden on junior high school students already faced with having to absorb vast quantities of information. To many it appears to be a code with no logic. Although learning written Japanese is difficult it is at least pronounced as it is written.

Theory; While some students may try to look for patterns in English to help them there is a strong underlying resentment at being told to remember things with no apparent reason.

Memorization; Students are often told to learn twenty English words a day. Some memorize whole dictionaries. Generally students are told what areas will be tested and cram these prior to exams. However as the load increases, students find it increasingly difficult to keep up. Many come to find that their lack of theory compounds this.

Teaching Method and Teacher Differences; The standard teaching method of English teachers in Japanese high schools is grammar translation, so lessons are conducted mainly in Japanese. Teachers are required to follow a set text. The text subjects such as politics or environmental problems are regarded as being heavy and boring. There is often frustration at not having the opportunity to ask questions.

Institution/Society; While the elementary school provides a warm atmosphere and make classes interesting this is not the case in many junior or senior high schools.

#### Relevance.

The individual; while many students can see the value of English in international fields, most students feel that it has little value within Japan.

The Classroom; 'Emphasis is placed on performance goals in order to gain positive judgments of competence rather than on learning goals which seek to increase competence.' Dweck '86 p1041. Many students question the present worth in terms of the intrinsic value of the learning content and also the future usefulness. (Two of Keller's Relevance Strategies sub-categories '87 p4).

Institution/Society; Duke sees the Japanese school as seeking to produce, 'The Literate Worker' and 'The Competent Worker' in elementary school. Duke '86 Ch 2, 3, 4. White stresses the elementary school's social mores of harmony and cooperation. White '87 pp 110-134. These values are replaced in junior and senior high school with emphasis of the

group over the individual which will produce 'The Loyal Worker'. Duke '86 Ch 5.

#### Expectancy.

The individual; Dweck refers to the difference in behavior patterns when comparing performance and learning goals in cases where students' confidence in their own ability is low. Beebe's study of successful speakers (1992) showed that despite poor or average grades these students were resourceful and persistent in trying to overcome these difficulties. This confirms Ames who states, 'In contrast, children with learning goals tend to use obstacles as a cue to increase their effort or to analyze and vary their strategies which often results in improved performance in the face of obstacles,' In Dweck '86 p1042. However these students are usually not the norm.

The classroom; Keller relates expectancy closely with confidence strategies. The classroom environment in Japan does very little to nurture confidence. Most students are not expected to be able to understand the English taught in lessons in the final stages of their high school years.

Institution/Society; It is almost as if the system is designed to promote failure. It is part of the stratification process and although society is aware of its shortcomings it is a case of, 'it can't be helped', a very common expression in Japan.

Keeping these reasons for lack of intrinsic motivation in mind, I will now look at the situation regarding motivation at a university where I am currently employed.

At Nagano University there is a somewhat negative approach to English, not only by many of the students but by some of the lecturers as well. While I am sure these lecturers would strongly disagree with me on this point, claiming to have a positive attitude, it is their style of teaching that I see as negative. The lecturers receive a class full of mentally drained young adults who have not only been force fed their education but have also been coddled. Due to this the students are often not used to expressing what they think or feel. If university lecturers treat their students in a similar manner to high school teachers, the negative aspects of Japanese secondary education English will be reinforced. When this happens the concepts of personal fulfillment and a relationship between language study and personal interests will not have a chance to present themselves to the students.

I see four areas where changes to the English Language Department could be made at Nagano University. 1 Syllabus and marking procedures should be revised. 2 There should be more communication between lecturers, looking at, 3 new styles of teaching, and then, when teachers are ready to make adjustments, 4 a change in the lesson structure based on the desires and needs of the students.

1: The syllabus as it stands at the moment is generally decided by the lecturer, who chooses the text to be used and the areas studied as well as tests, reports and how the student is graded. Classes are split between speaking, reading and writing and between first year and second year students. Over two years all students must complete three of these six subjects. There should be more communication between lecturers, with the same grading system used by all lecturers. There should be more interim tests to emphasize the need for constant studying instead of cramming for one final test. English classes

should not be split along the lines of speaking, reading and writing, but more along the lines of proficiency in English. Because English is not a Major study at Nagano University there is a vast range in the English ability of students entering. Upon entering students then choose an English class with little attention paid their proficiency level. This makes the classes boring for proficient students and difficult for those who are non-proficient. Both of these types of students will find being motivated to learn English more difficult than it has to be.

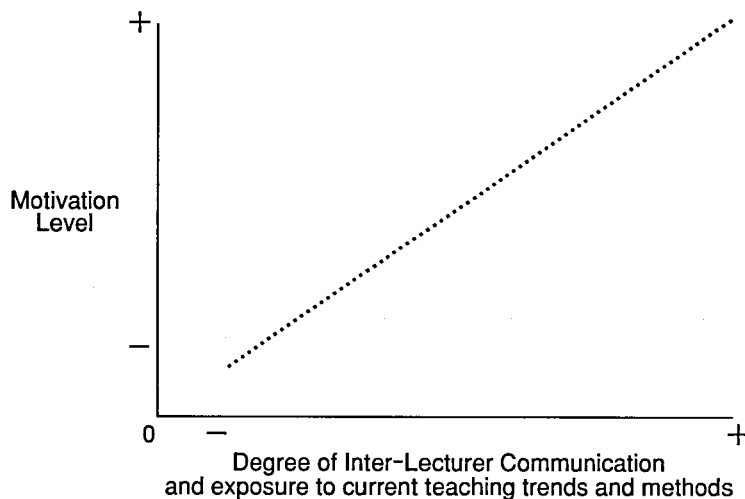
2: Lecturers should talk more about what they are teaching and how they go about teaching it with each other. This would reduce the chance of the same thing being taught by lecturers and it would be a chance to share and learn new ideas, techniques and styles. Lecturers could observe each other and provide feedback both positive and constructive. This communication between lecturers would lead to an increase in motivation in the lecturers, give the department an air of professionalism and perhaps be a stimulus for some of the lecturers to put more effort into their classes.

3: There is often a tendency among lecturers to repeat the same classes year after year, without critical appraisal. There are a number of journals and groups such as JALT (Japanese Association of Language Teachers) who hold conferences which the lecturers could read and attend. This combined with the previously mentioned communication with each other would greatly increase the interest level in their lessons, (see Graph 1). This in turn would be a stimulus and therefore incentive for many students, thus providing them with extrinsic motivation in relation to their learning of English.

4: Finally, when the lecturers have readied themselves for chages to their syllabus, lesson content, communication level and for some, their whole way of life, the stage is set for the mammoth task of eliciting personal input from the students. As I have said earlier, The Japanese student, up to university level, has rarely been asked to give an

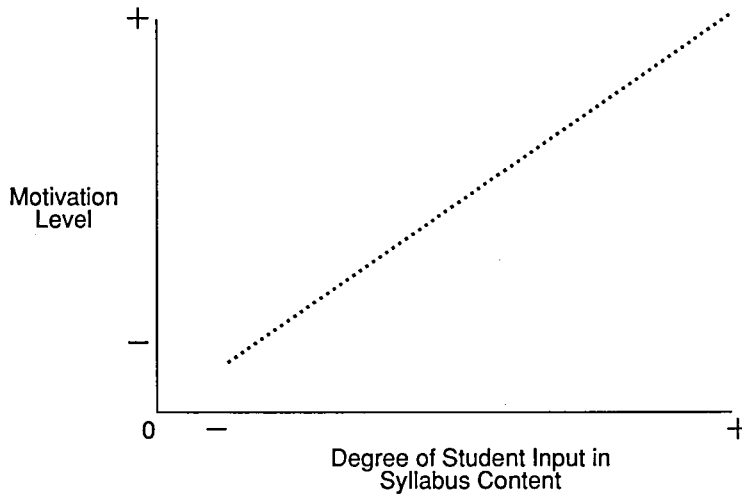
Graph 1.

Extrinsic Motivation in University Students



Graph 2.

## Intrinsic Motivation in University Students



opinion and most do not expect this to change upon entering university. However if students are given the chance to have a say in what they want to get out of their education and what they want to learn in their lessons, more than they have in the past, their lecturers will be able to tailor their lessons to suit the needs of their students to some degree. Perhaps if students are split by ability, the higher the level, the greater the input. If the students realize that they have had a say in what they are learning, (see Graph 2) they will be in a situation where they naturally want to increase what I believe to be the most important ingredient in second language acquisition, their level of intrinsic motivation.

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