

LEARNING LEARNING

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学 習 の 学 習

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4. A Do you feel the same when you are speaking Japanese in front of class? Or is it only when you give presentations in English?
5. L (Thinks about it) um. A little the same. I...I don't like presentation.
6. A (Waits to respond to allow the learner to say more...silence...) Okay. Can you think of a situation when you are doing a presentation (pause) Okay? Now, can you tell me what the problem is?
7. L mm, I don't remember all the words sometimes. I don't want to make mistake.
8. A So, you have difficulty trying to remember the words for your speech.
9. L Yes. (silence)
10. A Can you tell me how you prepare for your presentation?
11. L uh? one more?
12. A When you have to speak in front of people, how do you practice?
13. L I, I write down the presentation and memorize it. But I forget words sometimes and get nervous. Then I have to read the paper and I lose points because the teacher want eye contact.
14. A So, is memorizing your presentation helpful?
15. L (Thinks) Yes...No...Sometimes it's difficult
16. A Okay, so memorizing is not very useful to you. Can you think of a better way to prepare for presentations?
17. L Eh?...eeeh?
18. A What can you do to remember words?
19. L (Silence) ...
20. A (Waits) ...
21. L (More silence) ...
22. A How do you study vocabulary?
23. L I make vocabulary cards and write sentence and I review the cards on the train.
24. A That's an excellent idea! Can you think of how you can do the same thing for your presentations?
25. L I write my presentation on cards and study it?
26. A You could do that. But wouldn't it be difficult to write the whole presentation on cards?
27. L (Thinks) eeh?..what should I do then?
28. A Well, how about making note cards?
29. L Note card?

▷ FEATURE ARTICLE: MCCARTHY

30. A When I have to give a speech, I find it useful to make small note cards with important points written on it. This way, I can remember what I want to say easier. Do you know what I mean?
31. L Mm, maybe
32. A (Shows learner how to make a note card and demonstrates how to use it) Does this seem useful to you?
33. L Ahh. I think useful. I can try.
34. A How about we make one now, okay? (Makes sample with learner using information from presentation). Now, let's see if it works for you. Can you do a one-minute presentation for me?
35. L Eh? Now?
36. A Yes, just one minute. Use the card for reference.
37. L (Gives one minute presentation)
38. A (Listens attentively) Well done Up a Creek. Do you think this will help you to remember words for your presentation?
39. L mm, I think useful. I will try. I can practice with Paddle.
40. A Sounds good! Please come and see me again and let me know if the note cards helped you.
41. L Okay. Thank you

Appendix 2: An examination of the macro- and micro-skills used in the advising session

Line	Skill	Comment
2	Supporting Questioning	The advisor starts of with a positive comment to create trust. Then, immediately begins questioning to encourage the learner to think about the problem.
4	Linking	The advisor seeks to discover if it is a language problem or an affective issue. The learner's response does not add much clarity.
6	Attending Questioning	The advisor waits for the learner to speak rather than filling the empty silence. When there is no response, the advisor resumes the same line of questioning
8	Restating	The advisor confirms the problem ensuring that both parties are working towards the same goal.
10	Questioning	The advisor resumes the line of questioning to try to get to the root of the problem.
12	Paraphrasing	Simplifying the question but remaining focused on the message. The learner offers a more substantial reason for not liking presentations than "My English is not good."

14	Questioning Guiding	The advisor tries to help the learner explore past study habits to see how effective they are. It is important for the learner to understand for himself if the learning strategy is useful. Only then can he be open to new experiences.
16	Restating Guiding	By repeating this, the learner is committing himself to a new or different study method. The advisor tries to help the learner develop a new learning strategy.
18	Questioning	The learner having abandoned his method of learning is at a loss as to what to do next. The advisor continues the questioning strategy in the hope that the learner discovers a new way of learning.
20	Attending	The advisor gives the learner time to formulate a reply. When there is still no reply, the advisor tries yet another line of questioning.
22	Questioning	The advisor tries to provide a connection to the learner's present study habits and the learning problem, in the hope that the learner can find a way to study before the advisor makes a suggestion.
24	Giving feedback/ Supporting / Guiding	The advisor acknowledges and praises the effort the learner is making. The advisor continues to elicit to try and get the learner to formulate a new strategy
26	Supporting Guiding	Even though the learner has not arrived at a manageable goal, he is thinking of a new method showing a new self-awareness The advisor continues the questioning to encourage deeper thought
28	Guiding	As the learner seems to be getting frustrated, the advisor makes a suggestion
30	Empathizing	This shows the learner that the advisor understands and shares his experience
32	Modeling	This helps the learner to understand how to employ the new method
34 & 36	Modeling	It is important for the learner to leave a session with something concrete. It could be just a list of points raised by the learner during the session, but it helps the learner to feel a sense of accomplishment.
38	Attending Summarizing	To focus attention on the learner To bring the learner back to the main focus of the discourse
40	Conclusion	Bringing the session to an end and encouraging the learner to come back for a follow-up to check progress.

AN ANALYSIS OF LEARNER STRATEGIES AND LEARNER AUTONOMY IN JAPANESE BOOKS FOR ENGLISH STUDY

英語学習本を通じて見られる学習ストラテジー: 学習者自律への影響

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本 研究の目的は、日本で出版されている英語学習本を通じ、日本のコンテキストにおける英語自律学習の動向を明らかにすることである。本稿では、学習ストラテジーと学習者自律に関する先行研究に言及し、30人の著者による英語学習本の中で紹介されている学習方法や学習ストラテジーを検討する。この結果、すべての英語学習本は、self-management ストラテジーの重要性を主張するという点で一致する一方、日本のコンテキストにおいて英語学習者の自律心を育成するのにふさわしい日本特有の学習方法があることが明らかになった。本稿は、これらの結果を踏まえ、日本の英語教育における学習ストラテジー訓練の導入について議論する。



The aim of this study is to investigate learner autonomy in the Japanese context through a

survey of Japanese books for English self-study. The paper begins by reviewing the literature on learner strategies and learner autonomy before presenting a survey of 30 self-help guides to learning English published in Japan. The survey found that, similar to previous research on learner strategies, an emphasis on self-management strategies was a common feature in all the self-study guides. However, the survey also revealed that the Japanese self-study guides shared some approaches that are particularly appropriate for fostering learner autonomy in the Japanese context. The paper ends by discussing these approaches and considering measures for introducing strategy training in Japanese classroom settings.

INTRODUCTION

English language teaching (ELT) in Japan has been gradually changing. With a goal, set by the Ministry of Education, of cultivating 'Japanese with English Abilities' (MEXT 2002), the focus of ELT has shifted from teaching the grammatical aspects to developing communicative language proficiency. However, Japanese teachers of English in middle and high schools are inclined to use traditional approaches such as Grammar-Translation or Audiolingual methods because they believe that success in the university entrance examinations hinges on accurate memorization of vocabulary and discrete grammatical items rather than language use. The pressure exerted on students and teachers to succeed in entrance examinations leads to the situation where teachers are unwilling to change their teaching practice and relinquish control over their students' learning and students are also reluctant to assume control themselves.

At the same time, the fact is that, even in this environment, some Japanese learners of English do become successful autonomous learners. The concept of learner autonomy is very important in considering the time currently given to English education. Classes present some limitations to what students can learn, but autonomous language learning ability fostered through a class is unlimited. Developing learner autonomy enables students to be more self-directed and to understand how they can learn English by themselves both inside and outside class.

From this viewpoint, understanding successful learners' strategy use can provide students with possibilities to gain success in language learning and more specifically, to learn to listen to, speak, read, and write the target language for communicative purposes even in an unsupportive environment where English is taught as a means for passing entrance examinations.

This study starts with a review of research into learner strategies and considers the importance of particular strategies for learner autonomy. Next, a survey of 30 Japanese self-help guides to learning English is presented and the strategies for learning that are introduced in these guides are analyzed and discussed. Lastly, this study provides suggestions regarding how Japanese teachers of English can introduce strategy training in classroom settings.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEARNER STRATEGIES AND LEARNER AUTONOMY

Learner strategies facilitate language learning and contribute to L2 development. Richards and Schmidt (2002) state that an L2 learning strategy is an intentional or potentially intentional behavior implemented with the goal of learning. In addition, Wenden (1991) defines learner strategies as "mental steps or operations that learners use to learn a new language and to regulate their efforts to do so" (p.18) and develops her argument: active or successful language learners are inclined to be willing to use these strategies in language learning, but what strategies can be used varies according to the learner. In short, strategy use is determined by individual differences including attitudes, aptitudes, preferences or learning styles, and it has positive impacts on L2 learning.

Previous studies have indicated the importance of developing metacognitive strategies to foster learner autonomy (e.g. Thanasoulas, 2000; Wenden, 1991). Wenden (1991) categorizes learner strategies into two groups: cognitive (select input, comprehend input, store input and retrieve input); and self-management (planning, monitoring and evaluating), and highlights the significance of developing the latter strategies to encourage learners to become self-directed. Metacognitive strategies, which can allow learn-

ers to use any appropriate strategies for tasks or their goals, are regarded as one of the most important factors in language learning. Success in learning very much depends on learners having a responsible attitude toward their own learning (Sharle & Szabo, 2000). Therefore, learners are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility and have positive attitudes in making decisions regarding their learning so as to become autonomous.

Autonomous learners have a capacity to use metacognitive strategies and utilize other strategies appropriate for their purposes in language learning. Wenden (1991) points out two attitudes necessary for promoting learner autonomy: "willingness to take responsibility for one's learning and confidence in one's ability as a learner" (p.59). As has been mentioned above, Japanese high school classrooms tend not to foster these attitudes in students, due to an anxiety about university entrance examinations which discourages both teachers and students from adopting a more learner-centered approach. It is interesting, therefore, to examine a body of literature that has been produced in the Japanese context which advocates autonomous learning.

In this study, two questions will be addressed:

- Do Japanese self-study guides for English share a common view of learner strategies and learner autonomy with that defined by scholars?
- What strategies do these guides advocate to develop communicative language proficiency in an unsupportive environment where success depends largely on their individual efforts and initiative?

SURVEY

In order to investigate the relationship between learner strategies and learner autonomy, 30 self-study guides of English were randomly selected on the basis of the title of books such as 'this is how I learned English' or 'this is how I mastered English' (see Appendix 1). The approaches to English learning presented in the books were associated explicitly with the authors who are assumed to be highly successful or communicative English learners. They had some commonalities

in their background: they were born in Japan; they began to study English, in earnest, after the age of 11 or 12; they had studied English primarily in Japan without studying abroad in English speaking countries; they had few situations where English could be used in their daily lives; and they currently worked using English.

Data were collected by extracting descriptions of learning styles from each book. Since all the books were published in Japanese, data presented in this study have been translated from Japanese to English. Data analysis consisted of the grouping of similar descriptions of learner strategies given by 30 authors and counting how many of them used each category of learner strategies so as to clarify common strategy-use among them.

RESULTS

SELF-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Table 1 shows the 30 authors' English learning approaches. Their approaches varied from author to author, but all of them reported the intentional creation of opportunities for themselves to use English in their daily lives and describe how they found their own ways to learn

the language by trial and error. In addition, almost all authors report becoming responsible for their own learning by setting up short-term and long-term goals and keeping a strong motivation to achieve their goals. In short, a commonality among these learners was the use of self-management strategies in their learning.

Most of the authors seemed to regard language learning as a long process, indicating that they studied English everyday with continuation and repetition. In a series of learning processes, they emphasized the significance of keeping a balance between input and output. Specifically, one author recommended focusing on 'input' in the early stages of language learning, and then putting a special importance of generating output of what was learned. In addition, keeping an equal balance among the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, rather than focusing on just one skill was also an important strategy in their language learning,

Along with these learning approaches, minor and unique views included: ignoring strange 'superstitions' or 'delusions' (e.g. it is impossible to learn English without studying abroad for a long time); or working on English learning

Table 1: Learning strategies in 30 Japanese self-study guides to English (n=30)

Learning Strategies	Number
Intentionally creating one's own opportunities to use English.	30
Finding one's own way to learn English (with trial and error).	30
Studying English with a strong motivation while setting up short term and long term goals.	26
Studying English every day (with continuation and with repetition). Regarding English study as a habitual action.	26
Putting a special emphasis on 'quantity' rather than 'quality'.	18
Spend much time on input at the beginning stage and then focus more on output. Keep a balance between input and output in learning	17
Making errors work. (Studying English without being worried about mistakes)	15
Studying listening, speaking, reading, and writing equally, not focusing on just one skill.	6
Selecting teaching materials appropriate for one's own ability by taking TOEFL or TOEIC.	5
Finding weak points in English learning and resolving.	5

while imagining oneself as a successful language learner.

One of the principal findings is that the authors of the self-study guides that were surveyed all presented themselves as autonomous learners who have a positive attitude towards language learning and take charge of their learning. As the above table illustrates, authors were inclined to find and apply their own approaches to their English learning and to study the target language with a strong motivation while setting up not only short-term but also long-term goals in their language learning. These features mirror the theory of autonomy and learner strategies: successful or active learners are those who take “responsibility for one’s own learning and confidence in one’s ability as a learner” (Wenden, 1991, p. 59). They also support the concept which considers autonomy as “learner’s internal attitude” (Usuki, 2002, p.1).

JAPAN-SPECIFIC LEARNING STRATEGIES

While the findings in this study support the results of previous studies of learner autonomy, they also reveal a variety of unique learner strategies or learning approaches among this group of successful Japanese learners of English which related specifically to English learners in the Japanese context (see Appendix 2).

For instance, all the guides advocated intentionally creating situations where they had to use English for their self-study. This approach is closely related to one of the typical features of language learning in EFL Japanese contexts: a limited opportunity to use the target language in their daily lives. Textbooks are the primary mediator between learners and English in and out of class, and this limitation restricts their development of English proficiency in EFL contexts (Iida, 2009). A major reason why Japanese learners have been so dependent on the textbooks is not simply because the use of textbooks issued by the Ministry of Education is mandatory in public schools, but because the content of textbooks (e.g. grammatical structures and vocabulary items) and that of the nationwide university entrance examination, the National Center Test for University Admissions, are inseparable. Hence, Japanese learners must study English primarily using the textbooks to earn high scores

and pass the examination. From this viewpoint, it was crucial for authors to find ample opportunities to use English by going beyond classroom settings and to incorporate their English use into their lives in order to compensate for the limited time and opportunity to use the target language. This perspective is also associated with the concept of ‘quantity’ rather than ‘quality’ in their self-study. ‘Quantity’ referred to the amount of time to practice English and thus the word, ‘repetition’, ‘continuation’, or ‘habit’ was the key to English language learning.

Self-study guides advocated a positive attitude toward language learning. Some authors studied English by making errors work; others emphasized the importance of ‘forgetting’ and developed a recursive process of ‘memorizing-forgetting-memorizing.’ They regarded ‘error’ and ‘forgetting’ as being necessary in language learning. This approach provides an interesting relationship between autonomous learning through self-study and English learning in the classroom. In general, EFL Japanese students are not allowed to make mistakes in the classroom, where ‘accuracy’ is much more focused on than ‘fluency’, and those who make many mistakes and cannot memorize grammatical features are labeled as less successful learners. On the other hand, the authors of English self-study books seemed to consider that making errors or forgetting is a natural process in language learning which no one can avoid as they try to improve their language proficiency. That is why the concept of ‘repetition’ or ‘continuation’ was important to their learning. In this way, situating language learning as an on-going process could allow these authors to take a positive attitude towards their learning while reducing the degree of negative feelings regarding mistakes and forgetting which affect L2 learning.

In addition, some of the self-study books indicated the significance of equally developing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills through maintaining a good balance of the four skills in self-study. Developing both receptive and productive skills in self-study was important to this group of successful learners, because the English which they had been taught in school was focused on grammar and translation from L1 to L2, and language learning was not for

communicative purposes. For that reason, they needed to take approaches different from what was experienced in preparing for high school or college entrance examinations. More specifically, many of them attempted the following: to listen to authentic English (e.g. NHK [Nihon Hoso Kyokai] radio programs, AFN, FEN, CNN, BBC, etc...); to read interesting publications (e.g. Time, Newsweek, Readers Digest, novels, etc...); and to speak and write English in the same way as native speakers of English do. In other words, imitation is also another crucial strategy. Thus, finding access to 'authentic' English and imitating are the key strategies which could enable this group of Japanese learners of English to be successful without studying abroad in English speaking countries.

SUPPLEMENTING CLASSROOM ENGLISH

Learner strategies which were described in Japanese books on English study demonstrate some successful models of English learning. These models are necessary not only for students but for teachers also. Japanese teachers of English are required to teach English within a limited context, but it is quite difficult to teach every aspect of the target language within the school curriculum. Hence, the concept of learner autonomy comes to be important, and it is necessary to teach students what strategies are available and how the strategies can be used in language learning. Strategy-training is one of the crucial perspectives in EFL contexts to encourage students to become self-directed. While Japanese books for English study illustrate effective learner strategies and learning styles for EFL Japanese students, teachers should keep in mind that these strategies are not everything and that they are not always applicable to every student. It is, therefore, crucial for Japanese teachers of English to show students as many strategies as possible and have them choose ones which are most appropriate for their own language learning.

As long as entrance examinations keep pressure on both teachers and students, few people from either group are likely to think of the development of learner autonomy as being actually desirable and practicable. In addition, it may be difficult for teachers to change their classroom

practices and approaches to enable students to become autonomous learners. However, as this study reveals, there do exist some suitable learner strategies for developing learner autonomy and some Japanese learners of English do become self-directed learners even in this unsupportive environment where English has been taught as a means for passing entrance examinations rather than for developing communication skills. Understanding these strategies will provide Japanese teachers of English with opportunities to gain awareness of the importance of fostering autonomous learners and to consider how effectively the teachers can introduce strategy training in a given context. Language learning is an on-going process and it may take a long time for EFL Japanese students to become autonomous learners; however, it is crucial for Japanese teachers of English to give students some clues to become self-directed in their language learning and help them to develop their autonomy in classroom settings by extending beyond the perspective that they have been studying English as a means for passing entrance examinations.

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▷ FEATURE ARTICLE: IIDA

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APPENDIX 1

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APPENDIX 2

30 AUTHORS' LEARNER STRATEGIES ACCORDING TO THE FOUR SKILLS LISTENING STRATEGIES

Listening to Japanese radio programs for English learning (e.g. NHK radio program).

- Listening intensively and gaining awareness of pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation.
- Imitating pronunciations of a native speaker of English.
- Memorizing structures by listening over and over again.

Listening to US radio programs (e.g. AFN, FEN etc...)

- Listening extensively and focusing on the comprehension of the content rather than the meaning of each sentence.
- Listening for five minutes a day being aware of 'what is the main point' in the content.
- Being accustomed to rhythm and speed in English speech.
- Putting an emphasis on speech acts: intonation, speed, pitch, and accent.
- Imitating a MC's speech acts.

▷ FEATURE ARTICLE: IIDA

Watching TV programs. (e.g. CNN, BBC, NHK bilingual news, etc...)

- Trying to get accustomed to speed spoken by native speakers of English while studying new words.
- Listening extensively.

Watching Hollywood movies.

- Watching movies in Japanese once, and then watching them in English without subtitles.
- Watching same movies over and over again. (Start with subtitles and then take them out.)

Using audio materials sold in book stores. (e.g. 'English Journal', 'Hearing Marathon')

- Shadowing.
- Taking the dictation of 100-200 word descriptions listening by repetition.

Listening to US President's speech

SPEAKING STRATEGIES

Finding opportunities to speak English:

- Attending private conversation school
- Making friends with native speakers of English and talking to them.
- Practicing a conversation with Japanese friends who have the same proficiency levels.
- Trying to continue to speak English ignoring correct use of grammar or pronunciation.

Talking to oneself

- Imagining a specific situation and a person with whom he/she talks.
- Talking to a wall with consideration of contexts.
- Being conscious of situation, human relationship, and function of language.
- Asking oneself 'how do you say in English', and answering the question in daily life.

Imitating the way native speakers of English speak.

- Observing speech acts of native speakers of English.
- Imitating speech acts by asking colleagues from English speaking countries to teach correct pronunciation and its mouth shape.

Reading aloud of textbooks

- Putting a special emphasis on accurate pronunciation.
- Listening to radio program and practicing, by repetition, basic structure of sentences.
- Reading aloud of textbooks used in a middle school and memorizing structures.
- Reading aloud for thirty minutes a day, and trying to change one's facial expressions, or voice tones depending on the content of the reading.
- Continuing to read aloud of favorite sentences until he/she memorizes them.

Describing a situation in English.

- Explaining, to oneself, what he/she is doing right now (e.g. cooking)
- Describing somebody's behavior or what is seen in a specific situation.

▷ FEATURE ARTICLE: IIDA

Karaoke training

- Imitating how a musician sings a song and improving his/her habits in speaking English.
- Being aware of liaison or rhythm rather than speed in songs.

Tape-recording one's speech and comparing it to that of native speakers of English

- Improving pronunciation by recognizing the difference between his/her speech and that of native speakers of English.

Debating

- Being conscious of logic in speaking English.

READING STRATEGIES

Reading interesting or favorite books:

- Trying to comprehend the content in English without any process of translating.
- Reading interesting essays or articles extensively.
- Focusing on the content, not grammar.
- Considering a balance between intensive and extensive reading depending on learning stage.
- Reading same articles twice: Trying to understand the summary (top-down approach) in the first reading; and then checking the content word by word (bottom-up approach).
- Guessing meanings of new words

Reading newspapers or magazines

- Trying to read English sentences, as they are, without translation to Japanese.
- Trying not to read articles with Japanese translation.
- Guessing meanings of new words from the context, and looking at them in the dictionary.
- Reading an article a day and writing a short summary.
- Reading a newspaper every day.
- Reading Readers Digest for ten minutes every night before going to bed.

Reading English poems or short stories

WRITING STRATEGIES

Imitating writing styles of native speakers of English

- Practicing writing with imitation of writing formats (e.g. business letters)
- Increasing repertoires of writing via email exchange with native speakers of English.

Emailing Japanese friends in English

- Being aware of writing extensively without being worried about making mistakes.

Keeping diaries in English

- Having somebody (Japanese as well as native speakers of English) check one's writing.

Writing one's argument about some topics.

Working on free writing about one's interests.

Studying writing patterns by reading many English articles, and increasing writing repertoires.