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SPELT Journal 第9号の発刊に寄せて

実用英語教育学会の紀要発行は、第9号となる。今回、本紀要には2本が寄稿された。

1 本目は「Language Input in Junior High School English Textbooks in Taiwan and Japan」というタイトルの研究論文である。この論文の著者は、共同で3年続けての台湾の教育をターゲットとした論文である。最初は台湾の英語教員養成教育を調査し、日本の教員養成カリキュラムや教育実習を比較して分析・検討し2回目は、両国の中学校の英語教科書の関係詞節にフォーカスして言語活動の比較をした。そして今回は、中学校の英語教科書の、**vocabulary, readability, types and timings of new grammar structures**にフォーカスして比較調査・分析をした。大変参考になるデータや内容であった。アジア近隣国の中で、台湾は日本と教育事情が類似しており、国としての英語教育政策は日本より先行しているが故に、示唆に富む調査結果であった。言語の学習状況を調査・分析をするのは多種多様なアプローチがあるが、この調査から学ぶものをもっと我々は真摯に受け止めて日本の教育現場で考えていく必要があると考える。今後の展開もまた期待してしまいそうな論文である。

2 本目は「Fostering Autonomous English Learners in Common Education in Listening Skills at Japanese Higher Education」というタイトルの研究論文である。自律学習者をどのように育てていくか。社会の急速な変化に対応するために学習の多様化・個性化が叫ばれ続けているが、この論文はTOEICを対象にして調査・分析したものである。雄弁で理路整然として洗練された内容である。データも教育効果を示す上で客観的であり、参考になった。大学入学共通テストで、英語の民間検定試験の利用で混乱が続き、2019年7月にはTOEICが試験から撤退した。現在、英語の民間検定試験と記述式問題の導入が見送られ、4技能を正當に測ることができるのかまた疑問が呈されている状況である。今後は、TOEICから離れた視点の調査・分析の研究を期待したい。

今回の本紀要に寄稿された内容は、すべて英文で書かれており、教育現場を起点として展開する実用的な英語教育活動の実態を分析・考察したものである。実用英語教育学会は小中高大と連携を密にした研究を一層発展させていくために、多くの皆様のご意見を頂きながら、さらなる研究を進めていく所存である。

実用英語教育学会会長
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Language Input in Junior High School English Textbooks in Taiwan and Japan

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Abstract

English textbooks are important resources for EFL students, whose access to English is limited outside the classroom. This study explores how input can be effectively provided in government-approved English textbooks for junior high schools in the EFL contexts of Japan and Taiwan. In Japan, *Courses of Study* are determined by the Ministry of Education as standards for institutions, ranging from kindergartens to senior high schools. Referring to the curriculum set out in *Courses of Study*, textbooks used in Japan's compulsory schools must be approved by the government. Taiwanese junior high schools must also use government-approved textbooks. This study compares language input in government-approved English textbooks for Japanese junior high schools and government-approved English textbooks for Taiwanese junior high schools, focusing on vocabulary, readability, and types and timings of new grammar structures. The findings provide teachers with insightful information regarding the characteristics of input in the textbooks (Note 1).

1. Introduction

In Japan, *Courses of Study* are determined by Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) as standards for all schools, ranging from kindergarten to upper secondary schools. The textbooks used in compulsory schools in Japan support the curriculum set out in *Courses of Study* and must receive government approval. Taiwanese schools also use government-approved textbooks at compulsory schools. As government-approved textbooks must be used in the class, questions regarding the type of language input that these textbooks should provide and how such information should be presented are tremendously important.

The purpose of this study is to examine how effectively input can be provided in government-approved English textbooks in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts of Japan and Taiwan, where students' access to English is very limited outside the classroom. In such contexts, the English in textbooks provides valuable input for students. According to Imai and Sugiura (2018), who compared Japanese and Taiwanese textbooks by focusing especially on relative clauses, the frequency with which relative clauses were used in Taiwanese textbooks was found to be higher than in Japanese textbooks.

In this study, English textbooks for junior high schools in Japan and Taiwan are analyzed with respect to three aspects of input provided in them: vocabulary, readability, and types and timings of introducing new grammar. The results of the analysis will be discussed on the basis of the theoretical background regarding the role of input in second language (L2) acquisition. On the basis of the findings, more effective ways of providing input using textbooks will be discussed.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 The Role of Input in Second Language Learning

The necessity of input for L2 learning is uncontroversial. Gass (1997) emphasizes the importance of input in L2 acquisition, reviewing how various models conceptualize the role of input.

The frequency of input, which is the quantitative aspect, has been considered to significantly affect L2 acquisition. Ellis (2008) summarizes empirical research related to the Frequency Hypothesis, which argues that input frequency plays a major role in determining the order of L2 acquisition. He concludes that theory and empirical evidence support the strong relationship between input frequency and L2 acquisition, although input frequency also interacts with other factors, such as phonological salience, the learners' first language (L1) and communicative value of the forms, and the syntactic category of the grammatical feature, especially regarding whether the verb is regular or irregular. The frequent input may also contribute to language processing. McLaughlin (1990) claims that controlled processing can lead to automatic processing through the repeated form-function mapping of the linguistic input, which eventually assists in restructuring the learners' internal representations of the target language.

The quality of input is concerned with the underlying theory of Universal Grammar (UG). UG's assumption can be explained in that "language consists of a set of abstract principles that characterize core grammars of all natural languages" (Gass, 1997, p. 87). According to Gass, UG regards input as a catalyst or trigger for

innate properties.

Although the role of input may differ on the basis of a specific theory or viewpoint, it cannot be denied that input is indispensable for successful L2 learning.

2.2 Grammar Acquisition in Second Language Learning

L2 acquisition researchers have investigated the language development of L2 learners. Grammatical morpheme studies conducted in the 1970s proposed a natural acquisition order of morphemes (Krashen, 1982). Later, Bardovi-Harlig (2000) studied the acquisition of tense and aspectual systems, suggesting the following acquisition order of English: past, past progressive, present perfect, and pluperfect.

In a Japanese context, Shirahata (1988), who investigated Japanese high school students, found a certain acquisition order for English grammatical morphemes. The order does not necessarily match the order of grammar appearing in government-approved English textbooks in Japan. Extensive research has suggested an acquisition order of certain grammatical features. By admitting that it is impossible to decide the order of all grammatical features presented in a textbook, these research results provide insightful information. It is necessary for teachers to consider how to most effectively time the introduction of new grammar in the classroom in a pedagogical way when following a structural syllabus, which is based on introducing target grammar in order.

3. Textbooks in Japan and Taiwan

The environment in which students receive English input in Japan and Taiwan is almost identical. English education at junior high schools in both Japan and Taiwan, where English is taught as a foreign language, has a common background. As has often been discussed, opportunities to receive input and output in the classroom are important for EFL students, who often lack sufficient exposure to English outside the classroom. Students at junior high schools in Japan and Taiwan are required to use the textbooks that are authorized by their respective governments. In addition, both follow structured syllabuses using government-authorized textbooks. In both cases, structure-based textbooks introduce target grammar in each unit.

One difference between Taiwan and Japan, however, is their English education process at elementary school. Taiwanese students start to learn English as a subject in the 3rd grade of elementary school, while Japanese students, as of the academic year 2019, officially start to learn English in Foreign Language Activities Class in grade 5 (Note 2). Considering the connection between English education at elementary and junior high schools, the level of the

textbooks in Taiwan is therefore expected to be different from those used in Japan.

Japanese textbooks for compulsory schools and senior high schools are examined on the basis of a report submitted by the Textbook Approval and Research Council, which is affiliated with the MEXT, whose members are university professors and teachers (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014). English textbooks by publishers are approved for junior high school, and local boards of education then select which textbook should be used at public schools. Private schools, by contrast, make their own decisions.

In the case of Taiwan, formerly, only the National Institute for Compilation and Translation (NICT) used to publish textbooks. Taiwan's Ministry of Education (MOE) implemented the “One Standard, Multiple Textbooks” policy in 1999, which meant the textbook market was no longer monopolized by the NICT or by any one publisher. This made it possible for schools to organize a committee of teachers to select the textbooks for the students at their schools (Ministry of Education, 2010).

There are mainly three government-approved English textbooks for junior high schools in Taiwan: *English* (Nan I Book Enterprise), *i love English* (JOY Enterprises), and *English* (Kang Hsuan Educational Publishing). Although Japanese textbooks have only one volume to be used for each grade, Taiwanese textbooks each consist of two volumes, with both the first and the second volumes used in a year. Each unit consists of “Dialogue” and “Reading” sections (see Imai & Sugiura, 2018, regarding the detailed construction of Taiwanese textbooks).

4. Analysis of Textbooks

Japanese and Taiwanese textbooks were specifically compared with each other in three areas: vocabulary, readability, and the types and timings of introducing new grammatical structures. The Taiwanese textbooks used in the analysis are *English* (Nan I Book Enterprise), *i love English* (JOY Enterprises), and *English* (Kang Hsuan Educational Publishing). As each grade had two books, the total number of textbooks used was 18. The Japanese textbooks used in the analysis are *New Horizon* (Tokyo Shoseki), *New Crown* (Sanseido), *Columbus 21* (Mitsumura Toshō), *Sunshine* (Kairyudo), *Total English* (Gakko Toshō), and *One World* (Kyoiku Shuppan). The total number of textbooks was 18.

For the analysis of vocabulary and readability, Taiwanese textbooks produced by a Taiwanese publisher and Japanese textbooks produced by a Japanese publisher were chosen. These were *New Horizon* by Tokyo Shoseki and *English* by Nan I Book Enterprise. Both textbooks are widely used in their

respective contexts. For the analysis of the introduction of new grammatical structures, all 18 textbooks were used. Each result will be reported respectively in the following sections.

4.1 Vocabulary

4.1.1 The Total Number of Words in the Textbooks

We compared the total number of words between three Japanese textbooks from the *New Horizon* series by Tokyo Shoseki and six Taiwanese textbooks from *English* by Nan I Book Enterprise (both the first and second books for each grade). Table 1 shows the results in the first and last lessons of each textbook, while Figures 1 and 2 are displayed graphically on the basis of the data shown in Table 1. The figures indicate the changes in the number of words over three years.

Table 1

The Total Number of Words Used in Japanese and Taiwanese Textbooks

Japanese textbooks			Taiwanese textbooks		
Grade	Lesson	Words (Token)	Grade	Lesson	Words (Token)
1	1 (1)	13	1	1 (D) 1st	52
1	1 (2)	23	1	1 (R) 1st	35
1	1 (3)	29	1	9 (D) 2nd	97
1	11 (1)	58	1	9 (R) 2nd	81
1	11 (2)	55			
1	11 (3)	68			
2	1 (S)	31			
2	1 (D)	45			
2	1 (R & T)	61			
2	1 (R & T)	67			
2	7 (D)	53			
2	7 (R & T)	86			
2	7 (R & T)	95			
2	7 (R & T)	95			
3	1 (S)	36	3	1 (D) 1st	175
3	1 (D)	44	3	1 (R) 1st	159
3	1 (R & T)	78	3	6 (D) 2nd	178
3	1 (R & T)	86	3	6 (R) 2nd	205
3	6 (D)	41			
3	6 (R & T)	98			
3	6 (R & T)	91			

※ For the Taiwanese textbooks, two volumes are used in each year. In Table 1, 1st means the textbook in the first half of the year, while 2nd means the textbook used in the last half of the year.

※ Japanese textbooks S: Starting Out, D: Dialog, R & T: Read and Think.

※ Taiwanese textbooks D: Dialogue, R: Reading.

As Table 1 shows, Japanese textbooks have three parts for each lesson, while Taiwanese textbooks have two parts for each lesson. Since one part generally deals with one topic, comparing the number of words in each part was considered reasonable in order to see how many words students read at one time.

The largest number of words used in these graphs is the 205 words found in the “Reading” section of the Taiwanese textbook for 3rd graders, while the largest number in the Japanese textbook is 98 words. Thus, we can see that Taiwanese textbooks contain more words than the Japanese ones. It is clear that Taiwanese students are given more exposure to vocabulary in their textbooks

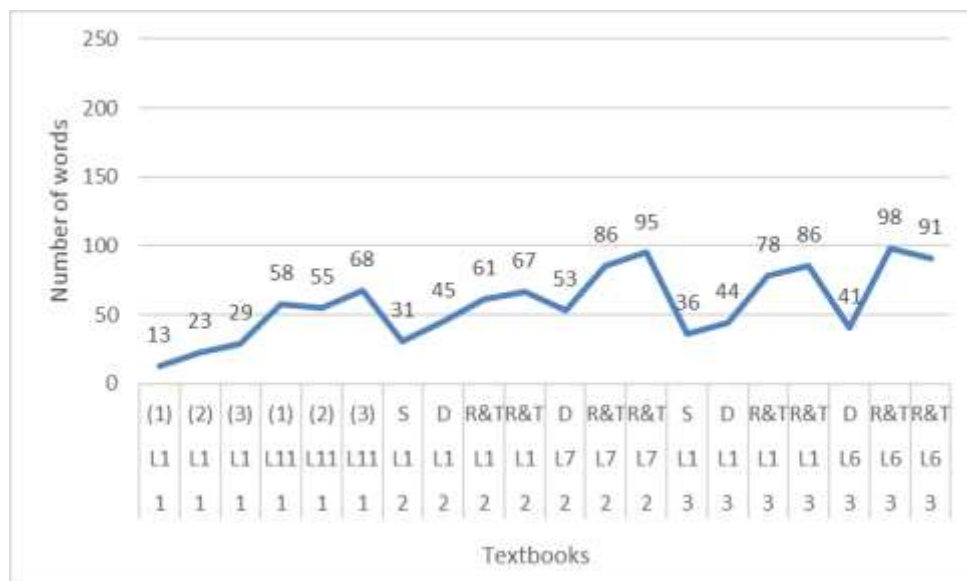


Figure 1. Change in the total number of words in the Japanese textbooks.

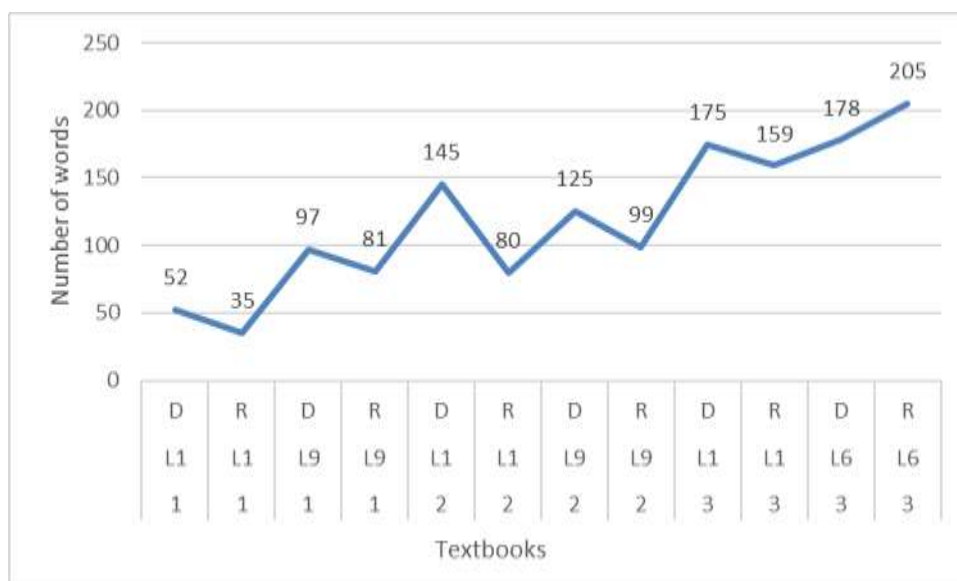


Figure 2. Change in the total number of words in the Taiwanese textbooks.

compared with Japanese students. The curves in the two figures fluctuate constantly.

Interestingly, the tendency to drop is different between Japanese and Taiwanese textbooks. That is, for Japanese textbooks, a decreasing number of words is seen in the contents of the “Dialog” section, whereas decreasing numbers are seen in the contents of the “Reading” section for Taiwanese textbooks. One interpretation of this finding is that Taiwanese students have more opportunities to encounter long passages of conversation, which may seem more authentic and natural in the context of their daily lives.

Next, we examined the number of vocabulary items in terms of their type and token. The term “type” refers here to the number of distinct words in a text, while the term “token” refers to the total number. Table 2 shows the “type and token” of the last lesson in each grade 3 textbook.

Table 2

The Number of “Type and Token” in the Last Lesson

			Token	Type	Type/Token
Japanese	Lesson 6 (Grade 3)	Dialog	41	36	0.88
		Read & Think 1	98	60	0.61
		Read & Think 2	91	59	0.65
Taiwanese	Lesson 6 (Grade 3)	Dialogue	178	107	0.60
		Reading	205	115	0.56

In this table, it is clearly observed that the Taiwanese textbook uses a larger variety of words than the Japanese one. For instance, 107 different types of words are used in the “Dialogue” section of the Taiwanese textbook, while 36 different words are used in the “Dialog” section of the Japanese textbook. As the number of vocabulary items is quite different between them, the figures themselves cannot be interpreted regarding the difficulty of each text. Even so, Table 2 suggests that Taiwanese students have more opportunities regarding the exposure of input, which contains a far larger number of words.

4.1.2 Word Total per Sentence

The number of words used in one sentence between Japanese and Taiwanese textbooks was compared, and the results are graphically presented in Figures 3 and 4. The largest number in these graphs is the average of 15.77 words seen in the “Reading” section of Taiwanese textbook for 3rd graders. In Taiwanese textbooks overall, the average number of words is highest in the “Reading” section.

The graph curve for the Japanese textbooks increases slightly, while the

graph for the Taiwanese textbooks shows a fluctuating pattern of increases and decreases. Figure 4 shows that the decreasing average word numbers are seen in the contents of the “Dialogue” section. However, the low scores themselves are similar to the Japanese scores.

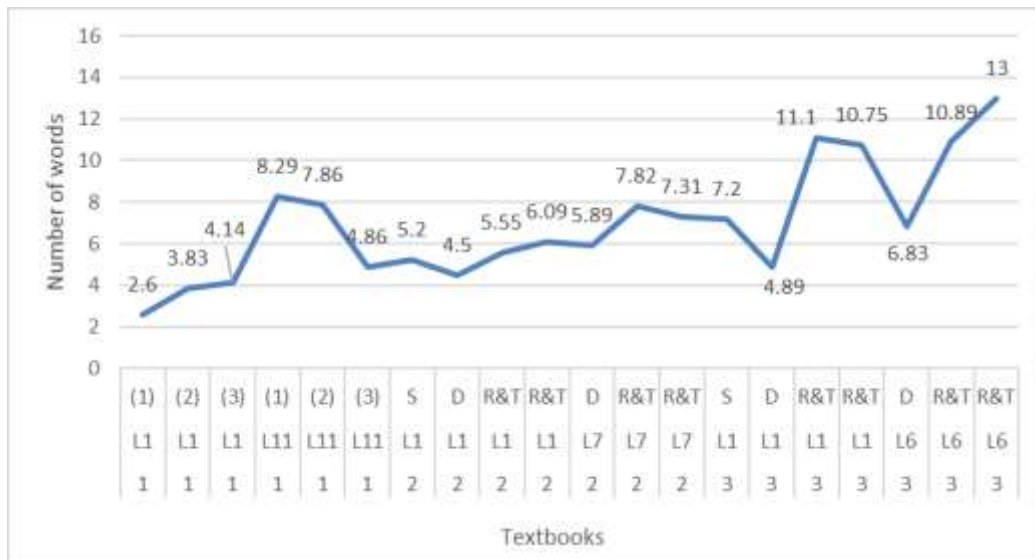


Figure 3. Change in the number of words in one sentence (Japanese textbooks).

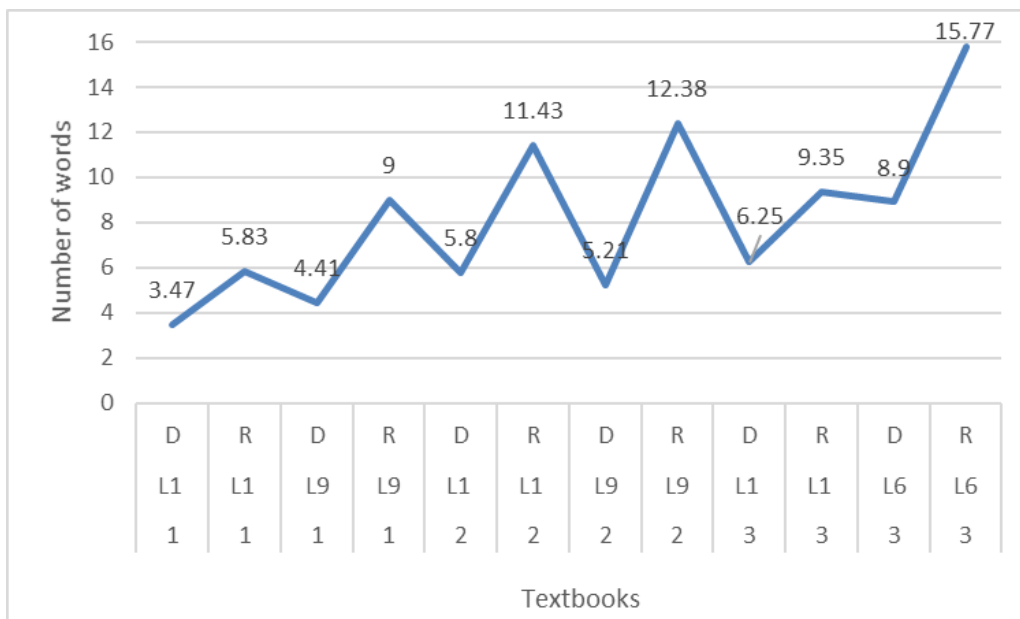


Figure 4. Change in the number of words in one sentence (Taiwanese textbooks).

The tendency to drop between Japanese and Taiwanese textbooks is the same. That is, the decreasing numbers seen in both are due to the content of the “Dialogue” section. Although the total number of words in the Dialogue section in Taiwanese textbooks is larger than that of the Reading section, as shown in

4.1.1, the number of words per sentence is smaller because using short and simple expressions are characteristics of conversational style.

4.2 Readability

Readability refers to the ease or difficulty with which a reader can read and understand a written text. Wissing Blignaut, and Van den Berg (2016) state that “The readability level of a text is an indicator of both its level of textual difficulty and the suitability of the text to readers of particular age groups or grade levels” (p. 157). Readability scores analyze texts, estimate the level of difficulty, and help us determine the appropriate grade level. We examined each textbook using two types of readability formulae: Flesch Reading Ease and Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level. For “Flesch Reading Ease,” a higher score indicates an easy reading level. By contrast, a higher score in the “Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level” indicates a difficult reading level (Note 3). Table 3 shows the levels of readability in the first and last lessons of each textbook.

Table 3

Readability for Japanese and Taiwanese Textbooks

Japanese				Taiwanese			
Grade	Lesson	FRE	FKGL	Grade	Lesson	FRE	FKGL
1	1 (1)	67.5	4.4	1	1 (D) 1st	83.6	2.7
1	1 (2)	88.9	1.8	1	1 (R) 1st	70.5	4.7
1	1 (3)	100	0	1	9 (D) 2nd	84.3	2.6
1	11 (1)	96.9	1.6	1	9 (R) 2nd	82.7	3.7
1	11 (2)	92.7	1.8				
1	11 (3)	89.1	2.1				
2	1(S)	70.5	4.6	2	1 (D) 1st	92.2	1.8
2	1 (D)	90.5	1.7	2	1 (R) 1st	69.6	6.2
2	1 (R & T)	89.8	2.1	2	9 (D) 2nd	78.4	3.6
2	1 (R & T)	89.5	2.2	2	9 (R) 2nd	73.6	5.4
2	7 (D)	83.3	2.9				
2	7 (R & T)	81.2	3.8				
2	7 (R & T)	74.7	4.6				
3	1(S)	84.3	3.2	3	1 (D) 1st	86.2	2.7
3	1 (D)	76.9	3.8	3	1 (R) 1st	76.0	4.8
3	1 (R & T)	45.4	9.4	3	6 (D) 2nd	88.2	3.2
3	1 (R & T)	63.7	6.9	3	6 (R) 2nd	83.6	4.5
3	6 (D)	65.6	5.8				
3	6 (R & T)	69.1	6.2				
3	6 (R & T)	77.9	5.5				

※ FRE: Flesch Reading Ease.

FKGL: Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level.

Figures 5 and 6 display graphically the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level based on the data shown in Table 3.

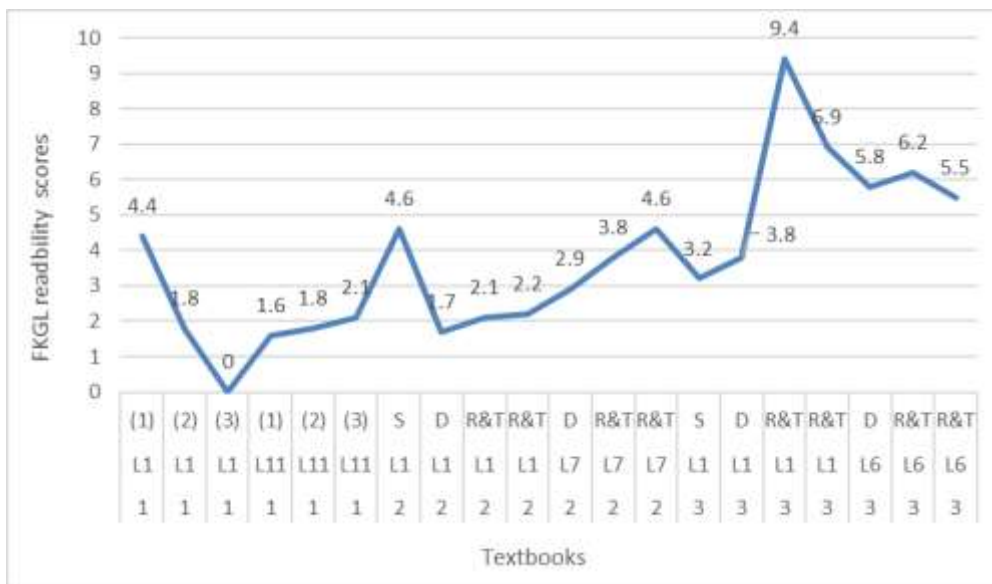


Figure 5. FKGL readability scores for Japanese textbooks.

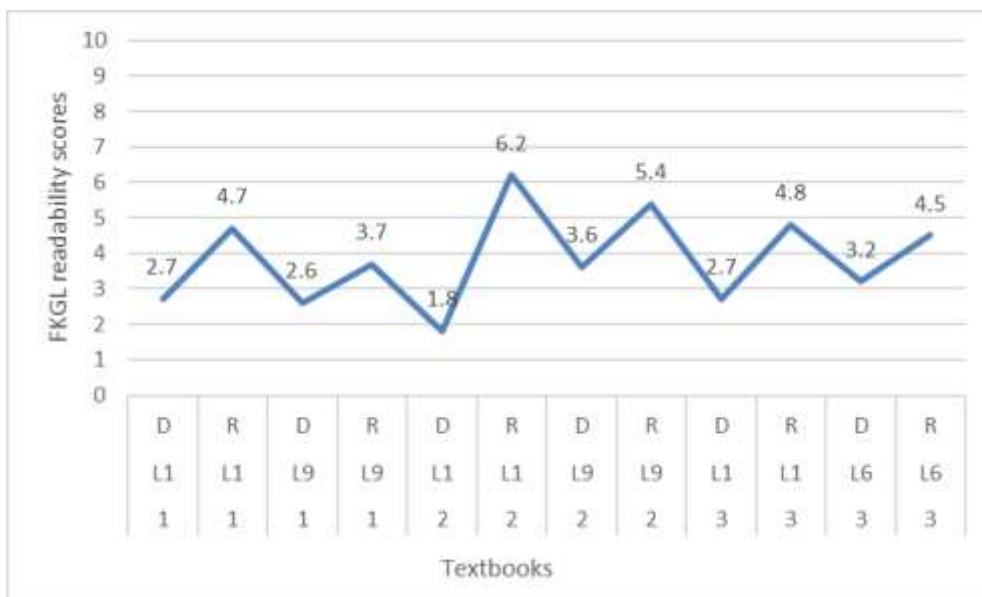


Figure 6. FKGL readability scores for Taiwanese textbooks.

The graph for the Japanese textbooks shows a slight increase, while the graph for the Taiwanese textbooks shows a fluctuating pattern that both increases and decreases. The increasing numbers are seen in the “Reading” section of the Taiwanese textbooks. We can see in these graphs that Taiwanese students are provided an opportunity to be exposed to easy-to-read levels in the “Dialogue” section and then more difficult levels in the “Reading” section.

4.3 Target Grammar

As explained in the previous section, Taiwanese students start to learn English two years earlier than Japanese students. In both cases, almost all units of the textbooks include a set of target English sentences. It can be expected that the types and timings of the grammatical structures used in Taiwanese textbooks are more advanced than the Japanese ones. When analyzing the textbooks, the types and timings of the grammar used in the textbooks in the two contexts featured many common points, although there were also several differences.

As Tables 4 and 5 show, one of the similarities is that both Japanese and Taiwanese textbooks introduce tense and aspect in the same order, which is as follows: first person present tense, present progressive, past tense, past progressive, present perfect.

Regarding introducing verbs, five out of the six Japanese textbooks all time the introduction of ordinary verbs immediately after introducing *be* verbs to first-year students. On the other hand, all three of the Taiwanese textbooks introduce ordinary verbs after introducing the present progressive and “there is/are” expressions, which means they focus on the usage of *be* verbs before introducing ordinary verbs.

Another difference is that Japanese textbooks introduce post modification using “-ing” and “-ed” as target sentences, while Taiwanese textbooks do not introduce them. Furthermore, although both Japanese and Taiwanese textbooks introduce *to*-infinitives, Taiwanese textbooks do not introduce the usage of *to*-infinitives as adjectives, such as “something to drink,” as a target sentence. The same rule also applies to the use of *to*-infinitives as adverbs, such as “I went to Tokyo to see my aunt.” However, the use of *to*-infinitives as adjectives appears in reading passages of the Taiwanese textbooks. This implies that Taiwanese textbooks use grammatical features even though these features are not taught as target sentences. As Taiwanese textbooks provide more input, by using two volumes for each grade, students may have more chances to learn certain grammatical structures without these being taught as target sentences. It can be said that students encounter the same grammatical structures in a repeated and cyclical way.

When Taiwanese textbooks introduce the passive voice, they teach passive forms of the present, past, future, and present perfect, while Japanese textbooks only deal with the present and past. It seems that Taiwanese textbooks try to provide comprehensive forms of certain grammar structures at one time. Moreover, Taiwanese textbooks use several units in the second volumes of the textbooks for each grade in order to make students review what they have learned previously. Students can encounter grammatical features

again in the new contexts in the review units.

Table 4

Target Grammar in Japanese Textbooks

Textbooks	Grade	Sequences of Major Target Grammar
A	1	present (<i>be</i> verbs) → present (ordinary verbs) → present progressive → past (regular / irregular verbs)
	2	past (<i>be</i> verbs) → past progressive → future expressions (be going to) → <i>to</i> -infinitives → future expressions (will) → There is (are)
	3	passive → present perfect → post modification (-ing, ed) → relative pronouns
B	1	present (<i>be</i> verbs) → present (ordinary verbs) → present progressive → past (regular / irregular / <i>be</i> verbs)
	2	past progressive → future expressions (will / be going to) → There is (are) → <i>to</i> -infinitives → passive
	3	present perfect → relative pronouns → post modification (-ing, ed)
C	1	present (<i>be</i> verbs) → present (ordinary verbs) → present progressive → past (regular / irregular verbs)
	2	past (<i>be</i> verbs) → past progressive → future expressions (be going to / will) → There is (are) → <i>to</i> -infinitives → passive
	3	present perfect → post modification (-ing, ed) → relative pronouns
D	1	present (<i>be</i> verbs) → present (ordinary verbs) → present progressive → past (regular)
	2	past (irregular / <i>be</i> verbs) → past progressive → future expressions (be going to / will) → There is (are) → <i>to</i> -infinitives
	3	passive → present perfect → post modification (-ing, ed) → relative pronouns
E	1	present (ordinary verbs) → present (<i>be</i> verbs) → present progressive → past (regular / irregular verbs)
	2	past (<i>be</i> verbs) → past progressive → There is (are) → future expressions (will / be going to) → <i>to</i> -infinitives
	3	passive → present perfect → post modification (-ing, ed) → relative pronouns

F	1	present (<i>be</i> verbs) → present (ordinary verbs) → present progressive → past (regular / irregular / <i>be</i> verbs)
	2	future expressions (be going to / will) → past progressive → There is (are) → <i>to</i> infinitives → passive
	3	present perfect → post modification (-ing, ed) → relative pronouns

※ A: *New Horizon* (Tokyo Shoseki). B: *New Crown* (Sanseido).
 C: *Columbus 21* (Mitsumura Tosho). D: *Sunshine* (Kairyudo).
 E: *Total English* (Gakko Tosho). F: *One World* (Kyoiku Shuppan).

Table 5
Target Grammar in Taiwanese Textbooks

Textbooks	Grade	Sequences of Major Target Grammar
A	1	present (<i>be</i> verbs) → present progressive → There is (are) → present (ordinary verbs) → past (<i>be</i> verbs)
	2	past (regular / irregular verbs) → past progressive → future expressions (will / be going to)
	3	present perfect → passive (should be / will be / has been / have been) → post modification (preposition) → relative pronouns → past perfect
B	1	present (<i>be</i> verbs) → There is (are) → present progressive → present (ordinary verbs) → past (<i>be</i> verbs)
	2	past (regular / irregular verbs) → past progressive → future expressions (will / be going to)
	3	present perfect → passive (auxiliary verb + passive) → post modification (preposition) → relative pronouns → past perfect
C	1	present (<i>be</i> verbs) → present progressive → There is (are) → present (ordinary verbs) → past (<i>be</i> verbs)
	2	past (regular / irregular verbs) → past progressive → future expressions (will / be going to)
	3	present perfect → passive (present / past / future / present perfect) → post modification (adjective / preposition) → relative pronouns → past perfect

※ A: *English* (Nan I Book Enterprise).
 B: *i love English* (JOY Enterprises).
 C: *English* (Kang Hsuan Educational Publishing).

5. Discussion

The results of the vocabulary analysis show that Taiwanese students tend to be given more opportunities to encounter larger amounts and wider varieties of vocabulary in their textbooks compared with Japanese students. In other words, in terms of vocabulary, the quantity of language input is higher in Taiwanese textbooks than in Japanese textbooks. Nevertheless, the results of the readability analysis do not indicate that the difficulty level of Taiwanese textbooks is necessarily higher. This suggests that Taiwanese textbooks have more extensive input for students to read and comprehend with ease.

As for vocabulary, 1,200 English words are on the list of words to be learned by junior high school students in Taiwan (Taiwan Test Central). The Japanese *Courses of Study* (MEXT, 2008) suggest that junior high school students should also learn 1,200 words. With the introduction of Foreign Language Activities Class from the 3rd grade in Japan, as well as English education from the 5th grade beginning in the academic year 2020, *Courses of Study* (MEXT, 2017) suggest junior high school students should learn between 1,600 and 1,800 English words. Increasing the number of words in the textbook may ensure the quantity of vocabulary input, but it is necessary to plan how frequently and in what context they are presented.

When introducing new grammar, Taiwanese textbooks try to provide comprehensive forms of certain grammar at one time. For example, they teach passive forms of the present, past, future, and present perfect at one time. Moreover, Taiwanese textbooks use several units in the second volumes of the textbooks for each grade in order to make students review their previous learning, which makes it possible for students to encounter grammatical features repeatedly in different contexts. Larsen-Freeman (2003) argues that grammar should be taught as a skill or a dynamic process, and that it is essential to teach form (e.g., grammatical morphemes and syntactic patterns), meaning (semantics), and use (pragmatics). To teach the appropriate usage in a given context, providing easy-to-read texts in textbooks, as is done in Taiwan, would help students learn the pragmatic aspects of language in various contexts. When considering the best way to teach the appropriate use of grammar, setting communicative contexts is inevitable. The timing of introducing new grammar features should be influenced by the communicative contexts that teachers intend to use in class.

6. Conclusion

The analysis of Taiwanese and Japanese textbooks has shown that

Taiwanese textbooks provide both larger and wider varieties of words. Reading English with ease can help students receive input for learning. The timing of introducing new grammar differs somewhat across each context. Japanese textbooks introduce ordinary verbs immediately after introducing *be* verbs to first-year students, while Taiwanese textbooks introduce ordinary verbs after introducing the present progressive and “there is/are” expressions, which means they focus on the use of *be* verbs before introducing ordinary verbs. The language resources that junior high school students have at their disposal, first graders in particular, are scarce and limited. Thus, the decision of how to sequence grammar instruction in the textbook must be carefully considered because the communicative contexts that the textbooks provide in each lesson will be influenced by the language resources the students have learned already.

While this study has only discussed input, the role of output in L2 learning must not be dismissed. As Imai and Sugiura (2018) point out, the output activities related to input provided in the textbooks of both Japan and Taiwan seem insufficient. When providing input in context, it will be necessary to consider how students can utilize the input they have learned in their output activities. In other words, sufficient opportunities to apply English for the purpose of communication should be provided to the students in the classroom. For future research, questions regarding how the input presented in textbooks can effectively lead to students’ output must be investigated.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 16th Annual Hawaii International Conference on Education held in 2018. Sugiura, R. & Imai, N. (2018).
2. In the academic year 2020 in Japan, Foreign Language Activities Class will officially start from the 3rd grade, and Foreign Language (English) Education will start from the 5th grade.
3. The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level indicates that the average student at the U.S. school grade level can read the text. For example, a score of 7.4 indicates that an average student in 7th grade can understand the text (Readability Formulas).

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Fostering Autonomous English Learners in Common Education in Listening Skills at Japanese Higher Education

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Abstract

This paper focuses on improving learner autonomy skills in out-of-classroom study through the use of weekly learning plans—produced by first-year Japanese university students—in general English education focusing on TOEIC preparation listening classes at a national university in Japan. A primary aim is to investigate how students plan their own out-of-classroom learning on a weekly basis in relation to their listening deficiencies. Special attention was paid to differences between improving and worsening students, which entailed an investigation of learning strategies and learning materials. This was done via quantitative analysis including correlations, correspondence analysis, and T-tests. A second aim is to examine and critique the ways in which their weekly plans influence learner autonomy skills. This research found that by asking students to produce learning plans for outside-of-class study, there were measurable improvements in learner autonomy. Additionally, successful learners demonstrated the ability to identify internal weaknesses; they employed appropriate corrective learning strategies and sought out corresponding materials. Non-successful learners, however, did not exhibit this self-appraisal and thus spent more time studying outside-of-class, but they did not employ appropriate learning strategies and materials. These results lead the study to conclude that it is necessary to provide appropriate advice for students to foster learner autonomy.

1. Introduction

In 2003 the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports Science and Technology (MEXT) enacted plans to enhance English communicative levels and improve scores on English proficiency examinations such as Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). Whilst TOEIC may not be as

internationally recognized as other certifications, in Japan it is held in high regard by the business community. However, Japanese TOEIC scores continue to rank poorly against other countries. One of the major reasons for this is simply lack of opportunity to use English in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environments. Indeed, the effectiveness of active learning and student-centered learning in classrooms are shown and thus are often used in Japan these days. However, there is a tendency that the students only do homework or assignments given by teachers. Consequently, what teachers can do in the classroom is limited. In order to overcome these issues, improving learner autonomy skills in out-of-classroom learning contributes significantly. Therefore, the purpose of this pilot study is to cast further light on the ways in which first-year Japanese university students improve their autonomous learning skills in common English education focusing on TOEIC preparation classes at a national university in Japan. In particular, the aim is to investigate how they plan their own out-of-classroom learning on a weekly basis in relation to their weaknesses in listening abilities. A second aim is to examine and critique the ways in which their weekly plans impact upon their self-awareness in learning.

1. Literature Review

The notion of ‘autonomous learning’ is not a new occurrence. Originally, the concept of learner autonomy was derived from prevailing socio-political and moral aspects of the West, and was first defined by Holec (1981) as ‘the capacity to take charge of one’s own learning’ (p. 3) and be responsible for the decisions they made (Little, 1996). According to Holec (1981), this responsibility refers to people’s competency and attitudes towards their own learning in which they decide their own objectives, progress, and evaluation. Hence, in order to practice learner autonomy, people are required to plan, monitor, and reflect upon their own learning (learner autonomy) in a desirable learning environment or behavior (self-directed learning).

Holec’s distinction between ‘self-directed learning’ and ‘learner autonomy’ has also been an influential force in more recent discussions (Benson, 2001; Little, 1991). With respect to learner autonomy, Benson (2001) emphasizes that a crucial role in developing it involves encouraging and engaging students’ psychological attributes and ability within classroom contexts. Indeed, it is desirable to encounter individualistic interdependent learning in classrooms as it is an ideal notion of learner autonomy to collaborate with others (Dam, 1990). This is mainly due to being able to solve issues in a constructive manner (Kohonen, 1991). Collaboration is often cited for its applicability towards group discussions, group

presentations, group research, study groups, and group projects (Kuechle, O'Brien, & Ferguson, 1995). These activities allow students to increase their understanding by sharing ideas and opinions, hence is essential to the development of autonomy (Little, 1996).

Another influential environmental factor indicated by Riley (1985) was self-access, which was first developed at the University of Cambridge on the premise that students have access to audio language materials to facilitate self-directed learning. These ideas later coalesced into CALL learning, E-learning, and Learning Management Systems (LMS). Some researchers demonstrated the effectiveness of CALL learning regarding students' engagement and motivation in the classroom (Galavis, 1998). Galavis (1998) also mentioned that CALL learning also had a positive effect on academic performance in language learning. Additionally, Lee (2001) suggested that CALL can help improve the students' academic skills.

Having said this, however, it can lead to the perception that learner autonomy may only be participated in, and provided by, the learning environment itself, such as use of self-access and CALL in the classroom. It should be emphasized again that learner autonomy is the ability to control one's own learning behavior, and in order to develop such capacity it is debatable whether the suggested environmental factors are a causal variable. Indeed, such technology-oriented learning styles are useful, but Smith (2008) has indicated that it is only effective on those students who have already acquired a high degree of learner autonomy. Hence, this type of learning is not always effective or may even have negative effects on those who have poor learning autonomy skills.

According to Smith (2008), gains in potential from learning environments such as self-access centers, CALL, and distance learning, are the *product* of, not the progenitor of learner autonomy. Benson (2011), therefore suggested a taxonomy of six influential approaches to improve learner autonomy. These are curriculum-based, classroom-based, teacher-based, learner-based, resources-based, and technology-based approaches (Benson, 2011). However, criticisms were raised, arguing that these approaches are based on Western philosophies, and therefore may be less effective for non-western students (Littlewood, 1999). Naturally, different cultures will give rise to different expectations and, ipso facto, the educational system that utilizes this form of learning and teaching strategy must accommodate for these differences. Nevertheless, Chickering & Ehrmann (1996) suggested that, even with the confines of a relatively homogeneous group, different individuals possess different learning styles depending on their beliefs, knowledge, and experiences, at which point one must therefore apprehend the different expectations held by students and their respective teachers. Pedagogical approaches in the classroom which

foster development of autonomy require consideration of what students are lacking and focus primarily on ‘training’ these students to practice control over their own learning whatever their background, experiences, and cultures are (Smith, 2008). In other words, the development of autonomy is concurrent to the self-identification of learning goals and outcomes; whether the methods employed are, crudely categorized, “Western” or “Eastern” is immaterial as the learner is already deeply embedded within either camp and thus well acquainted with the tools at their disposal. Furthermore, Little (1991) indicated that learner autonomy is not a specific technique, and therefore is not limited only to individualistic societies. Rather, it is an educational goal-setting structure, even though the actual execution must be met with varying pedagogical practices (Palfreyman, 2003).

With regards to Japanese English education, MEXT (2003) enacted plans to enhance English communicative levels and improve scores on English proficiency examinations such as TOEIC. However, even after 15 years, TOEIC scores are still ranked 39th out of 47 countries (ETS, 2017). Further evidence shows that upon graduation from high school the average English level is A1 of CEFR. Therefore, it is a serious challenge for higher education to improve these students’ English level. Most Japanese universities therefore employ active learning: shifting the focus from teacher-centered to student-centered learning. In this way, students have greater opportunities to collaborate by sharing ideas and opinions. Thus, it motivates them to learn and also decreases anxiety level towards learning (Yamada, 2015). The purpose of active learning is not only teaching pedagogy, but also outcome-based learning (Barr & Tagg, 1995). Indeed, it is very difficult for learners to acquire knowledge by listening or attending to 90 minutes lectures, so employing active learning has a positive impact upon improving learners’ ability (Yamada, 2015). Yamada (2015) goes on further to mention that active learning needs to be conducted based on students’ learning pedagogy, and grounded in specific learning outcomes instead of just implementing activities.

Nevertheless, there are a few issues that Japanese universities, especially national ones, encounter. The foremost of which is that Japanese national universities often prescribe English classes as compulsory subjects for all first-year students. Consequently, instructors are required to use the same curriculum, textbooks, syllabus, and evaluation criteria to ensure consistency and fairness. Therefore, Benson’s approaches—especially curriculum-based and learner-based autonomy development—are difficult to employ. As for teacher-based and classroom-based approaches, it is possible for instructors to act as facilitator and provide opportunity for students to work collaboratively using active learning. However, the national university offers only two 90 minutes

classes per week for first-year students: TOEIC (listening and reading), and EAP (writing and speaking). Hence, what instructors can do in each class is limited. Furthermore, as it is an EFL environment, there are not many opportunities for Japanese students to practice English outside of class. As such, it is critical that students take a more proactive approach. Thus, it is important to apply the resources-based approaches emergent from Benson (2011) into practice.

Resources-based approaches are for learners to self-direct their own learning to develop their English skills (Benson, 2011) and are designed to improve both learner autonomy skills and language ability. Yamamoto (2011) investigated this by incorporating learner-centered curriculum into the class, students to foster autonomy. As a result, students were learning English autonomously after the class ends (Yamamoto, 2011). Additionally, Nakatake & Sakurai (2016) concluded that employing portfolio in class have a positive impact on developing learner autonomy for university students in English learning. Consequently, these previous studies have pointed out that learner centered curriculum and portfolio approach incorporated in the class are effective in developing learner autonomy, but they do not discuss relationships between fostering learner autonomy and improving English skills. On the other hand, research on the development of learner autonomy and improvement of English proficiency outside the class is conducted in an ESL (English as a second language) environment. It is claimed to be important to create opportunities and environments to control one's own learning (Brijs & Clijsters, 2008). Based on this, it has been reported that the use of self-access center and CALL learning led to improvement of English (Raby, 2007). However, learning outside the class in an EFL environment like Japan, there are few studies that discuss the relationship between the development of senior autonomy and the improvement of English proficiency.

Therefore, this study focused on outside-of-classroom learning. In doing so, it first investigates how students plan their own learning in listening outside-of-classroom. It then examines and critiques the ways in which their weekly plans impact upon their self-awareness in learning.

2. Method

This research focused on two TOEIC preparation classes (Class A, and Class B) in the general education curriculum offered by a national university. These TOEIC preparation classes are offered to all first-year students in a quarter system (8 weeks per quarter). The national university offers TOEIC I (listening) in the first quarter. All first-year students are divided into upper, middle, and lower classes based upon the university entrance English

examination. As for this research, participants included 61 students in middle TOEIC I classes. The average English proficiency for middle classes is CEFR B1 level. The students in class A are from Humanities ($n=10$), Law ($n=15$) and International Studies Department ($n=4$), class B are from Economic ($n=13$), Education ($n=9$) and Regional Studies ($n=7$) and General Education ($n=3$) Departments.

Data was collected through quantitative means; pre-test, post-test, and questionnaires. A TOEIC practice examination from the prescribed textbook was used as the pre-test, which included 100 multiple choice listening questions (covering part 1 to part 4). Final examinations in week 8 were used as a post test – structurally identical to the pre-test. Data were then codified into three student groups: Group 1: improved, Group 2: unchanged, Group 3: decreased. Data were analyzed using the SPSS suite, primarily relying upon correspondence analysis, but also rudimentary statistical measures.

First, the students prepared their own weekly out-of-class learning plans. They were asked to make four weeks of learning plans (ranging from weeks 4-7). Plans included weekly goals, what and how they are going to study as well as any materials that they would use. In addition, every week, the students were asked to check whether they had done what they had planned using an achievement checklist in class. Finally, surveys in Japanese were used in week 8. They were comprised of eight closed-ended questions (Q1-7, Q9) with students selecting categories as appropriate, and two open-ended questions (Q8, Q10) for students who answered “no”. The surveys were used to determine the effectiveness and issues relating to students-awareness of their learning plans. These data were analyzed by comparing the three groups mentioned above.

3. Findings

4.1 Pre-test and Post-test

This study first compared the overall result of pre-test and post-test. According to Table 1, it can be indicated that whilst the mean is almost unchanged the standard deviation indicates that the degree of dispersion in the post-test is slightly larger than the pre-test.

Table 1

Basic statistics for pre-test and post-test

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Overall	Pre-test	59.89	61	8.361	1.070
	Post-test	59.25	61	9.588	1.228

4.2 Outside-of-classroom learning hours

Comparing the overall ($n=61$) duration of learning time outside-of-classroom between before and after production of learning plans, it can be indicated that average duration of time spent outside-of-classroom increased from approximately 60 minutes before to 130 minutes after producing learning plans ($t(59)=8.24$, $p<.001$). According to paired t-test, it can be shown that there is a strong correlation between making learning plans and learning time outside-of-classroom. As a result, it can be indicated that asking the students to produce learning plans by themselves tends to foster their autonomous learning hours (Figure 1).

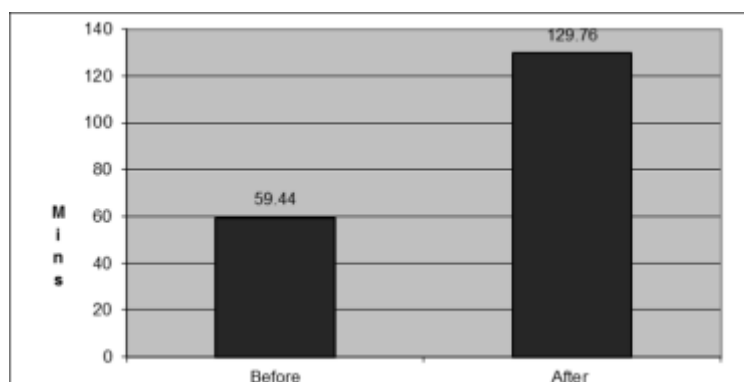


Figure 1. Aggregate duration of learning time (minutes) out-of-classroom between before and after producing learning plans.

Based on these data, this study divided students into groups based on deviation values to find out whether there are differences. Group 1 ($n=31$) students improved, Group 2 ($n=5$) students exhibited slight changes (± 1), and Group 3 ($n=25$) worsened. For this particular section of the analysis, because Group 2 is small it was subsumed into Group 3 thus creating Group 2A (Group 2+3, $n=30$).

The figure below is the average duration of learning time outside-of-classroom before and after learning plans were implemented between Group 1 ($n=31$) and Group 2A ($n=30$). Students in Group 2A tend to study average of 20 minutes longer than Group 1 after making learning plans. This may be due to greater levels of enthusiasm stemming from the autonomy afforded to the students. However, the exact specifics could be addressed in future work.

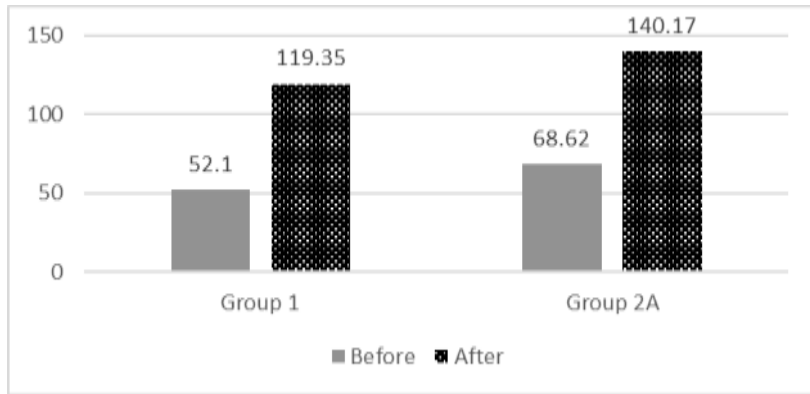


Figure 2. Average duration of learning outside-of classroom (minutes) by group.

4.3 Relationship between test scores and learning hours

Since both Group 1 and Group 2A have significant increases in learning time outside-of-classroom, a correlation ratio was conducted to determine the existence of a relationship between learning hours and test scores.

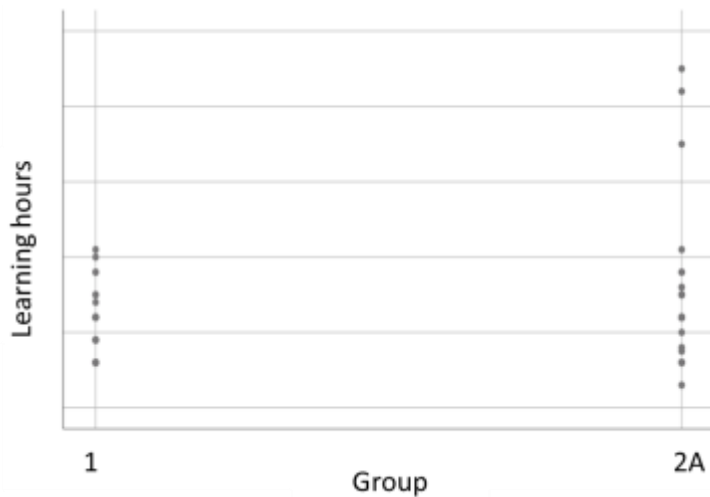


Figure 3. Variation of test scores between groups relative to total learning hours.

There appears to be no significant correlation between learning hours and test scores ($r=.103$). One can therefore infer that the longer a student studies does not necessarily mean that they will improve their scores. A closer examination into the discrepancies between these two groups will follow shortly.

4.4 Students' self-awareness on their weaknesses

This study also obliged students to find out about their own weaknesses in listening ability. First, following the pre-test, students were asked to identify questions that they answered incorrectly. Second, they were required to analyze their own weaknesses (Table 2). Following this, a correspondence analysis was

employed to investigate students' perspectives on their own weaknesses among group 1, 2 and 3 (Figure 4).

Table 2

Survey questions 2 and 3

Q2 Do you know your own weaknesses? 1. Yes 2. No
Q3 What are your weaknesses?
1. Vocabularies (e.g. Liaison) 2. Speed 3. Grammar, expression (e.g. unable to listen to interrogative words) 4. Different pronunciation (e.g. US, UK)
5. Slow information process 6. Long conversation 7. Technique 8. Others

According to the survey question 2, all of the students believe that can identify their own weaknesses. Consequently, the analysis centers purely on the closed-ended questions.

Returning to the earlier delineation of student groups (improved, slight changes, and worsened respectively), Figure 4 shows that students in Group 1 believe that their weaknesses include strong correspondence with vocabularies, pronunciation, and slow information process. Group 2 students believe that their weaknesses are speed, pronunciation, and technique. On the other hand, the students in Group 3 showed slight relationships between all options. This indicates that the students whose scores decreased do not tend to understand nor analyze their own weaknesses.

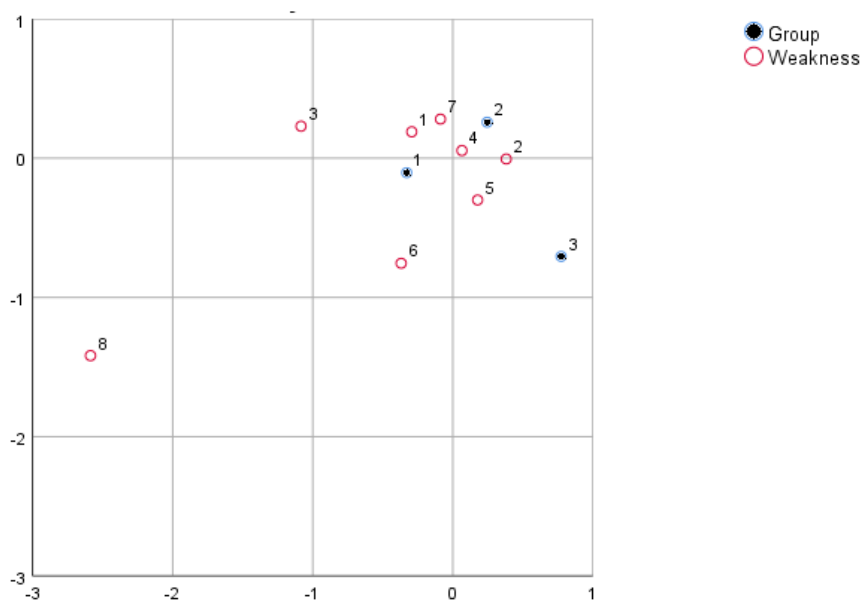


Figure 4. Student's awareness of weaknesses by groups.

4.5 Learning materials employed by the students

This study then attempts to establish what kind of learning materials and learning pedagogy the students used to overcome their weaknesses; it also used correspondence analysis to compare the three groups.

As a result, and as for learning materials, Group 1 have a tendency to use the official TOEIC practice book, Oxford on-line learning, and YouTube when they studied. Group 2 by comparison, do not exhibit such strong tendencies, so they do not seem to know exactly which materials they should use to overcome their weaknesses. Group 3 have a tendency to listen to English music.

Table 3

Survey question 5

Q5 What kind of materials did you use when you studied?		
1. Textbook	2. Official TOEIC practice book	3. Oxford on-line learning
4. Vocabulary books (Kin phrase, Tetsukabe)	5. Books I bought myself	
6. Vintage (grammar, vocabulary books)	7. Introduction to TOEIC comprehensive practice book	8. USA radio
9. YouTube	10. DVD (movies and dramas)	11. Listen to English songs
12. ALC seminar on-line learning	13. others	

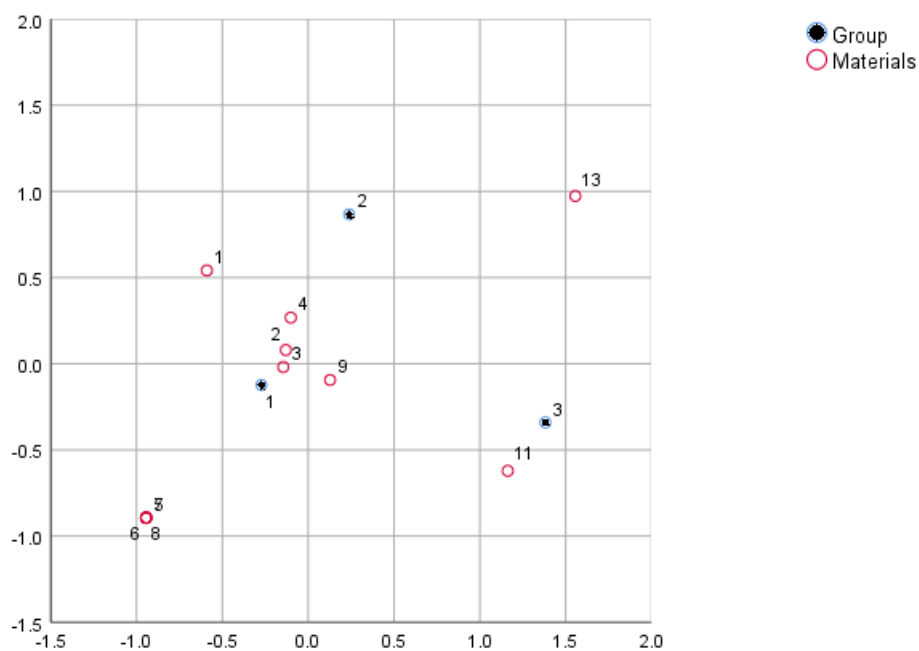


Figure 5. Relationship between groups and learning materials.

4.6 Learning pedagogies employed by the students

As for learning strategy, Group 1 often study by repeating and shadowing. It also can be shown from the data that Group 1 have a slight tendency to use

dictation and to listen to English. Group 2, on the other hand, display no close tendency in learning strategy, but a slight propensity to set goals, practice previous examination scripts, and memorize synonymous words. Group 3 tend to memorize vocabularies, listen to English at 1.2x or 1.5x speed, read aloud, and overlapping.

Table 4

Survey question 6

Q6. How did you study?

1. Memorized vocabularies 2. Memorized key phrases 3. Listen to English
 4. Memorize synonymous words 5. Listen to English by looking at scripts
 6. Used 1.2x or 1.5x playback 7. Set goals and practiced with previous
 examination 8. Reading aloud 9. Repeating 10. Shadowing
 11. Overlapping 12. Dictation 13. Review and preparation 14. Others

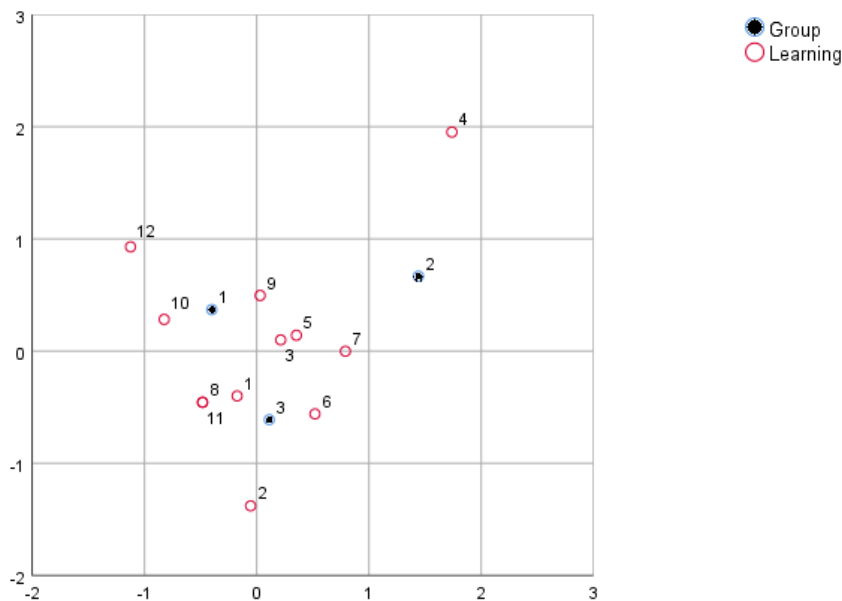


Figure 6. Relationship between groups and learning pedagogy.

4. Discussion

5.1 Fostering learner autonomy

One of the most encouraging results from the findings is the impact upon student commitment prior to and following the implementation of learning plans. Irrespective of final outcomes, the data show increases across the board in

terms of out-of-class learning. This might suggest, therefore, that the mere act of instructing students to do so may lead to an increased sense of responsibility for one's own learning and could be easily applied to any given subject. In this respect, the paper provides a tangible benefit for all educators.

On a more specific level, learning plans could be structured to include any number of subcomponents, but at the minimum should include the following:

- Students are required to take a note of questions/problems that they answer incorrectly,
- Students are asked to carefully consider what they perceive their weaknesses to be,
- Learning plans should be used for a considerable proportion of the scholastic term (in this application, the learning plans covered half of the course's duration),
- Students should be encouraged to follow their plans and reminded consistently, and
- Plans should include regular, short term goals to focus and encourage students to apply themselves. A weekly check list is one such approach.

One other curious finding emerged from cross-referencing learning plans with pre and post test scores: it was the students who either showed no progress or in fact worsened who spent the longest amount of time studying by themselves outside of class. Indeed, the data show that these students spent 17% more time in private study. This is interesting because it runs contrarily to what at first might appear to be intuitive logic, it might even be considered something of a truism that greater inputs lead to preferable outputs. Nonetheless, this result could be more put into clearer context by invoking another idiom: "garbage in, garbage out". Indeed, this notion becomes more apparent when considering the responses to the self-awareness survey.

5.2 Students' self-awareness on weaknesses, learning materials and strategies

Reflecting on self-awareness, it is interesting to note that each of the three student groups share very few similarities: looking at their responses to the survey, each group presents a distinct set of attributes and perceived corrective actions. A summary can be found in Table 5.

Students in Group 1 appear not to have any major difficulty in listening to English in terms of pacing, but their main concern centers around the message itself. These students report that their difficulties lie in the vocabulary used, the differing pronunciations among the spoken accents, and their ability to process the information being conveyed in a timely manner. To counteract this, they rely largely on the official TOEIC practice book and associated online learning. Interesting to note, they also make use of YouTube, which shows that

Table 5

Summarized findings from self-reflection

Group	Weaknesses	Learning materials	Learning strategies
1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vocabularies (Liaison) 2. Different Pronunciation 3. Slow information process 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Official TOEIC practice book 2. Oxford on-line learning 3. YouTube 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Repeating 2. Shadowing 3. Dictation 4. Listen to English
2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Speed 2. Pronunciation technique 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do not know what materials they should use 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set goals and practice previous exam
3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They do not know their own weaknesses 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listen to music 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Memorize vocab 2. Listen to English by 1.2 or 1.5x faster speed 3. Reading aloud, overlapping

they are quite practical. Finally, the learning strategies employed are repeating, shadowing, dictation, and general listening sessions. Given that this is the group that performed best, one could suggest that their ability to identify shortcomings and determine an appropriate response has been successfully developed.

Group 2, by comparison, reports greater difficulty in keeping pace with spoken English, although they also cite differing pronunciations as a challenge too. It would appear that they are adrift as they reported that they are uncertain as to what learning materials to use. In the face of such uncertainty, their response was to set goals and practice previous TOEIC exam scripts. Whilst this approach is not necessarily fruitless, it does show a relative lack of creativity and resourcefulness when juxtaposed against Group 1.

Lastly, the responses from Group 3 are grounds for concern. The greatest challenge here is that they cannot identify where their weaknesses lie, and in the absence of that axiomatic foundation, cannot chart a course that would lead to improvement. Furthermore, this group's corresponding learning strategy was simply to listen to music, memorize vocabulary, listen at 1.2x or 1.5x speed (presumably accessing YouTube's video settings), and reading aloud.

Reading into these answers, one begins to form an impression of the reasons for this group's worsening grades and higher reported time spent in private study. Firstly, one could rightly argue that listening to music is both less taxing and more pleasurable than working through textbooks and online

practice. In this regard, it is easily understandable how time spent in out-of-class learning could be artificially inflated if this definition includes “listening to music”. Secondly, the form that English takes in music is very different to everyday speech. Holding tempo aside for the moment, song lyrics are not comparable to everyday parlance: the extensive use of slang, metaphors, poetic phrasing, rhyme, and cultural references are such that music has practically no resemblance to daily interactions – which is what is tested in the TOEIC exam. As a result, one could conclude that this group is not using their time productively, nor is their chosen strategy relevant to the assessment criteria, and as a consequence of this, their grades corresponding fell. When viewed in this light, the reported differences and subsequent outcomes of the two groups become more logically consistent.

5. Conclusion

The literature suggests that building learner autonomy can be an effective tool for students. The research conducted here fits in to that body of work by examining the impact that self-determined study plans have upon effort and performance. More specifically, 61 students in a mid-level TOEIC class were asked to construct weekly plans with the underlying motivation being to lift their final exam scores. These plans required students to set personal goals and identify what corresponding learning materials they would use. Supplementary to this, the cohort was also asked at the end of the course to consider their scholastic weaknesses, and what learning materials and study methods they used in the interim.

A brief quantitative analysis showed an even split between students who improved and those who worsened. Additionally, whilst it was found that the overall average grade remained relatively constant, performance differentials became more dispersed. It was also found that following the implementation of study plans, all students reported a two-fold increase in the amount of time spent in private study.

A comparison of the two of the three groups showed that those who improved demonstrated a keen ability to identify their weaknesses and selected appropriate materials and study patterns to compensate. Students who fared worse. However, were unable to determine their shortcomings. Although this group reported more time spent in out-of-class learning, their time was spent unproductively – listening to music.

With respect to the implications of this study, it offers empirical support for the claim made by the literature that technology-centered approaches are only useful if students have already developed their learner autonomy. All

groups included technological factors in their plans and considering the performance outcomes of the more effective Group 1 compared to groups 2 and 3, it is evident that there is a palpable risk for students if they are given the freedom to self-determine if they fall into the latter category.

Given the relative proportions of the groups, it is clear that some form of support solution needs to be created to aid learner autonomy. As the literature also notes that learning methods are myriad even among homogeneous societies, this places greater emphasis for the need of individually tailored solutions vis-à-vis weaknesses identification and corresponding learning materials and strategies.

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- ④ 「結果と考察」や「結果と分析」等として、得られたデータのまとめ、その解釈、先行研究で得られた知見との比較等を述べる。「結果」と「考察／分析」の2章に分けてもよい。
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