

The Impact of Foreign Teachers and Japanese Teachers of English on High School Students' Levels of Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

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Abstract

It has been long believed that foreign teachers and local teachers of English (FTEs, LTEs) present different teaching models in classes of English as a foreign language, the benefits and disadvantages of which have been recently a focus of numerous studies all around the world. Japanese high school students' perceptions of different teachers, and the teacher effect on students' self-reported intrinsic and extrinsic interest as well as their level of classroom anxiety are investigated and reported in this article. The findings show that although all of the students had positive levels of extrinsic interest for both types of teachers, a majority of students expressed higher intrinsic interest for foreign teachers of English. Female students reported being more intrinsically interested in FTEs than male students.

Keywords: FTEs, LTEs, interest, learner motivation

Background and Literature Review

Learner Motivation

Motivation is generally described as being internally generated by either intrinsic interest or extrinsic goals. The main source of intrinsic motivation is a situational interest (Gardner, 1985). When learning a foreign language takes place in an enjoyable and fun environment, students are intrinsically motivated to participate in classroom activities. There is no extrinsic reward except the excitement of the process itself. At the same time, extrinsically motivated students are stimulated because they assign a utility value to the learning process with a focus on an external goal. Multiple researchers reveal that intrinsic motivation has a stronger effect on student performance because the students who are more intrinsically motivated are able to concentrate longer on their studies (Dörnyei, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Intrinsically motivated students enjoy the learning process itself, their motivation is situational, therefore it is affected to a certain degree by teachers, as teachers represent a significant part of learning environment. Knowing how teachers affect students' interest, we can discuss what they can do to improve students' levels of intrinsic motivation.

Teacher-related factors

Different teaching techniques, strategies, teacher attitude, manners and personality affect learner motivation. Although all teachers have their own individual differences and individual teaching styles, foreign teachers of English in Japan are widely generalized and regarded by many other teachers and learners as one distinctive group (commonly referred to as native English-speaking teachers) (Yazawa, 2019; Yazawa & Inouchi, 2018). Considering the context-dependent nature of students' interest in the language classroom, it is important to investigate how such factors, as teachers' relative identity as belonging to one of the generalized groups of FTEs and LTEs, can be advantageously used to develop positive language learning motivation in Japanese educational settings.

Motivation in Language Learning and gender

The nature of learners motivation is affected by a wide range of individual characteristics, among which are sexual dimorphism, age, cognitive aptitudes, psychological traits, personal interests and many others.

Gender is one of the most distinctive variables used in scientific research across almost all disciplines. Numerous studies have been conducted comparing the foreign language learning motivation and acquisition between male and female learners (Ellis, 1994; Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Kissau, 2008; Xiong, 2010). Ellis conducted a study on students learning French as a foreign language and showed that females had higher scores and more positive attitudes towards French than males (1994). Csizér and Dörnyei in their study of 8,000 Hungarian students learning foreign languages concluded that male students were less motivated to learn a foreign language than female students (2005). Kissau in his study on young Canadians studying French revealed that males reported being less intrinsically motivated than females (2008). Xiong reported that girls were more intrinsically motivated to study English than boys (2010). A similar study in the USA among 303 college students learning French revealed that female learners reported greater self-efficacy, interest, value and enjoyment in learning French than male learners (Mills, Pajares, & Herron, 2007).

Several studies in psychology, linguistics and sociology argue that there are psychological or biological differences between men and women that might influence learners' motivation to learn a foreign language. Costa Jr., Terracciano and McCrae (2001) reported in their multicultural research that women scored higher in such psychological traits as neuroticism, agreeableness, warmth, and openness to feelings while men reported themselves to be higher in assertiveness and openness to things and ideas. In his more recent cross-cultural research, Lippa supports this notion showing that women and men differ significantly in such traits as extraversion and agreeableness. His research, conducted in 51 nations using data from 200,000 participants, led to the conclusion that gender may influence personality traits more than socio-cultural factors (2010a). Lippa argues that women present themselves as more people-oriented

and less object-oriented than men do across all countries (2010b). Morris states that women are more interested in people while men are more interested in things (2016). Voyer and Voyer presented data demonstrating a female advantage for language courses (2014). A majority of researchers on gender differences and personality traits also notice that the differences are greater in well-developed and wealthy countries (Lippa, 2010a; Lippa, 2010b; Morris, 2016; Schmitt, Realo, Voracek, & Allik, 2008). Accordingly, the author expects that learners of English in an economically developed country such as Japan also will demonstrate a greater gender gap in interest, intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, and anxiety regarding language learning.

As mentioned above, it is widely believed, based on the previous research, that female students commonly express higher motivation and interest in learning a foreign language. Because women present themselves more people-oriented and less object-oriented, it seems reasonable to assume that female students are more sensitive to others in the language classroom. Therefore, they may not have a larger gap in their perceptions of different teachers than male students.

Based on the rationale above, students' relative perceptions of their English teachers and gender discrepancy as possible factors influencing their motivation were chosen to examine in this study. The following questions were addressed: "How do Japanese high school students perceive foreign teachers and Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) in regard of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation?" and "Do these perceptions differ between students of different gender?"

Methodology

Participants

The study was conducted in a Tokyo metropolitan high school. Students of both genders are enrolled in the school. Their academic level is ranked just slightly above the national average according to the deviation value. Deviation value, or standard score, is a popular means of measuring academic performance in Japan. The minimum acceptable score for admission to this school for the year 2016 was 52 points. With 50 points considered to be the mean acceptance score in a Tokyo metropolitan school, 52 points lie in the close range and can be considered Tokyo's average. Six hundred forty first- and second-year students were asked to participate in this study at the end of the academic year, more than half of them chose to take the questionnaire (N=368). The students had already experienced having classes for over a year or more with three different FTEs, two female teachers and one male, aged from 25 to 38 years old; and seven JTEs, three female and four male, aged from 26 to 60.

Questionnaire design

After receiving a brief explanation of the study and asked for cooperation in it, the students completed a questionnaire consisting of sixteen questions in Japanese. The students were asked to respond to fourteen of the statements using a 5-point Likert Scale, selecting from "not true

at all”, “not true”, “cannot say”, “true” and “very much true”. The statements were in Japanese and randomly ordered (Appendix A). The questions were designed to elicit students’ perceptions of their situational interest towards different teachers of English, as one of the main driving forces of intrinsic motivation and utility value—the main factor of extrinsic motivation. The survey (N=368) conducted in the present study was anonymous with the additional first two questions designed to identify students’ demographics: their gender (female: 197; male: 171) and GTEC (Global Test of English Communication) scores. Their average GTEC score according to the official school record was 380 points, which is at the very beginning of Primary Level 3 (GTEC, 2017). The self-reported average GTEC score according to the survey results was 371, which is very close to the actual number.

Intrinsic and extrinsic interests in learning English are important sources of motivation. To measure and compare students’ level of interest in learning English with different teachers, the following statements were included in the survey: (I)¹ “I am interested in FTEs’ lessons”, (I) “I am interested in JTEs’ lessons”, (I) “I think FTEs are interesting and fascinating”, (I) “I think JTEs are interesting and fascinating”, (I) “Learning from FTEs excites me”, (I) “Learning from JTEs excites me”, (U)² “I think FTEs’ lessons are very important”, (U) “I think FTEs’ lessons are very useful”. (U) “I think JTEs’ lessons are very important” and (U) “I think JTEs’ lessons are very useful”.

Anxiety towards teachers can play an important role in foreign language learning motivation. When a student has a sense of high anxiety, his or her self-efficacy drops. On the other hand, the more relaxed a student feels, the higher self-efficacy for the task he or she perceives. To understand the affective state of the students, one of the four forces which influences self-efficacy, and to check whether it is influenced by the presence of different types of teachers, the following statements were included in the survey: (C)³ “I do not feel uneasy (anxiety) with JTEs”, (C) “I do not feel uneasy (anxiety) with FTEs”, (C) “I do not feel nervous with FTEs” and (C) “I do not feel nervous with JTEs”. For the purpose of the simplicity of interpretation, the data gathered from the survey was later organized into a table with three categories: Interest, Utility and Comfort (Appendix A).

Analysis

The gathered data was first analyzed according to the general traits in students’ perceptions of different teachers. Basic descriptive statistics, such as the mean, median and standard deviations were calculated. Unfortunately, the mean, which represents the population average, has an unclear meaning when applied to Likert scale responses. Researchers have argued that the median should be used as the measure of central tendency for Likert scale data (Jamieson, 2004). Therefore, medians were looked at to measure the level of positive or negative perception toward different teachers of English in this study (Appendix B).

Finally, female and male students’ responses were also compared to find out if gender may

affect their perceptions. Crosstab analysis and Chi-square tests were run to determine whether there is any statistical significance and gender discrepancy (Appendix C).

Results

The results were separated into two categories: a category of questions with a median of 4 points and a category with questions with a median of 3 points. Most students indicated agreement with the following statements regarding foreign teachers of English: “I think FTEs’ lessons are very important” (Mdn=4, IQR=1)⁴, “I am interested in FTEs’ lessons” (Mdn=4, IQR=1), “I think FTEs’ lessons are very useful” (Mdn=4, IQR=1), “Learning from FTEs excites me” (Mdn=4, IQR=1) and “I think FTEs are interesting and fascinating” (Mdn=4, IQR=1.5). At the same time only three statements regarding Japanese teachers of English found an equal level of agreement among students: “I do not feel nervous with JTEs” (Mdn=4, IQR=1), “I think JTEs’ lessons are very important” (Mdn=4, IQR=1) and “I think JTEs’ lessons are very useful” (Mdn=4, IQR=1). The rest of the statements scored a neutral perception from the students (Mdn=3).

For the purpose to answer one of the research questions the students were divided into two categories of gender, and a crosstab procedure was used to detect any statistical significance. The results of the chi-square tests ran on each statement indicated that there is only one question, which gathered different responses by sex. Female respondents indicated agreement with the statement “I am interested in FTEs’ lessons” (Mdn=4, IQR=1), while majority of male students for the same question had a neutral response (Mdn=3, IQR=1). The Pearson chi-square statistic test (0.016) and the low expectant frequency less than 5 (10%) indicated that these results are valid and statistically significant (Appendix C).

Follow-up Interview

In order to examine the sources of students’ perceptions, all the participants of the first survey were asked two narrative frame questions in Japanese:

1. 日本人英語講師と比較して、外国人の先生は…
Compared to JTEs, FTEs are...
2. 外国人英語講師と比較して、日本人の先生は…
Compared to FTEs, JTEs are...

Two hundred and forty students chose to participate by providing short responses (M=119, F= 121). Their answers were analyzed by assigning eight different tags based on the nature of the research questions: (1-I)⁵ intrinsic enjoyment, (2-IU) interest in culture, (2-IU) authenticity, (3-L, 4-L) difficulty or easiness in communication, (5-I) personality, (6-U) language proficiency, (7-IU) pronunciation, and (8-U) general extrinsic usefulness.

Only three male respondents indicated intrinsic enjoyment during FTEs lessons: ex. “(FTEs)

have a good pronunciation and excite me” (発音が良い ワクワクする), “(they are) cheerful people and I feel excited during their lessons” (雰囲気明るい人が多く、授業の雰囲気が楽しく感じる). At the same time, more girls (N=13) expressed similar feeling of excitement: ex. “(FTEs) have a friendly, exciting vibe” (接しやすい雰囲気があって楽しい). Over twenty boys perceived FTEs as having interesting personality: ex. “(they are) fun, friendly,” (おもしろい, フレンドリー) and similar responses. Around the same number of girls mentioned FTEs’ personality (N=23): ex. “FTEs are always positive and respect our opinions and are easy to talk to” (外国人の先生はいつもポジティブで私たちの意見を尊重してくださり、話しかけやすい), “(they are) easy to consult with” (相談しやすい). Majority of male students described FTEs as having authentic English pronunciation (N=36), and only three indicated other usefulness: ex. “(FTEs) praise me. They also criticize but they do so by analyzing my mistakes” ((外国人の先生は)褒めてくれる。批判もすることはあるがそれは私の誤りを分析しているからだ). Twenty percent of boys described FTEs as difficult to communicate with. Almost half of the girls (N=50) mentioned FTEs’ pronunciation, and 29% of them expressed difficulties in communication.

While describing JTEs, around half of male students indicated that they are easy to communicate with: ex. “(JTEs are) easy to understand, easy to ask questions” (話しかけやすい, 質問しやすい), and over 60% of female students perceived JTEs as better communicators than FTEs: ex. “it is easy to ask (explanations) in Japanese when I do not understand” (わからないところを日本語で聞くことが出来るから楽). Eleven male respondents indicated that lessons with JTEs are useful: ex. “because I need a person who will teach me grammar properly, I want the Japanese teacher to teach me grammar” (文法をしっかりと教えてくれる人が必要なので文法は日本の先生に教えてもらいたいです).

Discussion

The students who participated in the study on average had a higher intrinsic interest in learning English from FTEs than from JTEs. Both types of teachers got a positive perception from the students in Utility category. This means that the learners are equally extrinsically motivated in learning English from both types of teachers in general, but learning from FTEs is more intrinsically interesting for them than learning from JTEs. In the category of Comfort, students perception of FTEs’ was lower compared to that of JTEs’, as the students defined themselves being more nervous and less at ease with FTEs. One of the possible reasons for being more nervous with FTEs could be the lack of language skills. Perhaps, many of the respondents did not speak enough English to feel as relaxed with FTEs in the classroom as they feel they are with JTEs. In the follow-up interview, the students expressed a desire for FTEs to use easier language. One can argue here that the observed situation where FTEs do not speak students’ L1, and students do not believe their cognitive abilities to be good enough to participate in tasks only in English, the students have higher anxiety to learn English in the presence of FTEs than LTEs.

Female and male students' scores were the same in all categories for JTEs. Both genders held equally indifferent Interest towards JTEs and put an equal high value on learning from them. At the same time, interestingly enough, the students' responses for FTEs were different in the category of Interest. Female students showed higher interest in FTEs lessons compared to male students.

According to the results from a previous study conducted in the same school (Yazawa, 2017), when students were asked to write down the advantages and disadvantages of FTEs and JTEs, one of the main reasons for which students prefer FTEs over JTEs was Interest. Some of the comments supporting this idea included: "authentic English is more fun" (本場の英語の方が楽しい), "it is interesting to be exposed to a variety of native English accents" (ネイティブスピーカーだと元の出身の英語の訛りが聞けて面白い), "the language of FTEs is rich and fun" (表現などが豊かで楽しい), and many similar responses.

Some researchers claim that students first get excited, develop their personal interest, and then get involved in the learning activities. As they become engaged in learning over time, they develop a higher level of self-efficacy with the development of expertise (Hidi, Renninger, & Krapp, 2004). Personal interest in English as a language and English language speaking people facilitates increased motivation, engagement in the learning process and comprehension. Authenticity of language provided by FTEs in classroom results in an overall increase in enthusiasm among learners. This positively influences their motivation and positively affects their furthermore learning outcomes.

Given the findings in psychological research described in the rationale section above, the author suggests that the dominant preference of People over Things among women may play a positive role in building their interest in FTEs. FTEs are a novice and thus interesting for many female students; they represent the people who speak the target language and its culture. Such interest in FTEs corresponds to intrinsic motivation (Gardner, 1985). Thus, it is possible to assume that female students are more intrinsically motivated than male students in classes with foreign teachers of English.

Conclusion

The present study concludes that teacher's native or non-native identities may have a different impact on intrinsic and extrinsic interest of Japanese high school students. This study revealed that FTEs have a high positive affect on students' both intrinsic and extrinsic interest, while Japanese teachers are only regarded by many participants as sources of extrinsic interest. At the same time, JTEs have a significantly higher effect on students' state of comfort. The study also revealed that female students express higher intrinsic interest in FTEs' lessons than male students.

Motivation is one of the most influential factors in language learning; therefore, it appears to be very important for both types of teachers to help students to enhance it. English is a

foreign language for the majority of Japanese learners in almost all educational settings. Having a foreign teacher, usually an FTE, students will be affected positively by the FTE and increase intrinsic and extrinsic interest, and thus will enhance their motivation and engagement into the learning process. When a student has a personal interest, she or he can be more easily involved in the content of English lesson in terms of the language value. Japanese teachers of English can be advised to shift their educational focus to enhancing the level of students' situational intrinsic interest through various popular teaching techniques, such as using active games, songs, interactive activities and many more in their classrooms.

Students' affective state is an important part of their motivational engagement. The present study showed that a majority of Japanese high school students felt more "emotionally safe" with JTEs than with FTEs. The differences among reported self-observed emotional states in students may be influenced by various factors, among which is the fact that many higher education institutes in Japan have a strict policy regarding languages used in the classroom. FTEs are asked to use only English and avoid using Japanese. Students too are commonly required to use only English in classes with FTEs. Under this condition, some students achieve a more comfortable emotional state with JTEs' presence in the classroom. FTEs should also be allowed to use Japanese to an appropriate extent in order to facilitate emotionally comfortable experiences in classes among students. Mutual understanding between teachers and students is one of the key factors for decreasing anxiety. Moderate usage of L1 by FTEs will allow students to build successful experiences with the language and lower their anxiety. Successful experiences will bring about greater interest and thus higher motivation to further learning.

The difference between female and male students regarding their FTEs should attract more attention of ELT researchers in Japan. More thorough research on gender differences will be advised to examine whether there are significant discrepancies between male and female interest in the English language classroom in Japan, and whether teachers have a significant impact on the nature of this interest.

Notes

1. (I) defines a question related to intrinsic interest.
2. (U) defines a question related to extrinsic interest.
3. (C) defines a question related to the level of anxiety.
4. Mdn = Median, IQR = Interquartile Range.
5. 1~8 indicate numerical number of a tag, alphabet letters correspond to Interest, Utility and Language category of questions.

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Appendix A

Japanese survey questions and their translation to English

A. Intrinsic Interest Value (Interest) Questions

1. I am interested in FTEs' lessons.
ネイティブ英語教師たちのレッスンに興味を持つ。
2. I am interested in JTEs' lessons.
日本人英語教師たちのレッスンに興味を持つ。
3. I think FTEs are interesting and fascinating.
ネイティブ英語教師は楽しいし、面白い。
4. I think JTEs are interesting and fascinating.
日本人英語教師は楽しいし、面白い。
5. Learning from FTEs excites me.
ネイティブ英語教師から英語を学ぶのはとても刺激になる。
6. Learning from JTEs excites me.
日本人英語教師から英語を学ぶのはとても刺激になる。

B. Extrinsic Interest Value (Utility) Questions

1. I think JTEs' lessons are very important.
日本人英語教師の教える内容はとても大事だと思う。
2. I think FTEs' lessons are very important.
ネイティブ英語教師の教える内容はとても大事だと思う。
3. I think FTEs' lessons are very useful.
ネイティブ英語教師の授業はとてもためになると思う。
4. I think JTEs' lessons are very useful.
日本人英語教師の授業はとてもためになると思う。

C. Comfort State Questions

1. I do not feel uneasy (anxiety) with JTEs.
ネイティブ英語教師の授業で不安な点がない。
2. I do not feel uneasy (anxiety) with FTEs.
日本人英語教師の授業で不安な点がない。
3. I do not feel nervous with JTEs.
日本人英語教師の授業では、緊張しない。
4. I do not feel nervous with FTEs.
ネイティブ英語教師の授業では、緊張しない。

Appendix B

Basic statistical analysis of the data

Questions and English Translation	Minimum	Maximum	Median Descend- ing order	Mean	Standard Deviation
(I) ネイティブ英語教師の教える内容はとても大事だと思う。 I think FTEs' lessons are very important.	1.00	5.00	4.00	3.76	0.85
(A) 日本人英語教師の授業では、緊張しない。 I do not feel nervous with JTEs.	1.00	5.00	4.00	3.86	1.02
(U) 日本人英語教師の教える内容はとても大事だと思う。 I think JTEs' lessons are very important.	1.00	5.00	4.00	3.69	0.83
(I) ネイティブ英語教師たちのレッスンに興味を持つ。 I am interested in FTEs' lessons.	1.00	5.00	4.00	3.47	0.96
(U) ネイティブ英語教師の授業はとてもためになると思う。 I think FTEs' lessons are very useful.	1.00	5.00	4.00	3.81	0.83
(I) ネイティブ英語教師から英語を学ぶのはとても刺激になる。 Learning from FTEs excites me.	1.00	5.00	4.00	3.84	0.88
(U) 日本人英語教師の授業はとてもためになると思う。 I think JTEs' lessons are very useful.	1.00	5.00	4.00	3.48	0.84
(I) ネイティブ英語教師は楽しいし、面白い。 I think FTEs are interesting and fascinating.	1.00	5.00	4.00	3.50	0.92
(I) 日本人英語教師から英語を学ぶのはとても刺激になる。 Learning from JTEs excites me.	1.00	5.00	3.00	3.22	0.91
(A) ネイティブ英語教師の授業で不安な点がない。 I do not feel uneasy with FTEs.	1.00	5.00	3.00	2.67	0.94
(I) 日本人英語教師は楽しいし、面白い。 I think JTEs are interesting and fascinating.	1.00	5.00	3.00	3.31	0.96
(I) 日本人英語教師たちのレッスンに興味を持つ。 I am interested in JTEs' lessons.	1.00	5.00	3.00	3.12	0.88
(C) ネイティブ英語教師の授業では、緊張しない。 I do not feel nervous with FTEs.	1.00	5.00	3.00	2.86	1.15
(C) 日本人英語教師の授業で不安な点がない。 I do not feel uneasy with JTEs.	1.00	5.00	3.00	2.99	1.02

Appendix C

Basic statistical analysis of gender discrepancy

I am interested in FTEs' lessons. (I) ネイティブ英語教師たちのレッスンに興味を持つ。					
Basic Statistics	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
Q2: Male (男)	1.00	5.00	3.00	3.29	0.91
Q2: Female (女)	1.00	5.00	4.00	3.61	0.97

Crosstab analysis

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.223 ^a	4	.016
Likelihood Ratio	13.091	4	.011
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.494	1	.006

a. 1 cell (10.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.51.

(矢澤 オーリア ビジネスデザイン学科)