

# Motivational change of Japanese learners of English: a study of students at Tottori University of Environmental Studies

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## I. INTRODUCTION

It has been reported that university students, on whom my study focuses, are less motivated to study English even though they were motivated to study English when they are in junior and high schools because of entrance examinations. According to a survey conducted by Benesse (Benesse Kyouikukennkyuujo, 1998), 54 percent of 1,718 high school students chose English as the most important subject for entrance examinations, followed by mathematics (34.2 percent). On the other hand, some research (NHK Broadcast Cultural Institute, 1995 and Somusho [Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications] 2001) revealed that university students spent less time studying than school students. Another survey of Japanese freshmen also indicated that 'motivation towards English peaks in the last year of high school, as the entrance exams approach, suffers a decline through university life...' (Berwick and Ross (1989) quoted in Benson, 1991). After Japanese students reach the goal they have been aiming at during school education, their study of English at university might seem more directionless and become more dependent on their own personal motivation. On the basis of a study of the attitudes and motivation of Japanese freshmen, Benson (1991) points out, 'many freshmen students remain unclear as to any larger purpose for studying English, and are simply doing it because it is required'.

It would appear from these studies, regrettably, that Japanese university students are poorly motivated to study English and, furthermore, seem to be failing to exploit an opportunity: they already have sufficient basic grammar and lexical knowledge of English gained at junior and high schools to achieve an intermediate or higher level of proficiency. Considering that 'in this EFL context long-term learning is necessary for anyone who wishes to achieve a good command of English' (Kobayashi, 2001: 67), this may be one of the reasons why there are very few Japanese who have such a command. In order to foster learners who are more motivated to continue to study English long enough to attain a higher level of proficiency, studies that examine the nature of the motivation of Japanese learners of English, especially learners at university, would seem to be an important and necessary step.

My study investigates the attitudes and motivation of Japanese learners of English, especially university students, proposing the following main research question:

**How did Japanese university students' motivation change from their junior high period to the present in the Japanese social and educational context?**

To address this research question, multiple methods (questionnaires and interviews) are employed as a research strategy and the data collected is analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

The purpose of this paper is, firstly, to explicate concepts of motivation relevant to Second Language Acquisition, (motivational influences covered in the research and prior studies of attitude and motivation of Japanese learners of English); secondly, on the basis of these, to present the research questions upon the basis of which I propose to conduct my study; thirdly, to give an outline of the appropriate research strategy and methods to investigate the stated research questions; and lastly, to discuss the findings underlying my research.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2. 1. TYPES OF MOTIVATION IN SLA**

Although various kinds of motivation have been identified by researchers, the following types are frequently cited in the field of Second Language Acquisition: integrative, instrumental, intrinsic, extrinsic, and resultative.

Among these types of motivation, integrative motivation is one of the primary and most influential concepts in motivation theory in the SLA field. The conceptual framework of integrative motivation was first proposed by Gardner and Lambert (1972). They spotlighted the influence of learners' attitudes towards the L2 and the L2 community on their L2 learning behavior. In this framework, the integratively motivated learner is one who has a positive view of the L2, has a desire to identify with the L2 community, and tends to evaluate the learning situation positively (Dörnyei, 2001). Gardner defines integrative motivation as a 'motivation to learn a second language because of positive feelings toward the community that speaks that language' (Gardner, 1985: 82-3).

It is generally assumed in this theory that L2 motivation is associated with a positive outlook towards the group and values the target language is linked with, regardless of the nature of the actual learning context. *Integrativeness* is thus considered to be able to play a role not only in a second language context but also in a foreign language context where learners have little opportunity to meet with members of the target language group, or to experience the language first hand. For example, Dörnyei and Clement's (2000) study in Hungary, which is largely monolingual and monocultural, with foreign languages being taught primarily as a school subject with very limited direct contact with the target speakers, found 'integrativeness to be the most powerful general component of the participants' generalized language-related affective disposition, determining language choice and the general level of effort the students intended to invest in the learning process' (Dörnyei, 2001). It should be noted that integrativeness may not in all cases imply a positive attitude towards the L2 community, however: for example, Ellis (1997: 75)

points out that 'some learners may be influenced by a 'Machiavellian motivation' – the desire to learn the L2 in order to manipulate and overcome the people of the target language'.

Instrumental motivation, which is defined as 'the degree of effort a learner puts into learning an L2 as a result of the desire to achieve some functional goal (e.g. to pass an exam)' (Ellis, 1997: 140), is the utilitarian counterpart of integrative motivation in Gardner's (1985) motivation theory. According to his research, integrative motivation is more correlated to learners' achievement than instrumental motivation. Some scholars, however, have raised questions about this dichotomous model of L2 motivation. Au (1988) points out that some cases seem to be difficult to classify into either integrative or instrumental motivation and there is a great deal of disagreement between researchers regarding classification. For example, Lukmani (1972) categorizes 'travel abroad' as instrumental motivation, while Burstall *et al.* (1974) classify 'travel to France' as integrative motivation. The same objective phenomenon can of course be classified either way, depending on the attitude towards it of the learner. Furthermore, Clement and Kruideniet (1983) state that motivation of L2 learners who want to make friends among the target language people can be classified as either instrumental or integrative.

A further well-known dichotomy in motivation theory is that between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. According to Dörnyei (2001: 26), intrinsic motivation 'deals with behaviour performed for its own sake in order to experience pleasure and satisfaction, such as the joy of doing a particular activity or satisfying one's curiosity' and extrinsic motivation 'involves performing a behaviour as a means to an end, that is, to receive some extrinsic reward (e.g. good grades) or to avoid punishment'. Deci and Ryan (1985) propose a more elaborate model of these motivations, *self-determination theory*, to replace the intrinsic/extrinsic dichotomy: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are seen not as dichotomous but as a composite continuum. In this view, extrinsic motivation can be graded through four types of 'self-

regulations': external, introjected, identified, and integrated. Where these can be placed on a continuum between self-determined (intrinsic) and controlled (extrinsic) forms of motivation is conditional on how 'internalised' they are, that is, to what extent the regulation has been transferred from outside to inside the individual. Deci and Ryan argue that extrinsic rewards can be incorporated into, or can even lead to, intrinsic motivation if they are sufficiently self-determined and internalized.

One further perspective is offered by the concept of 'resultative motivation': while motivation is in many cases assumed to be the cause of L2 achievement, the process can also work in reverse. L2 learners who have experience of success in learning may become more motivated, or in some cases, less motivated – if challenge is insufficient – to learn. Resultative motivation is thus 'motivation that learners develop as a result of their success in learning an L2' (Ellis, 1997: 143).

What is important about all these types of motivation is that they should be seen 'as complementary rather than as distinct and oppositional' (Ellis, 1997: 76). For example, L2 learners can be motivated both instrumentally and integratively at the same time even though they may be motivated more instrumentally than integratively or more integratively than instrumentally. Moreover, Ellis (1997: 76) points out that 'motivation is dynamic in nature; it is not something that a learner has or does not have but rather something that varies from one to the next depending on the learning context or task'. It can be appreciated, then, that motivation is such an elusive and complex phenomenon that it may be necessary to examine it from a multi-dimensional perspective and in a conceptually flexible way.

## **2. 2. MOTIVATIONAL INFLUENCES**

Motivation is a multifaceted phenomenon in which a number of factors are interrelated with each other. Among these factors, the following are examined in my study because they seem to be of great importance in understanding the attitude and motivation of Japanese learners of English in the Japanese socio-educational context.

### ● Teachers' influence

The motivational influence of teachers has been pointed out by many researchers. Clark and Trafford (1995), for example, reveal that teachers and students both view the teacher-pupil relationship as the most significant variable affecting pupils' attitudes towards L2 learning. Csikszentmihalyi (1997) also points out that teachers' enthusiasm has a strong impact on students' motivation to learn. Deci *et al.* (1997) provide some empirical confirmation of Csikszentmihalyi's argument.

### ● Parental influence

Many scholars have reported that students' motivation to learn in school contexts is strongly affected by their parents. For example, Feensta (1996) pointed out that integrative motivation is facilitated by the 'attitudinal atmosphere' of the home. In a recent study, Gardner *et al.* (1999) also confirm that parental encouragement is associated with the development of attitudes towards the learning situation and with the language-learning efforts of children.

### ● Gender difference

Gender has been seen as a significant factor in foreign language learning. For example, various studies (Burstall, 1975; Powell & Littlewood, 1983; Powell and Batters, 1985; Sung and Padilla's, 1998) show that girls tend to have a more positive attitude to learning foreign languages than do boys. Concerning explanations for these differences, Powell and Batters (1985: 16), state:

*That pattern [the predominance of female teachers in language departments] is part of wider social sex-stereotyping of roles which is bound to influence a child's view of the world'.*

Ethnographic and qualitative research also suggests that gender is indeed a largely socially constructed variable. Cameron (1992: 40) states:

*We must criticize explanations of difference that treat gender as something obvious, static and monolithic, ignoring the forces that shape it and the varied forms they take in different time and places.*

Although these researchers hypothesized that gender difference between L2 learners is related to social influences, Powell and Batters (1985: 20) state:

*'We recognize the difficulty for researchers in gaining a clear picture of pupils' perceptions of subjects taught in school, especially as regards sex differences'.*

## **2. 3. PRIOR STUDIES OF ATTITUDE AND MOTIVATION OF JAPANESE LEARNERS OF ENGLISH**

### **● Attitude toward studying English**

Kobayashi (2001) conducted a study by means of a semi-structured questionnaire in April 1998 to examine Japanese high school students' perceptions about English study, with a sample of 66. The study revealed that although students are reasonably motivated to learn English by notions of 'internationalization' and 'communication with people around the world', this notion is still often vague in their minds and even frustrates some of them when set against the reality of examination-oriented English classes nearly devoid of communicative activities and lack of practical need to use English in Japanese society. However, this study also showed that some students had a positive attitude toward both current and future English learning: they perceived that grammatical and lexical knowledge gained from examination-oriented classes could be the basis of their English proficiency and their future English use for communication. This view may be legitimate because it is widely held that grammatical competence is a part of communicative competence (Canale and Swain, 1980). Another study, conducted by Benesse (1998), revealed that 93 percent of high school students in the survey thought

that English education would not be effective in promoting their speaking proficiency, but instead of calling for reform 61 percent of the first-year students and 80 percent of the second-year students wanted to have grammar-oriented classes with more grammatical exercises to prepare for entrance examinations. This survey revealed two types of English in their mind; English for exams and English for communication, and their strong conviction that the former should have priority over the latter in English classes in high schools. These distorted perceptions about English seem to have some influence on students' attitude and motivation. Although the concept of 'internationalization' may promote a positive attitude towards 'English for communication', 'English for examination's lack of communicative activities in classes might deprive students of the development of motivation for 'English for communication'. Furthermore, as 'English for examination' is a more urgent need for students planning to enter university than 'English for communication', students might have no choice but to force themselves to study 'English for examination' regardless of interest in 'English for communication'. It seems thus interesting and important to examine how these separate conceptions of English in students' minds develop and influence their English study after they enter university and supersede the need to study for entrance examinations.

● The time Japanese students spent studying

Recording the amount of time students spend on studying can be one way of measuring and helping to understand their motivation. A survey conducted by NHK Broadcast Cultural Institute (1995) reveals that the amount of time reportedly spent by Japanese students in self-study decreased over 15 years. Among these students, university students spent the least time on self-study between 1985 and 1995, in spite of the relative abundance of time they had to study and a rich learning environment. Another survey (Somusho, 2001), conducted by Somusho [Ministry of Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications], also indicated that of all students in Japan university students spent the least time on lessons and related study activities



at schools, colleges, and universities. The results of the survey also indicated that university students spent less time on studies and research on their own outside lessons than junior and high school students. Another survey conducted by Benesse (Benesse Corporation, 2001), revealed that high school students with higher achievement in mathematics, Japanese, and English spent more time studying at home while those with lower achievement spent more time watching TV. The survey also uncovered that students with better results on achievement tests are likely to want to enter university through examinations, while those with lower results on achievement tests tend to want to enter university without taking examinations. According to these results, students' performance in English, mathematics, and Japanese practice exams held by Benesse seems to be closely related to which type of entrance route to university high schools students want to take. If so, students' attitude towards studying as well as their performance might be associated with their attitude towards university entrance route.

#### ● Gender difference in L2 learning

As already discussed, there are a number of studies reporting female students' more positive attitudes to L2 learning. Some research examining gender difference amongst Japanese learners of English also report female students' more positive attitude than male students'. Kobayashi (2000 a) conducted a survey at two 'non-elite academic' university preparatory high schools in central Japan, with a sample of 555 students (242 male and 313 female, aged 15 to 17). A statistical analysis of the data revealed that female students' means were significantly higher than male students' in five scales out of nine variables. On the basis of these research findings and multidisciplinary extant data, another study by Kobayashi (2002: 187) attempted to 'explore possible Japanese social elements likely to account for Japanese female high school students' more positive attitudes towards present and future English learning', presupposing gender as social construct. Kobayashi identified a composite of Japanese social and educational elements as the explanation for female students' positive attitude toward English learning. Although my study

examines gender difference statistically, it does not explore any explanation for it. Rather, it attempts to explain qualitatively how motivational influences were relevant to flux of motivation within individual learners who transcend categorizations such as gender.

### **III. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

#### **3. 1. RESEARCH QUESTION**

The main research question proposed for my study is as follows:

**Main question:**

**How did Japanese university students' motivation to learn English change from their junior high period to the present in the Japanese and educational context?**

The main research question is further developed into sub-questions in order to delve further into the main question:

**Sub-questions:**

- **Are there any differences in intensity and transition of motivation between groups such as year groups, male/female groups, and students who entered university through entrance examination and those who did so without taking an entrance examination?**
- **To what extent were motivational factors influential in enhancing their motivation?**
- **Are there any differences in the influence of motivational factors on enhancing their motivation between groups such as year groups, male/female groups, and exam/non-exam groups?**

#### **3. 2. RESEARCH DESIGN**

My research applied a two-phase design: Phase 1: a questionnaire was administered to the target group, and on the basis of the responses interviewees who represent interesting examples, that is, the motivated or unmotivated, and extreme cases (highly motivated or poorly motivated) were identified, taking account of the balance of their number as well as that of number in gender and year group. Phase 2: these interviewees were invited to

take part in a qualitative interview.

### 3. 3. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

#### 3.3. 1. Questionnaires

##### 1. Sample

The participants were 73 first to third year Japanese university students majoring in environmental subjects such as environmental policy, design, and systems at Totorri kankyo University (Tottori University of Environmental Studies), located in Totorri Prefecture, a typical rural region in Japan. The students of each year group were learning English in the same class. As the first year group students had not yet had any English lessons at university when the study was conducted, the data collected from them were equivalent to that from third year high school students or specialized university preparation school students. Although English was an obligatory subject for the first and second year students, it was optional for the third year students. The English class the third year students were taking was one of optional English lessons, focusing on essay writing, while those for the first and second years focused on general English skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The following table indicates the number of students according to year group, gender, and exam/non-exam group:

**Table 1.** The number of students according to year group, gender, and exam/non-exam group

Group	Total	Gender	Exam / non-exam
First year	28	Male 25 / Female 3	Exam 12 / Non-exam 16
Second year	33	Male 19 / Female 14	Exam 28 / Non-exam 5
Third year	12	Male 8 / Female 4	Exam 8 / Non 4
Whole group	73	Male 52 / Female 21	Exam 48 / Non 25

##### 2. Pilot and Procedure

The pilot for the questionnaires was administered to eleven Japanese speakers of English approximately ten days prior to the administration of the questionnaire in order to refine the content, length, and wording as

appropriate for the sample being targeted. Questionnaires were completed by the participants during their first English lesson in April 2003. Background information about the research and the questionnaire such as the purpose, confidentiality, voluntary responses, and thanks was provided before the administration. It took around fifteen to twenty minutes for students to complete the questionnaires.

### 3. Content of the questionnaires

Questionnaires with closed items including the six-point Likert scales were employed although sub-questions for some questions contained 'open' items. On the basis of the responses of the pilot, the questionnaire was modified to some extent: an example was presented at the beginning of questions if necessary and specific instructions were given for questions where the style of question varied through the questionnaire. Questionnaires were composed of nine parts Part 1: Respondents' background; Part 2: About studying English (Motivational intensity and experiences of learning English outside school were examined); Part 3: Communication in English/English conversation; Part 4: Willingness to study English over time (Self-assessment on students' willingness study English from junior high school to the present and the extent to which motivational factors were relevant to enhancing their willingness to study English were examined); Part 5: Reasons for studying English; Part 6: What made you like (or dislike) English; Part 7: Classes at schools and university; Part 8: Interest in foreign countries and foreign language; Part 9: Foreign experiences. The data used for the study, however, were mainly from part 1, 2 and 4 (See Appendix 2).

### 4. Measures

*Motivational intensity* was a measure of the extent to which students were motivated to learn English over the past 12 months and based on the responses interviewees were identified. In Question 1 of Part 2 of the student questionnaires participants were asked how much time they spent studying English each week over the past 12 months on average on their own (the time they spent in addition to English lessons) (TIME). Subsequent questions

(Question 2 and 3-1 to 3-3 of Part 2 of questionnaire) elicited information about students' self-assessments of intensity in studying English (SELF 1: you studied English hard; SELF 2: you studied English harder than other students; SELF 3: you spent a long time studying English), interest in learning it (INTEREST), their perceived need to study the language (NECESSITY), and their intention to continue to study it (DESIRE). Six point Likert scales were used in the questionnaire.

*Willingness to study English* (WTSE) over time was a measure of the degree of their willingness to study English from the first year junior high to the present. Self-assessment on WTSE over time was examined in relation to two aspects: 1. the transition of willingness to study English: how students' willingness to study English changed from first year junior high to the present. 2. the degree of influence of motivational factors on enhancing their willingness to study English: to what extent motivational factors had to do with enhancing their willingness to study English.

In the questionnaires, regarding to the transition of WTSE, students were asked to rate the degree to which extent they were willing to study English from junior high to the present on 6-point scales: 1 = 'Not willing at all', and 6 = 'Very willing'. With regard to the degree of influence of motivational factors, students were to rate the degree to which the factors on the list were relevant to enhancing their willingness to study English on 6-point scales: 1 = 'Not relevant at all', and 6 = 'Very relevant'. The factors on the list were: parents; classes; teachers; interest in foreign countries; interest in foreign languages; grades; entrance examinations; other factors. Concerning other factors, students were asked to write whatever factor they thought was relevant to motivating them to study English.

### 3. 3. 2. *Semi-structured Interviews*

#### 1. Sample

Scores for motivational intensity examined in the questionnaire were employed to identify motivated and unmotivated or highly motivated and poorly motivated students. The highest and lowest-scoring ten students out of

73 participants regarding the total scores of motivational intensity were classified as 'highly' or 'poorly' motivated students. On the basis of this information, interviewees were sampled, considering the balance of the number of poorly motivated/highly motivated students, male/female students, and year groups. The following table summarizes information concerning the interviewee sample (you can see more details in Appendix 1):

**Table 2.** Number of interviewees according to gender, type of entrance, and extreme cases

	Number of students	Number of student by gender	Number of students by type of entrance	Number of students by extreme cases
First year	8	M 5 / F 3	E 5 / N 3	H 2 / P 2
Second year	9	M 4 / F 5	E 7 / N 2	H 2 / P 2
Third year	4	M 2 / F 2	E 3 / N 1	H 1 / P 1
Total	21	M 11 / F 10	E 15 / N 6	H 5 / P 5

\* M = male, F = female \*E = exam group: students who entered university via exams route, N = non-exam group: students who entered university via non-exam route \*H = highly motivated students, P = poorly motivated students

## 2. Procedure

Semi-structured interviews were held approximately one week after the administration of the questionnaire in a quiet room at the university. Each interviewee was individually contacted, scheduled, and invited to the interview. Questions for the interviewee mainly concerned eight issues addressed in the questionnaire. Moreover, lines of inquiry raised from interviewee's answers for the questionnaires were pursued in greater detail and depth to complement the questionnaire data. Questions were asked and answered in Japanese during the interview. One-to-one interviews took around 20 to 30 minutes for each interviewee, recorded by the audio-tape recorder in addition to taking field notes.

## 3. Transcription

The recorded tape was transcribed into a text. Extracts from transcripts in this

paper were translated into English by the author. As it seemed almost impossible to translate some colloquial expressions used by interviewees without losing any nuance, translation aimed at trying to convey interviewees' intention as accurately as possible at the cost of literal translation.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

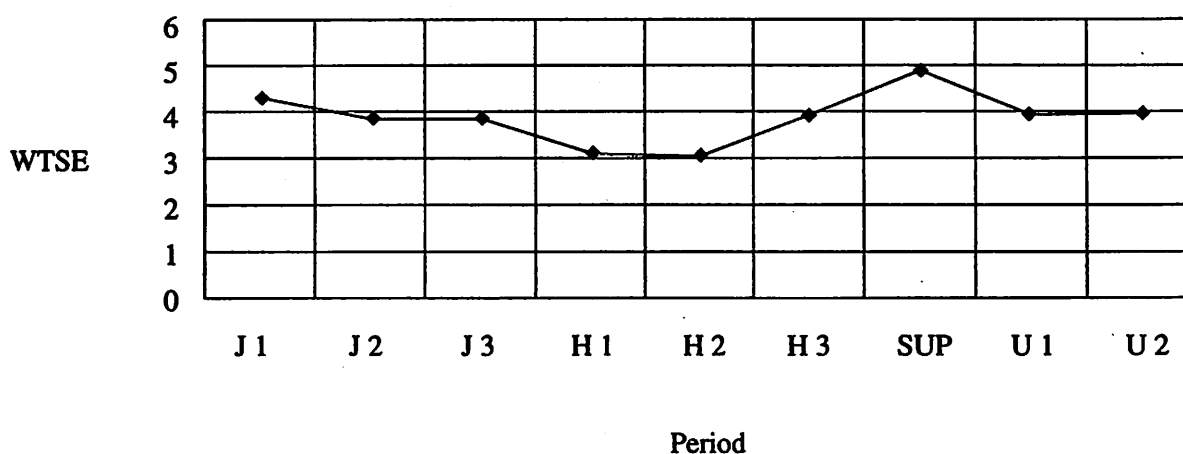
Mean scores for the whole group regarding students' self-assessment on WTSE from junior high to the present is shown in the following table and graph:

**Table3.** Mean scores of the whole group in response to questions on WTSE

J 1	J 2	J 3	H 1	H 2	H 3	SPU	U 1	U 2
4.30(73)	3.78	3.82	3.14	3.16	3.81	4.67(18)	3.89(45)	3.92(12)

\*J = junior high school \*H = high school \*SPU = specialized university preparation school  
 \*U = university \*The number of J, H, and U is the academic year \*( ) indicates the number of students; the number is the same in J 1 to H 3

**Graph1.** Transition of WTSE:Whole group



The results indicate that broadly speaking, WTSE decreased from J 1 to H 2 gradually and then increased from H 3 to U 2 by degrees. WTSE was higher in junior high (3.96) and in university (3.90) than in high school (3.37) and was highest in SUP or *yobiko*: specialized university preparation schools (4.67).

In Junior high school, the first year was higher in WTSE than the

second and third years. Students in general were likely to be willing to study English in J 1. This can probably be attributed to the novelty and easiness of English lessons: as students usually start to learn English from junior high, it is something new, which might stimulate their curiosity. Moreover, as English lessons start with basics, it is not difficult to understand them without effort at least at the beginning. As a result, most of the students were likely to get a good score, which motivated them to study English. According to S:

*S38: (English lessons were) easy and I got good marks in the tests. It's simple. That's the only reason (why I was willing to study English at that time).*

WTSE increased slightly in the third year of junior high and greatly in the third year of high school. This can be assumed to be because of students' practical need to pass entrance exams.

In high school, the first year was lowest, followed by the second year, each lower than at any other period. One of the main reasons for this is almost certainly examination-oriented lessons emphasizing grammar and translation with an increasing amount of vocabulary. Many interviewees indicated their disappointment at examination-oriented lessons:

*M53: Once I entered high school, lessons became examination-oriented. I was disappointed because English lessons in junior high were interesting.*

The increasing quantity of vocabulary and advanced content seem to make lessons more difficult and as a result decrease motivation:

*P38: English lessons were not interesting. Besides, I didn't like the teacher. The pace of the lessons got faster suddenly and the number of unfamiliar words increased. As it was difficult to*



*catch up with lessons if we did not study our own to prepare for them, it took a lot of time to prepare. Even though I prepared for it, what we learned was not that easy to understand...*

These negative reactions applied even to most students such as N classified as motivated in my study:

*N69: (Lessons at high school were) not interesting at all.*

*Interviewer: Why?*

*N70: Unlike junior high, lessons at high school were not basics.*

*Full of English and grammar which we usually do not use, they became difficult to understand. That is the reason.*

Some students indicated the style of teaching rather than the content of lessons as the reason why examination-oriented lessons were boring. D described:

*D65: ...they were just reading and translating the textbook.*

*Always like that.*

Although most students seem to have negative feelings towards examination-oriented lessons, they seem nevertheless to regard them as having been necessary to construct the basics of their English proficiency as well as to pass the exams<sup>1</sup>:

*I45: If we do not know grammar, we cannot compose sentences and accordingly speak. So it is not always useless...*

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<sup>1</sup> In the questionnaires their opinion were divided as to the opinion that grammar-/translation-oriented classes are useless because it doesn't enable you to speak English: 42 students disagreed to this opinion while 30 agreed.

Some of interviewees appeared to perceive grammatical knowledge gained at school to be part of communicative competence. Some students thus seem to have been studying 'English for exams' with contradictory feelings: that it was necessary as the basis of their English proficiency, even though it was not interesting, and difficult to learn.

In specialized university preparation (SUP) school, WTSE was the highest for all the periods. The goal of SUP schools and their students is very simple and clear: to pass the entrance examinations. These students are thus usually instrumentally motivated to a great extent. As a result, it may be quite natural that students work harder in this period than in other periods. The noteworthy point is that in spite of examination-oriented lessons emphasizing grammar and translation, which seem usually to decrease students' WTSE especially in high school, WTSE was the highest among the students who studied in SUP schools. In addition to an urgent need to pass exams, this seems to be because of satisfaction with the lessons at such schools. Some interviewees who went to SUP schools maintained that classes in these schools were more interesting than those in high schools:

*Interviewer: Your willingness to study English was highest when you were in SUP school. Was that because you had to study English hard to pass the exams?*

*B40: That was not the reason why I was highly motivated to study.*

*Interviewer: Then, what was the reason?*

*B41: Because classes were interesting.*

In university, there was almost no difference between the first year (3.89) and second year (3.92) in WTSE. Average scores of WTSE were higher in university (3.90) than in high school (3.37). This increase corresponds to that in the amount of time students spent studying English and their degree of enjoyment of English lessons<sup>2</sup>. Many interviewees reported enjoyment of

‘communication-centred English lessons at the university’<sup>3</sup> as a main reason for increasing their WTSE. As they had never had such communication-centred lessons before, these lessons were something novel for them. Moreover, they seem to meet students’ strong desire to speak English<sup>4</sup>. As a result, students can be assumed to be more motivated to learn English at university.

## 2. Motivational factors relevant to WTSE of whole group

The degree to which motivational factors were relevant to enhancing students’ WTSE was measured in the questionnaire on six-point Likert scales. The following table and graph indicate the degree of relevance of motivational factors to enhancing students’ willingness to study English:

**Table 4.** Mean scores of the whole group in response to questions on the degree of relevance of motivational factors to enhancing students’ WTSE

P	C	T	INFC	INFL	G	E	O
2.16 (73)	3.99	4.11	3.86	3.32	3.96	3.97	5.18 (18)

\*( ) indicates the number of students; the number of students were the same in all the factors except ‘O’. \*The capital letters in the table represents: P = ‘parents’, C = ‘classes’, T = ‘teachers’, INFC = ‘interest in foreign countries’, INFL = ‘interest in foreign languages’, G = ‘grades’, E = ‘entrance exams’, O = ‘other factors’.

According to the results, apart from ‘other factors’, ‘teachers’ was the most relevant factor (4.11), followed by ‘classes’ (3.99), ‘entrance exams’ (3.97), and ‘grades’ (3.96). According to Clark and Trafford (1995), both teachers and students regard the teacher-student relationship as the most significant variable affecting students’ towards L2 learning. Dörnyei (2001) organized the

<sup>2</sup> In the questionnaire enjoyment of English lessons was measured on 6-point scales: 1 = ‘Not interesting at all’ to 6 = ‘Very interesting’. The results indicated that U 1 (3.71) and U 2 (3.42) were higher than H 1 (2.88), H 2 (2.84) and H 3 (2.77) in enjoyment of English lessons.

<sup>3</sup> One of the attractions of the university is ‘communication-centred English lessons’: Only English is allowed to be used as a means of communication during the lessons, which increases the opportunity to speak it.

<sup>4</sup> As for such question as ‘You want to be able to speak English’ in the questionnaire, 71 of 73 students (97.2 percent) agreed it: 50 of them ‘strongly agree’, 17 ‘agree’, and 4 ‘partly agree’ while 2 ‘disagree’. As for another question such as ‘it is cool to be able to speak English’, 59 of them (80.8 percent) agreed it: 29 of them ‘strongly agree’, 17 ‘agree’, 13 ‘partly agree’ while 7 ‘slightly disagree’, 5 ‘disagree’ and 2 ‘strongly disagree’.

multiple influences teachers have on student motivation by separating four interrelated dimensions: *the personal characteristics of teachers, teacher immediacy, active motivational socialising behaviour, and classroom management*. Teacher immediacy refers to the perceived physical and/or psychological closeness between teachers and students (Dörnyei, *ibid.*). One of the interviewees felt closeness to her teacher on account of her remarks, which made her more relaxed and willing to study English:

*F46: She said, "Making a mistake is not wrong but natural. I often make mistakes and my English is not always perfect because I am Japanese (not a native speaker of English) too." I felt if there was a teacher like her...*

Further more, juku or SUP school teachers as well as school teachers seem to be very influential on student motivation. M mentioned:

*M59: In the third year of high school, I started to go to juku and met a teacher who graduated from Sophia University. He had visited many countries and told us about his experiences in these countries, which interested me a lot. Realizing we could have nice experiences such as his if we could use English like him, I felt very motivated to study English.*

The surprising fact is that 72.6 percent of the target group went to these schools in the junior high period and 38.4 percent in the high school period. This figure indicates that these schools are so pervasive in Japanese society that it may be appropriate to take into specific consideration these schools' socio-educational role in Japan and influence on students' life in order to get a better understanding of educational issues in Japan including student motivation.

'Extrinsic' factors such as teachers (4.11), classes (3.99), grades (3.96), and exams (3.97) were higher than 'intrinsic' factors such as interest in foreign countries or foreign languages: INFC (3.86) and INFL (3.32). Although in Japanese socio-educational context these 'extrinsic' factors may be more directly relevant to student motivation because they are more urgent for students, it seems that 'intrinsic' factors such as interest in foreign countries and languages play some role in enhancing or sustaining students' WTSE. Interviewees whose WTSE was high were more likely to have a strong interest in foreign countries, cultures, and languages. Furthermore, in the questionnaires students who were interested in foreign countries and foreign languages were higher in WTSE in all the periods except the first year of junior and high school period than those who were not. Moreover, students with interest in foreign countries and languages were higher on all the variables in motivational intensity than those without them. Interest in foreign countries and languages was also closely related to preference for (studying) English according to responses to questionnaires<sup>5</sup>. What was noteworthy was that WTSE of students who like English was higher in all periods than that of those who do not. From these results, 'intrinsic' factors such as interest in foreign countries and languages, and preference to English would appear to have much to do with student motivation, even though they may be 'indirect' rather than 'direct' factors motivating students to study English in the Japanese educational context.

Among the factors, 'parents' was weakest (2.16). But although 'parents' may not always be a direct factor in motivating students to study English, many interviewees with high WTSE became interested in foreign cultures, countries, and languages through their parents<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Among students who answered yes for such question as 'do you like English?', 'interest in foreign countries' was highest (72.7 percent) and 'interest in foreign countries' the second highest (42.4 percent) for the reasons why you like English, while 'teachers were good' (36.4 percent), 'classes were good' (27.3 percent), 'other reasons' (18.2 percent) in the multiple answering questions.

<sup>6</sup> M's mother was interested in foreign countries and traveled abroad with M; J's father studied abroad; O' family invited a Malaysian girl to her home as a host family; and T's mother ran an English conversation classes at home with her friends and so on.

As for 'other factors', eleven out of seventy three students responded. Their answers could be broadly categorized into six: traveling abroad (4)<sup>7</sup>; speaking English is 'cool' (2), necessity in the future (2), English conversation lessons on radio (1), friends were studying English hard (1), and usefulness of English (1). 'Other factors' were thus mainly relevant to English for communication, which seems to indicate students' strong desire and need for English communicative competence.

### 3. Gender difference of WTSE over time

The results of WTSE of male and female students are shown in the following table and graph:

**Table 5.** Mean scores of male and female groups in response to question on WTS

	J 1	J 2	J 3	H 1	H 2	H 3	SUP	U 1	U 2
Male	4.17 (52)	3.63	3.60	2.96	2.96	3.63	4.57 (14)	3.59 (27)	4.00 (8)
Female	4.62 (21)	4.14	4.38	3.57	3.67	4.24	5.00 (4)	4.33 (18)	3.75 (4)

\*( ) indicates the number of students; the number of students from J 1 to H 3 was the same.

According to the results, although the transition of WTSE seems to be similar for male and female students, there was a difference in the degree of WTSE between male and female students in each period: WTSE of female students was higher in all the periods except in the second year university. Therefore, unlike the transition of WTSE, there seems to be a gender difference in the degree of WTSE as far as the target group is concerned: female students were more willing to study English than male from J 1 to U 1. As for U 2, although female WTSE was slightly lower than male, this result might be reversed if the sample size was larger because the number of third year students were very small: male: 8, female: 4. Further examination of a larger-sized sample may be necessary to make this claim more convincing.

<sup>7</sup> Round brackets indicate the number of students.

The results of the degree of relevance of factors to enhancing students' WTSE by gender are indicated in the following table and graph:

**Table 6.** Mean scores of the whole group in response to questions on the degree of relevance of motivational factors to enhancing students' WTSE

	Parents	Classes	Teachers	INFC	INFL	Grades	Exams	Others
Male	2.15(52)	4.00	4.04	3.69	3.12	3.75	3.92	4.71(7)
Female	2.19(21)	3.95	4.29	4.29	3.81	4.48	4.10	6.00(4)

\*( ) indicates the number of students; the number of students were the same in all the factors except 'Others'

The results indicated that even though there was no significant gender difference with regard to the degree of each factor on the t-test, female scores were higher for all the factors than male. Apart from 'other reasons', the difference was large for INFC, INFL, and Grades. Female students seem to have stronger interest in foreign countries and languages<sup>8</sup>. The results also indicated that male and female students differed slightly in the order of factors enhancing students' WTSE: although 'parents' was lowest and 'other factors' highest for both genders, 'grades' was highest for females but fourth highest for males. 'Teachers' ranked high for both genders: highest for males and second highest for females.

#### 4. Difference between exam and non-exam groups in relation to WTSE over time

The results for exam and non-exam groups are shown in the following table and graph:

<sup>8</sup> For the question 'Are you interested in foreign country, society or language?' in the questionnaire, around 81 percent of females answered 'yes' compared with 73 percent of males. For 'Do you like English?', around 62 percent of females answered 'yes' while only 38 percent of males did so.

**Table 7.** Mean scores of exam and non-exam groups in response to question on WTS over time

	J 1	J 2	J 3	H 1	H 2	H 3	P	U 1	U 2
Exam	4.35 (48)	3.85	3.88	3.10	3.10	3.75	4.69 (16)	3.97 (36)	4.50 (8)
Non-exam	4.20 (25)	3.64	3.72	3.20	3.28	3.92	4.50 (2)	3.56 (9)	2.75 (4)

\*( ) indicates the number of students; the number of students from J 1 to H 3 was the same.

From the results, as to transition and degree of WTSE, exam and non-exam groups were very similar from the J 1 to U1 period but very different at university, especially in the U 2 period: the exam group was more willing to study English at university, especially in the second year, than non-exam group. Although the sample of third year students is very small, the difference between these groups in U2 on the t-test was significant at the 0.05 level (.012). As already discussed with regard to TIME, taking into consideration that the exam route requires more studying and is challenging with a risk of failure, taking the exam route or not might be a matter of not merely choice but of attitude: attitude towards studying and even way of life. This attitudinal difference might reflect a difference in WTSE as well as in the amount of time spent on studying English at university. This possibility, however, should be pursued in a further study for confirmation. The results also raised a few queries. The first question is why WTSE of the non-exam group increased in third year even though they did not need to prepare for entrance exams. One assumption might be that, firstly, the rise in motivation of the exam group influenced the non-exam group because they were studying in the same classroom; secondly, the non-exam group might have worked hard to raise their school grades because they were one of the measurements for entering university; and thirdly some of the non-exam group might have decided not to take entrance exams at the eleventh hour. The second question is why WTSE of the non-exam group was higher than that of exam group in H 3 (even though the difference between these groups on the t-test was not significant):



it seems reasonable to expect that students who entered university via exams were *more* willing to study English to pass entrance exams than those who did not need to prepare for them. One explanation might be that negative feelings of the exam group towards examination-oriented studying might have depreciated their self-assessment on WTSE to some extent even though the increase of WTSE surpassed its decrease in total because of the priority of passing exams: they may have been subconsciously unwilling to study. Many interviewees suggested they did not like examination-oriented lessons and studying. One of the motivated interviewees stated:

*I90: (Examination-oriented lessons were) difficult and boring. If I could do without them, I would.*

These negative feelings toward exam-oriented studying might have affected self-assessment on WTSE.

The results for motivational factors of exam and non-exam groups were as follows:

**Table 8.** Mean scores of exam and non-exam groups in response to questions on the degree of relevance of motivational factors to enhancing students' WTSE

	Parents	Classes	Teachers	INFC	INFL	Grades	Exams	Others
Exam	2.27 (48)	4.08	4.15	3.96	3.52	4.06	4.31	4.71 (7)
Non-exam	1.96 (25)	3.80	4.04	3.68	2.92	3.76	3.32	6.00 (4)

\*( ) indicates the number of students; the number of students from J 1 to H 3 was the same.

According to the results, there was a significant difference between exam and non-exam groups for 'entrance exams'. It is only natural that 'entrance exams' was more highly relevant to WTSE for the exam group than for the non-exam group, taking account of their situations, in which passing entrance exams was the priority for the exam group while the non-exam group was free from them.

Moreover, apart from 'other reasons', 'entrance exams' was highest for the exam group in the order of factors while it was fourth highest for the non-exam group, which seems to indicate the degree to which weight is placed on entrance exams among both groups. These results may suggest that examinations are regarded as central to students' life and are very influential on their motivation to learn English under the Japanese educational system. Other findings were: 'other factors' was highest and 'parents' lowest in both groups; 'teachers' was highest for the non-exam group and second highest for the exam group among all the factors except for 'other factors'.

## V. CONCLUSION

Willingness to study English (WTSE) over time was a measure to evaluate students' motivation from a temporal viewpoint: the extent to which students were motivated from junior high to the time of research study, which could offer information as to how students' motivation changed over time. The results indicated that broadly speaking, WTSE was high in the first year of junior high but decreased from the second year gradually and then started to increase from the third year of high school. WTSE in university was higher than that in high school but lower than that in SUP school – which was highest for all periods. From quantitative and qualitative analysis, it would appear that examination-oriented lessons are one of the main factors in reducing students' WTSE, and entrance examinations seem to be one of the main factors increasing it. These results suggest how influential examinations are on students' motivation to study English in the Japanese socio-educational context. Among the factors enhancing students' WTSE, 'teachers' was ranked highest, followed by 'classes', 'entrance exams', and 'grades', which indicated that Japanese students were motivated to study English by extrinsic factors rather than by intrinsic factors such as interest in foreign countries or languages. However, as far as students who liked English were concerned, intrinsic factors such as interest in foreign countries and languages were ranked highest as the reasons why they like English. Although 'parents' was

ranked lowest and may not be directly influential on students' motivation, it seemed to play an effective role in enhancing students' interest in foreign countries and languages as a facilitator. With regard to a group difference, female students were higher than male students in WTSE in all periods except the third year of university although there was not much difference in gender with regard to the transition of WTSE. As for the exam/non-exam groups, although the extent and transition of WTSE were very similar in each, they were significantly different at university, especially in the second year. Considering the exam route requires more effort to study, attitude toward studying might underlie students' choice of entrance to university. This attitudinal difference might emerge over the course of their university careers. These interesting findings may shed light on an aspect of motivational study for Japanese learners of English, but further examinations are necessary.

These findings may suggest some pedagogical implications. Firstly, communication-oriented lessons seem to work well in enhancing students' motivation to study English because the results indicate that almost all of the students were eager to be able to speak English and perceived strongly that communicative competence in English would be useful and necessary in the near future. Secondly, as interest in foreign countries and cultures seems to play a role in initiating and sustaining students' motivation to study English, it may be very important to give students frequent opportunities to develop an interest in foreign countries and cultures during and outside lessons. In addition to classroom study of target cultures it might be useful for schools or universities to organize events such as study trips abroad, during which students can have direct contact with native speakers of the target language.

Although the study provided a number of interesting findings, as reported above, it nevertheless had weaknesses. For example, as the size of the sample group was small and distribution of numbers between sub-groups such as year group, male/female group, and exam/non-exam group was not always equal, different numbers could have produced different results. Moreover, as most of students in the target group were from rural regions because of the

location of the university, the results might also have been different if the university of the target group had been located in an urban region or students were from urban areas. In addition, an 'interviewer effect' might have occurred to some extent because 'self' can not be perfectly altered. Denscombe (1998: 117) points out that 'there are limits to the extent that researchers can disguise their 'self' during interviews. We bring to interviews certain personal attributes which are 'givens' and which cannot be altered on whim to suit the needs of the research interview'. Similarly, the researcher's 'self' might have affected analysis of the data, as frequently occurs in qualitative research. The findings of this research can therefore only be tentative, and claims based on these findings should at best be modest.

Although the study has a number of weaknesses and unexplored variables, I believe that it still perhaps sheds light on the motivation of Japanese learners of English, providing some insight into my research topic which will serve as a reference point for the future study.

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### <Appendix 1>

List of interviewees according to year group, gender, type of entrance, scores of motivational intensity

Interviewee	Year group	Gender	Type of entrance	Scores of motivational intensity			
				TIME	SELF Total	INDIRECT Total	SELF/IND Total
A	1	M	Exam	8 hr 30 m	13	14	27
B	1	M	Exam	30 hr	16	15	31 (H)
C	1	M	Exam	20 m	5	6	11 (P)
D	1	M	Exam	2 hr	13	13	26
E	1	M	Non-exam	30 m	3	11	14 (P)
F	1	F	Exam	3 hr	13	18	31 (H)
G	1	F	Non-exam	3 hr	14	?	?
H	1	F	Non-exam	30 m	3	14	17
I	2	M	Exam	4 hr	12	11	23
J	2	M	Exam	3 hr	8	16	24
K	2	M	Exam	30 m	11	13	24
L	2	M	Exam	3 hr	6	9	15 (P)
M	2	F	Non-exam	2 hr	12	16	28 (H)
N	2	F	Non-exam	1 hr	10	15	25
O	2	F	Exam	3 hr	15	17	32 (H)
P	2	F	Exam	3 hr	14	9	23
Q	2	F	Exam	20 m	3	9	12 (P)
R	3	M	Non-exam	25 m	3	12	15 (P)
S	3	M	Exam	3 hr	13	17	30 (H)
T	3	F	Exam	20 m	8	13	21
U	3	F	Exam	1 hr	6	15	21

\*Year group: 1 = first year, 2 = second year, and 3 = third year \*Gender: M = mal; F = female \*Type of entrance: Exam = students via exam route; Non-exam = students via non-exam route \*TIME: the amount of time per week on average spent studying English over the past 12 months; hr = hours, m = minutes \*SELF Total = Total scores of SELF 1, 2 and 3 \*INDIRECT Total = Total scores of INTEREST, NECESSITY, and DESIRE \*SELF/IND Total = Total scores of SELF Total and INDIRECT Total; H = highly motivated; P = poorly motivated \*? = no data



## <Appendix 2>

(紙面の関係でPart 1 からPart 9のうち、Part 1, 2、4のみ掲載)

### アンケート調査

Part 1: 回答者ご自身について

1. 名前 \_\_\_\_\_
2. 性別 (以下該当するものを○で囲んでください)
  1. 男性      2. 女性
3. 鳥取環境大学へは推薦または受験のどちらで入学しましたか。
  1. 推薦    2. 受験

Part 2: 英語の勉強について

質問1. この一年間の英語の勉強時間についてお聞きします。英語の自習時間(学校の授業時間以外に自分で勉強した時間)は一週間に平均するとどのくらいだったと思いますか。(塾・予備校・英会話学校などの勉強時間は自習時間に含むことにします。)

1. 0～1時間    2. 1～2時間    3. 2～3時間    4. 3～4時間
5. 4時間以上

質問2～5のそれぞれの文章について、どの程度あなたに当てはまると思いますか? 「全く当てはまらない」ものを1. 「非常によく当てはまる」ものを6として、1から6までの数字でお答えください。

1. 全く当てはまらない	2. 当てはまらない	3. あまり当てはまらない	4. ある程度当てはまる	5. 当てはまる	6. 非常によく当てはまる
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質問2. この一年間の英語の勉強についてお聞きします。

質問2の1: 英語を熱心に勉強していたと思う。(      )

質問2の2: 他の科目に比べて英語を熱心に勉強していたと思う。  
(      )

質問2の3: 英語の勉強にかなり長い時間をかけていたと思う。  
(      )

質問3. 英語の勉強全般についてお聞きします。

質問3の1: 英語の勉強は面白いと思う。( )

質問3の2: 英語の勉強は必要だと思う。( )

質問3の3: 学校の授業がなくなっても将来英語の勉強は続けていきたいと思う。( )

質問4. 将来英語圏の大学(大学院)に留学したいと思う。( )

質問5. 中学生・高校生の時、学校以外で英語の勉強をしたことがありますか。以下の項目について、1. はい 2. いいえ のいずれかでお答えください。

	中学生の時	高校生の時
1. 塾・予備校で	1. はい 2. いいえ	1. はい 2. いいえ
2. 英会話学校で	1. はい 2. いいえ	1. はい 2. いいえ
3. 英会話サークルで	1. はい 2. いいえ	1. はい 2. いいえ
4. 海外留学	1. はい 2. いいえ	1. はい 2. いいえ
5. 通信教育で	1. はい 2. いいえ	1. はい 2. いいえ

質問6. 学校の授業や勉強の他に個人的な目的で英語を使う(使った)ことがありますか。

1. はい 2. いいえ

SQ「はい」と答えた方のみにお伺いします。それはどのようなことですか。該当するものすべてに丸とつけてください。

1. 英語の雑誌・新聞・本を読む 2. インターネット上で

3. 英語で文通をする 4. 旅行先で英語を話す

5. その他 ( )

Part 4 : 英語の勉強の「やる気」度について

質問1 : 今まで (中学時代から現在まで) の英語の勉強に対する「やる気」度 (英語の勉強に対する意気込みや熱心さ) についてあなた自身の自己診断をお聞かせください。「全くやる気がなかった」ものを1、「とてもやる気があった」ものを6、として1から6までの数字でお答えください。(該当するものをまるで囲んでください)

	1. 全くやる気がなかった	2. やるきがなかった	3. あまりやる気がなかった	4. ある程度やる気があった	5. やる気があった	6. 大変やる気があった
中学一年	1	2	3	4	5	6
中学二年	1	2	3	4	5	6
中学三年	1	2	3	4	5	6
高校一年	1	2	3	4	5	6
高校二年	1	2	3	4	5	6
高校三年	1	2	3	4	5	6
浪人 (もしやっていたら)	1	2	3	4	5	6
大学一年	1	2	3	4	5	6

質問2：あなたの英語学習の意欲（やる気）を高めるのに、以下の要因はどの程度関係があったと思いますか。（以下の要因の他にも何か要因が考えられる場合は「その他」にその要因を記入してください）「全く関係がなかった」という場合は1、「大変関係があった」という場合は6として1～6の番号で答えてください。（該当するものを丸で囲んでください）

	1. 全く 関係はな かった	2. 関係 なかった	3. あま り関係な かった	4. ある 程度関係 あった	5. 関係 があった	6. 大変 関係があ った
親	1	2	3	4	5	6
授業の内容	1	2	3	4	5	6
教師	1	2	3	4	5	6
外国への 興味	1	2	3	4	5	6
語学の興味	1	2	3	4	5	6
学校の成績	1	2	3	4	5	6
大学受験	1	2	3	4	5	6
その他 ( )	1	2	3	4	5	6

アンケートへのご協力、本当にありがとうございました。