

EPOK

Research Project

2021-Fall



(写真提供：榎野岡山大学長)

Okayama University



OKAYAMA
UNIVERSITY

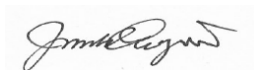
About EPOK Research Project

EPOK リサーチプロジェクトは、岡山大学の交換留学 EPOK 生の個別研究です。日本の社会や文化を探求する視野から自由に個々の課題を設定し、実践的なフィールドワークを念頭にリサーチを行い、その成果を小論文にまとめます。2021 年度秋期の文集には、4 つのリサーチプロジェクトを掲載しています。今学期の EPOK リサーチは、コロナ禍で来日が適わず本来のフィールドワークができないなかで、リモートで岡山大学の学生にアンケートやインタビューを行うなど苦心して調査をしました。学期末には、毎学期と同様にオンラインで研究発表会を行いました。

In the course of EPOK Research Project EPOK the four students worked on the individual research theme in relation to their interest in Japanese culture and society in the fall of 2021. The compilation of the research essay shows the final product of their exploration and discovery. The EPOK research essay collection displays a variety of their interest, including Japan's social issues, culture and life of the Japanese people, as well as the second language acquisition.

In the fall of 2021, the students were forced to pursue the research on Japan virtually under the unusual circumstance of the covid-19. Despite the difficulty of searching the theme on a place and its people without fieldwork, the students endeavored to get connected with Japan and Okadai students through questionnaires and interviews. This collection demonstrates their vigorous interest and sincere contribution in pursuing the topics remotely. At the end of the semester the students presented the paper as a usual semester but this time via online.

2022 年 2 月



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Okayama University

Japanese custom?
Japanese with International issues?
Teaching Language?
Local cultures?

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Bowing in Japan, a culture gap?

日本でのお辞儀、文化のギャップ？

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研究のテーマはお辞儀についてです。西洋諸国で、挨拶をする時、人々はお辞儀をしないで、代わりに握手をします。外国人は初めに日本へ来る時、日本人にとって、ステレオタイプがあります。その感じるは文化のギャップと呼ばれています。その文化のギャップは、外国人がどのように乗り越えられましたか。私は一年以上で日本に住んでいる岡山の大学生たちにインタビューをしました。お辞儀について、感想がありますか。感想を集めて、質問が答えられました。

INTRODUCTION

Asians' countries are surely different than Western's countries mostly in the cultural field. For example, Japan is known for its politeness and the bowing can immediately come in mind. Japanese citizens bow when they greet or thank someone. It is something that in France, we don't have. When we greet someone, we kiss each other's cheek or shake hands. Western's countries often do gestures with physical touch, which is not the case in Japan where they avoid this kind of contact.

People who have not ever visited Japan, have stereotypes about Japanese people and sometimes mock them. In the movie *Gung Ho*, Japanese people visited United States of America, they were eating with chopsticks and American people were laughing at them. They thought that Japanese people were weird. Obviously, this movie is old, and people change, there are fewer people like that nowadays but there are still stereotypes in every country. This kind of situation is called "culture gap".

We will focus on the action of bowing in Japan. I think this could be interesting to know about foreigners who decided to live some time in Japan, do they experience something like a culture gap? and how did they accommodate themselves to this uncommon culture?

LITTERATURE REVIEW

As I said before, to understand better how foreigners feel about a culture gap, (I chose to) I will focus my research on the action of bowing. It is an action which is very common among Japanese people but not really in the rest of the world. Actually, China and Korea, they also

bow but in China, it became rare to do it and in Korea, they bow as much as Japan, but Japan is more known for their bowing than Korea.

Bowing in Japan is something highly rooted in daily life of each Japanese person. It is an action that is natural for them. For example, when they are on a call with someone and then they did a mistake, they apologize to the person on the phone while bowing even though the person on the phone can not see them.

For my preliminary research on the topic, I researched on why it is so important for Japanese people. First, I searched about the origin of bowing, how it was created. Bowing in Japanese is called “*Ojigi*”, the origins of bowing are believed to come from the importation of Buddhism in Japan by Chinese kingdoms. In the Kamakura period where the warrior class rose and took a big part in Japanese history, created a warrior etiquette which explained how to bow for the samurai, along with others and was used widely by warriors. It is only during the Edo period where the popularity of this warrior etiquette, especially “*Ojigi*” increased and was spread to the common populace. It was used to differentiate between classes of people.

As I said, bowing in Japan is something natural, it is engrained in everyday interactions.

People bow when they greet, thank or apologize. It is a sign of respect, appreciation or remorse. There are two types of bowing, the standing bow and the sitting bow. The standing bow is the one which is currently used by most of the Japanese people and the most common. It has three variations of the bowing depending on the situation. The first one, the *eshaku* bow which is 15 degrees of bowing. This bow is for greeting someone who is equal socially or in business, for example a co-worker or an acquaintance. There is no need to hold the bow. The second one, the *keirei* bow which is a 30-to-45-degree polite bow. It is largely used during more formal events like in business interactions with persons who are in a higher position or socially. It is a bow of respect, and the timing is important where the bow should last for around 2-and-a-half seconds. The third one, the *saikeirei* bow which is a 45-to-70-degree bow. This is used to convey a profound respect or regret when meeting very important personnel, apologizing or asking big favors.

The sitting bow, which was originally the first, called in Japanese “*seiza*”, is the formal and traditional way of sitting in Japan. It is in the Edo period that the “*seiza*” became a convention for samurai to sit that way when meeting with the Shogun for example as a symbol of loyalty and obedience.

As explained before, in Western’s countries, bowing is uncommon nowadays. In fact, in European countries, in medieval age, bowing to the royal family every time was required to the population. Also, there is only one time where westerns people bow in actual days, it is at the end of a play, the comedians bow to the audience to thank them. At the end, bowing in western countries has disappeared since long ago. We could think of one reason of why it is

less common in the west side of the Earth. Bowing is driven by a respect for social rank, and this is frowned upon the egalitarian societies of western countries. In addition, in the business area, bowing properly is really important and the key to success for potential social or business scenario. There are some Japanese companies where they perfect their employees' bowing by giving them formal classes. There is a right way to bow, if the bow is not done correctly, it could be considered rude. Bowing is really important for Japanese people in their daily life, it is used for example for showing respect, expressing deep gratitude, asking a favor and many others. We saw through this preliminary research that for Japanese people, bowing is important but for foreigners who came to live in Japan, how do they felt when they encountered for the first time this action?

METHODOLOGY

My objective was to gather opinion from foreigners who are currently living in Japan and have spent at least one year to have consistent opinions because for foreigners who only went to Japan as a visitor, the opinion will be different than those who live for few years now. Foreigners who visit Japan, Japanese people do not expect them to know about their culture and do not mind when tourists do not bow at them. At first, I wanted to do a questionnaire on Google Forms, so that I could send to Okayama University, but it was too complicated because the university is too large to succeed to reach everyone. Also, I was new to the university, I did not know many people. Even my advisor, Prof. Obayashi helped me and sent my questionnaire on the Moodle of EPOK buddies. My questions were:

1. Do you know why people bow in Japan?
2. At first, when you just arrived in Japan, how did you feel when you had to bow?
3. And now? Do you do it naturally without giving any second thought?
4. When meeting someone, which is better? Shaking hands or Bowing
5. If you have the opportunity to not bow and instead you can shake hands to Japanese people. Do you prefer bowing or shake hands and why?

I received just one response. It was anonymous so I do not know if it was a Japanese person or a foreigner, but they answered for the first question that they know the reason why people bow, for the second question, they said that they feel it as one of Japanese culture. For the question three, they said that they do not do it naturally, for the question four, they said that it

is better to bow when meeting someone and for the last question, they said that they prefer bowing, because bowing is more familiar to them, and they get nervous when they touch other people's body.

Receiving only one response was a little discouraging but Mrs. Obayashi said that if the questionnaire didn't work, I could do an interview instead. So, I thought about it, and I remembered that in some of my classes, I met some GDP students and those are foreigners who are currently living in Japan. I decided to interview some of them. I changed a little bit my previous questions:

1. At first, when you just arrived in Japan, how did you feel when you had to bow?
2. And now? Can you do it naturally?
3. Was it easy to adapt yourself in this new country, with this new culture?
4. Did you feel a culture gap between your country and Japan?
5. Do you have an example where you didn't understand something because of this culture gap?
6. For people who want to go to Japan, those people will surely face a culture gap, do you have some advice to how to adapt?

I interviewed 3 Okayama university students; they all came from different countries.

| Questions | The first student (Peru) | The second student (Laos) | The third student (Philippines) |
|--|---|---|--|
| 1. At first, when you just arrived in Japan, how did you feel when you had to bow? | Bowing was a general tendency, so he just followed it. | She felt normal because in Laos, they have something similar which is Laos people "nop", it is a Buddhist style of greeting. | She also followed as everyone did it. |
| 2. And now? Can you do it naturally? | He can bow naturally, and he feels comfortable with it. | She can bow naturally. | When people do it all the time, people get to do it naturally, but she said at first, it was not easy. |
| 3. Was it easy to adapt yourself in this new country, with this new culture? | It was not difficult to adapt but he said that Japanese people ramble a lot sometimes so that is kind of difficult to follow. | She had no problem to adapt but she did not like the fact that Japanese people seem to not be open to foreigners, especially in the | It was not that hard to adapt, she made friends with Japanese people who are not shy or those who have been raised abroad. For the first |

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| | | countryside like Okayama. | year, she felt inferior for not knowing Japanese at all. After, she learned it and felt okay with being different. |
| 4. Did you feel a culture gap between your country and Japan? | He totally felt a culture gap | She did not feel because her country and Japan is quite similar. | Yes, there is a gap, her interests and Japanese people interested are different, |
| 5. Do you have an example where you didn't understand something because of this culture gap? | In his country, people are more straight forward in almost everything, they can be direct and respectful at the same time but in Japan, they avoid of being direct. | She said that Japanese people are hard to get along. In the outside, they show nice side of them. The opposite way, it is not true and the theory of "soto and uchi" proved to be real. Foreigners will never be part of them. | She didn't find someone who read the same books than her. She thinks that Japanese can fully accommodate with foreigners |
| 6. For people who want to go to Japan, those people will surely face a culture gap, do you have some advice to how to adapt? | Research about the culture and its social ways and come open minded, not awaiting everyone to adapt to you or thinking the western way is "the standard". | Try to be more proficient in Japanese, people in big cities are more helpful and open to foreigners, not in rurals like Okayama. | Language is the key for Japan. Cultural gaps are about understanding. As a foreigner, there is an extent that you have to understand and also to take part in. |

ANALYSIS

Due to some issues, I was obligated to reduce my number of participants. These three students do not represent all the foreigners living in Japan because everyone is different, therefore they do not have experience the same thing and have the same opinion but for this study, I will consider that these three opinions will represent the voice of foreigners in Japan. What I was expecting from the answers was that foreigners faced some difficulties with the bowing, encountered a culture gap, how do they overcome it and found a solution.

At the end, the answers were a little bit different to what I expected. I thought that they would feel uncomfortable about bowing but they did not feel that way at all, rather they did it because everyone did it. They imitate everyone to adapt themselves and now they fully accommodate to this culture where it seems for them that bowing is something natural. I asked them how they adapt themselves in this country. I expected to them to encounter a culture gap

so that they are not able to adapt themselves at first and how do they overcome it. However, they did have encounter a culture gap and there are things that are different compared to their country that they still do not understand but it was not something that slowed down their adaptation and they did not find it hard to adapt. At the end, in every country that we visited, we surely encountered a culture gap, and it is something that we cannot change because those differences are making the country, its uniqueness.

CONCLUSION

My goal of this research project was to find how did foreigners feel about the action of bowing and that this manner could be thought as a culture gap for them and do they adapt themselves in this country, different than their home country. I wanted to find this to inform those who want one day to live in Japan, how they should behave. We learned that the culture gap is something normal in each country, that there are still things about the country that we cannot understand even though we live there for years. For this study, I lack data because the research opportunity was limited. The fact that all of this research project was done online due to the sanitary situation, we could not do any fieldwork in Japan, but I was satisfied with my research, and I learned many things while interviewing those students. It was very enriching.

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Japanese university student's perception about comfort women

Pitikorn juwattanasamran

Abstract

2021 年度により、EPOK research project 科目の一環として「慰安婦問題に対する日本大学生の認識」の調査話題にした。日本大学生に聞き取り、Google form で調査を行ってきた。日本の社会で長く議論されている慰安婦問題をもう一度社会の人々に考えさせる。本調査では慰安婦問題に対する日本大学生はどのように考えてるのかを聞き取る。その調査の結果として、慰安婦問題に対して、多くの回答者は日本が加害国だと思っている。しかし、日本政府は韓国政府に 10 億円を拠出した金額について、多くの回答者が拠出すべきではないと思っている。戦争責任の認識がある。しかし、拠出した金額は結構反対側になる結果である。

Background

In Thailand, for the last 2-3 years, the gender equality issue was raised up so many times. The feminism activist was so recognized thoroughly. Also, I had heard about the comfort women issue for about 1 years ago in the twitter. In Youtube channel's name "Asian boss". They interviewed the Korean comfort women "Story of kim Bok-dong". This video was on air on Youtube on 28th October 2018. It inspired me to do this research topic about comfort women. It has been three years from 2018 to this day, So I am curious that How nowadays Japanese people feel or think about this issue? I had read about the political dispute between Japan and Korea from 1945 period. Found out that Neither Japan's argument nor Korea's reaction is justifiable. There are many different opinion arguing about this dispute for so long.

Comfort women history

Comfort women or comfort girls were women and girls forced into sexual slavery by the Imperial Japanese Army before and during World War II. The name "comfort women" is a translation of the Japanese ianfu (慰安婦), a euphemism for "prostitutes".

Originally, the brothels were established to provide soldiers with voluntary prostitutes in order to reduce the incidence of wartime rape, a cause of rising anti-Japanese sentiment across occupied territories. However, many women ended up being forced to work in the brothels against their own will. According to testimonies, some young women were abducted from their homes in countries under Imperial Japanese

rule. Japanese women were the first victims to be enslaved in military brothels and trafficked across Japan, Okinawa, Japan's colonies and occupied territories, and overseas battlegrounds. In many cases, local middlemen tasked with procuring prostitutes for the military lured women with promises of work in factories or restaurants. In some cases propaganda advocated equity and the sponsorship of women in higher education. Other enticements were false advertising for nursing jobs at outposts or Japanese army bases; once recruited, they were incarcerated in comfort stations both inside their nations and abroad.

comfort women and Korean – japan dispute

Japan and Korean have a dispute over comfort women for a long time. In 1951, At the start of negotiations, the South Korean government initially demanded \$364 million in compensation for Koreans forced into labor and military service during the Japanese occupation: \$200 per survivor, \$1,650 per death and \$2,000 per injured person. In the final agreement reached in the 1965 treaty, Japan provided an \$800 million aid and low-interest loan package over 10 years. Japan intended to directly compensate individuals, but the Korean government insisted on receiving the sum itself and "spent most of the money on economic development, focusing on infrastructure and the promotion of heavy industry" Until 1992, the Japanese government didn't accept any responsibility for the sexual slavery system In 2007, the surviving sex slaves wanted an apology from the Japanese government. Shinzō Abe, the prime minister at the time, stated on March 1, 2007, that there was no evidence that the Japanese government had kept sex slaves, even though the Japanese government had already admitted the use of coercion in 1993. On March 27 the Japanese parliament issued an official apology.

Finally in 2015 agreement. On December 28, 2015 Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and South Korean President Park Geun-hye reached a formal agreement to settle the dispute. Finally, Abe expressed his most sincere apologies and remorse to all the women and acknowledged that they had undergone immeasurable and painful experiences and suffered incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women. The issue of comfort women is resolved "finally and irreversibly" with this agreement. Japan agreed to pay ¥1 billion (₩9.7 billion; \$8.3 million) to a fund supporting surviving victims while South Korea agreed to refrain from criticizing Japan regarding the issue and promise to remove a statue memorializing the victims from in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul. But, Several comfort women protested this agreement as they claim they did not want money, but to see a sincere acknowledgement of the legal responsibility by the Japanese government. The co-representative of a support group of the surviving women expressed that the settlement with Japan does not reflect the

will of the comfort women, and they vowed to seek its invalidation by reviewing legal options

Literature review

From Minamoto Junko's professor's research, There are some questions in this research that is very similar to my research. The research topic is "Studies on Stories of War and Modern Youth's Views of War : the Issue of the Japanese Military "Comfort Women" and Nanjing Massacre" she asked and interviewed many student mainly about comfort women and Nanjing Massacre. Her research consist of four question. " What do you think about comfort women?" , " What do you think about Nanjing Massacre?", " What do you think about masochistic view of history?" and " What do you think about nationalism?" The result from this research inspired me and give me idea for my own research. Because my research title is comfort women, So I will focus mainly on it. When Minamoto junko asked for question number 1, There are many student who haven't been taught until high school. Most of the student feel sympathetic toward comfort women. " They were so shocked when they knew about comfort women incident. Most of student had knew about comfort women via Internet. " This problem is related to educational system. Just memorize this issue through textbook in school can not make student realize that your own country is an aggressor country. My research's objective is to renew this research by asking Japanese university student about comfort women. My expectation for the result from my research might not be different to Minamoto junko's research.

"The International Review of Law and Economics" journal, J.Mark Ramseyer wrote some article related to comfort women issue in March 2021. I find it so interesting that He claimed that Comfort women didn't get raped inhumanly. On the other hand, The comfort women was paid systematically. "To staff their brothels, the cooperating entrepreneurs hired women primarily from Japan and Korea. All else equal, the soldiers preferred Japanese women. Among the non-Japanese staff, they preferred the Koreans. Korea was part of the Japanese nation, after all (Japan had annexed the peninsula in 1910), and most Korean women spoke at least some Japanese. The army called the cooperating brothels "comfort stations" (ianjo). It called the prostitutes "comfort women" (ianfu)." Most of the people in that war time faced many problems and predicament in their life. Most particularly, all the dangers of war -- fighting, bombing, and rampant disease. This predicament seduced women into making contract with entrepreneurs (sexual service contract) in the comfort stations(ianjo).This article gave me another point of view about comfort women issue. I started thinking that they might not get raped, They may choose to be prostitute in the brothels by themselves .

For me, personally, I can not consider these women's decision to be prostitute "Free will". They were forced to be prostituted indirectly by suffering circumstance.

Methodology

For this research, I made the google form to collect all the answer from Japanese university student. There are 9 questions in total, consisting of multiple choices question and writing in the short essay. Actually, I aim this research to be a quantitative research. The research that depends largely on numerical data. Unfortunately, I am not able to collect the volunteer to fill in my google form sufficiently. The amount in total of the volunteer who answered the google form is 8 people. My google form was open for receiving the answer from 16th December 2021, conducting in Japanese language for the convenience of the volunteer to answer.

Here are my question list.

1. How much do you know about comfort women?
 1. I know it thoroughly.
 2. I have heard about comfort women many times, But don't know about it in detail.
 3. I absolutely know nothing about comfort women.
2. What type of the source of information when you first hear about comfort women?
 1. From school textbook
 2. Media online
 3. News on television
 4. The research or the article
3. In the Japanese compulsory educational system, Do you think the amount of contents related to comfort women in school textbook is enough?
 1. Yes, It's enough.
 2. No, It's not enough.
4. Do you know about the statue of peace installed in front of Japan embassy in Seoul?
 1. Yes, I know.
 2. No, I don't.

5. For the person who know, Do you think The statue of peace should be demolished?

1. Yes, It should be demolished.

2. No, It should not be demolished.

6. Could you explain your reason for number 5.

Answer.....

7. Do you know about 2015 Japan-Korea comfort women agreement ?

1. Yes, I know.

2. No, I don't.

8. Do you think Japanese government should donate the 1 billion yen consolation money to Korea government?

1. Yes, They should donate the consolation money.

2. No, They should not.

9. Could you explain your reason for number 8

Answer.....

Analysis

For question number 1. How much do you know about comfort women? 50% of Japanese university student answered that they have heard about comfort women many times, But they don't know about it in detail. 37.5% of volunteer answered that they absolutely know nothing about comfort women. The result is under my expectation. There is no way that most of Japanese people don't know about comfort women. Actually, I thought many Japanese university student may know about comfort women in detail but they don't have self-esteem to tell that they are well informed in comfort women issue.

For question number2, What type of the source of information when you first hear about comfort women? 57.1% of volunteer selected that they first hear about comfort women from News on television. The comfort women issue was on air on television News frequently. This is not beyond my expectation.

For question number 3, In the Japanese compulsory educational system, Do you think the amount of contents related to comfort women in school textbook is enough? Half of the volunteer (50%) selected that It's enough. This is beyond my expectation because the result is 50%, So I cannot conclude what the conclusion is.

For question number 4, Do you know about the statue of peace installed in front of Japan embassy in Seoul? This question's objective is to make preparation for the next question. I want to explore how much Japanese university student know about statue of peace issue for answering the next question. The result is 50% of volunteer know about statue of peace. The rest of volunteer don't know about this statue.

For question number 5, For the person who know, Do you think The statue of peace should be demolished? 60% of the volunteer want this statue not to be demolished. 40% of the volunteer want this statue to be demolished. For the next question you will know the reason why they should be demolished or not.

For question number 6, Could you explain the reason for question number 5. There are two people who thought that the statue of peace should be demolished. One said that "I can not understand why Korean people installed the statue of peace in front of Japan embassy in Seoul, Japan even didn't install the Japanese peace bell in front of America embassy in Japan. I understand if they will build some memorial to remind your own past. But, I thought Korean government bring up these issue again and again for consolation money "

Another said " Maybe the consolation money might be used in the wrong way." For the person who don't want the statue to be demolished. Most of the volunteer said that "There are two different point of view in this dispute, I understand both side. From Japan side, They thought they have finished this issue already. They donated the money and have a lamenting speech for comfort women. Moreover, It is still not clear that comfort women is abducted for real truly or they get paid systematically. So, I thought the statue should not be demolished."

For question number 7, Do you know about 2015 Japan-Korea comfort women agreement ? 50% of the volunteer answered that they know about this. The rest of volunteer don't know about the agreement.

For question number 8, . Do you think Japanese government should donate the 1 billion yen consolation money to Korea government? This result from this question amazed me a little bit. At first, I thought the volunteer will agree with Japanese government for donating consolidation money. 100% of the volunteer selected "No, They should not." For the reason why they thought the Japanese government should not donate the money, It will be stated in the next question.

For question number 9, Could you explain your reason for number 8? The main reason why the volunteer thought the government should not donate the money. One said “ How long the japan have to take responsibility for their war crime? Just donating the money, Can it fix the dispute? Actually, According to my research, the Japanese government have donated the money to Korean in this comfort women issue before. There is no end for the request for the money by Korean government. If Japanese surrender to donate money, They might have to donate again and again.” Another said that “ From my own research, The Japanese government have paid to Korean government about this issue before. The issue should have been fixed from that time. Moreover, The Korean also have some dispute with Vietnam for Raidaihan issue. If Korean government willing to paid for Vietnam in Raidaihan issue. The Japanese government can donate to this 1 billion yen to Korean government. If Korean didn't, There is no necessary for Japanese government to do that.

Deficit about this research

This research has many limitation and deficit about the methodology. The total number of volunteer in google form is just 8 people. So, It is exaggerated exceedingly when I stated that Japanese university student thought that..... In the Covid-19 situation, The deficit and limitation is impossible to avoid. I even can not go to japan for collect the data and get more volunteer. Originally, the Goal of the number of volunteer is 15-20 people.

Conclusion

In this comfort women issue, There are so many argument on this issue. It was not easy to decide or judge what side is justifiable. This research had investigated about Japanese university student's perception about comfort women. Most of the volunteer accepted that “Japan country is the aggressor country. Japan have to take responsibility for their war crime”. But, In specific detail, The volunteer do not agree with the money donated to Korean government on 2015 Japan-Korea comfort women agreement. They consider it as an excuse from Korean to request the

money from Japan. Lastly, We can not judge that most of the Japanese university student have such a perception towards comfort women similar to what I have said. As I told you earlier, this research has many deficit and limitation.

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Method of English Teaching for Japanese Students – A Comparison

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Summary:

このエッセイでは、日本人の英語教育方法について、ヨーロッパの教育方法と比較し、両者の共通点や相違点を探ってみたい。それぞれの教育方法の状況や基本的な枠組みを評価した結果、発話中心の教育を含む直接対面でのコミュニケーション・アプローチを重視することによって、ヨーロッパの学生は大学や高校を卒業した後の能力や理解力において日本の学生よりも優れていることが分かった。また、語族を共有しているため、ヨーロッパの学生は英語のフレームワークを理解することが容易である。CEFRに基づく言語学習と認証のアプローチは、日本の学生の能力と理解力を高めることができるだろう。

1. Introduction

In this thesis, the method of English teaching in Japan and how different, international proficiency certification frameworks impact the approach of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) on future learning methodologies shall be analysed and compared with how Japanese students themselves perceive their learning environment and their experiences during school, university and afterwards.

Currently, there are multiple different certification frameworks which are internationally acknowledged and experience daily use by companies, universities and other institutions. While TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), IELTS (International English Language Testing System), TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) and EIKEN (Jitsuyo Eigo Gino Kentei (Test in Practical English Proficiency)) are used as tests to prove the user's ability at a certain point in time, the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) (Europe, 2020) is more an “autonomous, life-long learning as a process and technique” (Rappleye et al. 2011). The CEFR has underwent adaptations outside of Europe, leading to the creation of the CEFR-J in Japan. It has been described as the result of “and urgent need for a common language framework in order to discuss foreign language learning, teaching and assessment” (Masashi, 2012). The MEXT has acknowledged in a 2016 report, that the CEFR is an important measurement to overhaul the Japanese education system (Shillaw 2017).

2. Certifications and learning approach

Currently, Japan is using the JLPT system to evaluate foreign languages learners in their ability to read, listen in addition to their vocabulary and grammar, comprehension (*Japan Foundation 2012*). On the contrary, the TOEFL test I.e., is requiring its examinee in addition to the tasks above to speak about a certain or familiar topic (*ETS 2022*). Certifications like this overall give a third person recipient an official statement of what the possible employee, graduated university student or colleague has been able to deliver at the certain point in time in terms of English or Japanese language proficiency at one of those test topics in any of those certificates.

This different approach is an underlying pattern when it comes to comparing the European and Japanese language learning approach. Europeans tend to put an emphasis on direct communication and face-to-face discussions, while Japanese classes tend to have a reading or listening focus, without the student needing to create own answers or perspectives on certain topics. This can limit the actual information intake and recreating ability. A student including learning approach, with the student needing to speak and producing answers or dialogue on time or under time pressure, has shown to be more effective in elevating ones ability to indulge in a foreign language and levelling up the language proficiency itself (*Brown, 1941*). Due to the absence of these methods, in addition to Japanese language being non-related to the English language family, creates an even harder obstacle to overcome the more time progresses in ones educational path. European non-native English speakers have the advantage of their prospective language being “related” to the English language, since European languages all derived from Latin, thus making it easy to connect missing vocabulary or eradicate misunderstandings by comparing their mother tongue with the missing vocabulary piece (*Robinson, Croft 2016*).

While certification just aim for a snapshot of ones ability at the point of examination, the CEFR approach tries to create a combination of learning method recommendation plus additional possibilities to obtain valuable certifications. The CEFR was first published in 2001 and creates six level of foreign language proficiency, Starting from A1, A2, over B until C2. This implementation of levels is creating the possibility for teacher to establish learning and teaching objectives, to review curricula, design teaching materials and outside of the academic advantages, it provides a basis for recognition of language qualifications (*Europe, 2020*). The combination of these points from the area of certification, but also main education and generalizing curricula gives the European Union the chance, to standardize education and the certification process.

MEXT has taken a look into the CEFR process, and tries to adapt those resolutions into their own standard, the CEFR-J. Having been launched in 2008, the CEFR-J Project is an attempt to

reconstruct the CEFR framework of teaching and assessing foreign languages in Japan. So far it hasn't found its way into Japanese classrooms.

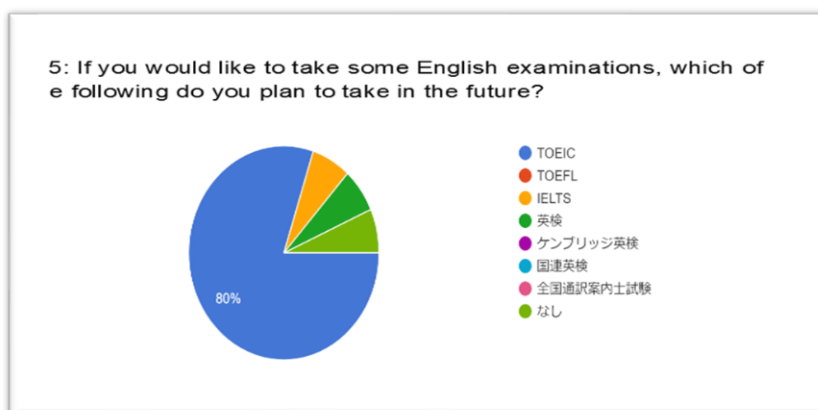
To assess the status quo of Japanese English teaching methods, we will take a look at the data we gathered with Japanese students and how they perceived their English learning experience from school until university, and what the main focus points were.

3. Questionnaire Preparation and Results

To gather the relevant data on Japanese student preferences, a questionnaire was created and distributed to various students from the Okayama University. It contained x questions and the questionnaire itself was divided into a 4 step approach.

Step 1 contained questions regarding general information gathering, like age, university department and current English level, as well as learning motivations. Step 2 consisted of questions towards the interviewees certification status. Did the interviewee already participate in a certification exam? If so, what was the score and what was the underlying motivation to take this exam? How did the interviewee study for this examination? The third step was future focussed, and focused on information regarding future assignments or certifications, if the interviewee prepared for another examination and if so, what the underlying motivation was for obtaining an additional certification. The fourth and final step was past focused, how the interviewee experienced his or her English learning process in school, what type of English learning techniques were used by teachers and what method the interviewee prefers to learn English. Additionally, the interviewees worst English learning experience was asked, furthermore the interviewee was asked to give an opinion on what English learning method is the most effective in his or her perspective.

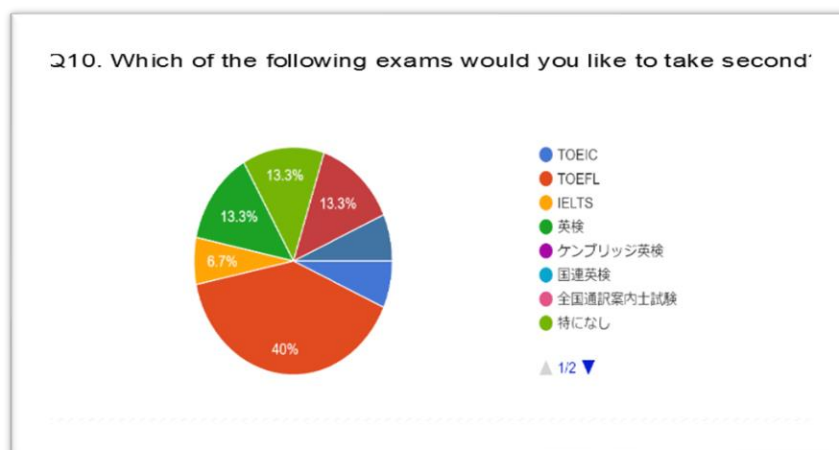
Overall, 15 students from different faculties of the Okayama University, aged between 19 and 24, took part in this survey. At the time of answering the questionnaire, most of them didn't study English at all or not enough, with the main reason for studying English in the first place were future prospects regarding career or job opportunities, followed by communication purposes.



As a main result, Japanese students preferred the TOEIC certification over any other one, with 80% of the interviewees having either already undertaken or planning to take the TOEIC examination. The European favourite

TOEFL was chosen zero times as an answer in this first question. Following closest to the TOEIC were the IELTS, EIKEN or not having a certification yet/not planning on taking an examination as answers with the same amount of ticks.

Additional certificates have been on the students horizon as well, this time the European favourite has been chosen as the students nice-to-have, with 40% thinking about taking it as an additional incentive for their career. Other certificates appear in a well mixed order, without a single second favourite emerging out of the answers given by the students.



4. Conclusion

One possible disadvantage of having an overwhelming number of certificates, which all use a different approbation approach is, that not every certificate can be evaluated equally. Certain employers or companies might prefer a specific certificate, while others tend to a different one. This can make it hard for a student or learner to choose the right certification ahead of their job-hunting process. Additionally, if the learners preferences change, i.e., he or she wants to work or study abroad, some of the certificates mentioned are just domestically viable. The CEFR

English language certificates are not accepted at every university in Japan, some are specifically requesting TOEIC or IELTS certificates to be able to apply for their exchange program.

On the other hand, the afore mentioned overwhelming number of certificates can be one possible advantage. Due to that, the learner has the possibility to achieve one of those certificates, since statistically the chances for one of these being close to his or her local residency are high. Additionally, a lot of webpages are giving approximations of result comparisons between different certifications. With this, users can compare themselves and their respective test scores with another application who took a different certificate.

All in all, we saw that Japanese students were wishing for a more communication, discussion driven approach, like the CEFR is offering in Europe. The worst teaching methods were simple listening and following strategies, while the most effective were face-to-face engaging learning activities. Grammar and reading proficiency have to be focused as well, but shouldn't be the main focus of any class.

The main difference between the Japanese and European learning approach is the amount of emphasis placed on the learning method "communication and discussion". From our comparison, we saw that communication heavy approaches were favoured by students and lead to stable, as well as sustainable results in language proficiency. The CEFR gives a sustainable learning approach while achieving important certification results for future necessities. A global joint framework for certification and learning-/teaching approaches could create the possibility of equal level distribution for non-native speakers to advance to a native or near native level. English learning is a lifelong process and needs to be enabled through action-oriented, communicative structure during and after class.

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Okayama Seagulls Influence on Okayama City

岡山シーガルズが岡山市に与える影響

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要旨：1999年に設立された岡山シーガルズは、バレーボール V1 リーグに所属するクラブチームです。バレーボールの練習・試合だけでなく、地域住民へのバレーボールの指導、健康増進のためのクラス、自治体と取り組む地域貢献活動等、岡山県民の役に立つ社会貢献活動に取り組んでいます。この研究では、アンケート調査により、岡山シーガルズの活動が岡山の地域住民にどのような影響を与えているのか明らかにするとともに、調査結果や現状を分析し、台湾のバレーボールリーグが学ぶべき点について考察しました。

1. Okayama Seagulls introduction:

Okayama Seagulls , established in 1999, is a club volleyball team; they are not sponsored by one specific company but by a lot of residents, individuals and local small companies. Okayama Seagulls provides many social and SDG activities (Sustainable Development Goals) in Okayama Cities. For instance, volleyball courses, health expectancy speech, human rights awareness class, community development activities, women's empowerment speech and so on (pic. 1). The activities are approximately 200 times annually. In recognition of the team's cooperation in various awareness-raising activities to promote the importance of human rights awareness, which it has been involved in since its establishment, the Ministry of Justice awarded the team the "Human Rights Protection Merit Award" for 2008, a letter of appreciation from the President of the National Federation of Human Rights Protection Commissioners.

皆さんと共に～地域貢献活動の紹介～



岡山シーガルズではチーム創立以来、地域密着型市民クラブチームの使命として、競技活動はもとより、チームを支えてくださる地域の皆様への恩返しとして、バレーボール教室や講演活動、各種啓発活動、イベント参加等、年間200回にも及ぶ地域活動に取り組んでいます。

Pic. 1. Community service activities by Okayama Seagulls

<https://okayama.v-seagulls.co.jp>

2. Okayama Seagulls' SDGs Activities:

The team is involved in several social action projects related to the SDGs. Some of the examples are explained below.

2.1. Extending healthy life expectancy:

Aiming to extend healthy life expectancy, participating in various stretching classes and conveying the joy of exercising (Pic. 1) .

2.2 Volleyball class activities:

Teaching volleyball for various people such as elementary school students, junior high students and disabilities to activate sports activities in Okayama (Pic. 3).



Pic.2 Extending healthy life expectancy
Activity
<https://okayama.v-seagulls.co.jp>



Pic 3. Volleyball class Activity
<https://okayama.v-seagulls.co.jp>

3. Motivation:

Japan's National Volleyball League is the best in Asia, which is an outstanding organization that the Taiwan league can learn. Since last year (2021), Taiwan established a brand new basketball league, Plus League, which made a substantial success and revived the Taiwan basketball leagues again for over 20 years. Therefore, as a die-hard volleyball lover, I know that tons of volleyball fans in Taiwan are eager for the same level volleyball league to be established, and Japan National League will be the best for us to learn. It motivated me to do the localization research from Okayama Seagulls.

In recent years, people in Okayama, especially Okayama University students, have learned a lot about Sustainable Developments Goals activities. Therefore, I'm interested in implementing a professional team's effort.

4. Method:

In order to know the influence of Okayama Seagulls, I made a questionnaire focused on Okayama University students and professors and finally got ten responses. The questionnaire, consisting of 20 questions, includes the familiarity of Okayama Seagulls, the comparisons between Okayama Seagulls and other professional sports teams in the atmosphere, marketing aspects. And the second part, the respondents judge the level of SDGs activities in different aspects, which includes volleyball improvement in Okayama prefecture, volleyball improvement in Japanese nations, motivation for kids to play volleyball, motivations for kids to

become professional volleyball players, income that can bring by the activities to Okayama prefecture, expansions of the number of Okayama seagulls fans.

5. Analysis:

According to the questionnaire results, we can see that there are 70% of Okayama citizens heard about Okayama Seagulls; however, only 10% of them have the experience of seeing games in Seagulls' main court. (Fig.1) With a brief introduction of those Seagulls' activities, most of them agree that those are SDGs activities, which are typical social feedback that good for Okayama citizens.

For more details, all the respondents think that these activities can help volleyball promotion in Okayama prefecture; 80% of the respondents think that can help improve the level of volleyball in Japan (Fig. 2). Secondly, all the respondents believe that it can enhance the motivation for Okayama kids to play volleyball; 80% of the respondents think that can help motivate kids to become professional volleyball players and 70% of the respondents believe that can bring more income to Okayama prefecture. Finally, 60% of the respondents believe that can expand the fans of Okayama Seagulls, and 60% of the respondents think that can attract more sponsorship from local companies.

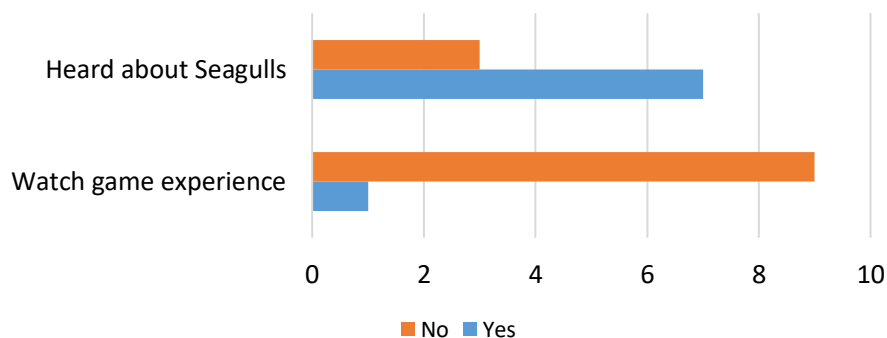


Fig.1 The number of respondents that have heard about Okayama Seagulls and the experience of watching games in the main court. (n=10)

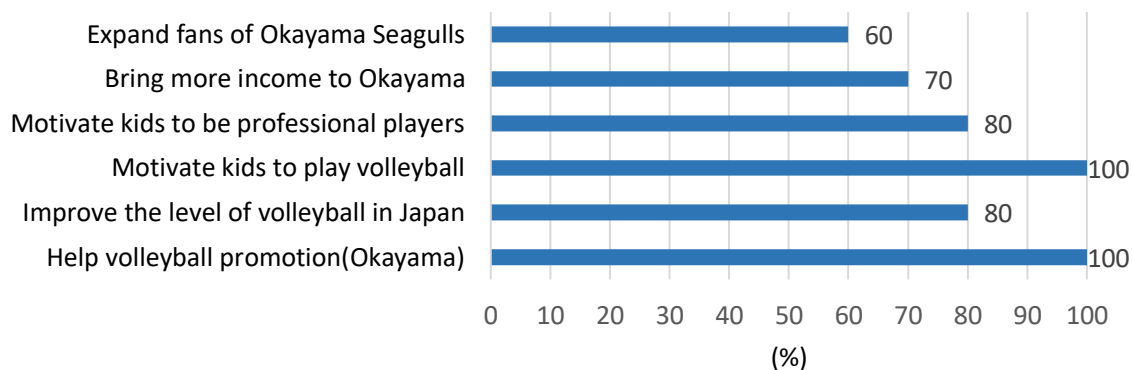


Fig.2 The respondents' feedback of the benefits of Okayama Seagulls' SDGs activities

6. Conclusions:

In conclusion, people in Okayama recognize the effort of Okayama Seagulls on SDGs activities. However, the results show a weak connection between the respondents and Okayama Seagulls. The reasons are supposed to be the lack of data and the concentration. Due to all 10 data come from Okayama university students and professors, which means it is more focused on 20-30 and 50-60 generations, different from Seagulls activities aiming generations: under 18 and over 60. Thus, further data collection and analysis will be required for more accurate analysis.

Though the connection between citizens and professional teams can be more robust, I still notice the importance of localization. Okayama Seagulls not only bring the fans by the outstanding plays on the court, but they also know the importance of the things that are "outside the court".

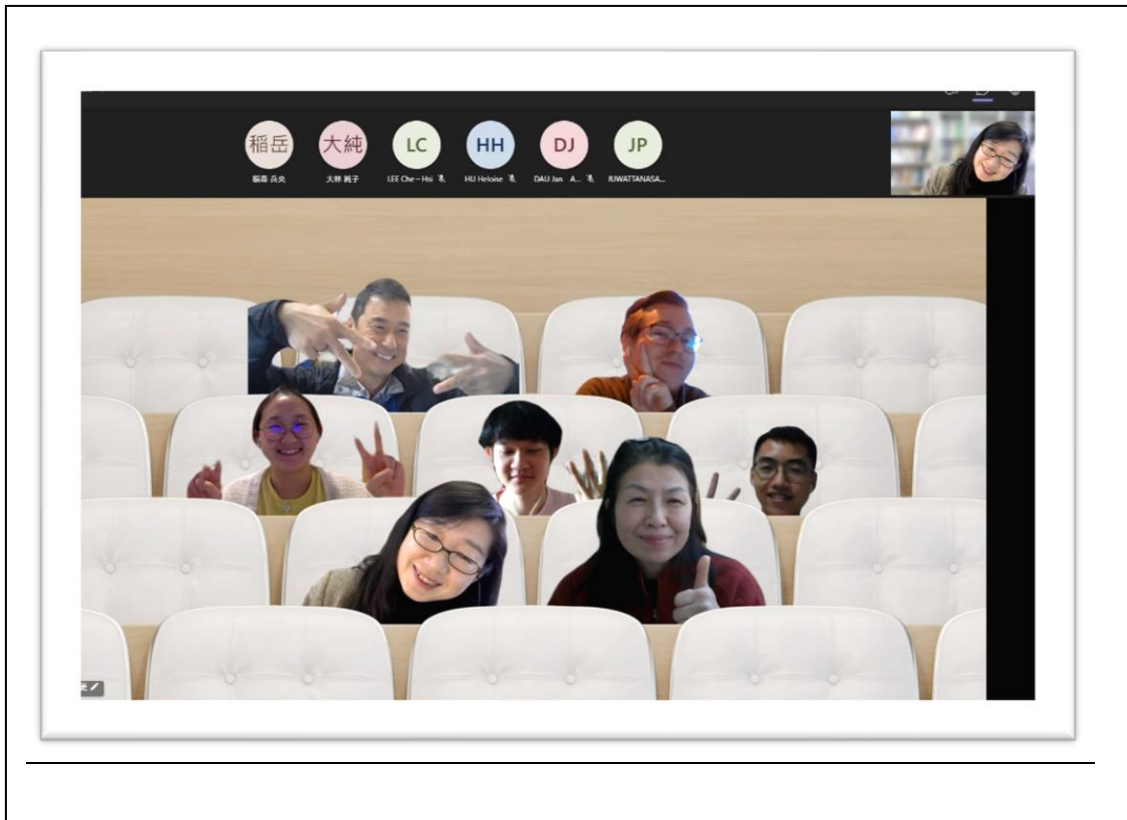
A star player may temporarily bring fans, but a complete localization plan can bring long-term fans in one city. This is what the Taiwan league can really concentrate on. Taiwanese have strong regional consciousness; 26 prefectures make 26 individual and special local features and cohesion. If the Taiwan league can bring Okayama Seagulls' operation model into Taiwan, I believe it will be easier than building a business model as now we see.

Take Taiwan new basketball league, Plus League, as an example. There's a new team in Hsinchu, called Hsinchu Lionears. They made much effort in marketing and localization. They also taught primary schools students on basketball, they also charitable activities for the local residents; in these two years, though they didn't get the best grades on basketball games, they definitely won the most fans from whole nations, which made the also win the best fans teams in 2020-21

seasons. That is to say, the localization operation model works in Taiwan, and I believe that the volleyball league can do it in the same way.

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The four students presented the paper on January 26, 2022.

The End