

Learning Learning

学習の学習

JALT Learner Development N-SIG Forum Vol. 1, No. 2 July 1994

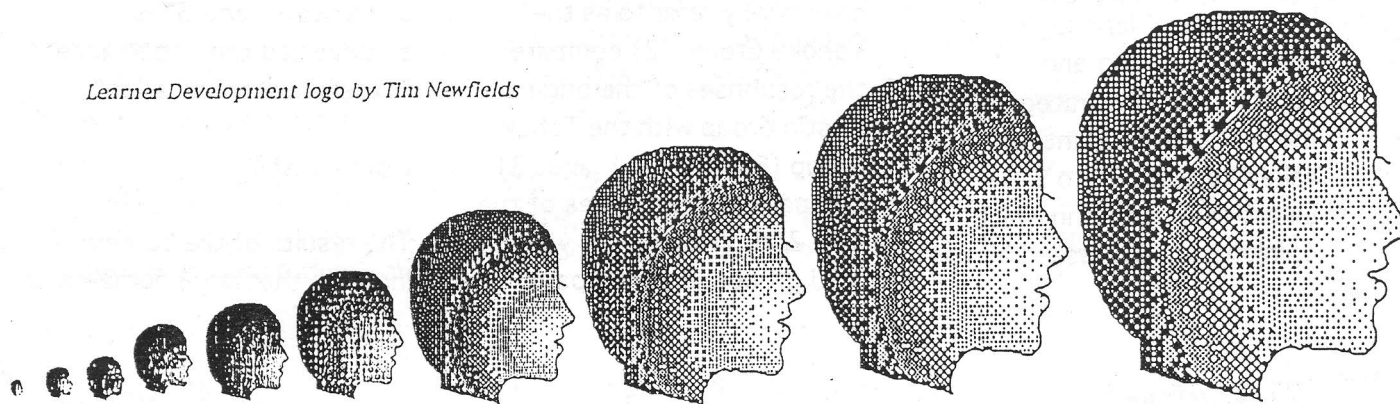
*Learning Learning*第2号は、日本の大学における学習者の特徴にさまざまな角度から焦点を当てた三本の記事を集めました。初めの記事はキース・アダムスによるもので、学習者の学習と言語に関する信念を考慮することの重要性を指摘し、彼の教える学生の信念を明らかにするためにに行った調査について報告しています。次の記事ではデイル・グリフィーが、英語を学習する際の到達目標とそれを実現するための行動目標を学生自身に考えさせる試みを述べ、その試みの中で遭遇したさまざまな問題を論じています。最後に吉竹ソニアは、英語のアカデミック・ライティングにおける論理構造について学習者の気づきを高めるための手順を紹介し、文化差という観点から、日本語を母語とする学生にとってのこの種の学習者ディベロプメントの重要性を強調しています。私たちが教える学生はどんな背景を持っているのか。彼らは何を信じ、どんなことなら責任をもってやれるのか。彼らはすでに何を知っていて、何を知らないのか。こうした疑問は、さらに深く追いかけてみる必要があります。さらなる投稿をお待ちしています。

リチャード・スミス、青木直子

In this issue of *Learning Learning* we feature three contributions which focus from different angles on learner characteristics in a Japanese university context. In the first article, Keith Adams reminds us of the importance of taking into account learners' beliefs about learning and language, and reports on a study he undertook to discover more about the beliefs of his own students. Next, Dale Griffiee describes how he attempted to have his students reflect on their goals and objectives in studying English, and discusses a number of problems he encountered. Finally, Sonia Yoshitake describes a procedure for raising learners' awareness of possible organizational structures in English academic writing, and emphasizes, from a cross-cultural perspective, the importance of this kind of learner development with Japanese students. Where *are* our learners coming from? What do they believe, what responsibilities can they assume, and what do they/don't they already know? Further investigation of these kinds of question is needed, and your own contribution(s) awaited!

Naoko Aoki and Richard Smith

Learner Development logo by Tim Newfields



What Do They Think? A Survey of Student Language Learning Beliefs

Keith Adams

Rationale

Our subjective assessments and assumptions about our students' attitudes and beliefs relating to language learning, have great influence on many of our teaching decisions. Therefore, I wanted to gain empirical data to evaluate the validity of some common perceptions we might hold about our students.

The Survey Instrument

The model used for the questionnaire in the survey was the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) developed in the Intensive English Program of the University of Texas at Austin (Horwitz, 1989).

The BALLI asks for student opinions in five major areas of language learning : foreign language aptitude, the difficulty of language learning, the nature of language learning, learning and communication strategies, and motivations. Students are asked to respond to 34 Likert-scale items, in which opinions are expressed across

a range from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree", in the five areas.

I deleted some of the original BALLI items due to their inappropriateness to an EFL environment, and made some minor modifications in others. Six new items were developed to bring the total number of items on my survey to 37. The questionnaire was translated into Japanese, and both versions, English and Japanese, were used in the survey.

The Students

The questionnaire was given to 175 students from five different groups. Four of the groups consisted of English Literature majors at Tohoku Gakuin University (TGU), comprising 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year and 4th year students respectively, while the fifth group was a class of second year Science majors at Tohoku University (TU), who were taking a required English reading course.

Research Objectives

My objectives were to (1) gain a general profile of beliefs of the 175 students, whom I shall collectively refer to as the Tohoku Group, (2) compare the responses of the original Austin Group with the Tohoku Group (ESL vs. EFL), and (3) compare the responses of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year TGU groups, and compare

responses of the TGU groups with the TU group to see if there were differences in beliefs between the groups according to students' year in university or major.

Selected Results

For a detailed analysis of the results, see Adams, 1993. Here, I shall summarize selected findings. Firstly, responses to items in two categories, relating to the Nature of Language Learning and Communication Strategies, indicated general support of practices usually associated with a communicative approach; however, "traditional views" of language learning were still quite evident. For example, half of the TG group agreed that learning vocabulary is the most important aspect of language learning, while 22.9% gave grammar this distinction, and 15.4% supported the primary importance of translation.

There was also a consistent support rate for "correctness". 25.1% agreed that if beginning students' errors are not corrected, the students will have difficulties in speaking correctly later. 38.9% felt that it was important to understand every word, and 61% emphasized the importance of "excellent pronunciation".

Comments

The results of the survey indicate that large numbers of

the respondents share relatively "traditional" views about language learning; many language teachers in Japan will probably find their assumptions about student beliefs in this respect confirmed by the results of the survey.

Concerning the three objectives of the study, the students' major seemed to have the least influence on beliefs. There were more contrasts generated by the EFL/ESL variable, but the contrasts were largely outnumbered by the similarities. However, the students' year in university did result in noticeable differences in opinions, especially in the areas of the nature of language learning and motivation.

The opinions of the four levels divided into two 'contrasting camps' in 12 of the questionnaire items: 3rd/4th year versus 1st/2nd year. In general, the former group had a stronger support for traditional views and correctness than the latter group. A drop in motivation could also be seen in the older students, particularly with the third year students.

Follow-up

The survey was originally made during the Spring Semester of 1992. I have subsequently administered it to my freshmen students the

past two years. I plan to have the original 1st and 2nd year students take the survey again later this year. It will be especially interesting to see if their attitudes have changed, and whether they conform to the more 'conservative camp' profile seen in the older students in the original survey.

References

- Adams, K.. 1993. "A survey of student language learning beliefs". *The Tohoku Gakuin University Review*. No. 84. [available from the author: see p. 10]
- Horwitz, E.K. 1989. "Surveying student beliefs about language learning", in Wenden, A. and Rubin, J. (Eds.), *Learner Strategies in Language Learning*, pp. 119-129. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall International.

言語学習に関する学生の意識調査

キース・アダムス

背景

我々教師は言語学習に関して学生がどのような態度や考えを持っているかということについて主観的な判断や予想をすることがあり、それは教育の場で下される様々な決断を左右する。そこで、教師が学生に対して抱きがちなイメージの妥当性を評価すべく、実証的なデータを得ようと試みた。

調査用紙

質問紙はテキサス大学オースティン校の英語集中プログラムで

開発されたBALLI (Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory; Horwitz, 1989)をもとに作成した。BALLIは言語学習における主要5領域に関して学生の考えを問うものである。その5つとは外国語学習適性、言語学習の困難さ、言語学習の特質、学習ストラテジーとコミュニケーション・ストラテジー、学習の動機である。学生は34項目についてリカート法に従った「強くそう思う」から「全くそう思わない」までの範囲で回答するようになっている。

今回の調査は日本で英語学習中の学生を対象としたため、BALLIの中で実状にそぐわないいくつかの項目は削除し、またその他の項目についても若干の修正を加えた。新たに6項目を加え、総項目数を37とした。質問は日本語に翻訳し、日本語版、英語版の両方を用いた。

対象

アンケートの対象となったのは5つの異なるグループに属する学生175人で、東北学院大学の英文学専攻の1~4年生と、東北大学で必修の英文講読の授業を履修している理科系の2年生である。

目的

この調査の目的は(1)175人の学生の考え方の全体像を把握し(この学生群を「東北グループ」と呼ぶ)、(2)東北グループ(EFL)から得られた結果をオースティン・グループ(ESL)と比較し、(3)東北学院大学の1~4年の各グループ、及びそれらと東北大学グループの比較を行い、学年または専攻によって意識に違いがあるかどうかを見ることであった。

結果(抜粋)

「言語学習の特質」と「学習ストラテジーとコミュニケーション・ストラテジー」の2つの領域における回答は、コミュニケーション

