

The possibility of accommodating an immersion education option in Japan

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④ Bilingual education ⑤ *Global Jinzai*

I. はじめに

Despite extensive foreign language study, it is often said that students in Japan cannot use foreign languages well (McConnell, 2000; McVeigh, 2002; Sato, 2009). In recent years, in attempts to make the subject more communicative, many additions and changes to curricula and teaching approaches have been implemented. Investigation of the following questions has guided this research:

- What connection exists between development of *global jinzai* and education?
- How do students feel about their experience as foreign language learners?
- What are some examples of effective bilingual approaches that could inform and shepherd foreign language education in Japan?

II. 目的

The purpose of this study is to gauge the perceptions of first year university students regarding their experience with foreign language education in junior and senior high school. A secondary goal of this study is to begin to gauge students' awareness of popular rhetoric associated with globalization and bilingual education.

III. 研究方法

80 first year students participated in the study. All respondents gave permission for their data to be used by the researcher as required by the Ethics Committee at AUHW. Participants completed a survey containing a total of forty-five items. A number of different item types were utilized in the survey. Data analysis of results is not at this moment complete. Data will be analyzed and reported in a summative manner.

IV. 結果

In light of responses provided, despite largely positive feelings toward language, the majority of respondents feel that the foreign language education they have received is not particularly effective.

At the JHS level, slightly more than 60% of respondents indicated feeling pressure to do well on high-stakes, standardized, knowledge-based high school entrance exams, one of which is a written English exam. At the SHS level, that number jumps to more than 76% for university entrance exams. Bridging the gap between skill development and academic expectation will continue to be an integral part of foreign language education and policy in the years to come.

V. 考察

What this research was really about was determining how open students were to the idea of bilingual/immersion education. Baker (2011) provides in-depth descriptions of immersion in context. An example of a successful bilingual/immersion education in Japan is Katoh

Gakuen, where students in the bilingual program study at least half of their subjects in the target language. Basically, immersion is a carefully considered learning environment where teachers who themselves are bilingual support students' learning in a variety of ways.

Respondents provided mostly positive reactions to the idea of immersion. Nearly 90% of respondents indicated that they felt learning subjects other than English in English would be beneficial to developing English abilities. The general consensus from respondents seems to be that technical subjects would be easier to learn in English than subjects in the social sciences. These feelings prove to be accurate as this resembles Katoh Gakuen's approach to bilingual curriculum planning (Bostwick, 2001).

Though immersion is a proven and effective approach to bilingual education that could have outstanding positive effects on the developing globalism of Japanese students, some feel that giving increased prominence to English medium education will have adverse, negative effects on learners' self-identity as Japanese citizens. Downes (2001) found these concerns to be mostly unfounded, but the fact that they persist illustrates the nature of the significant roadblocks that exist for immersion in Japan.

VI. 文献

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VII. 発表 (誌上発表、学会発表)

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