

Profiling of Successful English Learners : Analysis of Learner Variables

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Introduction

In traditional Japanese English teaching, students' role was to sit quietly in the classroom while listening to the instruction by the teacher and provide answers to the questions when asked. Such a scene is very typical of Japanese classroom English learning where grammar translation method is widely used. In this kind of classroom setting, students take the role of passive learners instead of actively participating in the process of learning. However, we have seen increase in the number of research and writing on the learner-centered language learning.

Current research on learner-centered approach emphasizes the role each learner plays in the classroom and the process involved. Rather than seeing learners as passive absorbers of knowledge, this approach considers learners as active participants in the learning process and regard students as valuable contributors to the dynamic classroom learning.

It is important to see the dynamics involved in the process of learning in a classroom rather than treating the class as a static entity consisting of lot of people, because each student brings different expectations and attitude into the classroom. All of these factors greatly influence the way learning takes place. We tend to define successful language education as an outcome of successful instruction by a teacher or as a product of a good system, but we should note that the great part of this process has been initiated by learners not by teachers. Without active participation by the learners in the learning process, there is no way to guarantee successful language learning.

In this thesis I would explore what kind of active roles are played by students in classroom. The main purpose of this research is to understand what kind of expectations students bring to the classroom and how that influences the outcome of their learning. Motivation, attitude and various strategies are also involved in the process of learning. I would like to come up with profiles of successful language learners so that I could shed some light on what constitutes a successful learner and what is involved in each student's process of learning.

Motivational Factors

First and foremost, what matters most when we undertake any learning is why we are doing it, the reason behind the actual learning process. What discourages as most is being forced to do things without knowing why we are doing it. We need a clearcut reason to be doing what we are doing. Motivational factors play a great role in the learning process. Sometimes we can say that

successful activity is all due to the fact that the student was motivated. Researchers have shown that motivation is a key to learning.(Crooks and Schmidt 1991) In this thesis, I tried to profile two kind of motivational factors to see how they have influenced the outcome of students' learning.

Roughly there are two kind of motivational factors identified by researchers have identified. One kind of motivation which is familiar to everyone who has studied any language is instrumental motivation. This motivation refers to the drive by the students to study for the benefits that accompany the learning. With this motivation, students study because there is something to be gained as a result of learning. For example, most Japanese students study English not for the purpose of immigrating to the U.S. but for the purpose of scoring high grades on a test, especially for an entrance examination for universities. Adult English learners who are studying English at private language institute may be studying English so that they can get higher grades on TOEIC. But the ultimate reason for them to score high scores on TOEIC is because it is good for their promotion in a company. These reasons fall under the category of instrumental motivation. They are motivation from external factors, so the nature of the motivation is extrinsic.

The other kind of motivation is internal rather than external, the drive to learn derives from the learner himself rather than from the external benefits or advantages that accompany the learning. "Intrinsically motivated learners are ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself." (D. Brown 1994) This kind of motivation is the strongest possible motivation and students with this motivation are sure to study hard because they study just for the love of it! I would explore how these two kinds of motivation influence the students' learning outcome.

Attitudinal Factors toward English Speaking Countries

Another factor that I would like to study is the attitude students have toward the countries where the target language is spoken. This factor that is in the affective domain is an interesting one to explore since attitude is one of the pillars that make up people's motivation. In 1972, Gardner and Lambert have tried to correlate positive attitude toward people of the target language and the high motivation by the students. It is clear that positive attitude toward a target language and the people who speak it will lead to high motivation and successful outcome of learning. Those who intend to immigrate to the U.S. would no wonder have the desire to assimilate to the mainstream culture so that they can lead their lives more comfortable and easily. "Culture may be defined as the ideas, customs, skills arts, and tools that characterize a given group in a given period of time. (D. Brown 1994) However, we are most of the time unconscious about our own culture, so it is natural that our attitude toward the target culture is also subconscious. But here in this subconsciousness lies a key to the motivation for learning. I would explore how this would affect

learners' outcome of learning.

Learning Strategies

Along with attitude and motivation students bring to a classroom toward the target language, it is important to note that learning takes place not only in a classroom but also at home of each student. It is of great interest to teachers to find out how long students actually study at home. What is of more interest to us is how they study the target language and what kind of strategies each student employs when they are at home. Each student must have his own way of learning. Our interest lies in finding out what kind of strategies successful language learners utilize and what kind of strategies they are. If we can profile the kind of strategies that are used by good language learners, that would be of great advantage to both students and teachers.

Research on the field of learner training involves exploring various kinds of strategies that students use. D. Brown write extensively on this subject, he has identified six strategies that are known to be used by students. Memory strategies, cognitive, strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social strategies. (D. Brown 1994)

Memory strategies are students' effort to memorize variety of new information most efficiently. We have experiences of making our own notebooks before the exam so that we can learn new information. Cognitive strategies refer to effort to analyze new information and integrate it into the cognitive system, this includes such effort as translating new information into our mother tongue or analyzing new grammatical features. Compensation strategies are those used when a communication breaks down, such as consulting a dictionary or asking for explanation for new words. Metacognitive strategies involve being aware of the learning process one is undertaking and becoming aware of your overall learning plan and monitoring yourself. Affective strategies involve lowering your anxiety when speaking a target language and trying to take risks wisely. Social strategies include participation in group based activities and working together with others to learn a target language. All of these strategies may be something we are unaware of, however, they are part of the learning process we all go through.

Procedure

In this research, students were asked to fill out a sheet that asked them on four factors that the author thought were important for becoming a successful language learner. Motivation, attitude, affective factor, risk-taking factor have been explored. Students were asked to answer questions on a scale of five. Strongly agree to strongly disagree. The average score of the result for each construct was compared with the results of students' performance at the term exam to see if there

were any correlation between the above mentioned factors and the academic performances of the students. One class out of four was chosen randomly.

The subjects were third year junior high school students at a catholic school in Miyazaki. Most of them have been studying English for three years. They have seven English classes a week including a conversation class taught by an Australian English teacher. At public schools, junior high school students have only three English classes a week. So students at this school have twice as many classes as public school junior high school students.

Intrinsic Motivation

夏課	3定	2実	4定	平均	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	AV.	Grade
67	67	69	68	67.7	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
62	67	65	66	65.5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
64	63	62	63	63.0	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
64	64	60	62	62.7	3	5	5	5	5	4.6	5
58	64	61	64	62.5	4	5	5	4	5	4.6	5
64	57	61	65	61.5	4	5	5	4	5	4.6	5
42	41	39	42	41.2	4	5	5	3	5	4.4	3
38	40	41	42	40.5	4	5	5	3	5	4.4	3
		36	34	34.7	4	5	4	4	5	4.4	2
66	64	69	66	65.8	5	5	4	5	2	4.2	5
64	63	67	66	64.8	3	5	5	3	5	4.2	5
62	62	64	67	64.0	3	5	4	5	4	4.2	5
52	58	59	57	56.8	4	5	4	4	4	4.2	4
52	51	44	48	49.0	3	5	4	4	5	4.2	3
55	49	54	56	53.2	4	5	4	3	4	4	4
35	35	36	39	36.5	3	5	4	5	3	4	3
64	63	65	62	63.2	4	5	3	3	4	3.8	5
59	58	59	57	58.0	3	5	5	3	3	3.8	5
62	52	54	52	54.0	4	5	3	4	3	3.8	4
52	54	58	52	53.7	3	5	4	3	4	3.8	4
45	45	45	46	45.3	4	5	3	4	3	3.8	3
52	54	54	54	53.7	2	5	3	3	5	3.6	4
48	49	53	49	49.5	5	4	4	3	2	3.6	3
46	49	46	48	47.7	3	5	3	3	4	3.6	3
39	44	42		42.3	1	5	4	3	5	3.6	3
54	53	58	52	53.7	3	5	2	3	4	3.4	4
40	41	42	43	41.7	3	5	2	3	4	3.4	3
52	52	49	52	51.5	1	5	3	3	4	3.2	4
48	51	44	52	49.7	3	4	3	3	3	3.2	3
31	30	33	32	31.3	3	5	2	1	5	3.2	2
60	55	53	56	55.8	3	5	2	2	3	3	4
49	47	46	48	47.5	2	4	3	3	3	3	3
43	43	48	45	44.5	4	5	3	2	1	3	3
42	40	40	42	41.0	3	4	3	3	2	3	3
53	53	50	53	52.5	3	4	3	2	2	2.8	4
61	57	58	59	58.5	3	5	2	1	1	2.4	5
48		51	56	52.8	2	4	3	2	1	2.4	4

40	45	42	41	42.3	2	2	2	2	3	2.2	3
43	38	42	40	40.2	2	4	2	2	1	2.2	3
31	31	36	32	32.2	4	2	2	2	1	2.2	2
37	40	38	38	38.5	3	3	1	1	1	1.8	3

Those who have scored high on the intrinsic motivational factors have been chosen to compare their motivational scores with final grades they were given at the end of the term. I1~I5 refers to the questions provided on the question sheet and to the right is the average score for the intrinsic motivation. Grade refers to the final term grade. Students were graded on the scale of five to one, distinction, excellent, good, unsatisfactory, needs more effort. Out of sixteen students deemed to have high intrinsic motivation, eleven students have been given either distinction or excellent. There is a direct correlation between good grade and a high motivation. On the other hand, those who had little motivation did not do so well.

The result seems to indicate the strong intrinsic motivational factors behind successful learners. This confirms many previous researches on motivation that placed intrinsic motivation before extrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic motivation is seen as a stronger drive than extrinsic motivation seen in the long run. If students are intrinsically motivated to learn, the possibility is that this drive will be maintained because it derives from the students' internal psychological mechanism rather than the external. However if the students are extrinsically motivated such as by being given rewards and other external benefits, the chances are that when these rewards are withdrawn, they might not be able to sustain the same drive that they had when they were given rewards.

In the next chapter, I will take a look at the result from extrinsic motivational factor and see if there is any correlation between extrinsic motivation and students' performance on the exam.

夏課	Extrinsic Motivation										Grade
	3定	2実	4定	平均	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	AV.	
54	53	58	52	53.7	5	5	4	4	5	4.6	4
38	40	41	42	40.5	5	5	4	4	5	4.6	3
42	41	39	42	41.2	4	5	4	4	5	4.4	3
64	63	65	62	63.2	4	4	4	4	5	4.2	5
40	41	42	43	41.7	5	5	4	2	5	4.2	3
64	64	60	62	62.7	5	3	4	3	5	4	5
49	47	46	48	47.5	5	2	4	4	5	4	3
42	40	40	42	41.0	4	4	4	4	4	4	3
58	64	61	64	62.5	5	3	3	3	5	3.8	5
62	52	54	52	54.0	5	3	3	3	5	3.8	4
48		51	56	52.8	5	4	2	3	5	3.8	4

52	51	44	48	49.0	5	5	3	3	3	3.8	3
46	49	46	48	47.7	4	4	3	4	4	3.8	3
39	44	42		42.3	3	5	3	3	5	3.8	3
66	64	69	66	65.8	5	3	1	4	5	3.6	5
64	57	61	65	61.5	5	4	3	2	4	3.6	5
64	63	67	66	64.8	5	1	3	3	5	3.4	5
64	63	62	63	63.0	4	2	3	3	5	3.4	5
45	45	45	46	45.3	5	5	2	2	3	3.4	3
		36	34	34.7	4	3	3	3	4	3.4	2
52	58	59	57	56.8	4	2	3	2	5	3.2	4
52	54	58	52	53.7	5	4	1	1	5	3.2	4
48	51	44	52	49.7	4	4	2	2	4	3.2	3
31	31	36	32	32.2	1	5	3	3	4	3.2	2
67	67	69	68	67.7	5	5	2	1	2	3	5
59	58	59	57	58.0	3	3	3	3	3	3	5
53	53	50	53	52.5	4	3	2	2	4	3	4
35	35	36	39	36.5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
62	62	64	67	64.0	5	4	3	1	1	2.8	5
55	49	54	56	53.2	4	3	2	2	3	2.8	4
52	52	49	52	51.5	3	4	1	1	5	2.8	4
52	54	54	54	53.7	5	1	1	1	5	2.6	4
48	49	53	49	49.5	3	3	2	2	3	2.6	3
62	67	65	66	65.5	4	2	2	2	2	2.4	5
37	40	38	38	38.5	3	5	2	1	1	2.4	3
31	30	33	32	31.3	3	2	1	1	5	2.4	2
61	57	58	59	58.5	5	3	1	1	1	2.2	5
40	45	42	41	42.3	2	2	2	2	3	2.2	3
43	43	48	45	44.5	5	1	1	1	1	1.8	3
43	38	42	40	40.2	5	1	1	1	1	1.8	3
60	55	53	56	55.8	3	2	1	1	1	1.6	4

On the extrinsic motivation scale, there seems to be no correlation between those who scored high and high academic performance. A student who had the highest academic score has little extrinsic motivation as seen from the chart. This indicates that of two kinds of motivation, intrinsic motivation has more positive influence. Extrinsic factors seem to have only minor influences.

It is interesting to note that as teachers, we tend to emphasize to the students in our class that they should study hard for the test so that they can get better grades or even parents pressure students to study hard so they can get ahead in the society. This trend still remains strong in Japan even the murky economic condition does not guarantee that better diploma translates into better life style.

From this chart, we can infer that emphasis on external reasons for studying don't seem to have as much effect as parents and teachers hope. Too much emphasis on external reasons for studying runs the risk of ruining the students' inner drive to study and deprive them of their intrinsic motivation they otherwise might have. Training students to be independent learners so that they

could sustain their study without being dependent on teachers. Training students to be autonomous is one of the key tasks that we have to deal with as teachers. Autonomous learners will be sure to be successful in the long run.

夏課	Attitudinal Factor										Grade	
	3定	2実	4定	平均	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	AV.		
64	63	65	62	63.2	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
64	64	60	62	62.7	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
58	64	61	64	62.5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
64	57	61	65	61.5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
61	57	58	59	58.5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
59	58	59	57	58.0	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
46	49	46	48	47.7	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3
38	40	41	42	40.5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3
62	52	54	52	54.0	5	5	5	4	5	4.8	4.8	4
52	54	58	52	53.7	5	5	4	5	5	4.8	4.8	4
52	52	49	52	51.5	5	5	5	4	5	4.8	4.8	4
52	51	44	48	49.0	5	5	5	4	5	4.8	4.8	3
49	47	46	48	47.5	5	5	5	4	5	4.8	4.8	3
42	41	39	42	41.2	4	5	5	5	5	4.8	4.8	3
39	44	42		42.3	5	5	5	3	5	4.6	4.6	3
42	40	40	42	41.0	4	4	5	5	5	4.6	4.6	3
31	31	36	32	32.2	5	5	5	4	4	4.6	4.6	2
52	58	59	57	56.8	5	5	5	3	4	4.4	4.4	4
48	49	53	49	49.5	3	5	5	5	4	4.4	4.4	3
45	45	45	46	45.3	5	5	5	3	4	4.4	4.4	3
66	64	69	66	65.8	3	5	4	3	5	4	4	5
48	51	44	52	49.7	2	5	5	4	4	4	4	3
67	67	69	68	67.7	5	5	4	1	4	3.8	3.8	5
64	63	67	66	64.8	3	5	5	2	4	3.8	3.8	5
60	55	53	56	55.8	4	5	4	3	3	3.8	3.8	4
52	54	54	54	53.7	5	5	5	1	3	3.8	3.8	4
43	38	42	40	40.2	5	5	3	3	3	3.8	3.8	3
35	35	36	39	36.5	4	5	3	3	4	3.8	3.8	3
62	67	65	66	65.5	4	5	4	1	4	3.6	3.6	5
64	63	62	63	63.0	4	4	5	2	3	3.6	3.6	5
54	53	58	52	53.7	5	4	4	2	2	3.4	3.4	4
55	49	54	56	53.2	3	4	5	2	3	3.4	3.4	4
43	43	48	45	44.5	2	3	5	3	4	3.4	3.4	3
62	62	64	67	64.0	3	5	4	1	3	3.2	3.2	5
		36	34	34.7	3	4	3	3	3	3.2	3.2	2
48		51	56	52.8	2	3	5	2	3	3	3	4
53	53	50	53	52.5	3	3	4	3	2	3	3	4
40	45	42	41	42.3	2	3	4	3	3	3	3	3
40	41	42	43	41.7	3	3	5	2	1	2.8	2.8	3
37	40	38	38	38.5	3	1	3	1	1	1.8	1.8	3
31	30	33	32	31.3	5	5	5	4	5	4.8	4.8	2

On the attitudinal scale, there seems to be a high correlation between high achievers and favorable attitude toward the target culture. Six high achievers have all answered favorably to the questions asked. Out of twenty two students who have scored above 4 on the attitudinal scale, eleven students have been given distinction and excellent. Students have favorable attitude toward the target culture on average according to the chart. But not all the students have blind love toward the target culture. Some high achievers had objective attitude. According to the chart, however, it can be said that in order to be a successful language learner, it is important to cultivate a favorable attitude toward the target language and its culture and as a teacher, it is necessary to create such an environment in a classroom that would encourage students to nurture positive attitude toward the target language.

We all have stereotypical images of people from different cultures, such as Americans are talkative, British people are shy and reserved and so on. From the result of this chart we can infer that positive stereotyping actually reinforces students' attitude toward the target culture and it is helpful to learning. On the other hand, negative stereotyping seems to correlate with low academic performance. But if we take a look at the profile of successful learners, not all of them have positive attitude on all aspects. So we should consider the outcome in the degree to which the students are inclined to have either positive or negative attitude.

All of have both positive and negative attitude toward a target culture and we should know that it can be changed. Western countries in the war time Japan were regarded as cruel and crude but as we can see from the chart that many students see America favorably. In this regard, we should promote an environment in a classroom where students can get in contact with the target culture so they can nurture better attitude toward the culture. This is important not only for the language education but also for the better relationship with other countries. Students have flexible attitude unlike adults and they can be taught to have tolerant attitude toward other cultures. They should never be subjected to narrow nationalistic sentiments as in the past. They should be taught to appreciate other countries as much as their own. In this process being aware of differences of cultures will nurture students' ability to think critically.

Learning Strategies

夏課	3定	2実	4定	平均	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	AV.	Grade
61	57	58	59	58.5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
62	52	54	52	54.0	5	5	5	5	3	4.6	4
64	63	65	62	63.2	3	4	5	5	5	4.4	5
67	67	69	68	67.7	5	3	5	5	3	4.2	5
62	67	65	66	65.5	1	5	5	5	5	4.2	5
58	64	61	64	62.5	4	3	5	4	5	4.2	5
43	43	48	45	44.5	1	5	5	5	5	4.2	3
64	63	62	63	63.0	1	5	5	4	5	4	5
39	44	42		42.3	3	4	5	5	3	4	3
38	40	41	42	40.5	3	5	5	4	3	4	3
64	63	67	66	64.8	2	4	5	5	3	3.8	5
48	49	53	49	49.5	4	4	5	4	2	3.8	3
52	51	44	48	49.0	4	4	3	4	4	3.8	3
37	40	38	38	38.5	5	5	3	1	5	3.8	3
31	30	33	32	31.3	3	5	4	2	5	3.8	2
48		51	56	52.8	5	2	4	3	4	3.6	4
53	53	50	53	52.5	1	4	5	4	4	3.6	4
35	35	36	39	36.5	3	4	3	5	3	3.6	3
66	64	69	66	65.8	5	5	1	1	5	3.4	5
54	53	58	52	53.7	3	4	3	4	3	3.4	4
45	45	45	46	45.3	3	4	5	2	3	3.4	3
40	41	42	43	41.7	1	2	5	5	4	3.4	3
		36	34	34.7	3	4	3	4	3	3.4	2
64	57	61	65	61.5	1	3	5	4	3	3.2	5
52	58	59	57	56.8	3	4	4	2	3	3.2	4
52	54	54	54	53.7	1	3	5	3	4	3.2	4
46	49	46	48	47.7	3	4	3	3	3	3.2	3
42	40	40	42	41.0	4	3	3	3	3	3.2	3
59	58	59	57	58.0	3	3	3	3	3	3	5
52	54	58	52	53.7	3	3	3	3	3	3	4
55	49	54	56	53.2	2	3	4	4	2	3	4
52	52	49	52	51.5	2	4	5	3	1	3	4
64	64	60	62	62.7	2	2	5	2	3	2.8	5
48	51	44	52	49.7	2	2	3	4	3	2.8	3
49	47	46	48	47.5	1	3	4	4	2	2.8	3
62	62	64	67	64.0	1	1	5	5	1	2.6	5
60	55	53	56	55.8	2	3	3	3	2	2.6	4
40	45	42	41	42.3	3	2	3	2	3	2.6	3
42	41	39	42	41.2	1	3	2	1	3	2	3
43	38	42	40	40.2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
31	31	36	32	32.2	1	1	1	1	5	1.8	2

In this part students were asked questions on their learning strategies especially how students are dealing with linguistic part of the learning process. They were asked if they are trying to remember many new English words and if they are trying to pay attention to new grammatical structures. Also they were asked if they actually write English sentences while they learn new grammatical structures. There seems to be a strong correlation again between good performance and those students who have tried to utilize cognitive strategy such as paying attention to new grammatical forms and trying to learn new words. Students who have been given distinction at the term exams have scored highly on average concerning the cognitive aspect of learning.

From this chart, we can say that despite recent criticism of rote learning and drilling, successful learners have utilized traditional method as remembering new sentences by writing them. From this result, we can say that rote learning is not entirely meaningless, it actually facilitates students' learning process and benefit them in the long run. Those who have not tried to learn new phrases and sentences have fared poorly compared with those who have.

Another point of interest is in this section, students were asked if they are trying to pay attention to new grammatical structures. Learning grammar is another contentious point in language learning. Some criticize grammar instruction as time wasting and that we should spend more time teaching students to speak. But as we can see from this chart, high achievers answered that they do pay attention to grammar and the direct correlation between this and their performance indicates that learning grammar is far from meaningless but it is necessary and helpful. Those who insist that learning grammar is useless should try to learn any language without learning any formal rules about the target language, which is of course impossible.

The point of contention should not be if grammar should be taught or not, but rather how it should be taught. Teaching grammar does not mean that students have to be exposed to long instruction in grammatical jargons that are difficult to comprehend even in a mother tongue. Learning grammar can be a fun process where learners can figure out the new rules by themselves.

Affective Factor: Risk Taking

夏課	3定	2実	4定	平均	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	AV.	Grade
67	67	69	68	67.7	5	4	4	5	5	4.6	5
66	64	69	66	65.8	5	5	5	3	5	4.6	5
58	64	61	64	62.5	4	5	4	5	5	4.6	5
62	62	64	67	64.0	5	5	5	1	5	4.2	5
64	57	61	65	61.5	4	5	4	2	5	4	5
54	53	58	52	53.7	1	5	5	4	5	4	4
46	49	46	48	47.7	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
64	63	67	66	64.8	3	3	4	4	5	3.8	5
52	54	54	54	53.7	5	5	2	2	5	3.8	4
55	49	54	56	53.2	3	5	3	3	5	3.8	4
49	47	46	48	47.5	4	5	3	3	3	3.6	3
64	63	62	63	63.0	3	5	3	3	3	3.4	5
52	58	59	57	56.8	3	3	2	4	5	3.4	4
62	52	54	52	54.0	3	3	5	2	4	3.4	4
48		51	56	52.8	4	4	4	1	4	3.4	4
45	45	45	46	45.3	4	4	4	2	3	3.4	3
39	44	42		42.3	3	5	2	2	5	3.4	3
40	41	42	43	41.7	4	4	3	1	5	3.4	3
42	41	39	42	41.2	2	5	3	2	5	3.4	3
		36	34	34.7	4	4	3	3	3	3.4	2
48	51	44	52	49.7	3	4	3	2	4	3.2	4
42	40	40	42	41.0	3	3	3	3	4	3.2	3
38	40	41	42	40.5	4	4	3	2	3	3.2	3
35	35	36	39	36.5	3	3	3	3	4	3.2	3
64	63	65	62	63.2	3	4	3	1	4	3	5
64	64	60	62	62.7	3	3	3	3	3	3	5
59	58	59	57	58.0	3	3	3	3	3	3	5
53	53	50	53	52.5	3	3	3	1	5	3	4
48	49	53	49	49.5	3	3	4	2	3	3	4
52	51	44	48	49.0	3	2	3	2	4	2.8	4
43	43	48	45	44.5	4	3	3	1	3	2.8	3
52	52	49	52	51.5	1	3	3	3	3	2.6	4
43	38	42	40	40.2	3	3	3	1	3	2.6	3
62	67	65	66	65.5	4	1	1	3	2	2.2	5
60	55	53	56	55.8	2	2	2	2	3	2.2	4
40	45	42	41	42.3	2	2	2	1	3	2	3
31	31	36	32	32.2	2	1	1	1	5	2	2
61	57	58	59	58.5	3	3	1	1	1	1.8	5
31	30	33	32	31.3	2	1	1	1	1	1.2	2
52	54	58	52	53.7	1	1	1	1	1	1	4
37	40	38	38	38.5	1	1	1	1	1	1	3

In this section, I have tried to see how far the students are willing to take risks and make wise judgement when they are actually reading or writing English. The purpose of this section is to see what kind of reading and writing strategies students use when they are actively engaged in English. Risk-taking is one of the important factors in language learning and it falls under the affective factor. I have noted in the previous chapter the importance of learning grammar and its benefit in learning a language, but it is necessary to understand that being preoccupied with grammar all the time inhibits the learners from diving in and challenging new features. It is also important to feel free from the constraint of grammar and actually try to use new structures and words that have been learnt in the classroom. As there is optimal input that is emphasized by Krashen, there is optimal output. It is when we actually use new structures and test them out when we learn them and move from controlled stage to automatic stage.

In this section, I have asked students if they can cope with certain ambiguity when reading or writing English. Especially in C5, students were asked if they could cope with uncertainty on grammar, it is interesting to find out that most of the high achievers have answered favorably to this question. They have also answered that they try to guess the meaning of new words and sentences from the context before using a dictionary. From this chart, we can infer that successful learners are also wise risk-takers. On the other hand those at the lower end of the chart, although they did not tend to try to learn grammar as much as those who were successful in the previous chapter, the low achievers seemed to be concerned about individual word and grammatical niceties before they get to the meaning. They also tend to shy away from taking risks when writing and reading English.

Conclusion

I have looked at four major factors that I thought were of importance in language learning. Strong correlating was observed between successful academic performance and intrinsic motivation, favorable attitude toward the target language, cognitive strategy and risk-taking. It is interesting to find out that on motivational factors, as much as we tend to think that students are studying hard only for the exam, high achievers are not necessarily studying out of external reasons such as passing exams, they tend to study English because they like it, or because they want to express themselves in English. From this fact, as teachers, it is important to create a situation in a classroom where students can feel the actual reward in speaking English and feel confident and positive about using English. It is also important to introduce the students to authentic materials as well to promote positive students' attitude toward using English.

Concerning cognitive strategy, it was found out that successful language learners tend to utilize many strategies when learning such as trying to remember new words and grammatical structures.

From this research we can infer that successful learners try to find chances to learn English outside the classroom as well. Also awareness of grammar is found to be useful and helpful to language learners despite arguments to the contrary.

On the affective factor, I have focused on students' willingness to take risks in guessing the meaning of English sentences and new words. It has been shown that student who tend to score high on the exam tend to have a balanced approach to learning a language. Although they are aware of new grammatical structures, they tend to take the risks in trying to guess the right meaning instead of using a dictionary right away. On the other hand, low achievers tend to be overwhelmed by new words and lose the forest for the trees. From this fact, in dealing with low achieving students, it would be helpful to teach them learn learning strategies such as guessing words from the context instead of resorting to using a dictionary right away. I have chosen only a couple of learner variables that have been identified in this research but there are other factors involved in language learning. It would facilitate learning and teaching to be aware of different variables involved in the process of learning. Teachers should focus more on what is involved in the students' classroom learning for the betterment of language education.

Appendix: Questionnaire

Intrinsic Motivation

I1 I look forward to my English class.

5 4 3 2 1

I2 I want to be fluent in English.

5 4 3 2 1

I3 It is fun to read and write in English.

5 4 3 2 1

I4 Studying English is fun.

5 4 3 2 1

I5 I want to express myself in English.

5 4 3 2 1

Extrinsic Motivation

M1 Studying English will get me a good job.

5 4 3 2 1

M2 My parents will praise me when I study English.

5 4 3 2 1

M3 I can be rich if I study English.

5 4 3 2 1

M4 I can be famous if I learn to speak English.

5 4 3 2 1

M5 Speaking English is cool.

5 4 3 2 1

Attitudinal Factors

B1 I want to have an American friends.

5 4 3 2 1

B2 I want to go to America.

5 4 3 2 1

B3 I like American music and movies.

5 4 3 2 1

B4 America is an ideal country.

5 4 3 2 1

B5 I am interested in American culture.

5 4 3 2 1

Learning Strategies

D1 I try to remember many words and phrases.

5 4 3 2 1

D2 I try to understand new grammatical structures.

5 4 3 2 1

D3 I try to read English aloud.

5 4 3 2 1

D4 I try to listen to English every day.

5 4 3 2 1

D5 I write English when I learn new sentences.

5 4 3 2 1

Risk-taking

C1 I don't mind grammar too much when I read and write in English.

5 4 3 2 1

C2 When I read and write in English I try to guess the meaning of new words and phrases.

5 4 3 2 1

C3 When I read English I try to understand the meaning from the context.

5 4 3 2 1

C4 I try to guess the meaning before I use a dictionary.

5 4 3 2 1

C5 I don't mind making a few grammatical mistakes.

5 4 3 2 1

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