

[日本の多言語習得に対する意識の停滞について社会学的観点からの考察]

Research Status: RQ:

"Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition"
By Andrew Lynch, published in March 2017

Languages original purpose was for its nationhood, and "one language-one nation" ideology. As time moved forward these ideas changed. Language became a "tool", especially prior and post to the two world wars.

"Bilingualism" and "second language acquisition". Everyone believed that these two were very different yet very similar. Furthermore, research was conducted and with a lot of observing it was concluded that although "Bilingualism" and "second language" are acquired in different forms - bilingualism tends to be acquired through the mother tongue - they are both as important to the world/society. Especially in the age of globalization.

If bilingualism is more important than ever in terms of globalization, why is Japan so behind?

Hypothesis:

The strong presence of Japan's unique pop culture and entertainment industry has contributed to the country's limited social advancement in the context of globalization (while the economic engagement is strong).

EXPLANATION: Japan's vibrant pop culture is often enjoyed in its native language, creating a language barrier that can hinder the English proficiency. Music and literature, which are popular both domestically and internationally, are typically consumed in Japanese. This language barrier limits exposure to English and inhibits language learning opportunities, contributing to lower English proficiency rates.

Conclusion of Research:

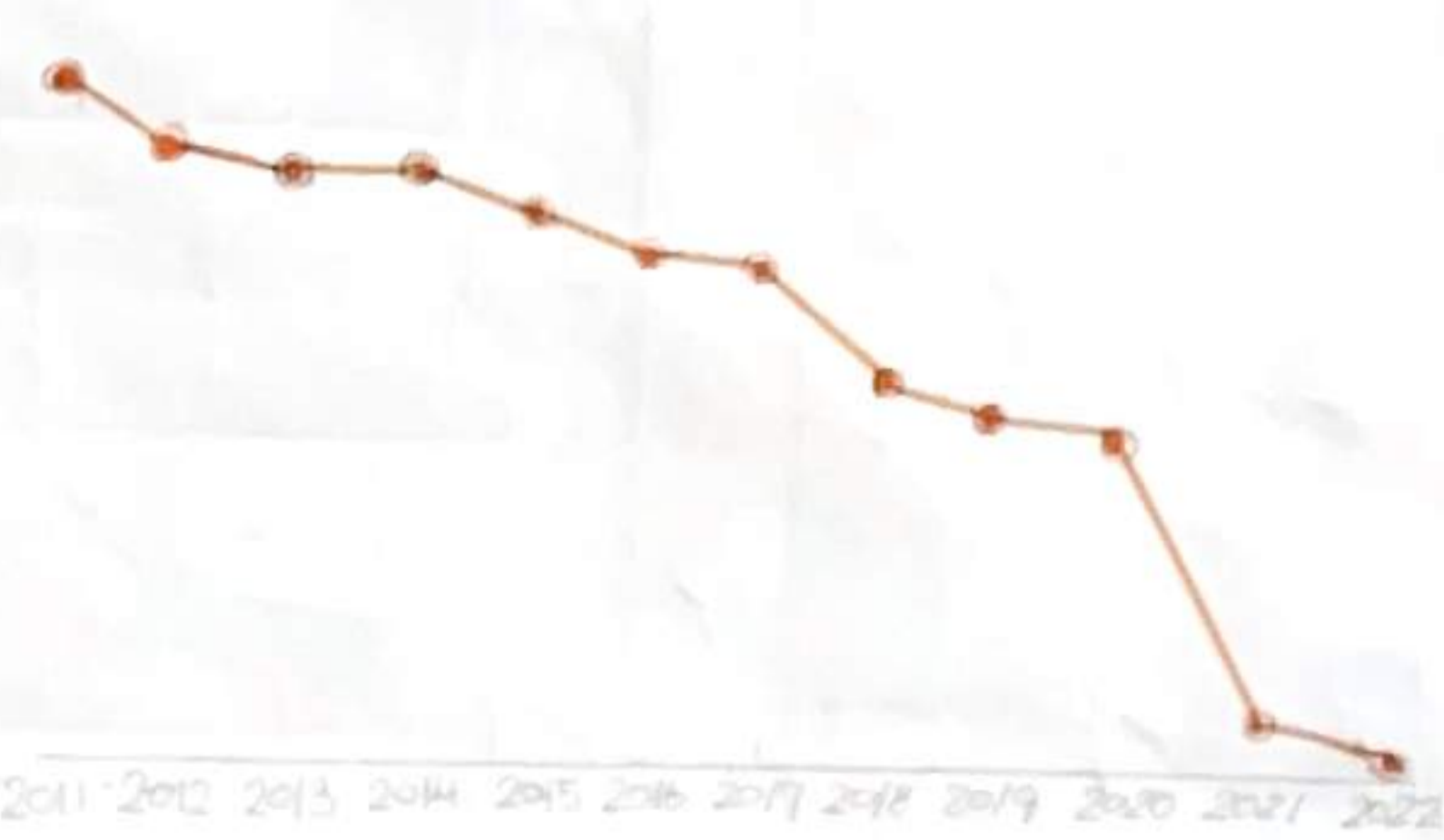
OBJECTIVE: "In the age of globalization, bilingualism will become ever more prevalent" (12). Its been six years since this article has been published. So why isn't Japan moving along with the trend? The article also states how being "bilingual" and learning a "second language" has the same amount of importance in Today's world. What's stopping Japan/ Japanese people.

SUBJECTIVE: It is surprising to see Japan not caught up with globalization: socially and politically. Knowing how outstanding Japan's economy and technology is. It is clear that there is a significant language barrier in Japan. In 2022, Japan was ranked at 80th in a survey of English Proficiency in 112 non-English speaking countries and region.

Research Purpose:

Figure out resident's exposure to English and its potential impact on low English proficiency.

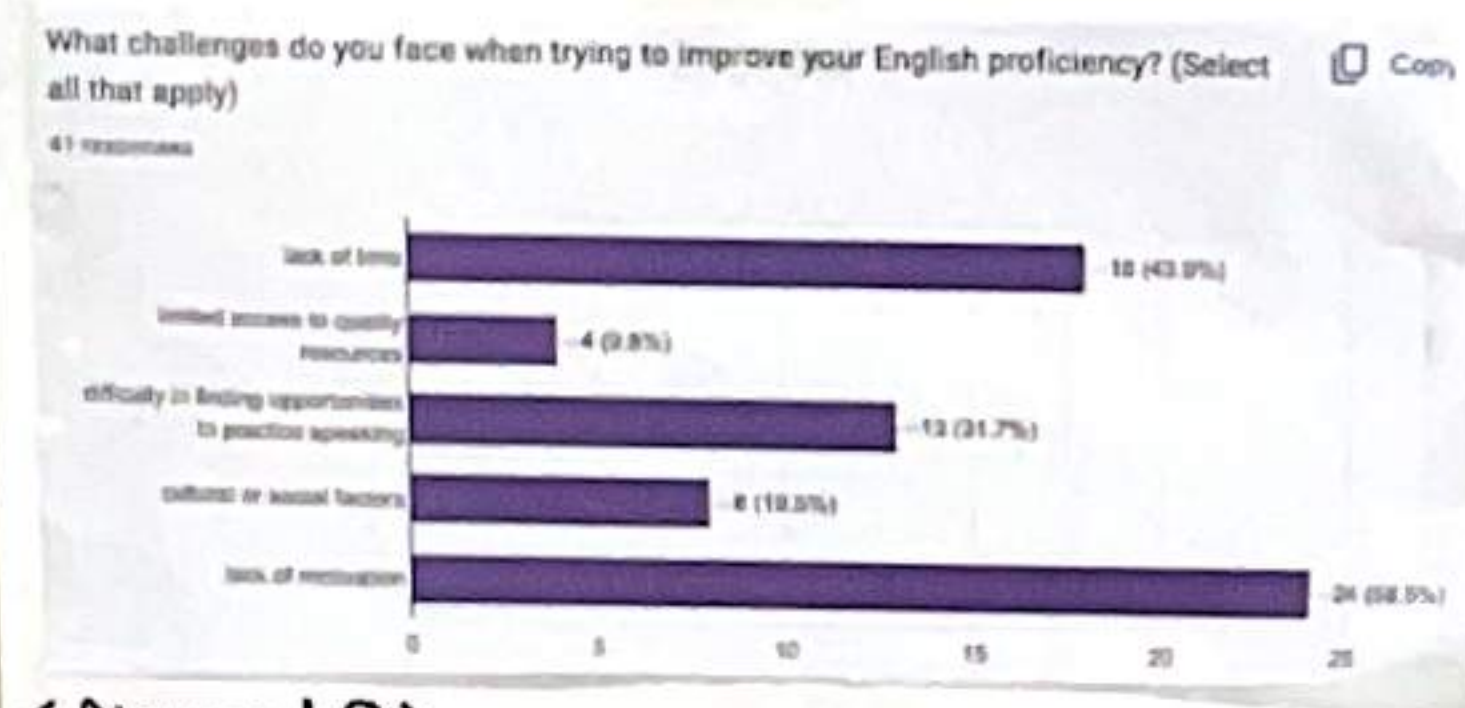
「Japan's EF English Proficiency Index Ranking」



Methodology: Conclusion:

- * Research design: Survey
- * Sampling method: Online, reaching out to peers (not random)
- 41 participants answered 19 questions
- ↳ Ages: Teens 66.4%, 20s 24%, 50s 7.2%, 60s 2.4%
- Nationality: Japanese 70.7%, Korean 2.4%, mixed: 26.9%

Result:



<figure 1.0>

- Q: Do you think there are some negative sides to learning English?
- ↳ No: 59.5%
- ↳ Yes: 40.5% (ex. lack of interest, pronunciation & accents, making mistakes, tests)

- Q: Is knowing English a necessity in Japan?
- ↳ No: 65.8% + English is a tool. Although it expands opportunity, it is not a need when living in Japan.
- ↳ Yes: 34.2%

FREE RESPONSE:

- Q: Do you believe cultural factors play a role in the low English proficiency in Japan?
- ↳ No: 25.8%
- ↳ Yes: 74.2% + Japan has own popculture, can have a comfortable life without speaking a word of English, need more interest in the world, education, etc.

- Q: What steps can be taken to increase English exposure in Japan?
- ↳ - have more interest
- ↳ - more opportunities from a young age
- ↳ - less focus on grammar, more focused on speaking and listening
- ↳ - better and more equal education (make international schools cheaper)

Given that roughly 60% of the participants were bilingual, the results were unexpected. I assumed that many people struggled with finding opportunities to practice speaking. Results stated otherwise; roughly 60% of the participants answered how one of the challenges they face was the lack of motivation. 45% of them also answered how their lack of time interferes with their improvement in English.

What also was surprising and intriguing is how many participants who voted "yes" to having negative effects from learning English were monolingual. Within those who voted "yes", some reasons included the fear of making mistakes, struggling with pronunciation, and more.

Knowing how 60% of the participants were bilingual, I expected the next question to be in favor of my opinion/hypothesis. 65.8% voted no. But, once I read through the reasons I acknowledged their choices. People wrote how knowing English was not a necessity but it's a great tool and can offer one so much more.

The free response area was where we could explore different ideas and opinions. The first question, "Do you believe culture has a role in the low English proficiency?", had many answers that were in my favor and supported my hypothesis. It supported my claim how that in Japan, there is everything one needs, thus, no need to learn another language. Along with the next question where I asked for suggestions and some solutions, many participants said that the root of this issue is Japan's popculture. Having more interest: currently we lack interest in other cultures since Japan has such a large entertainment industry/culture.

- ★ Hidden Biases in my research
 - 60% were bilingual
 - 30% were mixed
 - Sampling Bias: I had my peers answer the survey (not random)
 - Double-Barreled Questions: Some questions had multiple topics.
- Thus, if there had been more monolingual participants, the data would have been more accurate and useful.

Summary: 私の本研究で日本の多言語習得に対する意識の停滞に対してアンケート調査を元に考察した。その結果、英語に対するモチベーションが不足していることがわかった。それは日本のポップカルチャーが充実していることや、日本の翻訳技術の高さにより外国のツールを日本語で理解することが出来ることが挙げられる。従って、日本で生活する上で英語を学ぶ必要性が不足していると考えられる。

- References: "Bilingualism and Second Language Acquisition" Andrew Lynch
hippon.com, 「日本人に相応しい英語教育」