【Articles】

Curricular Impacts on Learner Motivation: Listening to Japanese University EFL Students

学習者のモチベーションに与えるカリキュラムの影響：日本の大学の英語学習者の声を聞く

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Abstract

This article explores how a university EFL (English as a foreign language) curriculum in Japan influences language learner motivation by listening to learners' voices. The research aimed at (1) understanding students' perceptions of the university EFL curriculum, (2) examining the relationship between students' motivation and the university EFL curriculum, and (3) transforming the university EFL curriculum to promote language learner motivation. From the perspective of an insider who understands certain cultural practices and routines at the research site, I interviewed 22 students in the Japanese university where I have been teaching. Interviews were conducted from August 2018 through July 2019, and follow-up

communications via the Line app continued until May 2020. The students' narratives were examined from Ushioda's (2009) person-in-context relational view of motivation. Drawing on analysis of narrative, three themes were emerged: pedagogical approaches, course contents, and modes of instruction. The findings showed that most of the participants preferred to a communicative approach, content-based courses, instructors' L2 instruction, and group work activities. However, a few of them felt more comfortable about the grammar translation and instructors' L1 use, liked test-driven development courses, and viewed group work as anxiety. Students' diverse needs and interests and individual difference led to the complex relationship between learner motivation and the university EFL curriculum. These findings can give useful guidance to develop the university EFL curriculum. Curriculum developers and researchers need to listen to learner voices and integrate their voices into the curriculum, and view curriculum development as a participatory project.

Keywords: *learner motivation, curriculum development, Japanese university EFL contexts, qualitative research*

Introduction

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) in Japan annually releases official curriculum guidelines for EFL (English as a foreign language) education in elementary schools and junior and senior high schools. For these educational levels, the official government curricula are often top-down and hierarchical. However, university EFL curricula have been flexible and have largely rested on each university (Takeda, 2009). Therefore, tenured English faculty in Japanese universities play a key role in curriculum development in settings where they work.

In Japan, where L2 users are distant from native English-speaking environments, learners generally have little engagement with English and view English as one subject in the school system and as one subject of university entrance examinations. In such an environment, university students often lose motivation to learn English after they enter universities (Kikuchi, 2015; Falout, 2012). Therefore, EFL instructors and researchers in Japanese universities have increasingly focused on learner motivation, engagement, and participation, which enriches the studies of L2 (second language) motivation of Japanese university students (e.g., Kikuchi, 2015; Irie, 2003; MacWhinnie & Mitchell, 2017; Mori & Gobel, 2006; Ryan, 2009; Yamashiro & McLaughlin, 2001).

As a response to these situations, curriculum development and learner motivation have come to be seen as inseparable when tenured English faculty in Japanese universities transform the curriculum. Several curricularists have argued that learners' voices should be listened to, taken into account, and ingrained in the curriculum (Bovill, Cook-Sather, & Felten, 2011; Brooman, Darwent, & Pimor, 2015; Campbell, Beasley, Eland, & Rumpus,

2007; Ngussa & Makewa, 2014; Seale, 2009). Curriculum development can be a bottom-up, participatory project in which learners have a say about their own curriculum and have the agency to transform the curriculum in which they are inherently part of. However, in the field of TESOL there are very few studies of bottom-up curriculum development in which learners' voices are involved (e.g., Banegas, 2019; Elisha-Primo, Sandler, Goldfrad, Ferenz, & Perpignan, 2010; Kikuchi, 2009). As a response to this lacuna, I as a key faculty of an EFL program at a Japanese university felt the need to better understand how students perceive the university's EFL curriculum, how the university EFL curriculum affects leaners' language motivation, and what the university EFL program can offer students to promote their motivation of learning English. By listening to learners, the bottom-up curriculum might be developed.

Because I valued students' voices in this study, I interviewed 22 students in the university where I have been teaching. Narrative data were examined from "a person-in-context relational view" of motivation (Ushioda, 2009). My aims are to understand students' perceptions of university EFL curriculum, to explore the relationship between students' learner motivation and the university EFL curriculum, and to change the university EFL curriculum to promote learner motivation and engagement. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the studies of the synergy and dynamics between language learner motivation and a university EFL curriculum in Japan. It also helps improve the design of bottom-up curricula by listening to students' voices.

A Person-in-Context Relational View of Motivation

Several TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) researchers view language learners as complex social beings and emergent and ever-changing agents, and examine the relationship between language learners and sociocultural, sociohistorical, and sociopolitical contexts (Atkinson, 2019; Block, 2003; Dörnyei, MacIntyre, & Henry, 2014; Pavlenko, 2002; Ushioda, 2009). Ushioda (2009) asserted the importance of understanding L2 learners as real people, and as people who are located in multiple micro- and macro-contexts. She summarized a person-in-context relational view of motivation as follows:

> I mean a focus on real persons, rather than on learners as theoretical abstractions; a focus on the agency of the individual person as a thinking, feeling human being, with an identity, a personality, a unique history and background, a person with goals, motives and intentions; a focus on the interaction between this self-reflective intentional agent, and the fluid and complex system of social relations, activities, experiences and multiple micro- and macro-contexts in which the person is embedded, moves, and is inherently part of. (p. 220)

She stressed the synergy and dynamics between language learner motivation and the con-

texts that drive them to do something. Aligning with Ushioda's "person-in-context" view, curriculum developers must view learners as real people and understand that curricula influence learner motivation. Learners might have something to say about their own curriculum and can be the agency to transform the curriculum in which they are part of. Curriculum developers must listen to their voices and integrate their voices into the language curriculum. Curriculum development should be regarded as a bottom-up, participatory project in which learners are involved.

One seminal study exploring the complex relationship between language learner motivation and ESL courses within a community of practice framework is Norton's 2014 paper, which expanded on her previous study (Norton, 2000). Norton focused on immigrant women learners in Canada and examined the non-participation of learners in ESL courses. She found that the learners decreased their motivation of learning English and discontinued participating in the ESL courses because of a disjuncture between learners' expectations and the course goals. While the learners wanted to develop English as a social practice including how to get along in everyday life, finding jobs, and accessing resources in Canadian society, traditional ESL courses offered them only a focus on language form, including grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Norton contended that a gap between learners' expectations of language learning and formal ESL courses led learners to a risk of non-participation in language courses.

In Japan, Miyahara (2015) examined how an English-medium university setting influenced learner motivation and identity construction by using the theoretical framework of the L2 motivational self system (Dörnyei, 2009). Her qualitative study discovered that four out of six students were positively influenced by the university learning environment and strengthened their ideal L2 selves, although two students did not develop their possible L2 future selves and had no personal attachment to English because of their personal interests outside the university. Miyahara concluded that a bilingual and multicultural university setting was one factor that raised learner motivation of learning English and developed their ideal L2 identity. Kikuchi (2015) similarly investigated the relationship between Japanese university learners' motivation and learning contexts that the learners are embedded. Although his main focus was learner demotivation, he found that university EFL course contents, the teacher's instruction and personality, the chemistry between teacher and student, and relationships between classmates influenced learner motivation and demotivation. He suggested that a suitable and stimulating environment would surely lead learners to remain motivated to study English.

Thus, these researchers interviewed learners, examined the relationships between language learners' motivation and the learning contexts, and discovered that the learning contexts influenced learners' motivation, engagement, identity, and participation. In this line of research, qualitative research is suitable for examining my participants' perceptions of the

university EFL curriculum and, more broadly, learning English in Japanese universities and exploring the complex relationship between their language motivation and the university EFL curriculum. A person-in-context relational view of motivation is a useful analytical approach to examine how the university EFL curriculum including pedagogical approaches, course contents, and modes of instruction influences my participants' language motivation.

Research Questions

The aim of this study is to better understand how students perceive the university EFL curriculum and subsequently to apply these understandings to curricular transformation. The following research questions were identified to achieve this aim:

1. How did the students perceive their university's EFL curriculum including pedagogical approaches, course contents, and modes of instruction?
2. How did the university EFL curriculum influence students' language motivation?
3. What and how did they want to learn in their university EFL courses?

Method

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection included interviews and communications via the Line app. 22 students in the university where I have been teaching participated in this study. Interviews were conducted from August 2018 through July 2019 and Line app communications continued until May 2020. These interviews were semi-structured, held in the students' first language, Japanese, and typically lasted between 30 minutes and one hour (Merriam, 2009; K. Richards; 2009). Exchanges via the Line app were used for follow-up questions and extended questions. Broadly, the interviews and follow-up Line app communications explored (1) the participants' perceptions of the university's EFL curriculum, (2) the relationship between students' language motivation and the university's EFL curriculum, and (3) what they really want to learn in their university's EFL courses. Students were encouraged to talk about their university English curriculum, courses, classes, modes of instruction, textbooks and other materials, and wider aspects of their motivations to learn English. Additional data collected were taken from syllabi, course textbooks, and my research journals.

To find thematic elements, the interviews were transcribed and coded for exchanges that were felt to be pertinent to the research questions (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). I examined the data set and generated a list of preliminary categories, while looking to identify recurring patterns and salient themes. Following iterative readings of the data set, I combined, delineated, and refined categories. I did the iterative and cyclical process of analysis until axial categories emerged, which led to the following themes: pedagogical approaches,

course contents, and modes of instruction.

The Context

The students were drawn from the business department at a large private university located in Tokyo, Japan. All students at the university were taking two 90-minute compulsory EFL courses in their first year and two in their second. The first-year students were required to take English 1, a course focused on English grammar and writing skills, and English 2, which focused on English speaking and listening skills. The second-year students had to take English 3 to focus on English reading skills and English 4 for improving their TOEIC test score. The students were streamed using the TOEIC-IP (Test of English for International Communication-Institutional Program) into five levels: A, B, C, D, and E. Most student scores fell within levels C and D in proficiency (an average of 310 points out of 990 on the TOEIC-IP).

Although all instructors were required to use an assigned textbook for each proficiency level of each course, they had flexibility to use the assigned textbooks as they saw fit, within the parameters outlined by the full-time faculty. Instructors could choose which units were most appropriate for their particular classes as the course progresses, rather than predetermining which units they cover before class begins. They were encouraged to supplement the textbook with their own materials as they deemed appropriate.

The rates of students who failed English 3 and 4 (the second-year courses) were considerably high (see Table 1). This critical incident urged me to reflect on the causes behind these rates and to transform the curriculum.

Table 1 *Percentage of Students Who Failed Each Course*

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
English 1 (Grammar & Writing)	7.8	6.3	5.7	7.2	5.4
English 2 (Speaking & Listening)	8.0	5.8	5.7	4.8	6.1
English 3 (Reading)	11.7	10.1	10.7	8.3	9.4
English 4 (TOEIC Preparation)	10.7	10.2	8.1	8.0	9.2

Participants

For this study, 22 students of the university participated. Because this study focused on the overall university EFL curriculum, I recruited students who had completed all four required English courses. Ten out of the participants were students that I had taught English 1 when they were 1st year students. Others were students whom my former students introduced me to. I provided all participants with a written form of agreement, in order to make

sure that they understand the objective of the interview. I also confirmed with them that their interview data were to be used only for my research.

The participants were composed of five 4th-year students (2 male, 3 female), twelve 3rd-year students (7 male, 5 female), and five 2nd-year students (2 male, 3 female). Their English proficiency ranged from 250 to 870 on the TOEIC. Also, their English learning experiences were varied; three of them had experienced 6 to 12 months in study abroad programs in English-speaking countries during their undergraduate program, five students had participated in short-term (e.g., three to six weeks) study-abroad programs during their undergraduate studies or during their junior/senior high school days, and others had not experienced study abroad programs or traveled to foreign countries. While seven of them had studied English in English conversation schools or cram schools when they were elementary school pupils, others had started to study English in junior high school per the education ministry's requirement. Like a majority of Japanese university students, my participants spent a lot of time studying reading, grammar, and translation, and memorizing a large quantity of vocabulary in preparation for the demanding Japanese university entrance examinations.

Researcher Positioning

To investigate and interpret learners' narratives, I employed subjective principles of research. The status of insider helps gain access to an interview and the insightful understanding of an interview (de Fina, 2011; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Also, such an insider status enables researchers to better understand the complexity and subtlety of the narratives being told and to be a qualified interpreter of those narratives (Okada, 2009; Kumazawa, 2011). As a key faculty member I entered the field and adopted an emic position in this study. As a tenured professor in Japan, I have been teaching EFL courses and developing curricula for an EFL program in the university for 15 years. I was able to access course syllabi, textbooks, and other resources. I have also come to understand the particularities of the university context and student characteristics through observation, participation, professional discussion, university questionnaires, and faculty meetings. Such a thorough knowledge has helped me conduct the research more smoothly.

Findings

Pedagogical Approaches: Grammar Translation Method vs. Communicative Approach

Eleven students expressed discontent with English 3 (Reading) taught via the grammar translation method while two students were satisfied with the grammar translation method even though they felt that it was boring. The other nine students were taught the course in a

communicative approach by native English-speaking instructors and Japanese speaking instructors. The students who experienced the course instructed via the old-fashioned grammar translation method noted that this way of teaching was pointless and ineffective. One student commented that the course did not help improve her English reading skills but that she went along with this way of instruction in order to get course credits.

> English 3 was just translating sentences in the textbook from English to Japanese. Some of the same sentences appeared on the test. So if we could translate them well, we could get credits. I acquired nothing much. For me, the course meant just to pass it and get the course credits. (Student R.Y, Female, Interview, 19 July 2019, translated by author)

Another student made a similar comment as follows:

> English 3 was translating texts and the test was memorization. In the end, I wondered what the university wanted students to do? The course was meaningless. I didn't feel that I could improve my English ability. (Student M.O, Female, Interview, 07 June 2019, translated by author)

The other student also noted that many of the classmates including herself used translation applications running on mobile devices so that they seemed less engaged in the class (Student N.O, Female, Interview, 05 June 2019). Thus, students were discontented with English 3 instructed using the grammar translation method and even wondered what the university curriculum wanted them to acquire. It led to students' demotivation of English learning and disengagement of the class.

I continued to ask students what they wanted to learn and how they wanted to learn English in the university's EFL program. Although all of them stressed English communication skills as a goal, what they concretely meant by English communication skills varied. One student expressed her preference for learning about daily conversation.

> I am not motivated to learn English for finding a job. Of course, I understand English is important to find a job, but I want to be able to speak English when I travel abroad. I like traveling to foreign countries very much. Although I understand English grammar is important, I want to learn about easier communication and daily conversation, which raises my motivation of learning English. Instead of learning lots of English grammar, I want to learn more useful expressions and be able to speak English. (Student M.O, Female, Interview, 07 June 2019, translated by author)

I continued to ask her if she wanted to learn about English presentation skills, but she did not. She wanted to develop conversation skills such as traveling and shopping through oral activities, as opposed to grammar drills and reading activities.

The other student who experienced three weeks in Germany doing volunteer work stressed the improvement of interactive English communication skills.

> It was very new and enjoyable for me to learn what and how foreign people think through talking with them in English. Although I had thought that foreign young people were different from Japanese young people, they were not. However, it is meaningful for me to know these things through interactions with them. (Student R.Y, Male, Interview, 12 Oct 2018, translated by the author)

He stressed that exchanging ideas and opinions in English was important because he wanted to communicate with other people in different countries and understand their ways of thinking. Therefore, he wanted to improve interactive communication skills involving expressing himself and exchanging ideas and opinions in English.

While many of the students wanted to improve communicative abilities in the target language, a few wanted to develop more advanced skills including presentation skills. Although the students who wanted to learn about English presentations were very few, one student made an honest and interesting comment.

> Author: What did you want to learn in your English courses? Did you have any preferences?
> T.M: Well, it doesn't mean that I really wanted to do…, but speaking in front of everyone in English would be a good task.
> Author: You mean, English presentation?
> T.M: Yes. If I were required to give an English speech in front of everyone, I would pay more attention to pronunciation. That kind of task seems to be appropriate for the university level, as we haven't done it in high school. I think of it as meaningful. I might complain about it if English presentation were a task as one of classroom activities. But we students would do it if it were compulsory. I think it would be meaningful and useful for students.
> (Student T.M, Male, Interview, 05 July 2019, translated by author)

The student's account explained that having opportunities to give speeches and presentations in English, whether as an individual or in a group, would be meaningful and rewarding for university students even if students expressed some kind of hesitation toward the task.

Thus, students preferred the communicative approach that develops communicative abilities, rather than the grammar translation method. Even though students did not use the specific terms such as "a communicative approach" and "a communicative language teaching approach," they liked to acquire English communicative abilities by interactions with one another and the instructor and with more advanced oral skills.

Course Contents: Test-Driven Development Courses vs. Content-Based Courses

As curriculum developers of the university, key faculty (including myself) had originally thought that a high TOEIC score would benefit students, particularly in their employment opportunities in Japan. Therefore, we offered the compulsory course "English 4: TOEIC

Preparation" to our students, which we assumed would motivate students to learn English. However, the considerable high rate of students who failed English 4 showed that students seemed not to enjoy the course and were not motivated to study for the TOEIC tests. Students' narratives evidenced this. Nineteen students out of 22 commented that they did not like English 4 and were bored with it. One student said, "English 4 was just to do exercises in the TOEIC-style textbook and to practice the tests. It wasn't enjoyable at all." (Student A.O, Female, Interview, 07 June 2019, translated by author). Not only she but also other students made similar comments. Studying English for tests made them feel uninterested and unremunerated. Another student was critical of the test-driven development course. He put it this way:

> I don't like studying English for tests, job hunting, or university entrance exams. As we come to like English and study English, the score of TOEIC will improve. Therefore, English learning shouldn't aim to raise the score of TOEIC. The test score will improve if we are interested in and like English. (Student A.O, Male, Interview, 12 June 2019, translated by author)

This student was very skeptical about English learning being directed at tests and job hunting. He thought that students should learn English for their interests, general education, and personal growth.

Furthermore, several students commented that instead of studying the TOEIC test, they wanted to learn about different cultures and values and to broaden their perspectives through English courses. One student explained:

> For example, I would like to talk about Chinese culture, British culture, etc. and similarities between Japan and other countries, in English. I like broadening my perspectives more than getting 600 points on the TOEIC test. (Student S.Y, Female, Interview, 18 September 2018, translated by author)

These students were more interested in content-based courses in which they were able to broaden their perspectives, learn about the importance of diversity, and change their own values. In this sense, the test-driven development course did not appeal to many of the students.

On the other hand, three students thought that "English 4: TOEIC Preparation" was appropriate for them because they were business majored students. They believed that a "good" TOEIC score would help find a prospective job. One student excitedly talked about the improvement of the TOEIC score (Student M.S, Female, Interview, 07 June 2019). As students were required to take TOEIC-IP tests in April of the 1st year, December of the 1st year, and December of the 2nd year, they were able to see their improvement of English proficiency by looking at the scores of the TOEIC tests. The improvement of the TOEIC score would give her a sense of accomplishment. Even though other two students did not raise the score of the TOEIC test, they liked that the course provided a clear target and purpose of

raising the score of the TOEIC test. They appreciated the course by commenting that they would not study English if the university did not offer the course. Thus, some students preferred to learn English with clear targets and purposes, rather than ambiguous targets such as learning about diversity, broadening students' perspectives, and personal growth.

Modes of Instruction: L2 Instruction and Group Work

Other issues emerged from students' narratives are modes of instruction, in particular, L2 instruction and group work. In relation to the development of English communicative abilities, eighteen students out of 22 saw instructors' use of English in class as positively. In particular, they regarded ideally those Japanese instructors who used English in the classroom as L2 role models. Three reasons why students liked L2 instruction were explained by students' accounts. First, students paid more attention to lessons taught in English than in Japanese. As one student stated:

> I liked instructors who speak English. I was getting used to listening to English and got into the habit. Also, when the class was implemented in English, I had to carefully listen to what the instructor said and to understand the instruction. I concentrated on lessons and was motivated to learn. (Student T.M, Male, follow-up line communication, 07 May 2020, translated by author)

Other students also commented that Japanese EFL instructors' L2 talk compelled students to concentrate on the class and class activities.

Second, students noted that opportunities to use the target language increased when instructors use English. One student pointed out that she improved not only her listening ability but also her speaking ability because of the instructor's L2 talk. She also learned more natural pronunciation, not *katakana* English.

> I liked instructors who speak English. I've learned native-like pronunciation which differs from *katakana* English. I think I would improve my speaking skills by asking questions in English. When I didn't understand what an instructor said, I asked questions in English during the class. I think it positively affected my motivation to learn English. Above all, I increased opportunities to speak English by asking questions in English to the instructor. (Student R.F, Female, follow-up line communication, 07 May 2020, translated by author)

Thus, EFL instructors' L2 talk increased opportunities for interactions between teacher and student in English and affected students' motivation to learn English.

Third, Japanese instructors' L2 talk triggered the development of the ideal L2 self among students. This was evidenced by the following student's narrative:

> I liked instructors who speak English. One of the reasons is that I'm used to English classrooms where teachers speak English because my high school English teachers used English in class. Another reason is I think Japanese instructors who

> speak English are cool. When they speak English, I would like to imitate them. I would like to speak English like them. So, I think university instructors should teach English in English. (Student R.S, Male, follow-up line communication, 07 May 2020, translated by author)

For students, Japanese EFL instructors who use English in the classroom appear as ideal L2 role models. As a response to these students' accounts, courses instructed in English had a great influence on students and motivated students to participate and engage in classroom activities.

On the other hand, four students noted that they did not like instructors who often use English. The main reason given was that they were unable to understand what was going on in the classroom or to follow teachers' L2 instructions because of their limited English proficiency. One student expressed her anxiety aroused by instructors' talking in English as follows:

> I preferred instructors who didn't use English in the classroom a lot. I often didn't understand what an instructor said and what was going on in the classroom. I was afraid that only I might not understand when other students seemed to understand. (Student Y.K, Female, follow-up line communication, 11 May 2020, translated by author)

Other students also commented that they would not understand what instructors were saying and would feel demotivated to learn English if instructors used only English. This kind of anxiety might decrease learner motivation of English learning and engagement in the class.

Another mode of instruction that raised students' motivation and engagement was instruction using group work activities. Nineteen students out of 22 reported that they liked group work activities. They also noted that group work developed a sense of collaboration, promoted learner responsibility, and offered a receptive atmosphere. Additionally, one student commented:

> I liked group work. I could do English output during class. Group work affected my motivation to learn English. For example, as group work was assigned at the end of the class, I tried to concentrate on the input (what an instructor said) and was motivated to listen to the class seriously. (Student S.Y, Female, follow-up line communication, 13 May 2020, translated by author)

For her, group work helped her understand the importance of input and made her pay more attention to what the instructor was saying and explaining. She also appreciated the opportunity of creating output through group work activities.

On the other hand, out of those, five students critically analyzed the limitations of group work even while they enjoyed group work activities. They also reported that they often used Japanese (L1) in group work activities because it was embarrassing to speak English (L2) with other Japanese students. As a result, they often used Japanese to complete assignments.

> I liked group work, but we often chatted in Japanese during group work. I don't think group work improved my English ability. Although group work was the best way to build good friendships, it didn't lead to improvement of English proficiency. (Student R.S, Male, follow-up line communication, 07 May 2020, translated by author)

Like him, other students were doubtful if group work activities would improve their English ability.

As I noted earlier, three students seemed not to prefer group work. They preferred to work alone and were too reticent to make a group with classmates. For them group work activities did not affect their motivation to learn English, and it instead made them frustrated.

> Honestly, I didn't like group work. (As I was unable to find group members,) I remained until the last every time and made a group with students who remained. Therefore, it did not affect my motivation to learn English. Rather, it was stressful. (Student I.A, Male, Follow-up line communication, 11 May 2020, translated by author)

This student also said that he was too shy to find group members in the classroom and was unfamiliar with learning in groups. He did not develop a sense of collaboration or solidarity at all. Moreover, stressful situations made him feel demotivated to participate in the class.

To sum up, while the preference of L2 instruction relied on students' English proficiency, the engagement of group work attributed to learners' individual preferences and personalities. These findings reminded us that in the process of curriculum development it is important to collect information about a demographic profile of the students including their English proficient levels, learning styles, and attitudes and motivation toward learning English (see J. C. Richards, 2001).

Discussion

In examining the first and second research questions—how students perceived their university's EFL curriculum and how the curriculum influenced their language motivation—, I found that pedagogical approaches influenced learner motivation. My participants who were taught by the grammar translation method were very displeased with English 3 (Reading Course) because of the pedagogical approach. The grammar translation method made students feel demotivated to learn English and less engaged with class activities. This was in line with the finding of Kikuchi's (2009) study. Also, many of the students in my study were displeased with the test-driven development course (English 4, TOEIC Preparation). They felt bored and uninterested with the course. For particularly limited English proficient students, studying English for TOEIC tests made them feel unremunerated. The gaps between learners' wants and curriculum developers' expectations were uncovered. It might be too

early to conclude that students' discontent of English 3 and English 4 causes a high percentage of the students who failed English 3 and English 4. There might be other factors in which the students failed English 3 and English 4. However, students' narratives regarding English 3 and English 4 cannot be ignored. The English reading course often instructed by the grammar translation method and the test-driven development course led to students' demotivation and disengagement. As a result, the risk of non-participation would likely increase (see Norton, 2014). Students' disengagement and non-participation are serious issues to consider when we develop a curriculum.

Furthermore, modes of instruction including L2 instruction and group work influenced my participants' motivation, engagement, and participation. The instructor's use of English, whether instructors were native English speakers or L2 users, positively affected learner motivation and engagement. In particular, my participants looked at Japanese instructors who use English in their classroom as ideal L2 role models and developed ideal L2 selves (Dörnyei, 2009; Miyahara, 2015). However, several students expressed anxiety aroused by instructors' talking in English because they were unable to understand teachers' L2 instruction. As for group work activities, while many students viewed group work as an enjoyable activity, a few students felt anxiety about group work activities. These negative feelings led to students' disengagement and non-participation. The complex relationships among learner motivation, pedagogical approaches, course contents, and modes of instruction influenced active (or less active) engagement of classroom activities and led to positive participation (or a risk of non-participation) in classes (see Kikuchi, 2009; Norton, 2014).

As for the third question of what and how students wanted to learn in their university's EFL courses, the finding showed that there seemed to be a divide between students who preferred courses focused on development of communicative language skills and students who preferred courses that develop sociocultural knowledge. For students, communicative language skills included daily conversation and communication skills for traveling and shopping. On the other hand, sociocultural knowledge implied learning about different cultures, beliefs, and values, and enriching their own perspectives and minds. This reminds me of the debate over whether EFL instructors should teach "Cultural English" or "Practical English" in Japanese universities, a topic which became very heated in the 1970s (Hiraizumi & Watanabe, 1975). Also, in the ESL context, two decades ago there was a well-known debate between Benesch (1996, 2001) and Santos (2001) over whether sociopolitical and sociocultural issues should be used in American ESL courses. Both of these debates have remained unresolved in the TESOL field. Perhaps a curriculum that addresses both purposes would best serve our students. For curriculum developers, it is important to convert from either/or to both/and thinking. Teaching about a variety of topics including sociopolitical and sociocultural issues in a communicative approach, that is, content and language integrated learning (CLIL) might be one possible approach to motivate students (Doiz, Lasagabaster, & Sierra,

2014). Aside from the debate, subject matters and contents to learn are related to learners' wants and interests, and consequently would influence their motivation, engagement, and participation of learning English (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004). Therefore, it is important for curriculum developers to analyze learner's needs and interests and take into consideration subject matters and contents provided in classes.

Overall, the findings will give useful guidance to develop a university EFL curriculum. Curriculum developers of university EFL programs must rigorously analyze and understand students' personalities, needs and interests, attitudes and motivation toward English learning, and English abilities in their particular contexts. As many curriculum researchers noted, needs analysis is important in developing and transforming the curriculum (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004; J. C. Richards, 2001). On the other hand, the finding made it clear that a curriculum cannot meet every single student's needs and interests. In this study, even though there were a few, some students expressed their preferences of a grammar translation method, test-driven development courses, L1 instruction, and individual work. To take into consideration these minority students' voices, test-focused courses may better be offered as electives of the EFL program. Curriculum developers as well as key faculty of the university also need to provide the faculty development program for in-service instructors with the information about the students' personalities, needs and interests, and English abilities to make in-service instructors understand the students. Faculty development programs for in-service instructors should be included as one of the roles of curriculum developers.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. First, the data consisted of interviews and follow-up communications via the Line app. Because this study was primarily concerned with students' perceptions of the university EFL curriculum through their discourse, observations of actual classroom practice were not conducted. As Maxwell (2005) stated, although interviewing is an efficient way to understand participants' perspectives, observations enable researchers to understand their actual views that they directly stated in interviews. Classroom observation should be conducted for future research. The second limitation is that this study was limited to a single campus, and therefore the resources were limited in this particular study. However, one aim of this study was to examine students' perceptions of the university EFL curriculum and to gather detailed information about their motivations, opinions, and attitudes toward the curriculum to transform this particular university's curriculum. Despite these limitations, however, this study showed varied relationships between students' language motivation and the university EFL curriculum including pedagogical approaches, course contents, and modes of instruction by exploring students' narratives about the university EFL curriculum and English learning. This project offered potentially useful information

for this student population.

Concluding Remarks

In 2020, the curriculum examined in this study was extensively changed in the university. The prime concern of key faculty, including myself, was how to reinvigorate English 3 (Reading) and English 4 (TOEIC Preparation) because quite a high percentage of the students failed English 3 and 4 and also in this study students expressed discontent with and disengagement from English 3 and English 4. In our discussions over curriculum reform, we included students' opinions and argued the knowledge and skills we would like our students to acquire, their motivation, engagement and participation, and the university's expectations. It was concluded that we would like to educate them as global businesspersons with critical thinking abilities and culturally tolerant minds. Therefore, our new courses have been designed to focus on content alongside language form. The course focused on English reading was transformed to "Current Business Topics," which now focuses on contemporary business content, synthesizing content and language, with a development of communication and presentation skills. The course focused on TOEIC preparation has been changed to "Global and Cultural Topics," which now focuses on critical engagement with issues related to globalization and intercultural relations, synthesis of content and language, and development of informal and formal writing expression.

In addition, to determine the level most suitable for students to begin coursework, the placement tests were changed from tests based on two skills to tests based on four skills. Students were placed in the courses based on the scores of listening and speaking sections and the courses based on the scores of reading and writing sections. The university is able to place each student in the correct course level.

Future research—both quantitative and qualitative—should examine how students perceive the new EFL curriculum of the university, and more specifically whether the new curriculum has increased learner motivation, engagement, and participation. Future investigations might analyze the relationship between learners' wants and intentions of curriculum developers. To make a better curriculum, the gaps between learners' wants and intentions of curriculum developers should be reduced. Under the situation where tenured English faculty in Japanese universities play a key role in curriculum development, tenured English professors are mediators between curriculum and students.

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Disclosure Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest associated with this manuscript.

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要旨

本論文は、学習者の声を聞くことによって、日本の大学英語（外国語としての英語）カリキュラムがいかに学習者のモチベーションに影響を与えるかを探究したものである。研究の目的は以下の通りである。(1) 学生は大学英語カリキュラムをどのように思っているのかを理解すること、(2) 学生のモチベーションと大学英語カリキュラムの関係性を探究すること、(3) 学習者のモチベーションを高めるために大学英語カリキュラムを改革すること。研究サイトの文化的習慣や慣習を理解するインサイダーの視点から、筆者は筆者自身が教える大学において 22 人の学生にインタビューを行った。インタビュー調査は 2018 年 8 月から 2019 年 7 月まで行われ、2020 年 5 月まで Line によるフォローアップ調査が行われた。ウシオダ (2009) の「個人と環境の複雑な関係性が与えるモチベーション理論」を使って、学生のナラティヴを分析した。ナラティヴの分析を通して、3 つの主要テーマ ー教育的アプローチ、コースの内容、教授方法ーが浮かび上がった。被験者の多くがコミュニカティヴ・アプローチ、内容重視のコース、教師の英語による指導、グループワークの

使用を好んでいることがわかった。しかし、数名の学生は従来型の訳読教授法や教師の日本語による指導に居心地の良さを感じ、資格試験中心の授業を好み、グループワークが負担だと感じていた。このような結果は、学生の多様なニーズや興味、個人の差異は学習者のモチベーションと大学英語カリキュラムの間の複雑な関係性を表出している。一方、この結果は大学英語カリキュラムを向上させる上で有益なガイダンスともなる。カリキュラム開発者や研究者は学習者の声を聞き、彼・彼女らの声をカリキュラムに反映させる必要があり、かつ、参加型プロジェクトとしてカリキュラム改革を考える必要がある。