

**Culture clash in the Japanese EFL classroom:
A study of tolerance of ambiguity in second language acquisition**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine second language acquisition from an intercultural perspective. Research was conducted by administering a Japanese version of the Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale (Ely, 1995) to 128 students taking English as a foreign language. The data were analyzed to determine if a general trend was present in the learning style of these students and, furthermore, to examine the possible implications for tolerance of ambiguity in the foreign language classroom. The cognitive variable of ambiguity tolerance (AT) was chosen for this study after a review of the intercultural communication literature revealed an inherent paradox regarding AT when Japan is defined as a high-context collectivist society that is also high in uncertainty avoidance. The research was conducted in Japanese university foreign language classrooms to ensure that AT could be studied in a learning environment where students were trying to communicate as well as confront uncertainty. Current research has not been able to determine a preferred learning style for the Japanese, which may be due to the reluctance of Japanese students to express frank opinions on a survey. Therefore, one of the major aims of this study was to develop a culturally sensitive assessment tool that substituted pictorial symbols salient in Japanese society for the response words, "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree", and "strongly disagree". The resulting data show that Japanese students, as members of a high-context, collectivist society, are tolerant of ambiguity when English is experienced as an indirect communication style. However, once English becomes a direct form of communication, as when writing or speaking, students' attitudes reflect the characteristics of a high uncertainty avoidance culture and they become intolerant of ambiguity. The study also suggests a relationship between travel to an English speaking country and a higher TOA in the areas of reading, writing, and listening. However, this did not hold true for speaking. Cognitive awareness of TOA could enhance second language acquisition and result in the development of

language strategy instruction. Additional research on TOA is also recommended to further understand the paradox of ambiguity tolerance as experienced by the Japanese learner.

INTRODUCTION

As teachers begin to consider the implications of culture in the second language classroom, they are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of learning styles. As Hyland (1994) states, "learning style, then, is where culture and education overlap" (p. 56). This can be seen not only in the multicultural English as a second language (ESL) classroom, where students bring different learning styles nurtured in their respective countries, but also in the homogeneous English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. An EFL student will project her/his own learning style on the study of English and may or may not be successful using that approach.

To date, current research has found that Japanese students, as a group, do not show any major learning style preference (Call, 1995; Hyland, 1994; Reid, 1987, Stebbins, 1995). Reid (1987) speculates that this is due to cultural differences in the way Japanese experience language learning as opposed to students in a Western classroom. Nevertheless, it is significant that all other cultures in the research do show a major learning style preference and it is only in Japan that research has been inconclusive.

Japanese research has tried to explain the uniqueness of the Japanese learning style. Brown (1991) cites the work of Tsunoda and his followers who claim that due to the unique left- and right- brain functioning of the Japanese, they are unable to master the English language (p. 61). This view may be rather extreme and while a major preference for learning style has not been found in Japan, there are general characteristics cited in the research. In particular, Condon (1984) in a study of Japanese kindergartens found that the Japanese learner was field dependent, reflective, and used modeling as a major learning strategy.

The Japanese learner brings this preference to the EFL classroom. A report by Bedell and Oxford (1996) on junior high school students in their third year of English states that

the most frequent strategies involved reading or writing new words repeatedly and using a dictionary. Least frequent were using actions, pictures, or objects to learn words and learning groups of related words.

Social strategies were not popular. In practicing words, students preferred written to spoken modes in both input and output. (p. 51)
This type of learning behavior would be expected of a Japanese learner who is employing modeling as a learning style preference.

Ambiguity tolerance (AT) as a predictor of second language proficiency

In a study of high school students learning French by Naiman, Frohlick, and Stern (1975), it was found that “those students who have a high intolerance of ambiguity may have a great deal of difficulty dealing with the amount of ambiguity present in the second language classroom, and therefore may drop the subject as soon as possible” (p. 259). Ironically, had these students continued their language study, they may have found success in the later stages of language learning. This is due to the need for balance in AT.

Brown (1980) cites that successful language learning results from a tolerance of ambiguity, “at least for interim periods or stages, during which time ambiguous items are given a chance to become resolved. On the other hand, too much tolerance of ambiguity can have a detrimental effect” (p. 95). In the early stages of learning a language, ambiguity must be tolerated to a large extent in order to learn basic sentence patterns and vocabulary. Later, less ambiguity should be tolerated, as the more advanced learner must self-check for errors in the second language. Ely (1995) states, “the ideal case, of course, is that of the learner who is neither inhibited by low tolerance of ambiguity nor oblivious to linguistic subtleties” (p. 93).

In their study of foreign ESL students in the United States, Chapelle and Roberts (1986) found that AT was a significant predictor of performance on the TOEFL as “students with higher levels of AT had an advantage in acquisition of English structure and listening comprehension” (p. 43). A specific scale to measure tolerance of ambiguity in second language acquisition was developed by Ely (1989) and subsequent research showed a direct relationship between AT and language learning. Students with a lower tolerance for ambiguity were found to be deficient in three major language learning areas: 1) learning individual linguistic elements; 2) practicing language learning skills; and 3) adopting those skills as permanent strategies (Ely, 1995, p. 88). Based on these studies, AT clearly serves as a variable that can determine second language proficiency.

Incorporating an intercultural communication framework

In the intercultural communication research, Japan has been established as a collectivist society with a high uncertainty avoidance level (Hofstede, 1980). In a comparison of Hall's (1976) low-and high-context cultures with data collected by Hofstede (1980, 1983) all of the cultures classified by Hall as low-context are individualistic, and all high-context cultures are considered to be collectivist. Thus, Japan is seen as a high-context collectivist culture.

However an interesting paradox results in the area of ambiguity tolerance: a high-context, collectivist society prefers ambiguity (as seen in its indirect communication style) and yet a high uncertainty avoidance culture should reject ambiguity. As defined by Gudykunst (1994):

the greater the uncertainty avoidance in a culture, the more individuals within the culture experience anxiety when communicating. Consistent with this prediction, Japanese and Koreans report higher levels of social anxiety than North Americans (Gudykunst, Yang, & Nishida, 1987)... Recognizing that Japanese and Koreans report higher levels of communication apprehension than North Americans should not be interpreted as implying that communication apprehension is a problem in Japan or Korea. In fact, the opposite is true: it is valued. (p. 75)

It would appear that while the Japanese EFL student may feel anxiety due to the speaking of a foreign language, this anxiety is actually valued in her/his own culture and thus would not lead to the anxiety reducing response of language strategy use.

The Japanese EFL classroom provides a context where both communication and uncertainty avoidance are present. It provides an environment where AT as a cognitive variable can be studied through the process of acquiring a second language. In addition, as no major learning preference has yet been established for the Japanese learner, a study of AT will suggest implications for future study while also providing a worthwhile contribution in the field of intercultural communication.

METHODOLOGY

Previous research has not been done on tolerance of ambiguity in second

language acquisition in Japan. Therefore, this exploratory descriptive study was “more concerned with describing the extent of occurrence of a phenomenon than with studying its correlates” (Bailey, 1994, p. 379).

Framework for the study

Special attention for this study was given to creating a survey that would be culturally sensitive to the Japanese EFL learner. It was assumed that a Japanese EFL student would have a lower English ability level as compared to an ESL student in America. Therefore, in order to ensure student comprehension of the survey questions and establish validity, the survey was conducted in Japanese.

In addition, one of the major issues addressed in formulating the survey was to create a culturally appropriate survey for a Japanese respondent. Stebbins' (1995) research on perceptual learning style preferences in Japan found that “Japanese students responding to the survey in both 1984 and 1992 showed no strong preferences for any mode, which perhaps indicates an unwillingness to express personal opinions rather than a lack of preferences” (p. 111). This same phenomenon, observed by Eliason (1995), found that simply translating an instrument did not take into account “concepts that had no practical equivalent in Japanese classroom experience” (p. 24). Therefore, the utmost care was devoted to creating a survey that would allow students to express their true opinions without reservations.

This was accomplished by using pictorial symbols familiar to the students rather than printed words in the responses requiring statements of personal opinion. The exact symbols used were: ☉ for strongly agree, ○ for agree, △ for disagree, and × for strongly disagree. These symbols are salient in Japanese culture and are used not only for televised quiz show responses but also academic report cards. During the pre-test, no subjects requested assistance in answering any of the questions requiring a pictorial response and many students selected both strongly agree and strongly disagree responses. Therefore, the symbols were included in the final survey.

Finally, Ellis (1986) argues, “one of the major problems of investigating both personality and cognitive style is the lack of testing instruments that can reliably measure different types”(p. 12). For this reason, research was conducted by incorporating an established scale for measuring tolerance of ambiguity in second language acquisition (Ely, 1995). The scale had also

previously been translated into Korean and the designer was well aware of issues that could cause problems in the translation procedures. The finalized Japanese version of the scale was completed with much consultation and advice from the designer. After extensive back and forward translations, permission was received to use the scale for this study.

Thus, the framework for the study was to use a culturally appropriate survey of an established instrument translated into the native language of the students. It was hoped that by using such an approach, Claxton and Murrell's (1987) demand for "instruments that take cultural differences into account" (p. 3) would be met and that collected data would thus be more representative of the true feelings of the students. In addition, the data would result in establishing if a clear preference for tolerance of ambiguity in second language acquisition exists for Japanese learners in the EFL classroom environment.

Subjects

The survey was administered to a total of 128 students in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences of a national university in northern Japan. Four separate English classes were selected in which to administer the survey.

Required English classes were selected so that there would be a cross sample of students responding to the survey. If the students were a select population, such as English majors, the data collected would not reflect the general tendency of Japanese students. For the purpose of this survey, neither a student's major field of study or class year was considered as variables. To verify that the sample was diversified, a list of the students' major field of study and class year was requested from the instructor of each class. The first class had 43 sophomores from various departments such as technology, agriculture, elementary education, and secondary education. A second class had 43 sophomores who were all either elementary or secondary education majors. The remaining two classes had a combined total of 42 freshmen from various departments such as technology, literature, law and economics, environmental science, and intercultural understanding.

It was assumed that a possible variable that could affect the responses of the students would be the nationality of the instructor. Therefore, the same native Japanese instructor taught two of the selected classes, entitled General

English. The same native speaker of English taught the remaining two classes, entitled English Communication. Both of these instructors were male.

The General English classes were larger in number than the English Communication classes. Also, due to the fact that one of these classes consisted only of education majors, the sample was divided into three near equal groups. The first group, the General English class comprising 43 sophomores from a variety of majors and taught by a Japanese instructor was referred to as JMIK; the second General English class with 43 sophomores all majoring in education and taught by the Japanese instructor was referred to as JEDU; and the two English Communication classes were combined for a total of 42 freshmen representing a variety of majors and taught by the same native speaker of English and referred to as NSMIK.

As gender has been shown to be a variable in communication research, it was hoped to achieve an equal number of male and female students for the sample. Although the final number was not equal, the ratio reflected the actual participants in the English classes. There were a total of 60 male and 68 female students.

Materials

The method of collecting data was a survey, written in Japanese, and divided into two main parts. The first part requested demographic information such as gender, number of years studying English, exposure to English instruction from a native speaker of English, amount of English instruction outside of formal schooling (i.e., cram schools, English conversational schools, etc.) and experience in travelling or study in a foreign country. These categories were pre-determined as variables, since research on Japanese ESL students in America suggests that students with low AT tend to spend more time studying English (Chapelle, 1983). Thus, the demographic information included questions on both overseas experience and amount and method of English study outside of the required English classroom experience.

The second part of the survey consisted of Ely's (1995) second language tolerance of ambiguity scale. The scale consists of 12 questions, each with one of four possible responses. For example, one of the questions reads: "It bothers me that I don't understand everything the teacher says in English". The four possible responses are SA (strongly agree); A (agree); D (disagree) and SD

(strongly disagree). Scores are calculated by the following point scale: SA=4, A=3, D=2 and SD=1 and then the resulting total score is placed at a point between 12 and 48. Due to the use of negative statements in the questions, a score of 48 would represent a low tolerance of ambiguity and a score of 12 a high tolerance of ambiguity in second language acquisition. The only alteration to the format of the original scale was the use of pictorial symbols in place of the words strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Procedure

Two series of pre-tests were conducted prior to administering the scale. All pre-test subjects were from the Faculty of Education, English department, and were not included in the final sample. The first pre-test used the original English version of the scale, followed by in-depth interviews conducted in Japanese. Eleven students volunteered to participate in the pre-test, and interviews were conducted by appointment. It was apparent from the results of this pre-test that the students' English ability was not sufficient to complete the scale in its original English format. A further result of this pre-test suggested a relationship between experience abroad and TOA (Sakamoto, 2001).

The second pre-test was conducted upon completion of the Japanese version of the scale. Students were given the survey in class, and after the administration of the scale, responses were discussed. It was confirmed that the pictorial symbols were clearly understood by the students at that time. The results of the second pre-test also showed that the survey was now ready to be used on a larger population.

The survey was then distributed to the actual sample of students identified as subjects. Any exchange student or student with prior exposure to the survey was requested not to take part in the study. The survey was administered during regularly scheduled classroom time. Permission to attend each of the four classes to administer the survey was granted and any questions from the subjects were answered at that time. As student attendance is highest in the first three weeks of class, the scale was administered during the second class of the second semester, in October of 2000. Students were informed at that time as to the purpose of the study and guaranteed anonymity in the reporting of the findings.

Analysis

The data analysis centered mainly on the responses from the second part of the survey, which contained the tolerance of ambiguity in second language acquisition scale. The total score was tabulated for each participant and the data were then analyzed by total sample, gender and the three sample groups identified as JMX, JEDU and NSMX.

A frequency distribution was also performed to determine the percentage of students who responded strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree for each of the original twelve questions in the scale. The tabulated data illustrated both the success of using the pictorial symbols as well as the specific learning situations in which a Japanese student experienced the highest or lowest tolerance of ambiguity.

In the following discussion of the results, possible relationships between the frequency distribution and specific data collected will be analyzed. The results of this study may thus provide both students and teachers with a better understanding of how the average Japanese student responds to EFL instruction.

RESULTS

General findings from the TOA scale

The tolerance of ambiguity in second language acquisition scale spans from 12 points, which represents a high tolerance of ambiguity, to 48 points, which represents a low tolerance of ambiguity. The average score of the total sample was 30.7 with a median score of 31.0. The score with the highest number of respondents was 34 ($n=12$). A line graph comparing the score distribution by group is presented in Figure 1. The scores in the three sub-groups were also analyzed as to gender and the results are presented in Figure 2. All of the scores were very close to the median of 31 except for the male respondents in the NSMX group who had an average score of 28.4.

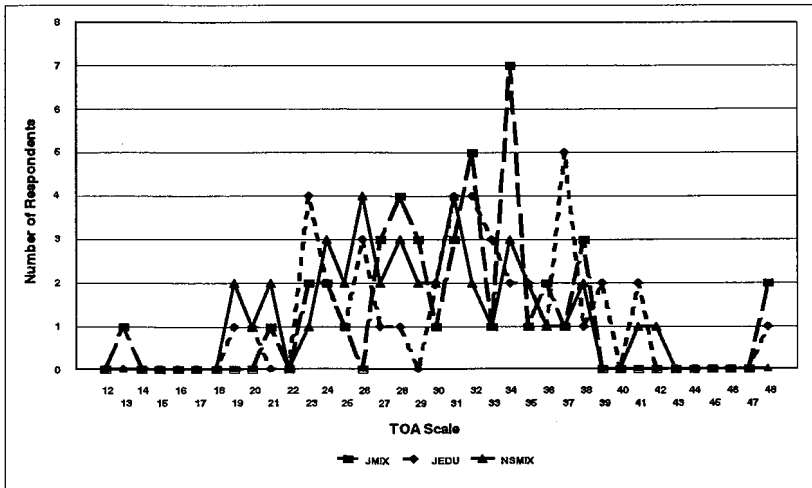


Figure 1. Sample groups TOA score distribution.

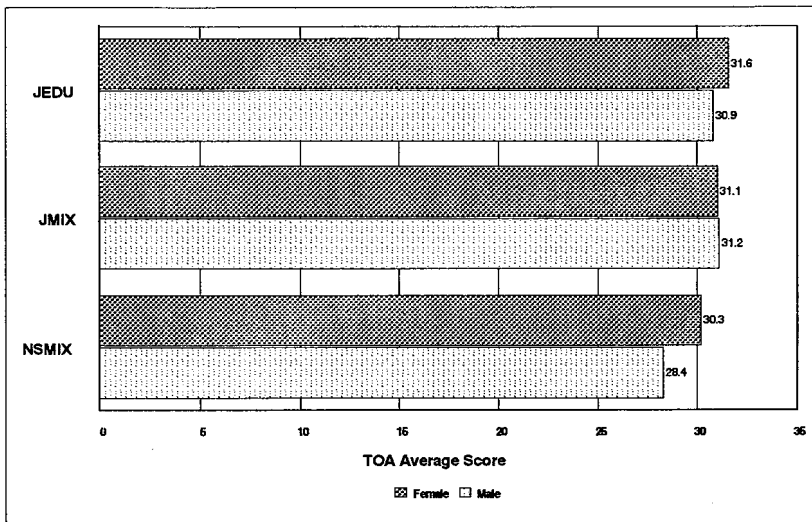


Figure 2. TOA score by class female and male.

DISCUSSION

The tolerance of ambiguity scale questions were further analyzed to determine at what times students felt the most tolerant or intolerant of ambiguity in second language acquisition. Of the twelve questions, five produced 70% or more of the students responding in a like manner. The

remaining seven questions did not show such a strong tendency to either agree or disagree. Therefore, the five questions showing a strong preference for either agreement as in Questions 3, 8 and 10, or disagreement as in Questions 9 and 12, were then further analyzed through the incorporation of the demographic data.

Student attitudes on writing

Both Questions 3 and 8 refer to the students' tolerance of ambiguity while writing in English. Question 3 showed the highest percentage of students responding strongly agree at 28% and agree at 48% for a total of 76%. Question 3 reads "When I write English compositions, I don't like it when I can't express my ideas exactly". Question 8 also centers on writing and reads, "When I'm writing in English, I don't like the fact that I can't say exactly what I want". For this question 24% responded strongly agree and 46% responded agree for a total of 70%. Thus the data shows that students feel the most intolerant of ambiguity when writing in English.

The data were then further analyzed incorporating the demographic data. Student responses were examined taking into account additional English instruction outside of the required EFL classroom experience and travel to an English speaking country. The data show that regardless of additional English instruction, students feel the most intolerant of ambiguity while writing English compositions. Figure 3 shows that 77% of students with additional English instruction as well as 74.1% of students without additional English instruction tended to be more intolerant of ambiguity while writing.

The percentages are not as similar for students who have visited an English speaking country. Only 62.9% of the students who had been abroad responded in the affirmative in comparison to 80.6% of the students who had never been to an English speaking country. It would appear that having been to an English speaking country had an effect on the students' tolerance for ambiguity when that ambiguity was encountered in a writing context.

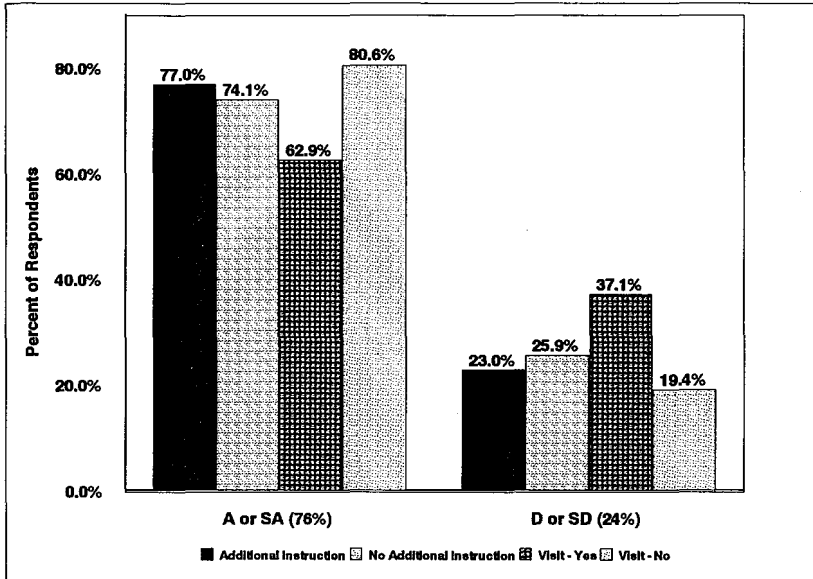


Figure 3. Total student responses to Question No. 3.

The percentage of students responding in the affirmative for Question 8 was also similar to the responses for Question 3 in regards to additional English exposure. Figure 4 illustrates the same pattern as found in the responses for Question 3. Additional English instruction did not seem as large a factor as having been to an English speaking country. Although the percentages were not as high as those reported in Question 3, the pattern remains the same. Students who had never been to an English speaking country were more likely to respond strongly agree or agree than those who had been abroad. The responses to Questions 3 and 8 show that students feel the least intolerant of ambiguity when writing in English. Furthermore, a relationship between travel to an English speaking country and an increase in ambiguity tolerance when writing may exist.

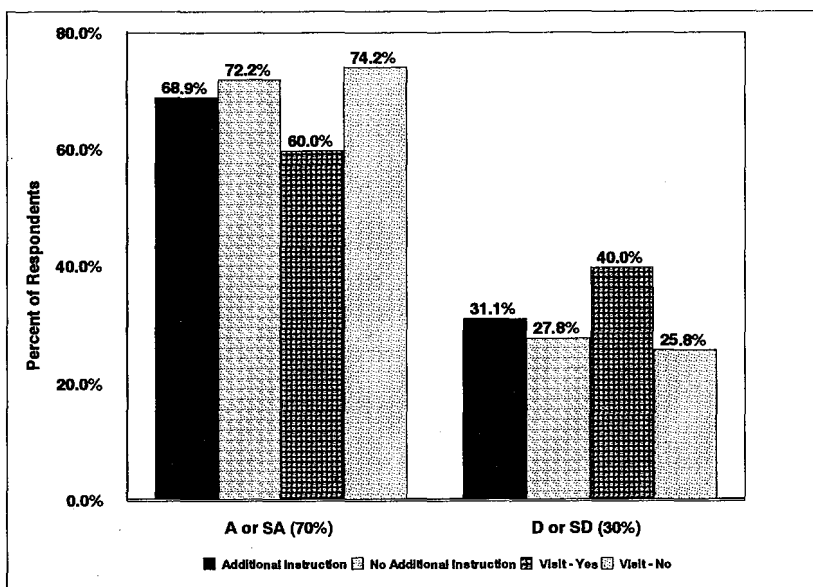


Figure 4. Total student responses to Question No. 8.

Student attitudes on speaking

Students also feel intolerant of ambiguity when speaking. However, the data show a very different preference in regards to speaking and additional exposure to English. The responses are the exact opposite of the pattern found in Questions 3 and 8. Students who have had no additional English exposure tend to be slightly more tolerant of ambiguity in speaking than those who have had additional English instruction. Furthermore, students who have never been to an English speaking country also tend to be more tolerant of ambiguity in speaking than those students who have been abroad. Figure 5 gives the actual percentages of the student responses.

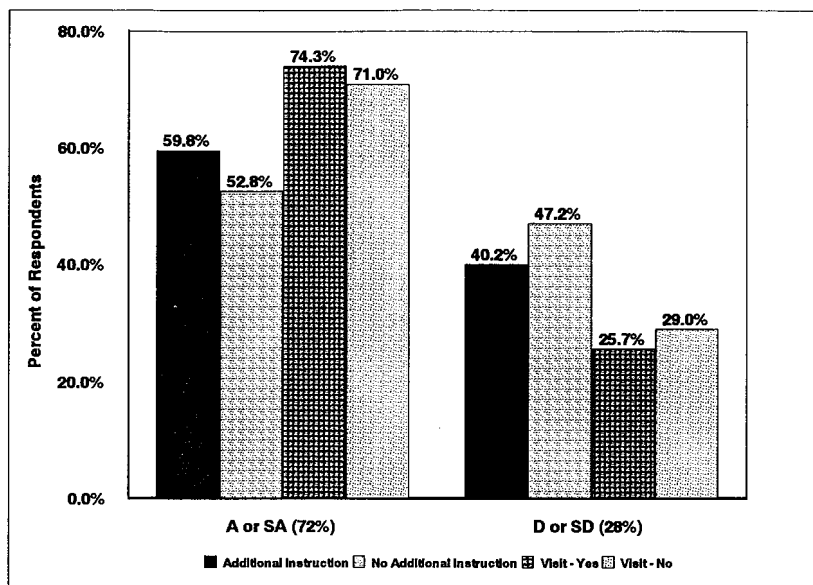


Figure 5. Total student responses to Question No. 10.

Thus, students who have had more exposure to English through either additional instruction or travel to an English speaking country also are more intolerant of ambiguity in speaking.

Student attitudes on listening and reading

Questions 9 and 12 produced the highest responses for strongly disagree and disagree. Question 9 had the highest percent of students to disagree with 30% responding strongly disagree and 44% responding disagree for a total of 74%. Question 12 had 70% of the respondents select strongly disagree or disagree and had the highest percent of strongly disagree respondents at 40%. Furthermore, students with additional English exposure either through additional instruction or visiting an English speaking country were slightly more tolerant of ambiguity in listening. Figure 6 shows the additional English exposure data for Question 9.

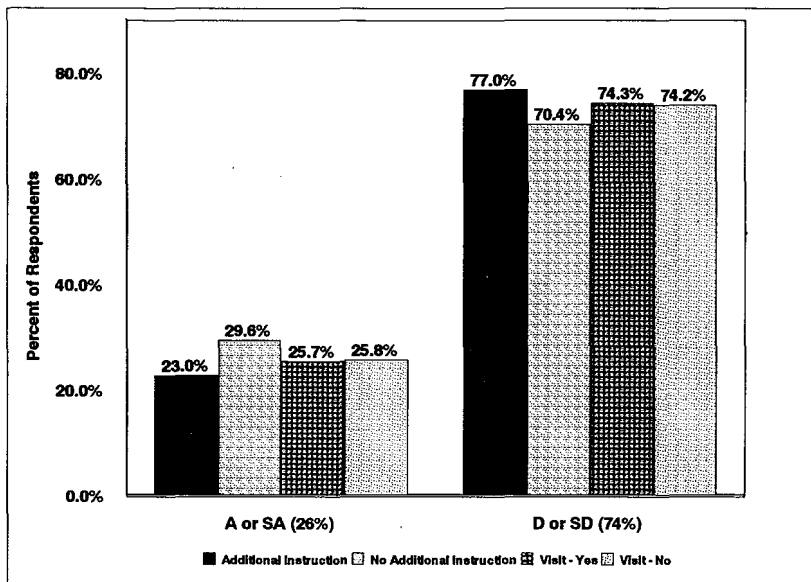


Figure 6. Total student responses to Question No. 9.

In regards to Question 12, the data once again suggests a relationship between tolerance of ambiguity and having visited an English speaking country as seen in Question 8. While there was a slight tendency for students who had additional English instruction to be less tolerant of ambiguity in reading, the students who had been to an English speaking country were the most tolerant of ambiguity with 80% of the students in disagreement with Question 12. Figure 7 shows the data for additional exposure to English.

Students who have visited an English speaking country will have been exposed to a social context in which they were partially illiterate. This exposure may result in a higher tolerance of ambiguity in reading as represented in the data analysis for Question 12.

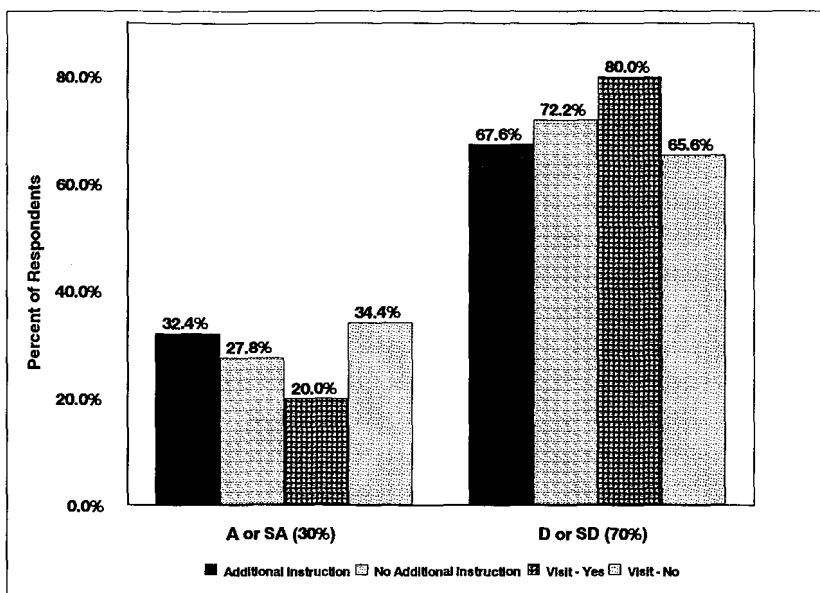


Figure 7. Total student responses to Question No. 12.

Further data analysis of student responses

The data also show that one third of the students who shared the majority opinion for all five questions analyzed had exposure to a native English speaker (NES) for more than twice the average of the total sample population. Amongst this group of 33 students, one third ($n=11$) had a native English instructor for over four years, which is twice as long as the average for the entire sample population. In fact, seven had a native instructor for six years, and another student for seven years. Of the remaining students, one had a native instructor for five years and the other two for four years. Nevertheless, these eleven students had the highest overall TOA score of any sample studied (score=33). It would appear that extended exposure to a native English-speaking instructor might result in a lower tolerance for ambiguity in second language acquisition.

Why do these students have such a low tolerance for ambiguity when speaking or writing in English, despite six or seven years of instruction from an NES instructor? Possible explanations for this phenomena as well as further discussion on the overall EFL classroom experience are further

addressed in the following section.

DISCUSSION

The culture clash in the EFL classroom

The data revealed that the majority of Japanese EFL students placed at the optimum level of ambiguity tolerance for second language acquisition. A closer analysis of the data, however, showed that even those students at the median of the scale were highly intolerant of ambiguity when speaking and writing. Students were most realistic in reading and listening expectations and showed the highest TOA in these areas. Students who had been to an English speaking country may have been able to transfer that experience to the classroom environment resulting in a higher TOA in reading, listening and writing. However, there was a negative effect on TOA in speaking that also held true for students with extended exposure to an NES as an instructor.

This reflects the paradox defined regarding ambiguity in a high-context, collectivist society with a high uncertainty avoidance level. The students, as members of a high-context, collectivist society, are highly tolerant of ambiguity when English is experienced as a receptive communication style. This occurs when reading and listening. Once English becomes a productive form of communication, as when writing or especially speaking, student attitudes reflect the characteristics of a high uncertainty avoidance culture and become intolerant of ambiguity.

Furthermore, learning which takes place utilizing the skills of reading and listening synchronizes with a field-dependent, RO learning style. A culture clash develops when this cognitive framework is challenged and students are expected to use English as a direct expression of their own thoughts and opinions. Therefore, even though the majority of students are currently at the optimum level of TOA awareness, they are unable to use that knowledge to develop successful second language learning strategies. Language instruction that encourages a cognitive awareness of TOA could resolve this culture clash and result in higher language proficiency for the Japanese EFL learner.

Resolving the culture clash through cognitive awareness of TOA

Ely (1989) has found that students who have a higher TOA also are "more willing to deal with the L2 on its own terms, and concentrate on the overall message being communicated" (p. 439). In contrast, Chapelle's (1983) findings show that a student with a lower TOA "may use strategies that will not help him in acquiring the L2 particularly in a communicative context and in the early stages" (p. 28). If students could be made aware of their own TOA preference it would provide an opportunity for self-empowerment of the learner. This can easily occur through use of the Japanese version of the TOA in second language acquisition scale. Furthermore, specific situations where the student feels the most intolerant of ambiguity can be identified through looking at the question responses.

Once students are aware of TOA, learning strategies can then be introduced to aid students in reducing the ambiguity present in learning a second language. "Active learner strategies are strategies employed by students who are aware of their learning strengths and limitations to effectively cope with incompatible learning situations" (Kinsella, 1995, p. 191). If indeed the Japanese EFL classroom does not provide students with a learning situation compatible with their learning style, active learner strategies could be introduced to resolve this conflict. By the above definition, students need to be aware of their strengths and limitations before such strategies are introduced. Thus, cognitive awareness of TOA should precede strategy instruction. Such an approach would also be beneficial for students who have a very high TOA in second language learning and may not be aware of the subtleties present in learning a second language.

Implications for future research

Due to the absence of previous research on TOA in Japan, no comparisons could be made to the data collected from this study. Additionally, the research was conducted in a rural area of Japan and may or may not reflect the tendencies of students in the more urban localities of Tokyo or Osaka where there is more exposure to an English speaking community. One of the results of this study was a Japanese translation of the TOA scale which can now be used with larger and more diverse groups of students, either as a short or long term study, to see if TOA increases or decreases with EFL instruction.

The data for this study were collected through the use of a culturally sensitive survey in which pictorial symbols were used in place of written responses. This approach allowed Japanese students to respond more openly as to their true feelings. It should be noted once again that current research has not been able to identify a learning preference for Japanese. This is due to students' lack of expressing strong opinions. This finding did not hold true for the current study. Three students had the highest possible score and one student scored only one point above the lowest possible score. Students appeared to hold very strong opinions and to be able to express those opinions through the use of pictorial symbols salient in their native culture. It is questionable if the results would have been the same without the use of pictorial symbols.

Further research should be conducted on creating research methodology that takes into account a cultural awareness of the respondent. Instruments should not only be translated into the native language of the culture being studied, but other approaches in format and use of visual imagery should be studied. It will only be through the use of culturally sensitive research methodology that the true voice of the respondents will be heard.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine two important issues. First, the role of TOA in second language acquisition was studied in the Japanese university EFL classroom to determine if a general trend was present in the learning style of the students. The data did not show a clear preference for a majority of the students and a near normal distribution of TOA scores was the result. Perhaps a more significant finding was that while the majority of students did score near the mid-point of the scale, they still held very strong opinions on TOA, especially in the areas of reading, listening, writing and speaking.

The second question was to examine what the implications of TOA could be in the EFL classroom. Further analysis of the data provided in-depth discussion on the experience of the Japanese student in the EFL classroom. The result was to define a culture clash in the EFL classroom between the students' innate learning style and the mode of EFL instruction. Discussion centered on cognitive awareness of TOA in order to overcome the cultural clash in the EFL classroom. Furthermore, knowledge of TOA levels could also be used as a predictor for language proficiency and strategy instruction.

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