

**THE BELIEFS OF FIRST YEAR JAPANESE UNIVERSITY
STUDENTS TOWARDS THE LEARNING OF ENGLISH**

A Dissertation submitted by
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CERTIFICATION OF DISSERTATION

I certify that the ideas, results, analyses, and conclusions reported in this dissertation are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award, except where otherwise acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

In the field of second and foreign language learning, beliefs, as one of the affective factors, remain relatively unexplored. Failure to address unrealistic student beliefs and expectations may increase student anxiety (Truitt, 1995; Young, 1991), hinder progress, and ultimately lead to a breakdown in learning (Ellis, 1996; Horwitz, 1985, 1987, 1988; Mantle-Bromley, 1995; Peacock, 1999).

This study investigates the beliefs about language learning of first year university students in Japan, employing the Japanese language questionnaire developed by Sakui and Gaies (1999). Two student discussion groups were also formed to provide further data. In addition to describing student beliefs, the study explores differences between student beliefs and teacher beliefs, change in student beliefs during a course of study, and relationships between student beliefs and second language proficiency.

A total of 661 first year students, and 34 of their class teachers, participated in this study, at a private Japanese university, between April 2002 and January 2003. Data were analysed using Pearson correlation, Cronbach's alpha, t-tests, and a principal components factor analysis.

The students in the study appear to hold a variety of beliefs, to varying degrees. Significant differences were found between student responses and teacher responses for more than half of the questionnaire items, with the four main areas of difference relating to translation, error correction, the difficulty of language learning, and motivation. In terms of belief change, significant differences were found in student responses to almost a quarter of the questionnaire items between two administrations in April and December, 2002. Some differences were also identified between the beliefs of students based on their proficiency scores, but the results here are inconclusive.

This study contributes to the growing understanding of the role of beliefs in language learning. Further studies of other student groups, at other institutions in Japan, will enable a comparison of results to help produce a clearer picture of the beliefs and expectations about language learning of students at Japanese universities.

PREFACE

The Doctoral Dissertation is the product of a journey. It may also be considered a starting point, as it opens more doors, poses further questions, and invites further investigation. Between 1998 and 1999 I attended three international conferences in the Tokyo area. Presentations I attended at these conferences opened my eyes to the field of beliefs about the nature of language learning, and provided the inspiration for this research. The presenters who particularly stick in mind are Stephen Gaies, Anita Wenden, and Mathew Peacock.

Reading in the area of language learning beliefs revealed the influential work of Elaine Horwitz at the University of Texas in the mid-1980s. I also discovered that very little research in this area had been carried out in Japan. A research project by Sakui and Gaies, presented in 1998 and subsequently published in 1999, was the first large scale study into the field of language learner beliefs in Japan. The Sakui and Gaies study proved to be the starting point for this project. I was interested to see how their Japanese language survey instrument could be used in a single Japanese university to try to describe the language learning beliefs of the students and investigate any differences between student beliefs and teacher beliefs. At the same time, I was also exploring the area of communicative language teaching, and its application in the Japanese setting. The traditional methods of language teaching in Japan rely on analytical and receptive skills, as opposed to active use of the second language for meaningful communication.

All this coincided with my entering the Doctor of Education program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Southern Queensland in July 1999, and the commencement of this journey. Participation in a doctoral program has presented many challenges, particularly in terms of time management, and communication with other researchers and supervisors, whilst continuing full-time teaching in Japan. This journey could not have been completed without the inspiration and assistance of many.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The role of affective factors in second and foreign language learning has been the focus of much research and discussion since the 1980s. Affective factors in language learning include attitudes, motivations, anxieties, and beliefs, and are thought to play a crucial role in the language learning process (e.g. Ellis, 1994; MacIntyre, 2000; Riley, 1996; Stevick, 1999; Stern, 1983). However, among these affective factors, relatively few studies have focused on beliefs in second and foreign language learning (Wenden, 1999). Beliefs have been described as personal and subjective understandings, which individuals hold dear and which often become resistant to change (Alexander and Dochy, 1995). For many adults, beliefs are thought to play an important role in their actions and behaviours, and act as “significant forces in the process and outcomes of learning” (Alexander and Dochy, 1995, p.438).

Pioneering research was conducted into beliefs related to second and foreign language learning by Horwitz, at the University of Texas. Employing her own research instrument, the *Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory* (BALLI), Horwitz (1988) investigated the types of language learning beliefs held on a variety of issues by American university students of French, German and Spanish. Results of the study revealed that many of the students held beliefs contrary to those commonly held by language educators. The students in the study appeared to underestimate, for example, the difficulty of language learning: one third of them felt that a maximum of two years was sufficient for learning a foreign language. As for the nature of language learning, one quarter of the students perceived it as mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary items and grammar rules. More than two-thirds of two of the three groups of students believed that learning a foreign language was mostly a matter of learning how to translate from English. Horwitz (1988) concludes that language learners enter the classroom with ‘definite preconceived notions’ of how a foreign language is learned, and that certain erroneous beliefs can be an impediment to successful language learning.

Failure to address unrealistic student expectations, or inaccurate student notions of how best to learn a second or foreign language, can lead to feelings of mistrust and reluctance on the part of the students (Peacock, 1999; Richards and Lockhart, 1996), and ultimately a breakdown in learning (Ellis, 1996; Mantle-Bromley, 1995). Unrealistic student beliefs about language learning have also been cited as a key source of language learning anxiety (Young, 1991). In a review article of research into beliefs in educational research, Pajares (1992) proposes a list of fundamental assumptions concerning the nature, origins and roles of beliefs. A principal assumption is that beliefs are instrumental in defining learning tasks and selecting the cognitive tools with which to deal with them. As such, “beliefs can be the single most important construct in educational research” (p.329).

Of the studies which have followed Horwitz, very few have investigated Japanese learners of English. The only large scale systematic study of language learners' beliefs in Japan to date was conducted by Sakui and Gaies (1999), employing an instrument similar to the BALLI instrument, but one which was written in Japanese, specifically for Japanese students. Sakui and Gaies were concerned for the most part with the testing of the instrument, which was shown to have both validity and general reliability. To investigate patterns in students' responses, Sakui and Gaies also carried out a factor analysis on their questionnaire, which grouped 25 of the 45 items into four groups: beliefs about a contemporary (communicative) orientation to learning English, beliefs about a traditional orientation to learning English, beliefs about the quality and sufficiency of classroom instruction for learning English, and beliefs about foreign language aptitude and difficulty.

After attending a research presentation by Stephen Gaies in 1998, I began to ponder the role played by beliefs in the success or failure of language learning. I conducted a pilot study in 1999 on one hundred entering university students and nine teachers in Japan, employing the Sakui and Gaies instrument. The study revealed that the students held a wide range of beliefs about language learning and were not as bound in their beliefs by traditional language teaching methodologies as is often thought in Japan. Differences were apparent between student belief and teacher belief on several items, particularly concerning the perceived difficulty of the language learning task and the importance of error correction. The pilot study also allowed me to investigate issues of timing, instrument administration, and data processing, crucial to the preparation of a larger scale study.

Following further reading of the literature on language learning beliefs, a large-scale investigation was prepared for the 2002 academic year in Japan, on which this dissertation is based. English language education in Japan is currently going through a period of considerable transition. The Japanese Ministry of Education amended the national school curriculum in 1993 and 1994 in an attempt to promote the attainment of greater oral communication skills in English. In 2002, the Ministry called for more emphasis on communicative activities in school classrooms and laid out plans for communicative attainment targets from junior high school to university level (MEXT, 2003). Some schools have had more success than others in implementing these changes (Sato, 2002). Students entering university at this time, therefore, are likely to possess a mixed bag of beliefs and expectations about the nature of language learning, based on their various life and school experiences. It seems a crucial time, therefore, for all involved in English language education in Japan, to attempt to identify the beliefs and conceptions students are bringing with them into the university classroom, notions which are likely to have a strong influence on the success of continued English language learning.

This study aims to expand on the work of previous research into language learner beliefs and add to the currently minimal number of empirical investigations of Japanese university students of English. Unlike the research of Sakui and Gaies (1999), which was conducted across a range of 2-year and 4-year higher education

institutions, some of which were universities, this study was carried out within the English language program of a single private university in Tokyo, Japan, to which I had access. This allowed for a high degree of control. A total of 661 students and 34 class teachers participated in the study, which commenced at the beginning of the academic year, in April 2002. All students were entering first year students, all teachers were class teachers of students in the study, and all participants completed the questionnaires during the first week of classes. Test-retest questionnaires were administered 14 days after the first administration. The second administration of the questionnaire was completed by all participants, during the same week, in December 2002. The data in Sakui and Gaies (1999) were collected from different institutions at different times between June 1996 and April 1997.

The set objectives of this study are:

- 1) to describe the beliefs about language learning of first year entering university students in Japan, and to compare them with the findings of previous studies, particularly those of Sakui and Gaies (1999).
- 2) to compare the beliefs about language learning of this body of students with the language learning beliefs of their teachers.
- 3) to investigate change in students' beliefs about language learning over a course of English language study.
- 4) to investigate any relationship between student held beliefs and English language proficiency levels.

This study will allow for a comparison of student beliefs about language learning at other institutions, and with other student groups, in Japan. This will help to produce a clearer picture of the beliefs and expectations about language learning, which entering first year university students carry with them into the language classroom. Finding out about the language learning beliefs of these students will offer insights to assist teachers, course planners, materials writers, and administrators of English language programs in Japanese universities. In these times of change, assumptions can no longer be made about the experiences and expectations of entering university students.

At the classroom level, teachers need to become involved in analysis and discussion with students, informed by research, of how language is best learned, and the most effective approaches and strategies for students to employ in their studies. At that time, teachers can attempt to address any unrealistic and possibly counter-productive beliefs the students may hold. By raising the students' awareness of beliefs as an affective factor, we can help reduce anxiety, provide the scaffolding for more effective and efficient language learning (Reid, 1999), and better help students achieve their language learning goals.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter, I present a review of the literature related to the theme of the dissertation, language learner beliefs. The chapter begins with an investigation of the nature and roles of learner beliefs, as one of the key affective factors in language learning (e.g. Ellis, 1994; Horwitz, 1985, 1987, 1988; Mantle-Bromley, 1995; Riley, 1996; Young, 1991). The work of Horwitz in the 1980s, and the questionnaire she created, the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), are then briefly explained. The chapter continues with a look at the relationships previously examined between learner beliefs and the factors of anxiety, learning strategies, students' cultural background, students' readiness for autonomy, and learner attitude.

Relevant literature is then discussed with reference to the research questions of the study, specifically, the relationship between learner beliefs and teacher beliefs, the notion of the stability of learner beliefs over time, and the relationship between learner beliefs and learner proficiency.

There are few studies in the literature, which have attempted to improve on the Horwitz BALLI instrument. Kuntz and Rifkin developed an alternative, the Kuntz-Rifkin Instrument (KRI), and produced some significant findings (Kuntz, 1996c). Sakui and Gaies also employed their own instrument, in one of the few studies which have been conducted into language learner beliefs in Japan. This study employs the instrument developed by Sakui and Gaies in their 1999 investigation of Japanese learners' beliefs.

One of the concerns of this study is the orientation of learner beliefs, in terms of whether they may be related to a traditional approach to language learning or to a more contemporary, communicative approach to language learning. Sakui and Gaies (1999) suggest that Japanese learners are becoming more aware of alternative approaches to the traditional methodologies historically employed in Japanese high schools. The chapter, therefore, continues with an examination of English language teaching in Japan, and the reforms underway towards a more communicative approach to language learning.

Beliefs in second-language learning

Two of the questions posed in early pioneering research into the attitudes and motivations of language learners were, "What is it that allows some learners to learn languages quicker and with more ease than others?," and "What are the qualities of such good language learners?" (Gardner and Lambert, 1972). These questions, and others relating to individual differences in language learning, have

been the focus of much research over the last 30 years. Attitudes, motivations, anxieties, feelings, and beliefs are all termed affective factors in language learning, and are of crucial importance in attempting to answer these questions and accounting for individual differences in language learning outcomes (e.g. Ellis, 1994). “The affective component [in language learning] contributes at least as much and often more to language learning than the cognitive skills” (Stern, 1983, p.386). Attention to affective factors in language learning, therefore, seems critical, as they form the foundation for the development of students’ cognitive processes (MacIntyre, 2000). In addition, students’ motivations and attitudes are likely to be strongly influenced by the beliefs about language learning which the students hold (Riley, 1996).

Relatively little research has been conducted into the role of beliefs as one of the affective factors in second language learning. Beliefs in language learning involve both learners' and teachers' conceptions and expectations about the nature of the language learning process. Most studies into beliefs about language learning have been conducted since Horwitz published her first paper, in 1985, on the assessment of students', teachers', and pre-service teachers' beliefs. In the context of foreign language learning, Horwitz describes beliefs as ‘definite viewpoints’ and ‘preconceived ideas’ about how a second (or foreign) language may best be learned (Horwitz, 1985, 1987, 1988). Justification for much of the research into learner beliefs is often based on claims that students enter the language classroom with misconceptions and mistaken viewpoints about language learning, which may create problems in the classroom, and may ultimately hinder students’ progress if not corrected (e.g. Mantle-Bromley, 1995).

The nature of language learning beliefs

It has long been accepted that learners bring with them into the language-learning classroom a complex set of variables based on attitudes, experiences, and expectations. A subset of these variables forms the beliefs which learners possess about the nature of the language-learning task. Learners may believe, for example, that a second language can only be successfully learned through communication with native speakers of the second language (L2). Conversely, they may believe that language learning is fundamentally a task of memorisation, involving repeated translation from the first language (L1). Learners could also believe it is possible to attain a second language within a relatively short time period. It is possible to foresee that problems may arise if such learners face actual language learning situations which fail to conform to these beliefs. In the three example situations above, insufficient communication opportunities with L2 native speakers, a lack of L1-L2 translation, or a perception of slow progress in learning the L2, could each have a negative effect on classroom instruction and ultimately language learning outcomes.

Learner beliefs can be considered both a subset of knowledge, and as personal, subjective understandings (Wenden, 1998). In terms of information acquired about the nature of learning, beliefs could be considered a subset of learners’ metacognitive knowledge, that is, the knowledge acquired by learners,

consciously or unconsciously, about learning (Wenden, 1999). However, the subjective, tenacious nature of beliefs is what distinguishes them from metacognitive knowledge (Alexander and Dochy, 1995; Wenden, 1999). For many adults, beliefs are thought to play a greater role than knowledge in their actions and behaviours, and, as such, they can be considered “significant forces in the process and outcomes of learning” (Alexander et al., 1995, p.438). Based on their beliefs of how language operates and how it is learned, learners derive a language learning philosophy, which in turn, guides the approach that learners take to language learning and the learning strategies they choose to employ (Abraham and Vann, 1987).

The main focus of this study is language learners’ beliefs, but it is also important to consider the beliefs of the language teachers, as addressed in research question number two (*How do student held beliefs about English language learning compare with beliefs held by their teachers about English language learning?*). In a review of the literature on teacher beliefs, Pajares (1992) proposes a list of sixteen "fundamental assumptions" (p.324) concerning the nature, origins and roles of beliefs. Many of these can be applied to learner beliefs, as well as teacher beliefs. Pajares' sixteen proposed assumptions can be synthesised as follows:

1. Beliefs are formed early, through a process of cultural transmission, and tend to self-perpetuate, persevering even against contradictions caused by reason, time, schooling, or experience.
2. The earlier a belief is incorporated into the belief structure, the more difficult it is to alter. Belief change during adulthood is a relatively rare phenomenon.
3. Beliefs are instrumental in defining tasks and selecting the cognitive tools with which to interpret, plan, and make decisions regarding tasks. Beliefs strongly affect an individual’s behaviour.

The three items listed here indicate just how important attention to beliefs is in the study of second language learning. Given their apparent self-perpetuating nature, and their influence in defining learning tasks and learning strategies, beliefs could be considered “the single most important construct in educational research” (Pajares, 1992, p. 329). I will return later in this literature review to the topic of belief change, however, as certain research conducted since Pajares has indicated that certain beliefs held about language learning may actually be susceptible to change over time.

Given the importance of beliefs in the language learning process, it seems to be in the interests of all involved in language education to attend to the preconceptions, viewpoints, expectations, and the beliefs carried into the language classroom by both language learners and their teachers. From my own experience, it seems accepted practice in many classrooms that learners will be naturally receptive to the methods and intentions of the class teacher, the teaching materials, and other learners. This is what Cortazzi and Jin (1996) refer to as “taken-for-granted frameworks of expectations, attitudes, values and beliefs about what constitutes good learning” (p. 169). Beyond the language classroom, curriculum planners, materials writers, and test writers all need to be familiar with their

students' beliefs and be aware of possible student reactions to all components of the second language curriculum (Bacon and Finnemann, 1990).

If learner beliefs are consistent with accepted good learning practices, or at least the practices of the current learning setting, then the effect of the beliefs is likely to be beneficial, and the learning outcomes positive. If learners, for example, believe that repetition and practice are key to successful language learning, they will welcome the opportunities for repetition and practice which a teacher may provide in the classroom. However, if learner beliefs are not consistent with good learning practices or with the practices of the instruction, then the effect of the beliefs are likely to be negative and the learning outcome is more likely to be negative. Results of Horwitz's 1988 study revealed that many of the students did hold beliefs which are contrary to those commonly held by language educators. The students in the study appeared to underestimate, for example, the difficulty of language learning: 43% felt that a maximum of two years was a sufficient length of time for learning a foreign language. As for the nature of language learning, 34% perceived it as mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary items, and 29% saw it as mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules. More than 70% of two of the three groups of students believed that learning a foreign language was mostly a matter of learning how to translate from English. Horwitz's study indicates that some language learners do enter the classroom with "definite preconceived notions" of how a foreign language is learned, and that certain unrealistic expectations can be an impediment to successful language learning (Horwitz, 1988).

Horwitz and the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI)

Most research into student beliefs about second language learning dates from the studies of Horwitz, at the University of Texas (Horwitz, 1985, 1987, 1988). In her 1985 paper, however, Horwitz acknowledges the influence on teachers and researchers of the earlier pioneering studies of Gardner and Lambert into the relationship between student attitudes and motivation and second language acquisition (Gardner and Lambert, 1959, 1972; Gardner, 1985).

According to her 1985 paper, Horwitz was involved in language teacher training at the University of Texas, and was concerned about the preconceived ideas, or beliefs, about language learning and teaching which many of her prospective teachers seemed to possess. She suggests that preconceptions held by her students could interfere with the teaching of methodology courses in the teacher-training program, at the University of Texas, by inhibiting the students' receptiveness to the information and ideas presented. She proposed that by making these preconceptions explicit, the instructors and trainee teachers could better attend to the issues and topics raised in the teaching of these methodology courses. To make them explicit, Horwitz used an instrument she developed called the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) in an attempt to assess the beliefs with which her students were entering the classroom (Horwitz, 1985).

The BALLI instrument was developed in several stages. First, four groups of 25 language teachers from different cultural backgrounds were employed in a free-recall task to list their beliefs about language learning, other people's beliefs about language learning, and their students' beliefs about language learning. The result was a 30-item list of beliefs from the free-recall protocol. The second stage involved an examination of the 30-item list of beliefs by foreign language teacher educators from a variety of culture groups, who added more beliefs to the list. In the third stage, further beliefs were added which arose from focus group discussions conducted with groups of ESL and foreign language students. Finally, the inventory was pilot tested with 150 foreign language students and 50 ESL students at the University of Texas (Horwitz, 1987). The beliefs which form the resulting BALLI instrument were assigned to one of five "logically related groups" (p. 293): a) beliefs about foreign language aptitude, b) beliefs about the difficulty of language learning, c) beliefs about the nature of language learning, d) beliefs about learning and communication strategies, and e) beliefs about motivation, with each area consisting of four to nine items (Horwitz, 1988).

The BALLI exists in three versions: the original 34-item version for use with American foreign language students (Horwitz, 1988), a 34-item version with simplified English for ESL students (Horwitz, 1987), and a 27-item teachers' version, used by Horwitz to assess the beliefs of student teachers (Horwitz, 1985). The seven items omitted from the teachers' version apply only to learners' beliefs and are therefore inappropriate for teachers to answer. Other items on the teachers' version were modified. For example, "The language I am trying to learn..." became "The language I teach...."

A further aim of Horwitz was to sensitise teachers to the types of beliefs possibly held by their students. She believed that failure to comprehend the nature of students' beliefs and perceptions about language learning could result in a 'clash of expectations' between students and teachers, which could interfere with language learning and lead to frustration, reduced learner confidence in and satisfaction with the teacher and the class (Horwitz, 1987, 1988).

The BALLI was not specifically designed as a research tool, but as a means of making beliefs about language learning and teaching explicit, and thereby initiating discussion. It does not yield a composite score for use in statistical analysis, and in her application of the BALLI, Horwitz offers only a descriptive analysis of responses and their possible consequences. The instrument has since been used, however, as a research tool, to assess the beliefs of students and teachers about language learning in order to better understand:

1. the nature of student beliefs and the impact of these beliefs on language learning strategies.
2. why teachers choose particular teaching practices.
3. where the beliefs of language teachers and their students might be in conflict.

(Horwitz, 1987)

Horwitz's BALLI study results

Horwitz administered the teacher version of the BALLI to trainee language teachers at the University of Texas over a period of several years, and reported on the general pattern of responses (Horwitz, 1985). One pattern which developed was that many of the trainee teachers endorsed the concept of foreign language aptitude. They believed that "Some people are born with a special ability to learn a foreign language." This is of concern in the case of language teachers, as a belief that some people are less able than others to learn a foreign language could lead to negative expectations of some students on the part of the teacher (Horwitz, 1985). The trainee teachers also commonly believed that some languages are easier to learn than others, and that one hour a day of study for three to five years is adequate to learn the target language. These could also be of concern, in that teachers may too readily attribute a lack of student success, particularly in an "easier" language, to poor or unmotivated students (Horwitz, 1985).

The BALLI was then used to investigate the beliefs of 32 ESL students at the University of Texas (Horwitz, 1987). In line with the previous study, the majority of these students also endorsed the concept of foreign language aptitude, with 81% of the students either strongly agreeing or agreeing with the statement "Some people are born with a special ability to learn a foreign language." However, almost 85% of the students also agreed that everyone can learn to speak a foreign language (Horwitz, 1987).

In terms of the difficulty of language learning, 75% of the students believed that some languages are easier to learn than others, with more than 80% believing English to be at least of average difficulty. There was no consistency in responses to the amount of time required to learn a language at the hypothetical rate of one hour of study per day. Estimates varied over the entire range of options, from less than a year (16%) to such a task being impossible (19%). These responses are of concern, as students underestimating the difficulty of the task of language learning may become frustrated if they fail to make progress at the rate they expect. On the other hand, a belief that it will take ten years or more to learn the language could be a discouraging and demotivating factor for the students (Horwitz, 1987).

In terms of the nature of language learning, over half of the students believed that language learning was mostly about learning vocabulary items and grammar rules. Of concern here is that half of these students, therefore, are likely to invest the majority of their time in memorising vocabulary lists and grammar rules, possibly at the expense of other language learning activities (Horwitz, 1987).

Relating to language learning strategies, the students in this study overwhelmingly agreed (95%) in the importance of repetition and practice, and in the importance of using audio-tapes in the language classroom (75%). These are practices usually associated with a traditional approach to language learning. On the other hand, in a practice commonly associated with a more communicative approach to language learning, 65% of the students agreed that it is "o.k. to guess if you don't know a word in English." However, 38% of the students endorsed the statement "You shouldn't say anything in English until you can say it correctly", indicating that at least one-third of these students have a concern for correctness which would likely hinder participation with a communicative approach to language teaching (Horwitz, 1987).

Horwitz carried out a larger study of foreign language students at the same institution: 98 students of Spanish, 80 students of German, and 63 students of French (Horwitz, 1988). In contrast to the ESL students of the previous study, only about half of the students endorsed the notion of foreign language aptitude. However, a clear majority of students (72% to 83%, depending on language) agreed that everyone can learn to speak a foreign language (Horwitz, 1988).

In terms of the difficulty of language learning, 86% to 88% of the students believed that some languages are easier to learn than others, although there was no clear consensus on the difficulty of learning the respective target foreign languages. Responses to the question of time requirement, given the hypothetical study rate of one hour per day, were centered on the mid-range of options. Just over one-third of students indicated one-to-two years as sufficient, with the same number indicating three-to-five years as sufficient.

In terms of the nature of language learning, two of the three groups of students had strong beliefs concerning the role of translation in language learning. At least 70% of students of Spanish and German agreed with the idea that learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of translating from English. In addition, at least 25% of the students in each of the three groups believed that language learning was mostly about learning vocabulary items and grammar rules.

The students in this study also overwhelmingly endorsed the importance of repetition and practice in language learning, with 98% of each group either agreeing or strongly agreeing that, "It is important to repeat and practice a lot" (Horwitz, 1988). Many of the students agreed that guessing a word is acceptable, but not as strongly as the ESL students in the earlier study. Responses in agreement ranged from 38% to 64%, depending on language group. A notable result in this study was in response to the item concerning error correction. Large numbers in each group, ranging from 48% to 57%, felt that it would be difficult later on in their language learning for students to correct errors which they are allowed to make in the beginning stages of their studies. In addition, between 40% and 58% of each group believed it is important to speak with an excellent accent (Horwitz, 1988).

Close examination of Horwitz's results reveals that many of the beliefs held by a large proportion of the learners run counter to assumptions about language learning which underlie more contemporary or communicative activities, and a more communicative approach to foreign language teaching and learning. Students portraying an overconcern with correctness, a dependency on translation, or an unwillingness to guess, for example, "Will probably have difficulty accepting, being comfortable with, and participating in the communicative approaches now common in many foreign language classes" (Horwitz, 1988, p. 290). Students' perceived receptiveness to differing methodological orientations was, in fact, the reason for commencing work on the development of the BALLI, as Horwitz proposed that the methodological approach of students' own previous learning experiences would affect their receptiveness to alternative teaching approaches to which they were subsequently exposed.

Since the original work of Horwitz in the mid-1980s, several studies have been carried out into the nature of language learner beliefs using either the BALLI

instrument or an adapted version of the BALLI (e.g. Banya and Cheng, 1997; Keim, Furuya, Doye, and Carlson, 1996; Kern, 1995; Kuntz, 1996; Mantle-Bromley, 1995; Oh, 1996; Park, 1995; Peacock, 1998, 1999; Truitt, 1995; Yang, 1992, 1999).

In addition, a number of researchers have looked at the relationship between student beliefs and other variables, including anxiety (e.g. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope, 1986; Horwitz and Young, 1991; Oh, 1996; Truitt, 1995; Young, 1991), learner strategies (e.g. Sato, 2004; Wenden, 1987; Yang, 1992, 1999), students' cultural background (McCargar, 1993; Truitt, 1995), and readiness for autonomy (Cotterall, 1995, 1999). Research involving learner beliefs and other variables is discussed in the following sections.

Learner beliefs and other factors

Research into the link between learners' beliefs and anxiety has revealed that the mismatch between learner beliefs about language learning and the reality of the language learning setting can lead beyond a level of frustration to feelings of language anxiety. Beliefs about language learning are considered one of the major sources leading to language anxiety (Young, 1991). Young suggests that when unrealistic learner beliefs and the reality of the language learning experience clash, the resulting frustration provokes feelings of anxiety. Examples may include an unrealistic belief about the importance of correctness in grammar or pronunciation, or about the length of time it takes to learn a foreign language. A significant correlation between certain learner beliefs and language anxiety was found in a study of EFL students in Korea (Truitt, 1995). Truitt's results suggest that learner belief in the difficulty of learning a second language, and a lack of confidence in speaking the second language, may be sources of foreign language anxiety. By discussing with learners realistic expectations regarding language learning, instructors may be able to reduce learner anxiety and help learners engage in more effective learning (Oh, 1996).

In research into the link between learners' beliefs and learning strategies, it was found that learners' beliefs often underlie and guide the strategies they choose to employ in language learning (Wenden, 1987). "Learners who emphasized the importance of using the language would often utilize communication strategies," whereas "learners who emphasized the importance of learning about the language tended to use cognitive strategies that helped them to better understand and remember specific items of language" (Wenden, 1987, p. 109).

In a further study, Yang (1992; 1999) found strong correlations between language learning strategies and self-efficacy and expectations, and the value and nature of learning spoken English. Beliefs about formal structural studies had a strong negative correlation with functional practice strategies.

When students believed that learning the grammar, vocabulary, and translation were the most important part of learning a foreign language and felt overwhelmingly that language learning involves a lot of memorization, they would be unlikely to seek or create opportunities to use or practice English functionally by trying to write, read, speak or think in English (Yang, 1999, p.529).

In addition to the relationships between learner beliefs and language anxiety and learning strategies, other research has attempted to identify relationships between learner beliefs and various background factors, such as academic major, previous overseas experience and cultural background. A study of EFL students in Korea found that students majoring in English or students who had lived in an English speaking country for at least one year felt less anxiety in the English language classroom than other students (Truitt, 1995).

However, in a study of learners of Japanese in the U.S., Oh (1996) found that students who had previously visited Japan tended to be less motivated and less confident in their spoken Japanese than those who had not. Oh (1996) suggests that students who had visited Japan were probably affected negatively by a realisation of the difficulty of the task of learning to speak Japanese well. In addition, analysis of responses between Asian students and non-Asian students revealed higher levels of motivation in the non-Asian group, particularly related to instrumental motivation and the notion of proficiency in Japanese being a benefit to securing a future job. The non-Asian students were also more likely to value traditional language learning methods than Asian students. This may be due to the high levels of instrumental motivation within the non-Asian group, and a belief that they took the learning of Japanese more 'seriously'.

A detailed study into the influence of cultural background on learner beliefs was carried out by McCargar (1993). In a study of learners from ten different cultural groups, and their teachers, in the U.S., he focussed on beliefs about teacher and student role expectations in the language classroom. Significant differences were found between the beliefs of students from different cultural groups, and between teachers' and students' beliefs. In terms of student – teacher differences, Chinese and Arabic student groups were found to differ the most from the teacher group. Between students, the Chinese and Korean student groups differed the least, and the Japanese and Korean student groups differed the most. McCargar's study suggests that learners' cultural background may well be an influential factor in learner beliefs, particularly if the language is being studied in the country of the target language, and taught by a teacher of a different cultural background.

A growing focus in language learning is on learner autonomy, commonly viewed as the degree to which learners are independent and able to take active responsibility for their own learning (e.g. Dickinson, 1992). Due to the profound influence of learner beliefs and attitudes on learning behaviour, a study of learners' beliefs and attitudes is crucial in preparing learners for autonomy (Cotterall, 1995). In research into the link between learners' beliefs and readiness for learner autonomy, Cotterall (1995) found that many learners did not match the profile of autonomous learners. Learners indicated strong expectations, for

example, concerning the role of the teacher as an authority figure, directing and controlling all learning in the classroom. However, certain results of a further study by the same researcher (Cotterall, 1999) offered encouragement for learner autonomy. For example, three-quarters of the students ranked student responsibility for finding opportunities to use the target language ahead of that of their teachers. In addition, students ranked their own effort, practice, opportunities to use the language, and feedback, all ahead of the teacher in terms of their importance for successful language learning (Cotterall, 1999). The results of this second study provide evidence that students may be ready and willing to assume greater responsibility for their learning. Teacher intervention strategies, such as through the use of belief surveys, can help explore learners' beliefs, produce meaningful dialogue, and encourage independent and autonomous learning.

Learner beliefs and learner attitude

What learners know or believe about a second language, and the speakers of that language, can affect their attitude towards that language. Learner attitude can be defined in language learning in terms of an emotional evaluation by the learners of the second language, the speakers of the language, or the culture of the language. In a classroom setting, it also involves the reaction of the learners to the teacher, and the other students. Attitudes have been found to have a (statistically) significant relationship to students' achievement (Mantle-Bromley, 1995). An example would be where a learner believes that successful second language learners are born with a special aptitude, and that he does not possess this aptitude. This will likely affect the learner's attitude towards the learning of the second language. There seems, therefore, to be a logical connection between learner beliefs and learner attitude. A number of researchers have suggested that negative learner attitudes and erroneous learner beliefs will not change simply by learner exposure to positive teaching practice (e.g. Kern, 1995; Mantle-Bromley, 1995). Teachers, therefore, need to actively work to change negative learner attitudes and influence unrealistic learner beliefs.

Influenced by attitude change theory, Mantle-Bromley (1995) used the BALLI and the Attitude and Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Gardner, Smythe, and Clement, 1974) to investigate the beliefs and attitudes of 12 classes of middle school students in the United States. She found that many of the students entered the language classroom with unrealistic or mistaken beliefs about language learning, beliefs which directly affect the potential for success in the language learning process. For example, many students entered the classroom underestimating the difficulty of learning a second language: 23% of the students believed Spanish to be easy or very easy to learn, 51% of the students believed that they would learn to speak another language well, and 69% believed that one could become fluent in a second language in two years time or less. Students who underestimate the difficulty of learning a second language may become frustrated or discouraged if their rate of progress does not match their expectations. Concerning the nature of language learning, 34% of the students believed that language learning is mostly a matter of translation from English. In a classroom environment where learning through translation is not encouraged this response

increases the potential for frustration and breakdown in the language learning process. Mantle-Bromley (1995) suggests that the potential effects of beliefs such as these are increased frustration, reluctance to participate, and ultimately discontinuance of second language study.

Mantle-Bromley (1995) calls for positive intervention to deal with such unrealistic beliefs as learning a second language being an easy task, fluency being achievable in a short amount of time, and language learning being mostly a matter of translation. Although certain research in the fields of cognitive psychology and social psychology (Alexander and Dochy, 1994; Dole and Sinatra, 1994), and second language teaching (Kern, 1995; Sakui and Gaies, 1998; Sugiyama, 2003) indicates it may be possible for students' beliefs to change, students' attitudes and beliefs are not likely to change merely as a result of the students' presence in the language classroom. Positive intervention is essential on the part of curriculum planners and classroom teachers, to implement strategies which attend to problematic beliefs. The elicitation and discussion of language learning beliefs seems to be a central part of such positive intervention, as this would allow for the deep thinking and critical reflection necessary to effect lasting belief change (Dole and Sinatra, 1994). Without such intervention, over the duration of a course of language study, students may also become not more, but less positive about the target language and the speakers of the target language (Gardner 1985; Mantle-Bromley and Miller, 1991).

As mentioned earlier, however, the research of Pajares points to the self-preserving nature of beliefs, and their resistance to change. Very few studies have investigated the notion of change in language learner beliefs, and few empirical results have been presented. Accepting that learners enter the language classroom with expectations and beliefs about the language learning process, and following a description of such beliefs, it is therefore of value to investigate just how resilient, or stable these beliefs are. In addition, by also surveying the teachers, it is possible to identify whether changes in learner beliefs render the beliefs closer to or further from the beliefs of the teachers.

Stability of learner beliefs

In an investigation of the beliefs about language learning of 288 university students of French in the USA, Kern (1995) compared the beliefs about language learning of the students with those of their teachers, and investigated the stability of student beliefs over a one-semester course of study. The relationship between overall teacher and student beliefs was very strong ($r = .93$) when comparing the mean scores of the entire group. Kern examined the stability of student beliefs over a 15-week teaching semester. The 15-week period could be considered a limitation of the analysis, as the majority of language students can be expected to undergo much longer periods of study. Results depended on whether analysis was of the group as a whole or at an individual student level. For the whole group, responses in the pre-test and post-test were shown to be very stable. At the individual level, however, on any given BALLI item, 35% to 59% of individual responses changed. Considering the instrument as a whole, 52% of all students'

responses changed over the course of the semester. One interpretation of these results is that learner beliefs do not appear to be as resilient as previous research has suggested. However, it must be noted that these are 'reported' beliefs, given by the students in response to questionnaire items, and that inconsistencies may exist between the students' own interpretations at time one and time two.

The study also allowed Kern to assess whether changes in student beliefs moved towards or away from the beliefs of the teachers. Results were mixed. Once again, for the whole group, there was little indication of a relationship. Following individual correlation, however, the beliefs of some learners moved considerably closer towards the beliefs of their teachers. This would suggest that teacher beliefs may have some influence on learner belief at the individual level.

On the other hand, Kern discovered that in several cases, students' and teachers' beliefs varied more at the end of semester than at the beginning of semester. Notable examples were beliefs about the importance of correct pronunciation, error correction, and of rule learning. In each case, teachers tended to disagree with the importance of these factors, with no teachers reporting strong agreement with their importance. For some students, however, the belief in the importance of these three factors strengthened during the semester, widening the gap between student and teacher belief. This is clearly an area requiring further exploration.

In a study of beliefs about language learning and foreign language anxiety, Oh (1996) compared the BALLI responses of students enrolled in first year university Japanese classes with those of students enrolled in second year classes. Although the comparison is between two different groups of students, it does provide an insight into how beliefs may differ over a one-year period, between the first year of language study and the second year.

Oh discovered that overall, more of the second year students tended to agree or strongly agree with individual BALLI items. Regarding the difficulty of language learning, second year students felt it would take longer to become fluent in the second language. Oh suggests that by the second year of study, students are feeling overwhelmed with the language learning task, particularly as more emphasis is placed on reading and writing the new language. Regarding the importance of grammar, more second year students agreed that learning a foreign language is mostly about learning a lot of grammar rules (46%), than did first year students (31%). With respect to pronunciation, more second year students agreed that excellent pronunciation is important (90%), than did first year students (71%). Finally, concerning foreign language aptitude, more second year students agreed that some people have a natural aptitude for foreign languages (85%), than did first year students (66%). The differences in beliefs between first and second year students observed in this study could support the notion of beliefs being subject to change over time.

In a more recent interview-based study of four Japanese teacher trainees in the United States, Sugiyama (2003) found that the experience of their graduate TESOL program had a strong effect on the beliefs of the participants. So influenced were they by the program that "Their beliefs about teaching and learning were transformed by the knowledge they gained and by their first-hand experiences as students" (p. 150). Sugiyama continues, " The changes include an

understanding of learner factors and the learning process, discovery of new roles for the learner and the teacher, and a deeper understanding of the relationship between language and culture” (p. 150). The trainees were influenced by the amount of meaningful communication which took place during their course in the U.S., both between classmates, and between classmates and professors. This posed a significant, and in their opinion a positive difference from their own learner experiences at undergraduate level, and earlier, in the Japanese education system. By the end of their teacher-training program, the beliefs of the participants about language teaching and learning had shifted considerably from the traditional notions of language learning employed in their home country, Japan, and “were becoming more consistent with the principles of CLT [Communicative Language Teaching]” (p. 99).

In a study of the learning strategies of Japanese students studying English in Australia, Sato (2004) discovered some changes in students’ beliefs during their course of study, particularly concerning the difficulty of language learning, and the time commitment required to acquire second language proficiency.

The four studies mentioned above indicate that, in certain circumstances, some beliefs may not be as resistant to change as Pajares’ earlier review suggests.

Learner beliefs and learning outcomes

As mentioned earlier, although the body of research into language learner beliefs is growing, very few studies have investigated the relationship between beliefs and actual learning outcomes. A study by Peacock (1999) sought to empirically test the relationship between unrealistic student beliefs and students’ English language proficiency. His study of 202 EFL students and their 45 teachers at a Hong Kong university compared the students’ beliefs with language proficiency progress as indicated by a proficiency test assessing listening comprehension, grammar, reading comprehension and essay writing. The study also included 5-minute oral interview sessions with 121 of the students as a qualitative component to assist in the interpretation of the data collected from the administration of the BALLI.

Peacock reports a statistically significant relationship ($p < .05$) between students’ responses on four of the BALLI items and the students’ language proficiency. Table 1 shows the relationships found for these four items. We can see that the higher the mean proficiency test score of the student, the less the belief that “learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules,” that “if you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning it will be hard to get rid of them later on,” and that “you shouldn’t say anything in the foreign language until you can say it correctly.” The table also suggests that the lower the mean proficiency score of the student, the greater the possibility of underestimating the length of time required to learn a foreign language. The interpretation from Table 1 is that, in this study, more proficient learners believe less in the importance of learning a lot of grammar rules, immediate error correction, and waiting to speak until you can say something correctly.

Peacock suggests that this empirical study (compared to previous theoretical studies) shows a direct link between certain language learning beliefs and language learning outcomes. He proposes that the four inaccurate learner

beliefs, shown in Table 1, affected the learning outcomes of the EFL classes, by helping to reduce learner confidence in and satisfaction with class, and therefore making the students less willing to participate in the type of communicative classroom activities likely to increase their language proficiency level.

Table 1. BALLI items significantly related to proficiency scores (Peacock, 1999) (p<.05).

“Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.”	Agree or strongly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree or strongly disagree
% Students	64	23	13
Proficiency (mean test score)	68	71	75
“If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning it will be hard to get rid of them later on.”			
% Students	36	30	34
Proficiency (mean test score)	68	69	72
“You shouldn’t say anything in the foreign language until you can say it correctly.”			
% Students	9	17	74
Proficiency (mean test score)	66	66	71
“If someone spent one hour a day learning a foreign language, how long would it take him/her to become fluent?”	Up to 2 years	3 to 5 years	More than 5 years
% Students	39	30	31
Proficiency (mean test score)	68	69	73

A study of 89 high school students in Taiwan identified five BALLI items with significantly different responses, depending on students’ proficiency levels (Huang and Tsai, 2003), different to those reported by Peacock. In the Huang and Tsai study, students with a higher score on a two hour General English Proficiency Test were more positive about their English study. They tended to believe that they possessed a special aptitude for learning foreign languages (Item 16, $p<.001$), that English was not particularly difficult to learn (Item 4, $p<.001$), that they would ultimately learn to speak English well (Item 5, $p<.01$), and that they enjoyed practicing English with Americans they met (Item 13, $p<.05$). On the other hand, the more proficient learners believed less in the importance of translating and learning how to translate (Item 28, $p<.05$).

In a study of 112 university students in Japan, Asbjornson (1999) found a significant correlation (at $p<.01$) between students’ oral proficiency and their responses to four items on the Sakui and Gaies questionnaire. More orally proficient learners were more positive about someday being able to speak English well (Item 4), and enjoyed studying English more than less proficient learners (Item 43). Conversely, more proficient learners believed less in the importance of

repetition and practice in learning in English (Item 12), and in the proposition that learning a word in English means learning the Japanese translation (Item 33).

The BALLI instrument has been used in several studies of language learner beliefs, many of them reviewed above. However, the BALLI was not designed specifically as a research tool. As such, some researchers have indicated that although Horwitz's design has contributed to a greater understanding of student beliefs about language learning, it does not stand up to rigorous statistical examination. For example, the BALLI has often returned a low internal reliability, as measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient. In a study of 195 learners at an American university, Oh (1996) measured an internal consistency for the BALLI of $\alpha = .5350$. Using a Chinese version of the BALLI, Yang (1992) measured an internal consistency of $\alpha = .690$ for a sample size of 504 students. With a Korean translation of the BALLI, Truitt (1995) reported an internal consistency of $\alpha = .61$ for a sample size of 204 students. In second language research, a reliability of at least 0.70, but preferably 0.80, is generally considered acceptable (Hatch and Lazaraton, 1991; Seliger and Shohamy, 1990). In an attempt to improve on the BALLI instrument, Kuntz and Rifkin designed the Kuntz-Rifkin Instrument (KRI) (Kuntz, 1996c).

Studies using the Kuntz–Rifkin Instrument (KRI)

The Kuntz-Rifkin Instrument (KRI) consists of the 34 items from the American foreign language students version of the BALLI, with an addition of ten demographic statements, and 13 additional items aimed at investigating beliefs which the BALLI did not appear to address, such as motivational elements.

Both the BALLI and KRI were used by Kuntz (1996c) in an investigation of 424 language students in the United States. In addition to students of French, German and Spanish, the participant sample also contained students of five less commonly taught languages (LCTL): Arabic, Italian, Japanese, Russian, and Swahili. Using the Cronbach alpha test for internal reliability, Kuntz measured a coefficient of .526 for the BALLI, and .805 for the KRI. This suggests that the KRI may be a more statistically reliable measure of learner beliefs than the BALLI.

Following comparisons of student responses, Kuntz reports eight beliefs, revealed by the KRI results, commonly held by the students. These beliefs are held regardless of language, enrolment group, or language difficulty:

Agreement

It is easier for children than adults to learn an FL

It is easier for someone who already speaks an FL to learn another one

It is important to repeat and practice a lot

Learning a foreign language differs from other subjects

Everyone can learn to speak a foreign language

Disagreement

To read something in a foreign language you have to know all the words

To listen to something in a foreign language you have to know all the words

I have a distant ancestor who spoke this language

Kuntz also reports certain beliefs which were significantly different for students of the less commonly taught languages. Students of Arabic and Swahili, for example, showed a stronger agreement with items associated with communication strategies and the people of the target language countries.

In another study, Rifkin (2000) used the KRI to investigate, over a three-year period, the language learning beliefs of 1,004 students enrolled in courses for 10 different languages in three different institutions in the United States. Rifkin was concerned with what he identifies as three limitations of much of the research on beliefs about language learning to date. These limitations are: a) participants have generally been drawn from beginning level language classes, b) research has been conducted mostly on students of French, German and Spanish, and c) most published studies have used learners from a single institution.

Following the three identified limitations, Rifkin aimed to investigate: a) whether learners at the first year level of instruction hold beliefs similar to those held by learners at other levels of study, b) whether learners of more commonly taught languages hold beliefs similar to those of learners of less commonly taught languages, and c) whether learners at large (research) universities hold beliefs similar to those held by learners at small liberal arts colleges. Rifkin found relationships between learner beliefs and level of instruction, whether the language of study is a commonly or less commonly taught language, and the nature of the institution. Specifically, first year level learners held beliefs significantly different from those held by more advanced learners on 33% of the survey items. Learners of commonly taught languages held beliefs which were significantly different from those held by learners of less commonly taught languages on 24% of survey items. Finally, significant differences were reported between responses of learners from large (research) institutions and small liberal arts colleges on 66% of the survey items.

Rifkin concludes that “every learner has a concrete set of beliefs, some of which may be productive, others counter-productive, for the language learning enterprise” (2000, p. 405) and that these beliefs “are at least as diverse as the languages, levels, and institutions in which the learners are studying” (p.407).

As Rifkin suggests, there seems to be a need for more research into the beliefs of learners of languages other than French, German and Spanish, and of learners who are not restricted to beginner level language classes. Further investigation of Japanese university students’ beliefs about the learning of English will work towards satisfying this need. The following section describes the research literature concerning language learner beliefs in Japan.

Research in Japan into student beliefs about language learning

Very few studies to date have investigated the language learning beliefs of Japanese learners of English. One of the few studies was by Luppescu and Day (1990), who carried out a study of 31 teachers of English and 84 high school and university students of English in Japan. Their stated goal was to develop a questionnaire instrument, which would allow researchers to determine a set of critical factors for the successful teaching and learning of English. The questionnaire consisted of 77 items in nine categories, with the items all relating to an *orientation* to language teaching and learning, defined as either *classical* or *contemporary*. The students received a Japanese version of the questionnaire.

Results of the study showed that the teachers' responses tended to follow an orientation path. Teachers generally either agreed with the classical items, and disagreed with the contemporary items, or vice versa. Student responses to the questionnaire items, however, tended to be inconsistent, and failed to follow either orientation path. The researchers concluded that the learners in their questionnaire study lacked the metaknowledge about language teaching and learning necessary to participate in such a study, and seemed to possess no coherent beliefs about English language learning (Luppescu and Day, 1990).

Another study in Japan involved an application of an adapted version of the BALLI on 411 university students at a Nagoya university (Keim, Furuya, Doye, and Carlson, 1996). A driving force in this study was the authors' concern that students entering the university were unaccustomed to, and hence unprepared for the communicative language learning environment of the university's English program (this was also a major motivation for the present study). An over-dependence on strategies reliant on translation and the use of Japanese-English dictionaries, a constant fear of making mistakes when speaking English, a reliance on memorisation, and a reluctance to participate in pair and group activities, were all observations of entering students at the Nagoya university. The researchers considered such student traits as not conducive to effective language learning in a communicative English program (Keim, et al, 1996). It was hoped that investigation of the students' beliefs about the nature of English language learning would provide insight into the beliefs supportive of such behaviour.

The study had two main research aims. Firstly, to attempt to confirm the researchers' assumptions that incoming first year students' beliefs are at odds with a communicative ethos to language learning. Secondly, to compare the beliefs of incoming first year students with those of second year students. In addition, the researchers intended to investigate relationships between gender and beliefs, and between students' attendance and beliefs related to motivation. The students completed a Japanese version of the adapted BALLI questionnaire. The researchers planned to readminister the same survey to first year students after one semester of study, to investigate any changes in first year students' beliefs. The results of the second administration are not reported.

Many of the results of the study ran counter to the expectations of the researchers. Of the entering students, 96% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposition that you should not say something in English until you can say it correctly, and 81% agreed or strongly agreed that it is OK to guess if you do not know a word in English. There was little difference between the results for

first year students and second year students, and the researchers suggest that any differences reported could not be directly attributed to the students' experience in their language program.

However, after comparing the students' questionnaire responses with the students' behaviour in class, the researchers remained unconvinced about the accuracy of the students' responses, on the grounds that the students' behaviour did not mirror the beliefs they reported possessing. The students' results did indicate an awareness of the kinds of behaviour and attitudes more likely to lead to success in a communicative English program. However, students lack the confidence and competence to participate and perform in communicative tasks. Possession of certain beliefs, such as it being acceptable to guess if you do not know a word, and that you need not wait until you can say something correctly before you can speak, does not guarantee that classroom behaviour will reflect such beliefs (Keim, et al., 1996).

Motivation for studies into learner beliefs in Japan seems to focus on this notion of orientation, and students' readiness for a more communicative language learning environment. An underlying assumption is that the language learning beliefs of Japanese (college) students will have been formed, or at least heavily influenced, by the traditional methodologies of their junior and senior high school English teachers. These traditional learner beliefs would therefore offer an obstacle to the success of later (college level) language learning, using a more contemporary, communicative classroom methodology. The nature of English teaching in Japan is a recurring theme in learner belief studies in Japan, and is further discussed in the following sections.

The research of Sakui and Gaies

In 1998, Stephen Gaies presented a paper at the annual conference of the Japan Association of Language Teaching (JALT) in Omiya, Japan, entitled Japanese Language Learners' Perceptions of Methodological Alternatives. The paper reported on an investigation, with fellow researcher Keiko Sakui, into the language learning beliefs of English college students in Japan. The investigation was published in 1999, and became the major influence for the present study.

In this large-scale systematic study of language learners' beliefs, Sakui and Gaies (1999) surveyed 1296 students of English at 2-year and 4-year higher education institutions in Japan. Although based on existing instruments, the language learner beliefs instrument they developed combined certain original items specific to learners in Japan, and was developed through a system of translation, back translation, piloting and consultation with teachers and graduate students in Japan. The development of this questionnaire was driven by three priorities. These were the need for an instrument relevant to learners in Japan, the importance of an instrument in Japanese (the students' first language), and the importance of multi-stage outside review of such an instrument. The research questions stated for the study were: 1) Are Japanese learners' consistent in reporting their language learning beliefs? 2) Can interview data help to confirm and explain questionnaire data? 3) What language learning beliefs do Japanese learners hold and how are they organised?

In addressing the first research question, a large part of the study was involved with the validity and reliability of the instrument. A sub-sample of 98 students was used to carry out a test-retest comparison, using both a scrambled second version and an alternate forms second version of the 45-item questionnaire. For the original-scrambled test-retest (n=44), 70% or more of the students were exactly consistent (giving exactly the same answer on both administrations) with 21 of the 45 items. For general consistency, that is, students responding with either agree or strongly agree, or disagree or strongly disagree on the two administrations, 70% or more of the students were consistent with 39 of the 45 items. Significance tests (t-tests) on the difference in means for pairs of items revealed statistically significant differences for only five of the 45 items ($p < .05$). Using the test-retest method, the instrument can therefore be considered reliable.

In addressing the second research question, the researchers conducted a number of interviews with students, in Japanese, to discuss the experience of responding to the questionnaire(s) and to seek additional information about students' beliefs. This would hopefully provide valuable data triangulation. According to Sakui and Gaies, the interviews offered insights to responses, which may otherwise have been interpreted as pointing to "unreliability" in the test-retest process of the survey instrument. Some students, who gave two different answers in the two applications of the test-retest process, reported that their beliefs had actually changed during the four weeks between the two administrations. An example given of change in belief is of a student whose response after four weeks indicated she would rather have a teacher who could provide explanations in Japanese, after initially preferring a teacher who spoke only in English. Despite this, Sakui and Gaies conclude that the participants demonstrated "satisfactory consistency" in their responses to the questionnaire (p.486). The study highlights the value of conducting interviews with participants as an additional source of data. Student interviews can provide insights into learner beliefs, which are unavailable from the responses to questionnaire items alone.

The third research question involves a description of the learners' beliefs and an analysis of how these beliefs can be organised. The strongest held beliefs by the learners in the Sakui and Gaies study are shown in Table 2. These are the items with a mean questionnaire score of 3.25 or higher on the Likert-type scale. We can see from Table 2 that, above all, the learners believe that English class should be enjoyable and that they need not wait to say something in English until they can speak it correctly. The students consider continued repetition and practice as important factors in their learning, and are dissatisfied with the progress they have made and the English education they have received to date. The learner responses indicate that they believe they should be able to learn everything they are taught, that knowledge of an English-speaking country is useful, and that listening to tapes and watching television programs are very important in their learning.

Table 2. Strongest learner beliefs in Sakui and Gaies (1999).

Item No.		Mean score
Item 2	English conversation class should be enjoyable.	3.52
Item 6*	You need not wait to say something in English until you can speak it correctly.	3.41
Item 11	In learning English it is important to repeat and practice a lot.	3.40
Item 7*	Considering the amount of time I have studied English, I am not satisfied with my progress.	3.36
Item 27*	In order to speak and understand English very well, English education at school is not enough.	3.36
Item 15	Listening to tapes and watching English programs on television are very important in learning English.	3.34
Item 37	I should be able to learn everything I am taught.	3.30
Item 5	It is useful to know about English-speaking countries in order to speak English.	3.25
Item 1	It is easier for children than adults to learn English.	3.25

* Items 6,7, and 27 were items of disagreement. The items have been reworded to reflect a positive stance. The mean scores have been recoded.

With reference to the organisation of learner beliefs, unlike Horwitz in the development of the BALLI, mentioned earlier, Sakui and Gaies did not create or assign questionnaire items in advance according to *logically-derived categories*. They sought to investigate patterns in students' responses to all the questionnaire items in terms of *empirically-derived categories*, by means of a principal components exploratory factor analysis. The factor analysis grouped 25 of the 45 items into four groups (or factors), according to the results obtained. The four-factor solution is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Factor Analysis Solution, Sakui and Gaies (1999)

Items	Factor Loadings			
	F1	F2	F3	F4
Factor 1. <i>Beliefs about a contemporary (communicative) orientation to learning English</i> ($\alpha=0.749$).				
43 The longer I study English, the more enjoyable I find it.	.630			
40 I study English because it is useful to communicate with English speaking people.	.584			
15 Listening to tapes and watching English programs on television are very important in learning English.	.573			
17 If I learn to speak English very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.	.560			
44 If I heard a foreigner of my age speaking English I would go up to that person to practice speaking.	.550			
5 It is useful to know about English speaking countries in order to speak English.	.536			
4 I believe that someday I will speak English very well.	.513			
21 If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.	.503	.367		
2 English class should be enjoyable.	.449			
11 In learning English it is important to repeat and practice a lot.	.423			
9 It's O.K. to guess if you don't know a word in English.	.369			
Factor 2. <i>Beliefs about a traditional orientation to learning English</i> ($\alpha=0.636$).				
41 To understand English, it must be translated into Japanese.		.676		
36 To say something in English, I think of how I would say it in Japanese and then translate it into English.		.634		
32 Learning a word means learning the Japanese translation.		.585		
20 Learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Japanese.		.531		
8 In English, I prefer to have my teacher provide explanations in Japanese.	-.460	.413		
14 Learning English is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.		.371	.356	

Table 3 continued.

	Items	Factor Loadings			
		F1	F2	F3	F4
Factor 3. Beliefs about the quality and sufficiency of classroom instruction for learning English ($\alpha=0.638$)					
45	I am satisfied with the English education I received.			.645	
7	Considering the amount of time I have studied English I am satisfied with my progress.			.636	
27	In order to speak and understand English very well English education at school is enough.			.609	
3	In order to learn to read and write English very well English education at school is enough.			.555	
26	Japanese are good at learning foreign languages.			.497	
Factor 4. Beliefs about foreign language aptitude and difficulty ($\alpha=0.456$)					
16	Girls are better than boys at learning English.				.736
30	Some people are born with a special ability which is useful for learning English.				.608
23	People who are good at math and sciences are not good at learning foreign languages.				.594

We can see from Table 3 that 12 items loaded together in factor one with an internal consistency of $\alpha = .749$. Sakui and Gaies labelled the 12 items in factor one as “Beliefs about a contemporary (communicative) orientation to learning English”. In factor two, seven items loaded together with an internal consistency of $\alpha = .636$. These were labelled “Beliefs about a traditional orientation to learning English”. Six items loaded in factor three with an internal consistency of $\alpha = .638$. These were labelled “Beliefs about the quality and sufficiency of classroom instruction for learning English”. Finally, three items loaded under factor four with an internal consistency of $\alpha = .456$. These were labelled “Beliefs about foreign language aptitude and difficulty.”

Only two studies have been identified in the literature which employ the Sakui and Gaies (1999) instrument. In a study of 112 university students in Japan, and following correlation and factor analysis, Asbjornson (1999) reported no systematic differences between the responses in his study and those of Sakui and Gaies (1999). However, although the two sets of results correlated at $r = .92$ ($p < .01$), the internal consistency on Factor 1 of the factor analysis was only $\alpha = .52$, compared to $\alpha = .749$ for Sakui and Gaies (1999). Investigating an additional research question, Asbjornson did report a link between responses to certain questionnaire items, and students’ oral English proficiency (see earlier section). Positive correlations were determined (at $p < .01$) for Item 4, *I believe that someday I will speak English very well*, and Item 43, *The longer I study English, the more enjoyable I find it*. Negative correlations were determined for Item 33, *Learning a word means learning the Japanese translation*, and Item 12, *In learning English, it*

is important to repeat and practice a lot. The second study to use the Sakui and Gaies (1999) instrument was conducted by Sato (2004) into the relationship between beliefs about language learning and the learning strategies of Japanese students of English in Australia (see earlier section).

Due to the more traditional methods of foreign language instruction commonly used in Japan (discussed in the following section), particularly at the high school level, (Gorsuch, 1998; Hino, 1988; Koike and Tanaka, 1995; Skehan, 1998), Japanese foreign language students may be considered lacking in awareness of and receptiveness to alternative instructional methodologies. This is of particular concern to teachers at the college level who attempt to employ more contemporary, communicative approaches to language learning. Certain research has suggested that the unresponsive nature of Japanese language students renders them unaffected by the application of any other methodology (e.g. Luppescu and Day, 1990). Due to the lack of consistency in the responses of their Japanese student subjects, Luppescu and Day (1990) concluded that the students lacked any background knowledge about the process of learning and possessed no coherent beliefs about language learning. However, the results of the Sakui and Gaies study suggest that there is a change occurring. Student responses were consistent between the traditional and communicative paths mentioned earlier, as shown by the results of the factor analysis. Furthermore, these categories were not pre-determined, but derived empirically through a factor analysis of the student responses. In sum, there does appear to be growing awareness among Japanese foreign language learners of different methodological orientations to language learning.

Teacher beliefs

In order to present a whole picture of the classroom situation, it is necessary to also consider the beliefs of the language teachers. In one of her initial studies, Horwitz (1988) suggests that because language teachers are often viewed as ‘experts’ by their students, teachers’ views “could have a strong influence on the students’ own beliefs” (p.291). Such influence could result from a teacher’s explicit expression of beliefs, or implicitly through a teacher’s methods and choice of activities employed in the classroom. Studies have suggested that teachers’ beliefs have a strong influence on their actions in the classroom, and even “help shape the nature of classroom interaction” (Johnson, 1992, p. 84). Some researchers contend that learning is enhanced when students and teachers accurately perceive each others’ expectations and intentions (Barcelos, A-M., 2000). However, when teacher beliefs are not consistent with the beliefs and expectations of the students, the so-called “clash of expectations” may result, leading to reduced success in the language learning outcomes.

Few studies have directly compared the beliefs of language students with the beliefs of their teachers. Neither the early studies of Horwitz, or the study of Sakui and Gaies (1999), surveyed teachers to analyse their reported beliefs. Horwitz (1988) tends to analyse students’ beliefs in terms of what she predicts “many, if not most, foreign language teachers” (p.286) would believe, and whether student beliefs are “consistent with common wisdom” (p.287). The research goals

of Sakui and Gaies were centred on the reliability and organisation of students' reported beliefs, rather than an analysis of the beliefs. Two studies of relevance have been identified in the literature, by McCargar (1993), and Kern (1995).

Using a self-composed survey instrument, McCargar (1993) investigated the role expectations of 161 ESL students, from a variety of countries, studying in the United States, and their 41 teachers. While the study mostly focused on the differences between various cultural student groups, some general patterns emerged across all students, with regard to differences with the views of the teachers. The results showed that students in general expected a much more teacher-centred classroom than did the teachers, and that teachers and students disagreed specifically on the topic of error correction, "Students wanted more error correction than the teachers wanted to give, and much disagreement existed on whether students should make mistakes, how students should feel about making errors, and whether teachers should criticize errors" (p.200).

Kern (1995) investigated the beliefs about language learning of 288 university students of French in the USA, and compared them with those of 12 of their teachers. Correlation of the BALLI results, between overall teacher and student beliefs was very strong ($r = .93$) when comparing the mean scores of the entire groups. However, Kern found that correlations dropped dramatically when looking at the beliefs of the individual learners and their teachers. In comparing the beliefs of each student with those of his or her own teacher, correlations ranged from $r = .00$ to $r = .80$, with 28% of the students having overall correlations of $r = .30$ or lower. This may not at first appear too surprising. The more one concentrates on the individual, the greater deviation one should anticipate from the central tendency. It does indicate, however, that there was a weak correlation between the beliefs of the teachers and the beliefs of almost one third of the students.

The greatest differences were identified between student and teacher beliefs in the areas of the importance of excellent accent, language learning being mostly a matter or learning a lot of grammar rules, and translating from or to the L1. In each case, the student body generally agreed with these ideas, and the teachers disagreed. What is more, the differences between students' and teachers' beliefs on these topics, were greater at the end of one semester of study than at the beginning.

The current study aimed to survey 34 classroom teachers, to elicit their beliefs about language learning, and allow for a direct comparison of student beliefs and teacher beliefs. As the study involves Japanese learners of English, with a particular focus on methodological orientation, in terms of the traditional and communicative paradigms, the following sections give background information on the teaching of English in Japan.

Background to English language teaching in Japan

Foreign language teaching in Japan is based on a traditional approach, which essentially considers education as the transmission of a body of knowledge and the language learner as an empty receptacle for the transmission of such knowledge. This traditional paradigm in English language teaching methodology is described by Renandya, Lim, Leong, and Jacobs (1999), as possessing the following eight characteristics:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. A focus on language | 5. Discrete point tests |
| 2. Teacher-centredness | 6. Traditional tests |
| 3. Isolated skills | 7. Emphasis on product |
| 4. Focus on accuracy | 8. Individual learning |

One classic language teaching procedure based on a traditional approach is the "3Ps" model of presentation, practice and production. The 3Ps model emphasises language as a system of rule-governed structures, which are presented sequentially to students by the teacher. Learning is dependent on repetition and memorization, and fluency is viewed as developing from accuracy. In a study of over 30 teacher training courses, Kerr (1994) found that instruction in teaching methodology was generally limited to the 3Ps model. This presentation-based approach to language teaching is widely used and "is probably still the commonest teaching approach when judged on a world-wide basis" (Skehan, 1998, p.94).

Another of the traditional methods of language teaching, and one which is widely employed in Japan, is the grammar-translation method (Gorsuch, 1998; Hino, 1988). The term used in Japan to describe this method is *yakudoku*. *Yakudoku* is a non-oral procedure to foreign language instruction, which focuses on grammar rules through explicit instruction in the first language; *yaku* means translation, and *doku* means reading (Hino, 1988). Single written English sentences are used to exemplify grammar structures. The target sentences are then translated into Japanese word by word so that the content may be understood as part of the process of comprehension (Hino, 1988). In a study of *yakudoku* teaching, Gorsuch (1998) notes that with an emphasis on translation and creating meaningful Japanese rather than meaningful English, teachers create classrooms that better resemble Japanese language classes than English language classes. A survey by Hino found that seventy to eighty percent of Japanese university and high school teachers still used the *yakudoku* method in their EFL classes (Hino, 1988). In a 1997 study of nineteen high school English teachers in Japan, Sato (2002) found that, "the majority conformed to an established pattern of teaching with heavy emphasis on grammar explanation and translation" (p. 58).

Reform in English language education in Japan

Since the 1980s, there have been many calls for changes to be made in the Japanese education system in general (Horio, 1988; Koike and Tanaka, 1995; Okano and Tsuchiya, 1999), and in the teaching of English in particular (Koike and Tanaka, 1995). In a push towards both a reform of English language education, and towards internationalisation, the Japanese government launched the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program (JET), in 1985. As part of the JET program, native English speakers work as assistant language teachers (ALTs) alongside Japanese high school English teachers, with the goal of enhancing students' communicative abilities and international understanding (Koike and Tanaka, 1995). There are currently more than 6,100 participants in the JET program, with approximately 90% of them placed as ALTs (Olson, 2005).

In 1990, Koike and associates published the results of an 11-year study by the Committee for Research on English Language Teaching in the Japanese School System, "the largest and most valuable source for understanding the revisions of TEFL [the teaching of English as a foreign language] policies at various levels in Japan" (Koike and Tanaka, 1995, p.19). The study consisted of a series of nationwide questionnaires distributed to both teachers and students at different levels in the Japanese educational system. The survey concludes that TEFL within the Japanese educational system is not very effective. For example, 62.6% of junior high school teachers, 58% of senior high school teachers, and 74.9% of college graduates evaluated their English instruction in Japan negatively. Further, 78.3% of college graduates "felt that the main objective for TEFL at the college level should be communication and that much stronger emphasis should be given to communication at the high school level" (p.19). The only exception to this general belief in the need for a more communicative approach was among college and university English teachers, who favoured a culture-oriented approach (52%) over a communication-oriented approach (47%) to English language teaching. The results of the college and university English teachers' sector are evidence of the "English and American literature paradigm" referred to by Gorsuch (1998, p.28). A large proportion of college and university teachers in Japan see intensive reading, translation, and appreciation of literary works as key elements of foreign language learning. That said, given that the majority of educators in Japan feel it necessary to gain direct communication skills in English, it seems time for a change to a communication-centred approach to EFL teaching in Japan (Koike and Tanaka, 1995).

In light of continued calls for educational reform, the Japanese Ministry of Education (MOE) put into effect changes in the teaching of English in junior high schools in 1993 and senior high schools in 1994. The changes were based on a 1989 revision of MOE guidelines (Wada, 2002), and included the adding of a new high school subject, Oral Communication, consisting of courses in listening, speaking and discussion (Matsuura, Chiba, and Hilderbrandt, 2001). These changes were aimed at promoting oral communication as the primary goal for English education. A term which has been commonly adopted for the new courses, and the new approach to English teaching now encouraged in Japan, is 'communicative language teaching'.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

The last two decades have seen much scholarly attention paid to communicative language teaching (CLT) in the fields of EFL and Applied Linguistics. The origins of modern CLT can be traced to the major concurrent debates about language education, which took place in both North America and Europe, particularly Britain, in the 1960s and early 1970s (McDonough & Shaw, 1993; Savignon, 2001). In the United States, Hymes (1971) introduced the term communicative competence to represent language use in a social context, and the integration of language, communication and culture (Savignon, 2001). At the same time, in Britain, Halliday (1975) developed a theory of language focusing on meaning potential, and context of situation in understanding how language systems work (Richards & Rogers, 1985; Savignon, 2001).

The term communicative approach has become synonymous with CLT. An approach can be described as the assumptions, beliefs, and theories about the nature of language and the nature of language learning that provide the theoretical foundation for what language teachers ultimately do with learners in the classroom (Richards and Rogers, 1985). Despite originating in what is termed the BANA (British, Australasia, and North America) camp (Holliday, 1994; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999), considerable resources have been employed around the world to provide language teaching which attends to the communicative needs of language learners (Savignon, 2002). In English language teaching, researchers, program planners and teachers have focused on teaching based on the communicative needs of the students, the capacity for interaction and engagement in the classroom, and the notion of learning as a continuing developmental process (Canale & Swain, 1980; Littlewood, 1981; Nunan, 1988, 1989; Richards & Rogers, 1986; Savignon, 1983; Savignon & Berns, 1984).

In contrast to the characteristics of a traditional paradigm in English language teaching methodology, Renandya and associates (1999) offer the following characteristics to describe the communicative paradigm:

1. Focus on communication
2. Learner-centredness
3. Integrated skills
4. Focus on fluency
5. Holistic tests
6. Authentic assessment
7. Emphasis on process
8. Cooperative learning

The shift towards a communicative approach to language teaching has not taken place simultaneously throughout the world. Despite the gradual spread worldwide of second language teaching based on the communicative needs of learners (e.g. Savignon, 2002), in many countries, “the debate is still very current, reflecting the differing and changing perceptions of the international roles and needs of education systems” (McDonough and Shaw, 1993, p.22). Indeed, on a worldwide basis, and particularly outside of Britain, Australasia, and North America (BANA), more traditional language-teaching approaches may still be the most commonly applied (Skehan, 1998). Research into learner beliefs may, therefore, not appear to be of great importance in some areas of the world, where the move towards more communicative emphasis in language learning has not been as swift, and learning continues to be centred on the teacher as knowledge imparting ‘expert’.

The move towards teaching for communication in Japan

In recent years, there has been an attempt in Japan to put forward the development of communication skills as a primary focus of English language learning. In 2002, the newly named Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) produced a document entitled “Developing a strategic plan to cultivate ‘Japanese with English abilities’” (MEXT, 2002). The plan calls for greater emphasis to be placed on “the cultivation of fundamental and practical communication abilities.” It lays out communicative attainment targets for school students, which range from an ability to hold ‘simple conversations’ at junior high school level, and an ability to hold ‘normal conversations’ at senior

high school level, to graduates leaving university with an ability to effectively function in their chosen occupational field in English (MEXT, 2003).

There have been difficulties in implementing such mandated changes in language-learning goals. It has been difficult for Japanese teachers to change to such a communication-centred approach and some struggle is [still] going on between the communication camp and the translation camp in the English teaching field (Koike and Tanaka, 1995). The high school teachers in the Sato (2002) study appeared to continue to teach straight from the textbook, a method to which both teachers and learners were accustomed. Despite the calls from Mombusho [MOE] for more communication-oriented English, the teachers seemed to teach according to what they thought would work best in their classrooms, based on their own life and learning experiences.

Reforms in the teaching of English in Japan must also address the issues of English-language ideology (Law, 1995). In the tradition of the Meiji era (1868 – 1912), English has been taught in Japan as a classical language, viewed as a source of valuable information and perceived as a one-way channel for the reception of western thought, not a two-way channel transmitting Japanese ideas back to the world. In the postwar era, efforts towards making education more egalitarian encouraged the teaching of English as a set of formal rules to be mastered and memorised. Law (1995) argues that these ideologies have resulted in “a set of teaching priorities and procedures which over time have become stiff and inflexible, and which now create considerable resistance to the introduction of new purposes and methods” (p. 219).

The Japanese government is also currently considering whether to make English the official second language of Japan, rather than simply a foreign language (Yoshida, 2002). A stated goal of MEXT is to enable the entire Japanese public to be able to conduct daily conversation and exchange information in English (MEXT, 2003). Yoshida (2002) describes a two-tier goal of the Japanese government based on Cummins’ (1984) distinction between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). The first tier calls for all Japanese people to be able to attain BICS, an ability to conduct everyday, contextualised, undemanding conversation. The second tier calls for control of more cognitively demanding use of English - CALP, targeting those working in specialised fields where communication on an international scale is expected.

Given the esteemed position, then, of English in Japan, it is very difficult to justify how little research or discussion seems to have been conducted on English language teaching and on Japanese learners. One reason for this shortcoming is provided by Rohlen (1983) who points out that education in Japan has been so dominated by a text-centred lecture approach to teaching that little attention is actually given to the analysis of teaching and learning processes. For example, according to Rohlen, “descriptions of Japanese high school instruction apparently do not exist in the literature on Japanese education” (p.241). As another example, in a study of the development process of the 1993 and 1994 MOE foreign language curriculum changes, above, LoCastro (1996) claims to have found no evidence of consultations with classroom teachers, and no evidence of any needs analysis having been conducted. With reference to the intention of MEXT to make English the official second language of Japan, Yoshida comments on the lack of

communication in the development process of that proposal:

Until now, not one applied linguist or TESL/TEFL specialist was included in the committee that came up with the proposal to make English the second official language. Furthermore, up to now, there has been relatively little cooperation between junior and senior high school teachers of English, less communication between high school and college teachers of English, very little communication as yet between junior high school and elementary school teachers; and also, very little communication between Japanese teachers of English and Foreign teachers of English.

(ELT News, 2000-2001)

Following the changes in high school English language curriculum outlined in the above section, it follows that students entering junior high school from 1993, or high school from 1994, are likely to have had at least some exposure to English language classrooms with a more communicative focus. Research findings indicate that incoming Japanese university students may already be aware of some of the requisites of a more communicative approach to learning English (Keim, Furuya, Doye, and Carson, 1996; Sakui and Gaies, 1999). This suggests that a move away from translation based English language teaching in pre-university language education in Japan may be underway. It would seem that this is a very important time, therefore, for teachers, course planners, materials writers, and administrators of English language education in Japan to be paying particular attention to the beliefs and conceptions that learners bring with them into their language classrooms. The assumption can no longer be made that the sum total of learners' language education when entering university has been six years of grammar-translation instruction at junior and senior high school. Neither can we assume that the learners' high school teachers have been able to make the commitment to a more communicative approach, called for by the Ministry of Education. Many English teachers in Japan are not well informed about developments in applied linguistics and language teaching, and receive little formal training on how to implement the move to communicative activities in their classrooms (Sato, 2002). School teachers in Japan continue to be burdened with the pressure to prepare students for the university entrance examinations, which historically have predominantly focused on grammar and reading skills.

It is more likely now than ever that entering Japanese university students will hold a mixed bag of beliefs and expectations, and it is now more important than ever that these be assessed, considered and attended to in preparing a course of language instruction for such learners. Students and teachers at all levels need to become involved in informed analysis and discussion of how language is best learned and what approaches are the most effective for teachers and learners to take, to best achieve the learning goals. The first step along this path would seem to be a comprehensive analysis of the beliefs about language learning of the learners, as well as those of their teachers.

In addition, learners also need help to develop and improve their views of themselves as learners so that they may become better learners, able to utilize their learning potential more fully (Kohonen, 1992). A sequence of procedures to raise learners' awareness about their learning is offered by Wenden (1998), and involves

the processes of elicitation of beliefs, articulation of those beliefs, confrontation with alternative views, and reflection on the appropriateness of the whole process.

In attempting to develop a workable methodology by which to achieve the stated communication goals of the Japanese government, it is crucial to consider what the learners bring into the language classroom, and what they construct within it. That is, what their beliefs and practices are as participants in this language learning process. An appropriate teaching methodology needs to involve an acknowledgment of both learners and surrounding contexts (Holliday, 1994). This includes the learners' existing competences, experience, knowledge, and beliefs.

Summary

Despite a body of research pointing to both the potential importance of the role of student beliefs in the language learning process, and the need to attend to these beliefs given their reported self-preserving nature (Pajares, 1992), they have been the focus of relatively little attention, particularly in Japan. Little research has been conducted into the nature of learners' beliefs and even less has been carried out into how learners' beliefs actually affect language learning (Ellis, 1994; Wenden, 1999). "Although student beliefs about language learning would seem to have obvious relevance to the understanding of student expectations of, commitment to, success in, and satisfaction with their language classes, they have remained relatively unexplored" (Horwitz, 1988, p. 283).

Amongst the few studies published in recent years, most have been carried out in the United States, South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Only one major study has been identified of Japanese second language students in Japan, that of Sakui and Gaies (1999). English language literature on research carried out in Japan is surprisingly difficult to locate as a whole (Rohlen, 1983), particularly given the extent to which the English language is taught in Japan. The lack of published research on Japanese students is one of the driving forces behind this study.

The current study aims to expand on the work of previous research into language learner beliefs and contribute to the currently minimal number of empirical investigations of Japanese university students of English. In addition, this investigation will be one of the first to focus on the three factors of student-teacher belief differences, student belief stability, and the relationship between language learning beliefs and language proficiency, with the same body of Japanese students.

The study attends to two of the concerns of Rifkin (2000). Participants in this study are from a range of classes, having been placed into classes from elementary level to upper-intermediate level, and are all students of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Japan. The whole body of participants are far from true beginning level students, having already received at least six years of compulsory English language education in the Japanese high school system. One limitation of this study is that it was conducted within a single institution. However, this did allow for a high level of control over both student and teacher participants, and provided a large participant pool in one location, with close to 1,000 freshman students enrolled in the institution's English program.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the beliefs about language learning among entering first year Japanese university students, the relationship between learner beliefs and teacher beliefs, the stability of learner beliefs over time, and the relationship between learner beliefs and proficiency levels. The study was designed to address the following four research questions:

- 1) What beliefs do first year Japanese university students in Japan hold about English language learning?
- 2) How do student held beliefs about English language learning compare with beliefs held by their teachers about English language learning?
- 3) Do student beliefs about English language learning change over a course of English language study?
- 4) What relationships exist between student held beliefs about English language learning and English language proficiency level?

Overview of Method

In this chapter, I present the methods used to address the above research questions. The study is predominantly quantitative in nature, and involves the administration of student and teacher questionnaires, with both a cross-sectional component and a longitudinal component. Semi-structured student discussion sessions were incorporated in the study to promote a multifaceted perspective.

The general outline of the method was as follows:

- Initial questionnaire administration to 23 classes of first year Japanese university students (Time 1).
- Questionnaire administration to 34 class teachers.
- Repeat questionnaire administration to four of the classes of students for test-retest analysis.
- Second questionnaire administration to same 23 classes of students (Time 2).
- Semi-structured discussion sessions with a small sample of participating students.
- Analysis of data.

The study is replicatory in nature and was driven by two key factors: the availability of a tried survey instrument in Japanese, which would benefit from a

replication study (the Sakui and Gaies instrument, 1999), and this researcher's position within a large scale English teaching program in a Japanese university. At the time of creating the research design for this study, only one other study had been identified in the literature employing the Sakui and Gaies instrument, that of Asbjornson (1999). Replication studies allow for verification of the reliability and validity of research instruments, and provide accumulated understandings and explanations to further the research field (Gay and Airasian, 2000). Despite the reported importance of replication in second language learning research, there are relatively few replication studies published (Porte, 2002).

The university English program in this study had a first year intake of almost one thousand students, which allowed for large numbers of participants to be surveyed within a very short space of time. In addition, student rosters were all computerised, as were records of students' course grades, and scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (see later section). Given that the study was to be survey-based with such a large number of participants, a predominantly quantitative approach was adopted for the research design.

Research design

The research design contains sections on the research instruments used, the participants, the pilot study, data collection, and data analysis.

Instruments

Questionnaire

The main instrument for this study was the questionnaire developed by Sakui and Gaies for their 1999 study. This 45-item instrument was developed in Japanese, specifically for Japanese learners of English. Although based on existing instruments, with many similarities to Horwitz's BALLI (Horwitz, 1985), Sakui and Gaies combined original items specific to learners in Japan, and developed this instrument through a system of translation, back translation, piloting and consultation with teachers and Japanese graduate students (Sakui and Gaies, 1999). The items were answered on a four-point Likert-type scale, with the answer options of: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree. For data analysis purposes, these responses were numerically coded as one, two, three, and four, respectively. The questionnaire instrument for the study is shown in Table 4. The Japanese version, administered to students, can be found in Appendix A.

Table 4. The questionnaire instrument.

1. It is easier for children than adults to learn English.
2. English class should be enjoyable.
3. In order to learn to read and write English very well, English education at school is enough.
4. I believe that someday I will speak English very well.
5. It is useful to know about English-speaking countries in order to speak English.
6. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can speak it correctly.
7. Considering the amount of time I have studied English, I'm satisfied with my progress.
8. In English classes, I prefer to have my teacher provide explanations in Japanese.
9. It's O.K. to guess if you don't know a word in English.
10. If a person studies English by himself for one hour a day, how many years will it take to become fluent?
11. In learning English it is important to repeat and practice a lot.
12. I would feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other Japanese students.
13. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on.
14. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.
15. Listening to tapes and watching English programs on television are very important in learning English.
16. Girls are better than boys at learning English.
17. If I learn to speak English very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.
18. It is easier to speak English than to understand it.
19. Learning English is different from learning other subjects.
20. Learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Japanese.
21. If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.
22. It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.
23. People who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages.
24. Japanese think it is important to speak English.
25. People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.
26. Japanese are good at learning foreign languages.
27. In order to speak and understand English very well, English education at school is enough.
28. Some languages are easier to learn than others.
29. You can learn to improve your English only from native speakers of English.
30. Some people are born with a special ability which is useful for learning English.
31. Speaking and listening to English are more useful than reading and writing English.
32. Learning a word means learning the Japanese translation.
33. I studied English only to pass the entrance exam.
34. I can improve my English by speaking English with my classmates.
35. I make mistakes because I do not study enough.
36. To say something in English, I think of how I would say it in Japanese and then translate it into English.
37. I should be able to learn everything I am taught.
38. I want my teacher to correct all my mistakes.
39. If my teacher is a native speaker, he/she should be able to speak Japanese when necessary.
40. I study English because it is useful to communicate with English speaking people.
41. To understand English, it must be translated into Japanese.
42. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.
43. The longer I study English, the more enjoyable I find it.
44. If I heard a foreigner of my age speaking English, I would go up to that person to practice speaking.
45. I am satisfied with the English education I received.

Sakui and Gaies (1999) carried out a test-retest procedure to assess the reliability of their instrument. In terms of general agreement (students either agreed or strongly agreed, or disagreed or strongly disagreed, on both occasions), 70% or more of the students were consistent with their responses to 39 of the 45 items. In terms of exact agreement, (students gave exactly the same response on both occasions), 70% or more of the students were consistent with 21 of the 45 items. Using t-tests to examine significant differences in the mean responses for pairs of items, statistically significant differences were found for only five of the forty-five items ($p < .05$). The questionnaire can, therefore, be considered reliable. In one of only two other studies identified which employed the Sakui and Gaies instrument, Asbjornson (1999) reported a correlation of results with those of Sakui and Gaies of $r = .92$ ($p < .01$), and also declared the questionnaire to be “the most rigorously constructed instrument available in Japanese” (p. 117).

The Sakui and Gaies English translation of the instrument was used to produce a teacher version for this study. To produce a teacher version, eight items from the student questionnaire, considered inappropriate for teachers, were omitted. The eight omitted items are listed in Table 5. The teacher version of the questionnaire, therefore, contained 37 items.

Table 5. Items omitted for the questionnaire - teacher version.

1.	I believe that someday I will speak English very well.
7.	Considering the amount of time I have studied English, I'm satisfied with my progress.
8.	In English classes, I prefer to have my teacher provide explanations in Japanese.
1.	I studied English only to pass the entrance exam.
1.	I study English because it is useful to communicate with English speaking people.
1.	The longer I study English, the more enjoyable I find it.
2.	If I heard a foreigner of my age speaking English, I would go up to that person to practice speaking.
45.	I am satisfied with the English education I received.

In addition, six items on the teacher version were re-written to represent a teacher viewpoint. The six re-written items are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Items re-written for the questionnaire - teacher version.

Item 37	<i>I should be able to learn everything I am taught.</i> <u>Changed to:</u> Students should be able to learn everything they are taught.
Item 17	<i>If I learn to speak English very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.</i> <u>Changed to:</u> If students learn to speak English very well, they will have many opportunities to use it.
Item 21	<i>If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.</i> <u>Changed to:</u> If students learn to speak English very well, it will help them get a good job.
Item 36	<i>To say something in English, I think of how to say it in Japanese and then translate it into English.</i> <u>Changed to:</u> To say something in English, most students think of how to say it in Japanese and then translate it into English.

Table 6 continued.

Item 34	<i>I can improve my English by speaking English with my classmates.</i> <u>Changed to:</u> Students can improve their English by speaking English with their classmates.
Item 35	<i>I make mistakes because I do not study hard enough.</i> <u>Changed to:</u> Students make mistakes because they do not study hard enough.

Because the teachers, for the most part, completed their questionnaires in their classrooms, at the same time as their students, the items on the teacher version were scrambled to maintain the integrity of the procedure. The teacher version of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix C.

In addition, a scrambled version of the student questionnaire was produced for use in the test-retest reliability procedure.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

Part of the investigation of research question four, the relationship between student beliefs and English proficiency levels, involves correlation of students' questionnaire responses with their scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The TOEFL is a standardised test used worldwide to determine the English proficiency of non-native speakers of English. It is widely used for placement into language programs and universities, particularly in North America. According to the TOEFL Test and Score Manual (1997), the average internal consistency reliability for tests administered between 1995 and 1996, was 0.95, with an average criterion validity of 0.8.

English course grades

Part of the investigation of research question four, the relationship between student beliefs and English proficiency levels, involves correlation of students' questionnaire responses with their end-of-semester English course grades.

End-of-semester grades in the university's English language program are all calculated using Microsoft Excel for Mac spreadsheets. The final grade is a number on a scale from 0 to 100. Students are assessed approximately as follows:

- 30% to 40% of grade - speaking assessments
- 25% to 35% of grade - writing assessments
- 15% to 20% of grade - written exam (including listening section)
- 10% to 15% of grade - students' effort and attitude

Participants

This study was conducted at a single private university on the outskirts of Tokyo, Japan, between April 2002 and January 2003. The university had a student population at the time of approximately 5,000 students. Of the incoming first-year

students in April 2002, 984 were enrolled in the university's English language program. Of these, approximately 70% were female, and 30% were male.

The university operated an in-house placement test procedure for placing incoming students into its thirty-one first year English language program classes, at one of four levels: elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, or advanced. The English language program is semi-intensive in nature, with students taking four 90-minute classes a week, conducted entirely in English, and taught almost exclusively by native-speaker teachers of English.

Twenty-three classes were chosen for the study, based on the convenience of scheduling of the questionnaire administrations, and as being representative across student levels. A total of 744 students were enrolled in the 23 participating classes. The breakdown of student numbers and levels is shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Number of classes and students at each level.

Level	No. of classes taking English	Total students enrolled	No. of classes in sample	No. of students in sample
Elementary	8	271	6	198
Pre-Intermediate	15	515	10	358
Intermediate	6	173	6	173
Advanced	2	25	1	15
Total	31	984	23	744

All students were given the option not to participate in the study, without consequence, and this was explained in a consent statement, in Japanese, on page two of the questionnaires. Due to the necessity to cross-reference questionnaire responses with student TOEFL scores and course grades, the questionnaires were not anonymous. The purpose of the study was explained to students in Japanese, and by placing their names on the questionnaire, students authorised the use of their results for research purposes. A total of 661 students were present at the time of the questionnaire administration in April, and all students present completed the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered for a second time, to the same 23 classes of students, in December 2002. A total of 504 students completed both the April and December questionnaires.

Teachers of the 23 classes were also invited to participate in the study, with the option of declining to do so without consequence. All 34 teachers invited to participate in the study, agreed to do so. The teacher questionnaires were not anonymous, and participating teachers signed a statement of consent, authorising the use of their responses for research purposes.

The participant institution generally requires teachers to hold a master's degree, and a large majority of the teachers in the study hold a master's degree in a TESOL related field from a BANA country university. A further description of the teacher participants is given in Table 8.

Table 8. Description of participating teachers.

Total	Male	Female	Native Speakers of English	Years teaching	Years teaching in Japan
34	26	8	32 (+ 1 Japanese, and 1 Chinese American)	Range 1 – 20 Average 11	Range 1 – 17 Average 10

The study received approval by the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted by this researcher at the same institution between April and December, 1999 (Riley, 2004). The study involved four classes, with a total of 100 students, and their nine class teachers. The pilot study allowed me to assess the feasibility of conducting a major longitudinal study involving both students and teachers at the university. In particular, it allowed for clarification of university consent procedures, scheduling and timing issues, teacher and student receptiveness to the research, and data input and data analysis procedures.

Data Collection

Permission was obtained from the head of the university English program to conduct this research project, and all individual teachers were contacted in advance to seek their cooperation. The academic year in Japan commences in April, and students at the university were involved in orientation activities throughout the first week of semester, including taking the institutional version of the TOEFL test. All questionnaires for the study were completed during regular classes, administered by class teachers, before the end of the second week of semester, in April 2002. It was important to be able to administer the questionnaires as soon as possible following the commencement of the academic year, to try to ensure that students' beliefs had not been influenced by the teaching practices or teaching materials of the university program (Horwitz, 1988). Students were allowed twenty minutes to complete the questionnaire, a period found to be sufficient in the pilot study for this project (Riley, 2004).

Following number coding of the questionnaire responses, all data were entered into a Microsoft Excel for Mac computer spreadsheet by this researcher. In addition, student TOEFL scores were obtained from the university, and entered into the same spreadsheet. At the end of the April semester, student course grades were obtained from the university, and also entered into the same spreadsheet.

For test-retest reliability analysis, four of the twenty-three classes, containing 101 students, were randomly chosen to complete a second, scrambled version of the questionnaire. This represented a sample size of 15%, adequate to

approximate the conditions existing in the population of 661 participants (Gay and Airasian, 2000). The scrambled retest questionnaire was administered by the class teachers fourteen days after the first administration, within an acceptable time frame for test-retest reliability (Hatch and Lazaraton, 1991).

For the second administration, all questionnaires were completed during regular classes, administered by class teachers, during the same week of December 2002.

Student Discussion Groups

To obtain a deeper understanding of students' language learning beliefs, two student discussion groups were formed following the Time 2 questionnaire administration. The aim was to discuss the results of the student questionnaires, particularly pertaining to research question three, and the investigation of change in student beliefs over time. The use of such follow-up discussions provides a complementary qualitative component in a disciplined enquiry approach (Gay and Airasian, 2000).

Students in the one advanced level participating class were invited to take part in these follow-up discussions. Eight students chose to participate, two groups of four students were formed and discussions took place on consecutive days in January 2003. The discussions were conducted in English with this researcher, were approximately one hour in length, and were audio-taped with the students' consent. The eight students had a range in TOEFL scores from 457 to 557 and were able to carry out the discussions in English. The audio recordings were transcribed by this researcher and excerpts used in the analysis are available in Appendix I.

Prior to the discussions, I was able to analyse the student questionnaire data briefly to try to identify items for which student responses appeared to have shown some movement between the April and December administrations. This would form the basis for the discussion content. I had also identified any movements in the responses of the individual discussion participants, so we would be able to attend to those particular items directly in the discussions.

Data Analysis

As with the Sakui and Gaies study (1999), the answer sheets for the questionnaires contained a four-point Likert-type scale, offering participants the options of: strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree. These responses were then numerically coded from one to four, respectively. The Likert scale is a summated rating scale, which allows the responses to be viewed as having approximately equal intervals and intensities (Hatch & Lazaraton, 1991; Kachigan, 1986; Kerlinger and Lee, 2000). The data in this study can, therefore, be viewed as interval data. Furthermore, given the sample size for this study, the responses can be assumed to have a normal distribution. It was therefore possible to carry out a series of parametric tests on the data, namely Pearson correlation, Cronbach alpha, factor analysis, and t-tests.

The reliability of the instrument was assessed using a test-retest procedure. Satisfactory conditions were achieved for sample size, timing, and scrambling of the retest (see above section). Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated, following the assumption that the data can be considered as interval data.

A general alpha level of $\alpha = 0.01$ was set for analysis of the data. A statistically significant 'p – value' would therefore signify that the probability of rejecting a null hypothesis based on the data was less than 1%. To further reduce the possibility of error in carrying out multiple t-tests, the alpha level was set at $\alpha = 0.001$ in analysing the data in respect to research question two, the comparison of student beliefs with teachers' beliefs.

A factor analysis was conducted on the data, using the SPSS 11.0 for Macintosh statistical software package, to investigate the organisation of students' questionnaire responses. Factor analysis is a technique which allows a large number of variables to be clustered into a smaller number of sets, or factors. This, in turn, allows for greater insight into the subject matter (Kachigan, 1986). A principal components factor analysis was conducted, with varimax rotation. Factor analysis is only appropriate for large-scale studies; Hatch and Lazaraton (1991) suggest a minimum of 200 participants; Kachigan (1986) suggests that the number of subjects involved in the study should be ten times the number of variables. The current study satisfies both of these criteria.

Although factor analysis is used extensively in studies of second language learning (Seliger and Shohamy, 1990) it has faced several criticisms, most related to theoretical controversies, and a distrust of the techniques involved (Kachigan, 1986; Kerlinger and Lee, 2000). However, it is one of the most powerful data reduction techniques available and "can provide a deeper understanding of a wide range of problems and provide the necessary information for their solution" (Kachigan, 1986, p.401).

The factor analysis revealed a four-factor matrix containing 27 of the 45 questionnaire items, using factor loadings of 0.4 or greater. A stated interest for this study, and purpose for conducting the factor analysis, is to investigate the beliefs of students related to the methodological orientation of language teaching and learning. The study is, therefore, only concerned with Factor 1, *Beliefs related to a communicative orientation to learning English*, and Factor 2, *Beliefs related to a traditional orientation to learning English*, of the factor-loading matrix. Full factor analysis results can be found in Appendix G.

In addressing research question four, the relationship between student beliefs and English proficiency levels, students' proficiency levels were correlated with their factor scores, calculated from Factor 1 of the factor analysis. The aim was to try to identify any relationship between students' proficiency level and propensity to agree with statements conducive to a more communicative approach to language learning. These scores are, in fact, estimates of the students' factor scores, determined by adding students' raw scores for all the variables loading into Factor 1, *Beliefs related to a communicative orientation to learning English*. The use of factor score estimates is an accepted technique for approximate exploratory analysis (Comrey and Lee, 1992). The two groups of students analysed produced average factor scores of 41.6 and 40.1, for the thirteen items loading into Factor 1.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

In this chapter, results of the study are presented. The study was designed to address the following four research questions:

- 0) What beliefs do first year Japanese university students in Japan hold about English language learning?
- 0) How do student held beliefs about English language learning compare with beliefs held by their teachers about English language learning?
- 0) Do student beliefs about English language learning change over a course of English language study?
- 0) What relationships exist between student held beliefs about English language learning and English language proficiency level?

The research questions were addressed with the administration of a questionnaire developed by Sakui and Gaies in 1998. First, the results of questionnaire reliability analyses are presented, followed by results related to each of the research questions, above.

Instrument

Data collection took place in the 2002/3 Japanese academic year. The academic year in Japan runs from April to March, with university classes split across two semesters: April to July, and September to January. The same questionnaire was administered to the students in early April 2002 (Time 1) and December 2002 (Time 2). Although a total of 744 students were enrolled in the 23 participating classes, only 661 students were present at Time 1. Pearson correlation between the results of the Time 1 administration ($n=661$) and the results of Sakui and Gaies (1999) ($n = 1296$) is $r = 0.8934$, indicating a high level of consistency between the responses in the two studies.

Reliability of the instrument was assessed using the test-retest method. Four classes, with a total of 101 students, were selected at random from the 23 classes in the study, to complete the same questionnaire a second time. To help reduce the effect of memorisation, the items in the second questionnaire were scrambled into a different order. The test-retest method requires an early second administration to reduce the possibility of students' beliefs actually changing between the two administrations. The second questionnaire in this study was administered 14 days after the first administration. This is considered an acceptable time frame for test-retest reliability (Hatch and Lazarson, 1991). Average response scores for the test-retest questionnaires can be found in

Appendix D. Pearson correlation of average response scores for the test-retest questionnaires (n = 101) is $r = 0.9847$, indicating a high level of correlation between the two administrations. A correlation coefficient in the high 80s and above is considered acceptable for test-retest reliability (Hatch and Lazarton, 1991).

Individual questionnaire items for the 101 students were also examined to analyse the consistency of individual responses. Table 9 shows how consistency is defined for this analysis. General consistency is defined as students agreeing or strongly agreeing, or students disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, in both questionnaire administrations. Exact consistency is defined as students indicating the exact same responses in both administrations. This method of checking response consistency was also employed by Sakui and Gaies (1999).

Table 9. Consistency definitions for test-retest.

	First questionnaire response	Re-test response
General consistency	Strongly agree or agree	Strongly agree or agree
	Strongly disagree or disagree	Strongly disagree or disagree
Exact consistency	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
	Agree	Agree
	Disagree	Disagree
	Strongly disagree	Strongly disagree

General consistency

For each of the 45 questionnaire items, at least 61% of the 101 students were generally consistent with their responses, answering either strongly agree or agree, or strongly disagree or disagree, on each questionnaire administration. At least 70% of student responses were generally consistent for 40 of the questionnaire items.

Exact consistency

For each of the 45 questionnaire items, at least 46% of the 101 students were exactly consistent with their responses, giving exactly the same response on each questionnaire administration. At least 50% of student responses were exactly consistent for 41 of the 45 questionnaire items. At least 60% of student responses were exactly consistent for 30 of the 45 questionnaire items.

Paired sample t-tests were also carried out on the test and retest responses, to identify any significant differences in the responses for matched pairs of items. Of the 45 questionnaire items, significant differences in means were found for only three items at $p < .01$. There is, therefore, a 99% possibility that the mean scores for 42 of the 45 items were not different on the test and re-test questionnaires. The three items with statistically significant differences are shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Items with statistically significant differences in Test-Retest ($p < .01$).

Item		Time 1 Mean	Retest Mean
7.	Considering the amount of time I have studied English, I'm satisfied with my progress.	1.54	1.71
26.	Japanese are good at learning foreign languages.	1.7	1.87
33.	I studied English only to pass the entrance exam.	2.17	2.46

In their 1999 study, Sakui and Gaies carried out a test-retest analysis on 44 participants. In terms of general agreement, 70% or more of the students were consistent with their responses to 39 of the 45 items. In terms of exact agreement, 70% or more of the students were consistent with 21 of the 45 items. Using t-tests to examine significant differences in the mean responses for pairs of items, no statistically significant differences were found for 40 of the 45 items ($p < .05$). The particular items showing significant differences are not identified in publication.

In sum, there are similarities between the reliability analyses of this study and the study of Sakui and Gaies. The results for general consistency are slightly better than those attained by Sakui and Gaies. However, the low number of test-retest participants ($n=44$) in the Sakui and Gaies study must be noted. Opinions on adequacy of sample size in the statistics literature are varied. Suggestions range from 30 to 100 as a minimum sample size for many statistical operations, but a sample size of 10% to 20 % is suggested as necessary, in order to approximate conditions existing in the total population (Gay and Airasian, 2000). The sample size of 44 in Sakui and Gaies represents only 3.4% of the total of 1296 students in the study. The test-retest sample size of 101 for this study represents 15% of the total of 661 students in the study. Based on the more appropriate sample size for the test-retest, the test-retest reliability of this study can be considered stronger than that of the Sakui and Gaies study.

Research Question 1

What beliefs do first year Japanese university students in Japan hold about English language learning?

A full breakdown of responses for the items in the April administration of the student questionnaire is given in Table 11. Based on a Likert-type scale, there were four possible responses to each item: 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-agree, and 4-strongly agree. Table 11 shows the percentage of students giving each of the four possible responses, percentage values for general agreement and general disagreement, and mean response scores for each of the questionnaire items.

Table 11. Student questionnaire responses, Time 1, frequency of choices, mean scores on individual items, and number of responses (n= 661).

Items	Responses (%) ¹						Mean	N
	1	2	3	4	1 + 2	3 + 4		
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn English.	1.82	6.21	47.88	44.09	8.03	91.97	3.34	660
2. English class should be enjoyable.	0.15	1.82	28.88	69.15	1.98	98.02	3.67	658
3. In order to learn to read and write English very well, English education at school is enough.	28.16	57.69	11.26	2.89	85.84	14.16	1.9	657
4. I believe that someday I will speak English very well.	3.54	37.54	48.46	10.46	41.08	58.92	2.66	650
5. It is useful to know about English-speaking countries in order to speak English.	1.37	5.46	47.04	46.13	6.83	93.17	3.37	659
6. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can speak it correctly.	70.41	27.77	1.21	0.61	98.18	1.82	1.32	659
7. Considering the amount of time I have studied English, I'm satisfied with my progress.	41.86	50.99	7.00	0.15	92.85	7.15	1.66	657
8. In English classes, I prefer to have my teacher provide explanations in Japanese.	18.10	59.66	19.02	3.22	77.76	22.24	2.08	652
9. It's O.K. to guess If you don't know a word in English.	1.39	7.42	72.18	19.01	8.81	91.19	3.08	647
10. If a person studies English by himself for one hour a day, how many years will it take to become fluent? ²	25.50	40.86	18.59	15.05	66.36	33.64	2.23	651
11. In learning English it is important to repeat and practice a lot.	1.06	1.52	33.79	63.64	2.58	97.42	3.59	660
12. I would feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other Japanese students.	6.99	32.83	49.70	10.49	39.82	60.18	2.64	658
13. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on.	7.06	39.88	44.94	8.13	46.93	53.07	2.53	652
14. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.	16.95	67.33	14.35	1.37	84.27	15.73	2.01	655
15. Listening to tapes and watching English programs on television are very important in learning English.	0.76	3.33	47.42	48.48	4.09	95.91	3.44	660
16. Girls are better than boys at learning English.	31.10	51.98	14.18	2.74	83.08	16.92	1.89	656
17. If I learn to speak English very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.	1.67	15.61	41.67	41.06	17.27	82.73	3.22	660
18. It is easier to speak English than to understand it.	15.98	52.21	23.74	8.07	68.19	31.81	2.24	657
19. Learning English is different from learning other subjects.	4.26	39.67	47.42	8.66	43.92	56.08	2.60	658
20. Learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Japanese.	28.61	59.82	10.81	0.76	88.43	11.57	1.84	657
21. If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.	2.43	13.83	51.22	32.52	16.26	83.74	3.13	658
22. It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.	8.09	38.63	45.34	7.94	46.72	53.28	2.53	655
23. People who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages.	35.37	57.32	6.71	0.61	92.68	7.32	1.71	656
24. Japanese think it is important to speak English.	3.33	20.57	58.09	18.00	23.90	76.10	2.90	661
25. People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.	11.23	43.55	37.48	7.74	54.78	45.22	2.41	659
26. Japanese are good at learning foreign languages.	31.55	63.40	4.44	0.61	94.95	5.05	1.74	653
27. In order to speak and understand English very well, English education at school is enough.	49.47	45.68	3.34	1.52	95.14	4.86	1.57	659
28. Some languages are easier to learn than others.	1.69	8.92	73.23	16.15	10.62	89.38	3.03	650
29. You can learn to improve your English only from native speakers of English.	11.28	71.56	14.84	2.32	82.84	17.16	2.09	647
30. Some people are born with a special ability which is useful for learning English.	21.67	50.62	24.77	2.94	72.29	27.71	2.09	646

Items	Responses (%) ¹						Mean	N
	1	2	3	4	1 + 2	3 + 4		
31. Speaking and listening to English are more useful than reading and writing English.	1.24	19.13	58.32	21.31	20.37	79.63	2.98	643
32. Learning a word means learning the Japanese translation.	9.47	48.45	39.91	2.17	57.92	42.08	2.35	644
33. I studied English only to pass the entrance exam.	24.42	32.46	35.55	7.57	56.88	43.12	2.25	647
34. I can improve my English by speaking English with my classmates.	2.32	20.90	60.99	15.79	23.22	76.78	2.90	646
35. I make mistakes because I do not study enough.	4.34	40.78	47.29	7.60	45.12	54.88	2.58	645
36. To say something in English, I think of how I would say it in Japanese and then translate it into English.	9.16	31.37	51.09	8.39	40.53	59.47	2.57	644
37. I should be able to learn everything I am taught.	3.25	36.17	51.62	8.96	39.41	60.59	2.65	647
38. I want my teacher to correct all my mistakes.	11.28	47.60	34.47	6.65	58.89	41.11	2.37	647
39. If my teacher is a native speaker, he/she should be able to speak Japanese when necessary.	6.79	29.17	53.55	10.49	35.96	64.04	2.68	648
40. I study English because it is useful to communicate with English speaking people.	1.39	8.81	58.11	31.68	10.20	89.80	3.20	647
41. To understand English, it must be translated into Japanese.	19.88	55.90	21.58	2.64	75.78	24.22	2.06	644
42. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	5.74	39.07	45.43	9.77	44.81	55.19	2.60	645
43. The longer I study English, the more enjoyable I find it.	2.80	20.84	51.01	25.35	23.64	76.36	2.99	643
44. If I heard a foreigner of my age speaking English, I would go up to that person to practice speaking.	4.06	33.23	43.06	19.66	37.29	62.71	2.78	641
45. I am satisfied with the English education I received.	29.81	48.76	18.94	2.48	78.57	21.43	1.95	644

All figures have been rounded.

¹Likert-type Scale responses: 1 - Strongly disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 - Agree; 4 - Strongly agree

²Item 10, *If a person studies English by himself for one hour a day, how many years will it take to become fluent?* Likert Scale – 1 - 2 years, 2 - 5 years, 3 - 10 years, 4 - Never.

Information from Table 11 was used to assess the strength of student beliefs in terms of the items on the questionnaire. We can see from Table 11 that the strongest response was for Item 6, *You shouldn't say anything in English until you can speak it correctly*, with 98.18% of students generally disagreeing with this statement. The second strongest response was for Item 2, *English class should be enjoyable*, with 98.02% of students generally agreeing with this statement. In percentage terms, seventy percent of the students strongly disagree that to say something in English, you need to wait until you can say it correctly, and sixty nine percent of the students strongly agree that English class should be enjoyable. Third in terms of strength of response was item 11, *In learning English it is important to repeat and practice a lot*, with 97.42% of the students agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement.

Descriptive statistics for the Time 1 administration of the student questionnaire are shown in Table 12. Given the replicative nature of this study, the results of Sakui and Gaies (1999) are also shown, to enable a comparison between the results of the two studies. The final column shows the difference in mean item scores for the two studies.

Table 12. Mean and standard deviation for student questionnaire responses at Time 1 (n=661) and for Sakui and Gaies (1999) (n=1296).

	Riley Time 1		Sakui & Gaies		Diff in Mean
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn English.	3.34	0.68	3.25	0.63	0.09
2. English class should be enjoyable.	3.67	0.52	3.52	0.63	0.15
3. In order to learn to read and write English very well, English education at school is enough.	1.90	0.71	1.82	0.66	0.08
4. I believe that someday I will speak English very well.	2.66	0.71	2.09	0.75	0.57
5. It is useful to know about English-speaking countries in order to speak English.	3.37	0.65	3.25	0.61	0.12
6. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can speak it correctly.	1.32	0.53	1.59	0.57	-0.27
7. Considering the amount of time I have studied English, I'm satisfied with my progress.	1.66	0.61	1.64	0.63	0.02
8. In English classes, I prefer to have my teacher provide explanations in Japanese.	2.08	0.07	2.67	0.78	-0.59
9. It's O.K. to guess If you don't know a word in English.	3.08	0.56	2.93	0.60	0.15
10. If a person studies English by himself for one hour a day, how many years will it take to become fluent? ¹	2.23	1.00	2.18	0.80	0.05
11. In learning English it is important to repeat and practice a lot.	3.59	0.58	3.40	0.58	0.19
12. I would feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other Japanese students.	2.64	0.76	2.83	0.70	-0.19
13. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on.	2.53	0.74	2.59	0.72	-0.06
14. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.	2.01	0.61	2.02	0.61	-0.01
15. Listening to tapes and watching English programs on television are very important in learning English.	3.44	0.60	3.34	0.59	0.10
16. Girls are better than boys at learning English.	1.89	0.74	2.09	0.75	-0.20
17. If I learn to speak English very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.	3.22	0.77	2.99	0.78	0.23
18. It is easier to speak English than to understand it.	2.24	0.81	2.36	0.78	-0.12
19. Learning English is different from learning other subjects.	2.60	0.71	2.75	0.71	-0.15
20. Learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Japanese.	1.84	0.63	1.86	0.61	-0.02
21. If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.	3.13	0.74	2.94	0.70	0.19
22. It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.	2.53	0.75	2.63	0.77	-0.10
23. People who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages.	1.71	0.61	1.84	0.60	-0.13
24. Japanese think it is important to speak English.	2.90	0.71	2.86	0.71	0.04
25. People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.	2.41	0.79	2.40	0.77	0.01
26. Japanese are good at learning foreign languages.	1.74	0.56	1.83	0.51	-0.09
27. In order to speak and understand English very well, English education at school is enough.	1.57	0.64	1.64	0.61	-0.07
28. Some languages are easier to learn than others.	3.03	0.56	3.01	0.61	0.02
29. You can learn to improve your English only from native speakers of English.	2.09	0.59	2.04	0.59	0.05
30. Some people are born with a special ability which is useful for learning English.	2.09	0.76	2.62	0.79	-0.53
31. Speaking and listening to English are more useful than reading and writing English.	2.98	0.67	3.19	0.67	-0.21
32. Learning a word means learning the Japanese translation.	2.35	0.68	2.31	0.66	0.04
33. I studied English only to pass the entrance exam.	2.25	0.91	2.96	0.81	-0.71
34. I can improve my English by speaking English with my classmates.	2.90	0.67	2.75	0.64	0.15
35. I make mistakes because I do not study enough.	2.58	0.69	2.60	0.68	-0.02

	Riley Time 1		Sakui & Gaies		Diff in Mean
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
36. To say something in English, I think of how I would say it in Japanese and then translate it into English.	2.57	0.77	2.76	0.74	-0.19
37. I should be able to learn everything I am taught.	2.65	0.68	3.30	0.55	-0.65
38. I want my teacher to correct all my mistakes.	2.37	0.77	2.41	0.67	-0.04
39. If my teacher is a native speaker, he/she should be able to speak Japanese when necessary.	2.68	0.75	2.93	0.73	-0.25
40. I study English because it is useful to communicate with English speaking people.	3.20	0.65	2.88	0.76	0.32
41. To understand English, it must be translated into Japanese.	2.06	0.72	2.22	0.71	-0.16
42. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	2.60	0.74	2.44	0.73	0.16
43. The longer I study English, the more enjoyable I find it.	2.99	0.76	2.54	0.81	0.45
44. If I heard a foreigner of my age speaking English, I would go up to that person to practice speaking.	2.78	0.80	2.40	0.77	0.38
45. I am satisfied with the English education I received.	1.95	0.76	1.85	0.68	0.10

¹ Item 10, *If a person studies English by himself for one hour a day, how many years will it take to become fluent?* Likert Scale: 1 - 2 years, 2 - 5 years, 3 - 10 years, 4 - Never.

Correlations between the mean responses in this study and those of Sakui and Gaies (1999) produced a correlation coefficient of 0.8934, indicating a high level of consistency between the responses in the two studies. However, examination of individual questionnaire items in Table 12 reveals some interesting variations in the mean scores of responses. The items with the largest mean score differences are given below.

Item 33, *I studied English only to pass the entrance exam.* The mean score was 2.25, compared to 2.96 for Sakui and Gaies. This suggests that fewer students in this study believe they studied English only to pass the entrance exam (to university).

Item 37, *I should be able to learn everything I am taught.* The mean score was 2.65, compared to 3.30 for Sakui and Gaies. This suggests that fewer students in this study believe they should be able to learn everything they are taught.

Item 8, *In English classes, I prefer to have my teacher provide explanations in Japanese.* The mean score was 2.08, compared to 2.67 for Sakui and Gaies. This suggests that fewer students in this study believe that they prefer to have their teacher provide explanations in Japanese.

Item 4, *I believe that someday I will speak English very well.* The mean score was 2.66, compared to 2.09 for Sakui and Gaies. This suggests that more students in this study believe that someday they will speak English very well.

The variation in these individual items indicates the possibility that the students in this study hold beliefs which could be judged as more positive in outlook and more conducive to a less traditional approach to learning English: not studying English just to pass the entrance exam, not believing they have to learn everything they are taught, not depending on explanations in Japanese, and believing someday that they will become very good speakers of English.

In terms of mean score, there were ten items on the Time 1 student questionnaire which averaged above a score of three, agree. These are termed the items of strongest agreement and are listed in Table 13. We can see that Item 2, *English class should be enjoyable*, received the highest mean score rating of 3.67,

followed by Item 11, *In learning English it is important to repeat and practice a lot*, with a mean score rating of 3.59. These ten items are also the strongest in terms of the percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed with them, although there is some change in order in the lower half of the table. For example, we can see that Item 9, *It's O.K. to guess if you don't know a word in English*, had the sixth highest score of 91.2% in terms of the number of students either agreeing or strongly agreeing. However, in terms of mean score, Item 9 placed ninth with a mean score rating of 3.08.

Table 13. Items of strongest agreement for student questionnaire, Time 1. Highest mean scores and percentage agreement.

	Mean score	Agree (3+4) %
2. English class should be enjoyable.	3.67	98
11. In learning English it is important to repeat and practice a lot.	3.59	97.4
15. Listening to tapes and watching English programs on television are very important in learning English.	3.44	95.9
5. It is useful to know about English-speaking countries in order to speak English.	3.37	93.2
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn English.	3.34	92
17. If I learn to speak English very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.	3.22	82.7
40. I study English because it is useful to communicate with English speaking people.	3.2	89.8
21. If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.	3.13	83.7
9. It's O.K. to guess If you don't know a word in English.	3.08	91.2
28. Some languages are easier to learn than others.	3.03	89.4

The nine items of strongest disagreement from the Time 1 student questionnaire are given in Table 14. Responses to nine questionnaire items averaged below a score of two, disagree. From Table 14, we can see that Item 6, *You shouldn't say anything in English until you can speak it correctly*, had the lowest mean score of 1.32, and the highest percentage of disagreement, with 98.2% of students either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement. This is followed by Item 27, *In order to speak and understand English very well, English education at school is enough*, with a mean score of 1.57 and 95.1% of students either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with this statement. There were two items with low mean response scores, which just failed to qualify for Table 14. Item 14, *Learning English is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules*, had a mean score of 2.01, with 84.27% of students either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Item 29, *You can learn to improve your English only from native speakers of English*, had a mean score of 2.09, with 82.84% of students either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

Table 14. Items of strongest disagreement for student questionnaire, Time 1. Highest mean scores and percentage disagreement.

	Mean score	Disagree (1+2) %
6. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can speak it correctly.	1.32	98.2
27. In order to speak and understand English very well, English education at school is enough.	1.57	95.1
7. Considering the amount of time I have studied English, I'm satisfied with my progress.	1.66	92.8
23. People who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages.	1.71	92.7
26. Japanese are good at learning foreign languages.	1.74	94.9
20. Learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Japanese.	1.84	88.4
16. Girls are better than boys at learning English.	1.89	83.1
3. In order to learn to read and write English very well, English education at school is enough.	1.9	85.8
45. I am satisfied with the English education I received.	1.95	78.6

Items of strongest agreement were combined with items of strongest disagreement, to produce a list of strongest reported beliefs. Items of disagreement were recoded to allow for a meaningful comparison of all mean scores. A score of 1 became a 4, a 2 became a 3, a 3 became a 2, and a 4 became a 1. In addition, due to the combination of responses of agreement and responses of disagreement, certain items were reworded for ease of understanding as positive statements. These rewordings are shown in Table 15.

Table 15. Items reworded for comparison.

Item 3	In order to learn to read and write English very well, English education at school is enough. <u>Changed to:</u> <i>In order to learn to read and write English very well, English education at school is NOT enough.</i>
Item 6	You shouldn't say anything in English until you can speak it correctly. <u>Changed to:</u> <i>To say something in English, you needn't wait until you can speak it correctly.</i>
Item 7	Considering the amount of time I have studied English, I'm satisfied with my progress. <u>Changed to:</u> <i>Considering the amount of time I have studied English, I'm NOT satisfied with my progress.</i>
Item 14	Learning English is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules. <u>Changed to:</u> <i>Learning English is NOT mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.</i>
Item 16	Girls are better than boys at learning English. <u>Changed to:</u> <i>Girls are NOT better than boys at learning English.</i>
Item 20	Learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Japanese. <u>Changed to:</u> <i>Learning English is NOT mostly a matter of translating from Japanese.</i>
Item 23	People who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages. <u>Changed to:</u> <i>People who are good at math and science are not necessarily poor at learning foreign languages.</i>
Item 26	Japanese are good at learning foreign languages. <u>Changed to:</u> <i>Japanese are NOT good at learning foreign languages.</i>
Item 27	In order to speak and understand English very well, English education at school is enough. <u>Changed to:</u> <i>In order to speak and understand English very well, English education at school is NOT enough.</i>
Item 45	I am satisfied with the English education I received. <u>Changed to:</u> <i>I am NOT satisfied with the English education I received.</i>

Following this recoding and rewording, the twenty strongest beliefs were compiled and are shown in Table 16. This table, therefore, lists the twenty strongest beliefs reported on entrance to university at Time 1 (April, 2002) by this body of 661 students. We can see that the strongest held belief is Item 6, *To say something in English, you needn't wait until you can speak it correctly*, with a mean score of 3.68, and 98.2% of students agreeing with this statement. The second strongest belief is Item 2, *English class should be enjoyable*, with a mean score of 3.67, and 98% of students agreeing with this statement. These results will be discussed later in the discussion section.

Table 16. The 20 strongest student beliefs, Time 1, mean scores and percentages.

	Mean Score	Response (3 + 4) %
1) 6. To say something in English, you needn't wait until you can speak it correctly.	3.68	98.2
2) 2. English class should be enjoyable.	3.67	98
3) 11. In learning English it is important to repeat and practice a lot.	3.59	97.4
11) 15. Listening to tapes and watching English programs on television are very important in learning English.	3.44	95.9
1) 27. In order to speak and understand English very well, English education at school is NOT enough.	3.43	95.1
2) 5. It is useful to know about English-speaking countries in order to speak English.	3.37	93.2
=7) 1. It is easier for children than adults to learn English.	3.34	92
=7) 7. Considering the amount of time I have studied English, I'm NOT satisfied with my progress.	3.34	92.8
1) 23. People who are good at math and science are not necessarily poor at learning foreign languages.	3.28	92.7
10) 26. Japanese are NOT good at learning foreign languages.	3.26	94.9
1) 17. If I learn to speak English very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.	3.22	82.7
2) 40. I study English because it is useful to communicate with English speaking people.	3.2	89.8
13) 20. Learning English is NOT mostly a matter of translating from Japanese.	3.16	88.4
14) 21. If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.	3.13	83.7
15) 16. Girls are NOT better than boys at learning English.	3.11	83.1
1) 3. In order to learn to read and write English very well, English education at school is NOT enough.	3.10	85.8
17) 9. It's O.K. to guess if you don't know a word in English.	3.08	91.2
18) 45. I am NOT satisfied with the English education I received.	3.05	78.6
19) 28. Some languages are easier to learn than others.	3.03	89.4
20) 14. Learning English is NOT mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.	2.99	84.27

Factor Analysis

To investigate the organisation of learner beliefs in their study, Sakui and Gaies (1999) carried out a principal components factor analysis, which yielded a four-factor solution containing 25 of the 45 questionnaire items. These four groups of items were then labelled a) beliefs about a contemporary (communicative) orientation to learning English, b) beliefs about a traditional orientation to learning English, c) beliefs about the quality and sufficiency of classroom instruction for learning English, and d) beliefs about foreign language aptitude and difficulty. As discussed in the literature review, for this study I am particularly interested in beliefs relating to the approach or orientation to the teaching and learning of English, and investigating whether the students possess beliefs more conducive to a traditional approach or to a more communicative approach. A principal components factor analysis was carried out on the student responses to see if the orientation factors revealed in Sakui and Gaies (1999) also existed in this study. The results of the factor analysis are compared with those of Sakui and Gaies, to help assess the degree of similarity between the two studies.

The factor analysis revealed a four-factor matrix containing 27 of the 45 questionnaire items, using factor loadings of 0.4 or greater. The full factor analysis can be found in Appendix G. The abbreviated solution, for Factor 1, labeled, *Beliefs related to a communicative orientation to learning English*, and Factor 2, labeled, *Beliefs related to a traditional orientation to learning English*, is given in Table 17.

We can see that Factor 1 contains 13 items, with an internal Cronbach α reliability coefficient of $\alpha = .7292$. The reliability figure follows recoding of item eight due to the negative correlation produced for this item in the factor analysis. The negative correlation of Item 8, *In English classes, I prefer to have my teacher provide explanations in Japanese*, in Factor 1, is logical, as explanations in the L1 are not conducive to the accepted practices of a communicative approach to learning English.

Six items loaded on Factor 2, two of them negatively, with a Cronbach α reliability coefficient for Factor 2 of $\alpha = .6031$. The reliability figure follows recoding of items 4 and 43 due to the negative correlation produced for these items in the factor analysis. The negative correlation of Item 4, *I believe that someday I will speak English very well*, in Factor 2, is logical, in that, the development of confidence in spoken English is not emphasised in the more traditional approach to English language teaching. The negative correlation of Item 43, *The longer I study English, the more enjoyable I find it*, in Factor 2, seems to make sense, as the continued enjoyment of English study is the strongest positive loading item in Factor 1, and therefore, seems to be more closely related to the actual use of English for communication purposes.

Table 17. Factor Analysis for Time 1 - abridged two-factor solution.

Item	Factor Loadings		
	F1	F2	
Factor 1. <i>Beliefs related to a communicative orientation to learning English.</i> ($\alpha=.7292$).			
43	The longer I study English, the more enjoyable I find it.	.535	-.459
5	It is useful to know about English speaking countries in order to speak English.	.499	
15	Listening to tapes and watching English programs on television are very important in learning English.	.499	
11	In learning English it is important to repeat and practice a lot.	.496	
34	I can improve my English by speaking English with my classmates.	.473	
17	If I learn to speak English very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.	.460	
2	English class should be enjoyable.	.459	
40	I study English because it is useful to communicate with English speaking people.	.451	
44	If I heard a foreigner of my age speaking English I would go up to that person to practice speaking.	.424	
37	I should be able to learn everything I am taught.	.420	
21	If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.	.414	
4	I believe that someday I will speak English very well.	.404	-.458
8	In English classes, I prefer to have my teacher provide explanations in Japanese.	-.405	
Factor 2. <i>Beliefs related to a traditional orientation to learning English</i> ($\alpha=.6031$).			
36	To say something in English, I think of how I would say it in Japanese and then translate it into English.		.597
41	To understand English, it must be translated into Japanese.		.477
35	I make mistakes because I do not study enough.		.475
39	If my teacher is a native speaker, he/she should be able to speak Japanese when necessary.		.400

In the Sakui and Gaies (1999) factor analysis, Factor 1 contains 12 items, with a reliability coefficient of $\alpha = .749$. Eleven of these items load at 0.4 or greater. All of these eleven items appear in Factor 1 of this study. The additional items in Factor 1 of this study are Item 34, *I can improve my English by speaking with my classmates*, which is a logical addition, and Item 37, *I should be able to*

learn everything I am taught. Seven items loaded into Factor 2 in Sakui and Gaies, with a reliability coefficient of $\alpha = .636$. Five of these items loaded at 0.4 or greater. Two of these, Item 34 and Item 37, appear amongst the six items in Factor 2 of this study.

To summarise, the results of the two studies can be considered similar in terms of the questionnaire items which correlate together, through factor analysis, and make sense under a heading of, *Beliefs about a contemporary (communicative) orientation to learning English.* There is less similarity, however, between the two studies in terms of items which correlate together, through factor analysis, under a heading of, *Beliefs related to a traditional orientation to learning English.*

Research Question 2

How do student held beliefs about English language learning compare with beliefs held by their teachers about English language learning?

The teacher version of the questionnaire was administered to the 34 class teachers at Time 1. In compiling the teacher version of the questionnaire, eight items were omitted from the 45 items in the student version of the questionnaire. These eight items were considered inappropriate for teachers to answer because they specifically targeted the personal opinions of the students. Examples of omitted items include Item 43, *The longer I study English, the more enjoyable I find it,* and Item 4, *I believe that some day I will speak English very well.* For ease of comparison between teacher and student responses, the item numbers remained unchanged in the analysis, and, therefore, the columns of the omitted items remain blank in the teacher results table, Table 18.

In addition, many of the items in the teacher version were rewritten to represent a teacher viewpoint. For example, Item 34, *I can improve my English by speaking English with my classmate,* was rewritten as, *Students can improve their English by speaking English with their classmates.* Complete details of the differences between the student version and the teacher version of the questionnaire are given in the Methodology chapter.

It was anticipated that many of the teachers would complete the teacher version of the questionnaire at the same time as their students were completing the student version. Because of this, the items on the teacher version were scrambled, to ensure that the numbering of the items on the teacher version did not correspond to the numbering of the items on the student version. A breakdown of responses for the items in the Time 1 administration of the teacher questionnaire, following unscrambling, is given in Table 18, which shows how many teachers gave each of the four possible responses, a percentage value for each response, the percentage values for general agreement or general disagreement, and the mean response score, for each of the questionnaire items.

Table 18. Teacher questionnaire responses, showing the number and percentage response for each item, and the mean score.

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Response									
1	0	0	11		1	29			0
2	7	0	17		7	5			0
3	16	16	4		19	0			13
4	11	18	1		7	0			21
Mean	3.12	3.53	1.85		2.94	1.15			3.62
Total (n)	34	34	33		34	34			34
%									
1	0	0	33.3		2.94	85.3			0
2	20.6	0	51.5		20.6	14.7			0
3	47.1	47.1	12.1		55.9	0			38.2
4	32.4	52.9	3.03		20.6	0			61.8
1 + 2	20.6	0	84.8		23.5	100			0
3 + 4	79.4	100	15.2		76.5	0			100

Item	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Response									
1	6	0	0	10	12	1	3	3	7
2	5	4	10	17	22	9	18	20	22
3	4	18	20	5	0	15	10	8	4
4	12	12	2	1	0	8	2	2	0
Mean	2.77	3.24	2.74	1.93	1.65	2.9	2.33	2.28	1.91
Total (n)	27	34	32	33	34	33	33	33	33
%									
1.00	22.2	0	0	30.3	35.3	3.03	9.09	9.09	21.2
2.00	18.5	11.8	31.3	51.5	64.7	27.3	54.5	60.6	66.7
3.00	14.8	52.9	62.5	15.2	0	45.5	30.3	24.2	12.1
4.00	44.4	35.3	6.25	3.03	0	24.2	6.06	6.06	0
1 + 2	40.7	11.8	31.3	81.8	100	30.3	63.6	69.7	87.9
3 + 4	59.3	88.2	68.8	18.2	0	69.7	36.4	30.3	12.1

Item	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Response									
1	0	16	0	4	9	2	6	3	15
2	4	18	12	18	22	12	23	24	15
3	18	0	20	9	2	16	4	5	2
4	12	0	1	2	0	3	0	0	1
Mean	3.24	1.53	2.67	2.27	1.79	2.61	1.94	2.08	1.67
Total (n)	34	34	33	33	33	33	33	32	33
%									
1.00	0	47.1	0	12.1	27.3	6.06	18.2	9.38	45.5
2.00	11.8	52.9	36.4	54.5	66.7	36.4	69.7	75	45.5
3.00	52.9	0	60.6	27.3	6.06	48.5	12.1	15.6	6.06
4.00	35.3	0	3.03	6.06	0	9.09	0	0	3.03
1 + 2	11.8	100	36.4	66.7	93.9	42.4	87.9	84.4	90.9
3 + 4	88.2	0	63.6	33.3	6.06	57.6	12.1	15.6	9.09

Table 18. continued

Item	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
Response									
1	1	13	1	2	15		0	11	0
2	2	20	8	13	16		0	21	1
3	23	1	18	17	2		17	2	29
4	8	0	7	0	0		17	0	2
Mean	3.12	1.65	2.91	2.47	1.63		3.5	1.74	3.02
Total (n)	34	34	34	32	33		34	34	32
%									
1.00	2.94	38.2	2.94	6.25	45.5		0	32.4	0
2.00	5.88	58.8	23.5	40.6	48.5		0	61.8	3.13
3.00	67.6	2.94	52.9	53.1	6.06		50	5.88	90.6
4.00	23.5	0	20.6	0	0		50	0	6.25
1 + 2	8.82	97.1	26.5	46.9	93.9		0	94.1	3.13
3 + 4	91.2	2.94	73.5	53.1	6.06		100	5.88	96.9

Item	37	38	39	40	41	42
Response						
1	5	16	3		17	0
2	19	17	16		16	2
3	9	1	11		0	21
4	1	0	4		0	10
Mean	2.18	1.56	2.47		1.51	3.24
Total (n)	34	34	34		33	33
%						
1.00	14.7	47.1	8.82		51.5	0
2.00	55.9	50	47.1		48.5	6.06
3.00	26.5	2.94	32.4		0	63.6
4.00	2.94	0	11.8		0	30.3
1 + 2	70.6	97.1	55.9		100	6.06
3 + 4	29.4	2.94	44.1		0	93.9

1 - Strongly disagree; 2 - disagree; 3 - agree; 4 - strongly agree.

We can see from Table 18, that there are seven items on the teacher questionnaire for which there is 100 percent general agreement amongst all teachers surveyed. These are:

100% of teachers generally agree with:

Item 2, *English class should be enjoyable.*

Item 9, *It's O.K. to guess if you don't know a word in English*

Item 34, *Students can improve their English by speaking English with classmates*

100% of teachers generally disagree with:

Item 6, *You shouldn't say anything in English until you can speak it correctly.*

Item 14, *Learning English is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.*

Item 20, *Learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Japanese.*

Item 41, *To understand English, it must be translated into Japanese.*

In comparing Table 18 with Table 11, we can see that high percentages of students generally agree with the teachers' beliefs on the seven items above. However, there are two exceptions. From Table 11, only 77% of students generally agree with Item 34, *Students can improve their English by speaking English with classmates*, and only 76% of students generally disagree with Item 41, *To understand English, it must be translated into Japanese*.

Another item, which stands out in terms of large differences in percentage responses, is Item 36. In response to the wording, *To say something in English, most students think of how to say it in Japanese and then translate it into English*, 97% of the teachers (31 of the 32 responding teachers) generally agreed. In response to the wording, *To say something in English, I think of how I would say it in Japanese and then translate it into English*, only 59% of the students generally agreed. There is, therefore, a large disparity between how reliant the students believe themselves to be upon translation, and how reliant the teachers believe the students to be upon translation.

Teacher and student responses were further analysed using t-tests. Due to the large difference in sample sizes of students and teachers, the t-tests assumed unequal variance between the two samples. Due to the large number of differences revealed by the t-test procedure, a significance value of $p < .001$ was used to reduce the possibility of erroneously identifying differences between teacher and student responses. As shown in Table 19, significant differences were identified for twenty of the thirty-seven common questionnaire items. From Table 19, we can also see that there are some large differences between teacher and student response means and percentages, indicating some wide disparities between student and teacher beliefs related to the learning of English.

Table 19. Items with significant difference between teacher and student responses at Time 1, in order of mean difference of response score ($p < .001$).

	Tchrs. Mean	%	Studs. Mean	%	Diff. In Mean
17. If I learn to speak English very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.	2.28	30 a/sa	3.22	83 a/sa	0.94
35. I make mistakes because I do not study enough.	1.74	6 a/sa	2.58	55 a/sa	0.84
30. Some people are born with a special ability which is useful for learning English.	2.91	74 a/sa	2.09	28 a/sa	0.82
38. I want my teacher to correct all my mistakes.	1.56	3 a/sa	2.37	41 a/sa	0.81
32. Learning a word means learning the Japanese translation.	1.63	2 a/sa	2.35	42 a/sa	0.72
19. Learning English is different from learning other subjects.	3.24	88 a/sa	2.6	56 a/sa	0.64
42. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	3.24	94 a/sa	2.6	55 a/sa	0.64
34. I can improve my English by speaking English with my classmates.	3.5	100 a/sa	2.9	77 a/sa	0.60
13. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on.	1.93	18 a/sa	2.53	53 a/sa	0.60
41. To understand English, it must be translated into Japanese.	1.51	0 a/sa	2.06	24 a/sa	0.55
9. It's O.K. to guess If you don't know a word in English.	3.62	100 a/sa	3.08	91 a/sa	0.54
15. Listening to tapes and watching English programs on television are very important in learning English.	2.9	70 a/sa	3.44	96 a/sa	0.54

	Tchrs. Mean	%	Studs. Mean	%	Diff. In Mean
31. Speaking and listening to English are more useful than reading and writing English.	2.47	53 a	2.98	80 a/sa	0.51
37. I should be able to learn everything I am taught.	2.18	30 a/sa	2.65	61 a/sa	0.47
25. People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.	1.94	12 a/sa	2.41	45 a/sa	0.47
21. If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.	2.67	64 a/sa	3.13	84 a/sa	0.46
36. To say something in English, I think of how I would say it in Japanese and then translate it into English.	3.02	97 a/sa	2.57	60 a/sa	0.45
29. You can learn to improve your English only from native speakers of English.	1.65	97 d/sd	2.09	83 d/sd	0.44
14. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.	1.65	100 d/sd	2.01	84 d/sd	0.36
26. Japanese are good at learning foreign languages.	2.08	84 d/sd	1.74	95 d/sd	0.34

* sa – strongly agree; a – agree; d – disagree; sd – strongly disagree

In terms of difference in mean response score, from Table 19, we can see that the item of greatest difference is Item 17, *If I (or students) learn to speak English very well, I (they) will have many opportunities to use it.* The mean student score was 3.22, with 83% of students either agreeing ('a') or strongly agreeing ('sa') with this statement. The teachers' mean score was 2.28, with only 30% of the teachers agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. The students, therefore, seem to believe much more strongly than the teachers that they will have many opportunities to use their newly acquired English in the future. The second greatest difference is for Item 35, *I (students) make mistakes because I (they) do not study enough.* The mean student score was 2.58, with 55% of students either agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. The teachers' mean score was 1.74, with only 6% of teachers agreeing with this statement.

Other differences of note between student and teacher responses, revealed in Table 19, include:

41% of students believe that they want their teacher to correct all their mistakes, while only 3% of teachers believe they should correct all the students' mistakes (Item 38).

42% of students believe that learning a word means learning the Japanese translation, while only 2% of teachers believe this to be the case (Item 32).

100 % of teachers believe that students can improve their English by speaking with their classmates, while only 77% of students believe this (Item 34).

53% of students believe that if they are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on, while only 18% of teachers believe this (Item 13).

96% of students believe that listening to tapes and watching English programs on television are very important in learning English, while only 70% of teachers generally believe this to be so (Item 15).

84% of students believe that if they learn to speak English very well, it will help them get a good job, while only 64% of teachers agree (Item 21).

60% of students believe that to say something in English, they translate from Japanese, while 97% of teachers believe that their students translate from Japanese (Item 36).

Research Question 3

Do students' beliefs about English language learning change over a course of English language study?

To investigate possible changes in learners' beliefs over time, responses were analysed of those students participating in both administrations of the questionnaire, at Time 1 (April, 2002) and Time 2 (December, 2002). There were 744 students enrolled in the classes involved in this study. Of these, 661 students participated in the Time 1 questionnaire administration. The same questionnaire was administered again at Time 2, and there were 504 students who completed both the April and December questionnaires. Paired Sample t-tests were carried out on the responses of these 504 students to investigate the possibility of changes in student beliefs over the nine-month period. The t-tests revealed significant differences in the responses to 11 of the 45 items ($p < .01$), as shown in Table 20.

Table 20. Items with significantly different student responses between Time 1 and Time 2, in order of mean diff. (n=504) ($p < .01$).

	Mean Time 1	3 + 4 %	Mean Time 2	3 + 4 %	Mean Diff.
4. I believe that someday I will speak English very well.	2.68	61	2.46	45	0.22*
33. I studied English only to pass the entrance exam.	2.26	43	2.42	50	0.16*
42. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	2.58	54	2.73	63	0.15*
30. Some people are born with a special ability, which is useful for learning English.	2.11	28	2.25	35	0.14*
40. I study English because it is useful to communicate with English speaking people.	3.22	91	3.1	85	0.12
43. The longer I study English, the more enjoyable I find it.	3.01	77	2.89	72	0.12
32. Learning a word means learning the Japanese translation.	2.35	42	2.24	36	0.11
34. I can improve my English by speaking English with my classmates.	2.91	77	2.8	72	0.11
9. It's O.K. to guess If you don't know a word in English.	3.08	90 3=71, 4=19	3.19	90 3=60, 4=30	0.11*
12. I would feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other Japanese students.	2.66	62	2.56	53	0.1
19. Learning English is different from learning other subjects.	2.64	59	2.74	64	0.1

* Significant at $p < .001$

We can see from Table 20 that the item with the greatest mean difference is Item 4, *I believe that someday I will speak English very well*, with a mean score at Time 1 of 2.68, and at Time 2 of 2.46. We can also see that there was a significant change in the number of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. At Time 1, 61% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they would someday speak English well, but at Time 2, only 45% believed this to be true. The responses to Item 33 show that at Time 1, 43% of students believed that they

studied English only to pass the (university) entrance exam, but 50% of the students believed this to be the case at the Time 2 administration.

In addition, at Time 2, more students believed that it is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one (Item 42), and that some people are born with a special ability, which is useful for learning English (Item 30). Fewer students believed at Time 2 that they study English because it is useful to communicate with English speaking people (Item 40), that the longer they study English, the more enjoyable they find it (Item 43), and that they can improve their English by speaking English with their classmates (Item 34). Fewer students at Time 2 also believed that learning a word means learning the Japanese translation (Item 32), and that they would feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other Japanese students (Item 12).

Finally, the greatest difference in discrete Likert scale responses between Time 1 and Time 2 was for Item 9, *It's O.K. to guess If you don't know a word in English*. There was an 11% increase in the number of students who strongly agreed with this statement at Time 2. At Time 1, only 19% of students strongly agreed with this statement, and 71% of students agreed. At Time 2, 30% of the students strongly agreed with this statement, and 60% of students agreed.

Student Discussion Groups

Following the Time 2 questionnaire administration, eight students were asked to participate in two discussions, to reflect on the questionnaire, their own individual responses to the questionnaire items, and the results of the questionnaire in terms of apparent changes in student beliefs. Two groups were formed, each consisting of four advanced level students, a level deemed appropriate for participation in the discussions, in English. The discussions took place in January 2003, were of approximately one-hour in length, and were audio-taped. The recordings were transcribed, and relevant excerpts from the discussion transcripts can be found in Appendix I. The student names shown in the transcripts are pseudonyms. The transcripts revealed that group one was much more responsive to discussion than group two.

Of particular interest was whether the discussion groups could account for any differences in student responses (and changes in beliefs) between the Time 1 and Time 2 administrations of the questionnaire. Full analysis of the data had not yet been carried out at the time of the discussions, but I was in possession of the questionnaire responses of the discussion group participants. In Table 20, we can see that Item 4, *I believe that someday I will speak English very well*, showed the greatest mean difference between Time 1 and Time 2 responses. Three of the eight discussion group students changed their responses to Item 4 over the two administrations. Student Hitomi believed at Time 1 that she would someday speak English very well. However, disappointed with her own efforts as a university student, by Time 2, she believed she would not someday become a good English speaker, because she had not, and did not study hard enough. Student Kanako had negative expectations of her university class and disagreed with Item 4 at Time 1, believing that a large university class, with students of questionable English ability, would hinder her own progress. However, after being placed in an

advanced class containing few high level English speaking students, by Time 2, she believed she would someday become a good speaker of English.

Another item of discussion was Item 34, *I can improve my English by speaking English with my classmates*. Fewer students either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement at Time 2 than at Time 1, and three of the discussion group students changed their responses to this item. Students Natsuko and Koki both believed that practising speaking English with classmates provides a good opportunity for using English, but that, by Time 2, they believed that real learning can only take place through communication with native speakers of English. They also suggested that speaking with other non-Japanese learners would be more beneficial than speaking with Japanese classmates. Student Kanako (above), on the other hand, disagreed at Time 1 that her English could improve by speaking English with her classmates, due to her negative expectations of the English ability of other students. By Time 2, however, she had changed her mind and believed that her English could improve by practicing speaking with other students of a similar level to hers.

A final item of interest was Item 40, *I study English because it is useful to communicate with English speaking people*, which showed a downward swing from 91% of students strongly agreeing or agreeing at Time 1, to 85% at Time 2. None of the discussion group students changed their belief in this statement, but they did discuss why students might change their responses to this item. A recurring theme in the whole discussions was that of the loss of confidence and hope that many students experienced during their course of study, between Time 1 and Time 2. The teachers in the English language program at the participant university are almost exclusively native speakers of English, and the medium of instruction is English. This contrasts with the 6 years of English instruction received by Japanese Junior and Senior High School students, which is almost exclusively taught in Japanese by Japanese teachers. The discussion groups believed that after entering university and participating in native-speaker taught English classes, most students became so disappointed and frustrated with their own ability, and their own previous learning experiences, that their confidence to communicate in English had drained away between the two administrations. By Time 2, therefore, they believed less that they would ever be able to communicate effectively with English speaking people.

A sample of comments from four students in the discussion groups is given in Table 21.

Table 21. A sample of discussion group students' comments

Natsuko: "I think that most students studied English in Japanese for 6 years. Once they entered university they have to study English in English. And it's a very different situation from high school."

Hitomi: "Japanese people are used to studying English in Japanese, and they lose their confidence because it's a struggle."

Shuji: "Students were hoping in April. They lost hope."

Table 21 continued.

Yoshimi: “We had a spirit of challenge in April, but lost confidence.”

Shuji: “In April I was satisfied just to speak English (enjoyable). After that I found that I needed to study more grammar and to read more difficult books in English. So in December I decided there are many walls. It is not fun anymore. I like English. It is interesting, but difficult.”

The belief in the importance of being able to speak English, and the usefulness of being able to communicate with English speaking people seems, for many students, to be related to their confidence in their ability to do so. These discussion groups allowed many insights into the students’ beliefs, particularly in respect to changes in students’ beliefs, and some possible reasons behind the changes. The results shown in Table 20, and the input from the discussion groups, indicate that changes may actually take place in the expectations and beliefs about language learning of the students during their first year of university study.

Research Question 4

What relationships exist between student held beliefs about English language learning, and English language proficiency level?

An area of interest in the study of learner beliefs is how beliefs may affect learning and learning outcomes. However, very few investigations have been conducted into how learner beliefs may actually impact learning outcomes. One of the few studies was conducted by Peacock (1999) in Hong Kong, who found a relationship between certain learner beliefs, as measured by responses to BALLI items, and the proficiency levels of his English language students, as measured by English proficiency tests. The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between students’ questionnaire responses and their proficiency level in three ways. First, to try to identify any patterns between the students’ questionnaire responses and their proficiency level, as measured by their scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Second, to try to identify any relationship between the students’ responses to the communication orientation items in Factor 1 of the factor analysis (Table 17), and their proficiency level, as measured by their scores on the TOEFL test. Third, to try to identify any relationship between the students’ responses to the communication orientation items in Factor 1 of the factor analysis (Table 17), and their proficiency level, as measured by their end of semester English grades.

The TOEFL test is a standardised English proficiency test for non-native speakers of English, and is widely used for placement into language programs and universities, particularly in North America. The TOEFL test is a mandatory part of the orientation procedure for the majority of entering first year students at the institution in this study. Of the 661 students who completed the questionnaire at Time 1, 430 of these also took the TOEFL test in early April 2002. The TOEFL

scores for these 430 students were used, in the following analysis, as an indication of their English proficiency level.

The English proficiency level of entering students at the participant university could not be considered particularly high. A score of 500 to 550 is used as a benchmark by many universities in English speaking countries, for entry by non-native English speakers to academic undergraduate courses. This level of score, however, is rarely achieved by Japanese students, at the undergraduate level. For this analysis, the range of TOEFL scores was divided into three, and the questionnaire results of the highest-scoring third of students were compared with those of the lowest-scoring third of students. Of the 430 students, 149 students scored above 422 at Time 1, and were labelled *Group A* (n=149). A total of 138 students scored below 390, and were labelled *Group B* (n=138). A description of the groupings is shown in Table 22. Appendix H contains a full comparison of Time 1 responses for *Group A* students and *Group B* students.

Table 22. Descriptions of TOEFL groups: size, range of score, mean, and factor score for Factor 1.

	Group A	Group B
n	149	138
Range	423 - 557	310 - 387
Mean	444	362
Factor 1 score	41.6	40.1

Group A and Group B responses were analysed using t-tests. The t-tests revealed significant differences in the responses to six of the questionnaire items ($p < .01$), between Group A students and Group B students, as shown in Table 23.

Table 23. Items of significant difference between Group A and Group B mean response scores, and difference in group means ($p < .01$).

	Mean Scores			
	All students	<i>Group A students</i>	<i>Group B students</i>	Diff.
4. I believe that someday I will speak English very well.	2.66	2.86	2.6	0.26
43. The longer I study English, the more enjoyable I find it.	2.99	3.15	2.9	0.25
8. In English classes, I prefer to have my teacher provide explanations in Japanese.	2.08	1.9	2.11	0.21
20. Learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Japanese.	1.84	1.74	1.95	0.21
39. If my teacher is a native speaker, he/she should be able to speak Japanese when necessary.	2.68	2.46	2.66	0.2
23. People who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages.	1.71	1.59	1.77	0.18

Of the six items in Table 23, five relate directly to the issue of methodological orientation. Item 4 and Item 43 relate to a more contemporary, communicative orientation, and indeed loaded into Factor 1 of the factor analysis, *Beliefs related to a communicative orientation to learning English* (Table 17). Items 20, 8, and 39 are related to a traditional orientation to language learning,

specifically, learning the L2 through translation from the L1, and expecting teachers to provide explanations in the L1, even if they are native speakers of the L2. In the factor analysis, Item 39 loaded into Factor 2, *Beliefs related to a traditional orientation to learning English*, and Item 8 loaded negatively into Factor 1.

The results shown in Table 23 suggest that, in this study, higher proficiency students are more likely to believe that someday they will speak English very well (Item 4), and that the longer they study English, the more enjoyable they find it (Item 43). On the other hand, lower proficiency students are more likely to prefer their teachers to provide explanations in Japanese (Item 8), even if the teacher is a native speaker of English (Item 39). Lower proficiency students are also more likely to believe in the necessity of L1–L2 translation (Item 20), and that people who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages (Item 23).

These results suggest that the main issues on which high proficiency and low proficiency students seem to differ in belief, can be categorised as relating to methodological orientation, with higher proficiency students leaning towards a more communicative orientation, and the less proficient students relating more with practices conducive to a traditional orientation to language learning.

Proponents of a more communicative approach to second language learning would suggest that activities and beliefs more conducive to such a communicative approach are more likely to lead to successful language learning outcomes, and improved proficiency. Peacock (1999), for example, suggests that the negative learning practices associated with certain beliefs held by his students, particularly their resistance to participation in communicative activities, were directly associated with the students' low proficiency scores at the end of their English course. Conversely, in this case, the beliefs of the higher proficiency students may have had some influence on their learning practices, which may be responsible for their relative success in the learning of English to date.

The factor analysis for this study produced a list of thirteen items, grouped together in Factor 1, and subsequently labelled as relating to a communicative orientation to learning English. As a next step, I was interested in investigating the relationship between students' responses to these communicative-orientated items, and their proficiency level, as measured by their TOEFL scores.

Factor scores were calculated for the students, by adding the students' response scores (from 1 to 4) for Factor 1 items. The average factor score for the 13 items was 41.6 for Group A students and 40.1 for Group B students, indicating that higher proficiency students (Group A) are slightly more likely to agree with items related to a communicative orientation. However, correlation between all student factor scores and all TOEFL scores produced a Pearson r coefficient of just $r=0.13$. This suggests that there is no significant relationship between students' scores on the items in Factor 1, and their proficiency level, as measured by their TOEFL scores, at Time 1. No evidence was found, therefore, of a relationship between students' responses to the communicative orientation items and the high or low TOEFL proficiency group into which the students had been placed.

Finally, having established no clear relationship between students' Factor 1 responses and TOEFL scores, I was keen to investigate any relationship between students' Factor 1 scores and end of semester English grades. Five classes were chosen from the 23 classes in the study, with a total of 129 students, representing a cross-section of levels and subject majors. The end of semester English grades (for July 2002) for the students from these five classes were used to investigate relationships with the students' responses to the communicative orientation items in Factor 1, at Time 1. The students' grades were correlated with the students' factor scores, calculated from Factor 1 of the factor analysis, as mentioned in the previous section.

The end of semester grades for this English program are decided approximately as follows, depending on the level of the class:

- 30% to 40% of grade - speaking assessments
- 25% to 35% of grade - writing assessments
- 15% to 20% of grade - written exam (including listening section)
- 10% to 15% of grade - students' effort and attitude

Grades are reported on a scale from 0 to 100, and ranged from 13 to 97, with an average score of 83. Pearson correlation between the students' grades and their factor scores on Factor 1 was $r=0.03$. This suggests that there is no clear relationship between students' scores on the items in Factor 1, and their proficiency level, as measured by their end of semester English grades, in July 2002.

In summary, the results in relation to research question four, indicate that some differences exist (at $p<.01$) in the responses to questionnaire items, between students of different proficiency levels, as measured by their TOEFL scores. However, the results do not provide any evidence of a relationship between students' proficiency, as measured by both students' TOEFL scores, and end of semester English grades, and strength of agreement with questionnaire items relating to a communicative orientation to learning English.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I briefly review the rationale for the study, and then discuss the results of the study, in the order of the research questions presented.

Affective factors in second language learning have been the focus of increasing attention in recent years. The area of student beliefs, however, has been the focus of relatively few published investigations. In particular, very little research has been conducted on the beliefs of Japanese language learners. The study of Sakui and Gaies (1999) has been identified as one of the few systematic studies of Japanese learners' beliefs. This study employs the questionnaire developed by Sakui and Gaies (1999), in Japanese, which proved to be fairly reliable in their test-retest procedure, and returned satisfactory internal consistency levels in their principal components factor analysis. As only two other studies have been identified which employ the Sakui and Gaies instrument (Asbjornson, 1999; Sato, 2004), this study hopes to contribute to the field of second language learning in terms of its replicative nature. There is a need for more replication studies in the area of second language teaching and acquisition (Polio and Gass, 1997), and progress in the research field often comes from the accumulated knowledge brought about by the use of replication studies (Gay and Airasian, 2000).

In addition to producing a description of the language learning beliefs of Japanese learners, a particular aim of this study was to investigate whether learner beliefs could be considered consistent with a more communicative approach to the studying of English. This seems of particular importance at this time, given the changes currently taking place in English language education in Japan (e.g. Wada, 2002), and discussed in an earlier section. In such a time of change, it is very difficult to make assumptions about what expectations and beliefs entering university students are carrying with them into the language classroom in Japan. Expectations and beliefs which have been shaped by the varying life and learning experiences to which the learners have already been exposed.

Furthermore, the study also aimed to empirically investigate the relationship between learner beliefs and teacher beliefs, by administering the questionnaire to 34 of the students' class teachers. Previous studies of learner beliefs often discuss accepted norms or common wisdom amongst teachers (e.g. Horwitz, 1988), with little objective investigation of what individual teachers actually believe.

Next, the study aimed to investigate any changes in learners' beliefs over a nine-month period of study. Despite the research of Pajares (1992) highlighting the resistant nature of beliefs, studies by Kern (1995), Oh (1996), and Rifkin (2000) suggest there may be evidence that some language learning beliefs of second language learners may be susceptible to change over a course of study.

Finally, very little empirical evidence has been provided in the literature to show any relationship between learner beliefs and learning outcomes. Although it has become accepted that the application of appropriate learning strategies can

lead to improved proficiency (e.g. Oxford, 1990), beliefs often underlie the learning strategies that students choose to use (Wenden, 1986, 1987; Yang, 1992). A significant relationship was discovered by Peacock (1999) between responses to BALLI questionnaire items and the language proficiency of his students. This study aimed to investigate further the relationship between the beliefs of the learners and their language proficiency.

Research Question 1

What beliefs do first year Japanese university students in Japan hold about English language learning?

The first aim of this study was to try to identify a set of beliefs commonly held about English language learning by a body of entering first year students at a private Japanese university. Results from the questionnaire administration can be found in chapter four. Table 11 gives a full breakdown of responses for the whole questionnaire, and Table 16 lists the twenty strongest held beliefs by this body of 661 students. In summarising the twenty strongest student beliefs from Table 16, we can see that the students believe English class should be enjoyable, that they need not wait until they can say something correctly before they speak, that repetition and practice is important, as are listening to tapes and watching English television programs, and having some knowledge of English-speaking countries. Students believe that it is easier for children than adults to learn English, and are not satisfied with their progress in learning English. They believe that Japanese people are not good at learning foreign languages, and that English education at school is not enough to be able to speak and understand English well.

In their 1999 study, Sakui and Gaies suggest that there may be a “growing awareness and approval” (p. 488), on the part of Japanese students, in the ongoing promotion of oral communication as a major goal of English education in Japan. This, in turn, may reflect on the beliefs of the students in this study, who may already be aware of some of the learning processes involved in a more communicative approach to language learning (Keim, Furuya, Doye, and Carson, 1996; Sakui and Gaies, 1999). Certainly, many of the strongest responses of the students in this study were for items which can be directly associated with a more contemporary and communicative approach to language learning. For example, the four strongest beliefs from Table 16, are Item 6, *To say something in English, you needn't wait until you can speak it correctly*, Item 2, *English class should be enjoyable*, Item 11, *In learning English it is important to repeat and practice a lot*, and Item 15, *Listening to tapes and watching English programs on television are very important in learning English*. All four of these statements are associated with a more modern, communicative approach to language learning and classroom activities: students enjoying their language learning experience, not being afraid to make mistakes, the importance of oral practice, and exposure to authentic, motivating aural practice through the use of appropriate listening activities and television programmes. Three of these strongest four beliefs, Items two, eleven, and fifteen, appear in Factor 1, *Beliefs relating to a communicative orientation to learning English*, following a principal components factor analysis (Table 17). The inclusion of Item 11 here, *the belief in the importance of repetition and practice*, in

a communicative orientation factor, needs to be considered within the context of second language teaching in Japan. The traditional ‘yakudoku’ approach to language teaching in Japan (see Literature Review section), is a non-oral approach which relies mainly on grammar translation of English texts (Gorsuch, 1998; Hino, 1988). Therefore, in the Japanese context, classroom activities which involve oral practice can be viewed as a distinct move towards a more contemporary, communicative approach, and away from the traditional grammar-translation methodology (Sakui and Gaies, 1999).

There are many similarities between the results of this study and those of Sakui and Gaies (1999). Table 24 compares the mean scores between the two studies for the ten strongest reported beliefs. We can see that eight of the ten strongest items in this study appeared in the strongest ten beliefs of Sakui and Gaies. Item 23, *People who are good at math and science are not necessarily poor at learning foreign languages*, ranked nine, was ranked thirteen in Sakui and Gaies, and Item 26, *Japanese are NOT good at learning foreign languages*, ranked ten, was ranked twelve in Sakui and Gaies. Pearson correlation between the mean scores of the two studies produced a coefficient of $r = 0.8827$ for these ten items, and a coefficient of $r = 0.8934$ for all items, indicating a high level of consistency between the results of the two studies.

Table 24. Comparison of 10 strongest reported beliefs at Time 1 with Sakui & Gaies (1999)

Item	Riley Mean Score (Rank)	Sakui & Gaies Mean Score (Rank)
6. To say something in English, you needn't wait until you can speak it correctly.	3.68 (1)	3.41 (2)
2. English class should be enjoyable.	3.67 (2)	3.52 (1)
11. In learning English it is important to repeat and practice a lot.	3.59 (3)	3.40 (3)
15. Listening to tapes and watching English programs on television are very important in learning English.	3.44 (4)	3.34 (6)
27. In order to speak and understand English very well, English education at school is NOT enough.	3.43 (5)	3.36 (5)
5. It is useful to know about English-speaking countries in order to speak English.	3.37 (6)	3.25 (8)
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn English.	3.34 (7)	3.25 (9)
7. Considering the amount of time I have studied English, I'm NOT satisfied with my progress.	3.34 (8)	3.36 (4)
23. People who are good at math and science are not necessarily poor at learning foreign languages.	3.28 (9)	3.16 (13)
26. Japanese are NOT good at learning foreign languages.	3.26 (10)	3.17 (12)

The principal components factor analysis for this study (Table 17) loaded thirteen items into Factor 1, labelled, *Beliefs relating to a communicative orientation to learning English*, with a Cronbach α reliability coefficient of $\alpha = .7292$. The factor analysis was exploratory in nature, and the result of the analysis was an empirically-derived grouping of learner beliefs, including those which can be described as relating to a contemporary, communicative approach to

language learning, placed in Factor 1. It would appear from the results of this study, therefore, that these learners have at least some awareness of beliefs relating to different methodological approaches to second language learning. In addition, many of these communication orientation items received the strongest of questionnaire responses from the learners, indicating how strongly these beliefs are held. Seven of the thirteen items from Factor 1 appear in the top fourteen strongest reported responses on the questionnaire, as shown in Table 16. The results of the factor analysis can be considered very similar to those obtained by Sakui and Gaies (1999), particularly with respect to Factor 1. All eleven items loading at 0.4 or greater in Factor 1 of Sakui and Gaies appear in Factor 1 of this study, indicating a congruence between the communicative-related beliefs of their learners and the learners in this study. The factor analyses for both studies are provided in Appendix G.

The results of this study contrast with the conclusions of Luppescu and Day (1990), who suggest that Japanese students of English are inconsistent with their responses and possess no coherent beliefs about language learning. On the other hand, the results are consistent with many of the results of Keim and associates (1996), who found that many of their first year Japanese university students' beliefs were, in fact, conducive to a communicative ethos to language learning. For example, in response to the proposition that you should not say something in English until you can say it correctly, 96% of their students either disagreed or strongly disagreed. In this study, 98.2 % of students disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. In response to the proposition that it is acceptable to guess if you do not know a word in English, 81% of the Keim students either agreed or strongly agreed. In this study, 91.2% of the students agreed or strongly agreed.

Despite the close correlation between the results of this study and those of Sakui and Gaies (1999), there are some differences between the results of certain questionnaire items across the two studies (see Table 12, Chapter 4). From Table 12, we can see that the differences in mean response scores for Item 33, *I studied English only to pass the entrance exam*, suggest that fewer students in this study believe that to be the case. Fewer students in this study appear to believe that they should be able to learn everything they are taught (Item 37), and that they prefer to have their teacher provide explanations in Japanese (Item 8). In addition, more students in this study believe they will someday be able to speak English well (Item 4). These results indicate that the students in this study may have a much more positive outlook to language learning, and may be more receptive to, or at least more aware of communicative goals in their learning task. For example, students in this study may have a more integrative motivation for studying English, other than simply passing the (university) entrance exam. We can see that, in this study, 90% of students believe they study English because it is important to communicate with English speaking people (Table 11, Item 40). In the student discussion groups, students were incredulous to think that any students disagreed with this notion. The students also appear to believe less in this study that they should be able to learn everything they are taught, but, on the other hand, believe more strongly that they will be successful in their attempt to learn English

well. Finally, they indicate a reduced preference for having their teacher provide explanations in Japanese.

One possible reason for the differences in results in learner belief studies in Japan, and mentioned by Sakui and Gaies (1999), is the effect of the time differences between investigations. Data collection for this study (2002) took place five to six years after that of Sakui and Gaies (June 1996 to April 1997), and more than twelve years since that of Luppescu and Day (1990). By 2002, the curricular changes in English language learning, which have been taking place in Japanese junior and senior high schools since 1993 (Koike and Tanaka, 1995; Matsuura et al, 2001; Wada, 2002), may have had much more effect on entering university students. The changes have included a move away from the traditional grammar-translation approach to second language teaching, such as the 'yakudoku' methodology (Gorsuch, 1998), with much more emphasis now placed on oral communication as a primary goal of English education in Japan. When the results of this study are included in a comparison of learner belief studies in Japan, over this twelve-year time period, we can see that there are differences in how Japanese learners appear to perceive English language learning. Learners in this study seem to have a more positive outlook to learning English, and increased belief in propositions more conducive to a contemporary approach to language learning, more likely to improve communicative proficiency.

Much of the research into language learner beliefs has aimed to highlight so-called problematic beliefs and expectations, those which may hinder progress, as they are not conducive to a contemporary, communicative approach to second language learning and teaching. This was the basis for the original studies of Horwitz (1985), whose concerns for the preconceived beliefs of her teacher-trainees initiated most of the research into language learner beliefs. Many learner beliefs have been shown to be based on a traditional paradigm to language learning, probably influenced by learners' prior language learning experiences (Horwitz, 1985). As language learners become language teachers, they "tend to teach either as they were taught or as they taught themselves" (Horwitz, 1985, p. 333), and outside of Britain, Australasia, and North America (BANA) (see Chapter two), this likely means a perpetuation of the traditional paradigm to language teaching.

Until recent times, language teaching in Japan also followed traditional methodologies, as outlined in earlier sections. Learners exposed to such methodologies, at least throughout the six years of compulsory high school English classes, could therefore be expected to have beliefs about language learning based largely on the traditional practices of their high school language courses and teachers. English language education in Japan, however, is in a complex, and sometimes controversial, period of transition. Over the last twenty years, two major shifts have taken place which have serious consequences for the teaching of English in Japan: the increase in the number of native-speaker teachers of English teaching in Japan, and the government implemented changes to English language school curriculum.

Firstly, the introduction of the Japan Exchange Teaching (JET) program in 1985 has resulted in there being over 6,000 native English teachers in place, in Japanese high schools, as of 2004 (Olson, 2005). In addition, many universities

and colleges in Japan have increased the number of overseas faculty they employ. As of 2004, there were approximately 16,000 non-Japanese nationals employed in tertiary education in Japan (MEXT, 2005), the majority employed in English language education. The overwhelming majority of these native-speaker English teachers have received their education and training from learning institutions in or affiliated to the BANA countries. As a communicative approach has become the accepted norm in second language teaching (Richards, 2002), it is safe to anticipate that these native-speaker teachers of English have far greater sympathy towards a more contemporary, communicative approach to language teaching and learning, than their learners. A possible consequence of increasing native-speaker teacher numbers in Japan, therefore, is the increase in the potential for a mismatch between the language learning beliefs of the learners and their teachers.

In addition to employing more native speaker teachers of English in Japanese schools and universities, the Japanese government has also implemented changes to English language school curriculum, aimed at improving the communicative proficiency of Japanese learners, from elementary school, through university (MEXT, 2002, 2003; Yoshida, 2002). Changes include more emphasis being placed on practical communication, the setting of minimum English attainment levels for Japanese teachers of English, and commencing English language education in elementary schools, nationwide.

Considering these two significant shifts relating to the teaching of English in Japan, now is a time for increased consideration of the language learning beliefs of Japanese learners. More and more language teachers in Japan are now teaching, or attempting to teach, in agreement with practices underlying a more communicative approach to language learning, either as a result of their own education, learning philosophy, or as mandated by central government. Elicitation of learner beliefs may help to avoid the negative effects of any 'clashes' between teachers' beliefs and practices, and learners' beliefs and expectations.

As mentioned above, many of the students' strongest responses in this study are conducive to a communicative approach to language teaching (see Table 16). However, this body of students appear to hold a variety of beliefs, to varying degrees. Without exception, each item on the questionnaire drew a full range of responses, from strongly agree to strongly disagree (see Table 11). Amongst the responses, there are several which could be a cause for concern, or even a hindrance, in a communication-focused classroom. The four main areas of concern appear to be beliefs relating to: translation and use of the L1, error correction, the difficulty of language learning, and motivation.

With reference to translation and the use of the L1, we can see from Table 11 that 12% of students agree that learning is mostly a matter of translating from Japanese (Item 20), 24% of students agree that to understand English, it must be translated into Japanese (Item 41), 42% of students agree that learning a word means learning the Japanese translation (Item 32), and 60% of students agree that before saying something in English, they first think of how they would say it in Japanese and translate it into English (Item 36). In addition, 22% of students reported a preference for their teachers to provide explanations in Japanese (Item 8), and 64% of students agreed that even if their teacher is not Japanese, he or she should be able to speak Japanese when necessary (Item 39). A communicative

orientation to language learning focuses on purposeful communication in the second language. It involves the application of learning strategies, such as guessing from context, and emphasises the process of learning to develop communicative competence, above a focus on the language itself. Student over-dependence on and preoccupation with translating, for both understanding and producing English, could be a major obstacle in a communication-focused classroom. Language classes in Japan often have 20 to 40 students, with the average in this study being 32 students per class. Therefore, of the 32 students in an average class, the above figures indicate that 3 or 4 of them may believe that language learning is mostly a matter of translation, perhaps 8 of them believe that to understand English it must be translated into Japanese, and possibly up to 19 of the 32 first think how to say something in Japanese, before they say it in English.

A second area of concern is error correction. From Table 11, we can see that 41% of students would like their teacher to correct all their mistakes (Item 38), and 53% of students believe that mistakes uncorrected in the beginning will be harder to attend to at a later stage (Item 13). Communicative language teaching, with a focus on meaningful interaction in the classroom, would generally only call for correction of errors which interfere with communication of meaning (see e.g. Crookes and Chaudron, 2001). Students expecting to be continually corrected by their teacher, in the use of their English (perhaps up to 13 students in an average class of 32 students), could easily become disheartened if they perceive that such 'teaching' is not taking place.

It appears that many students also underestimate the difficulty of the language-learning task. We can see that in response to Table 11, Item 10, *If a person studies English by himself for one hour a day, how many years will it take to become fluent?*, 25% of students thought that one to two years would be sufficient, and 41% of students thought that two to five years would be sufficient. It is possible to envisage these students becoming discouraged if they fail to make the kind of progress they apparently anticipate. In fact, it is no wonder that the motivation levels of English language students entering tertiary education in Japan are generally low. After all, they have recently completed six years of high school English, and 93% of them are not satisfied with the progress they have made so far (Table 11, Item 7). Furthermore, 43% of the students reported that they actually only studied English in order to pass the standard (university) entrance exam (Item 33), indicating a lack of intrinsic motivation for studying English in the first place.

In summary, in agreement with Sakui and Gaies, there appears to be evidence from these results of an awareness, if not majority approval amongst the students, of alternative practices to those related to the traditional methodologies of language learning employed in Japan. In fact, the strongest of the student beliefs are those in agreement with a communicative orientation to language learning (Table 16). The factor analysis grouped together 13 items which can logically be described as relating to a communicative orientation to language learning (Table 17, Factor 1), with an internal reliability of $\alpha = .7292$. In addition, specific student beliefs reported in this study (Table 12, Items 33, 37, 8, and 4), suggest that this body of students are more positive in their outlook, and may be more open to communication-focused English classrooms, than the student body in Sakui and

Gaies. On the other hand, there are still large minorities of students whose beliefs are of concern in a communication-focused classroom. Significant numbers of students believe particularly in the value or necessity of translation, error correction, and receiving explanations in Japanese, and seem to underestimate the difficulty of the task of becoming fluent in English. Attention must be given to these students, and these ideas, as the importance of communication is emphasised more and more in English language classrooms, in Japan.

Research Question 2

How do student held beliefs about English language learning compare with those of their teachers?

A focus of research into language learner beliefs has been the potential negative effects on language learning of certain beliefs held by language learners. An assumption has been made in much second language learning research that a communicative approach has become accepted as the norm in second language teaching. Communicative language teaching certainly has received widespread recognition and support in recent years (Brown, 1995; Savignon, 2001), and discussion usually highlights clashes between learner beliefs and the accepted common wisdom of language teachers. Rather than accepting this common wisdom, this study reports directly on individual teachers' beliefs through the administration of the questionnaire to 34 class teachers. This allows for a direct comparison between learner and teacher responses, rather than between learner responses and the accepted pedagogical norms. Very few studies have broached the beliefs of language teachers, with only McCargar (1993) and Kern (1995) conducting systematic investigations of multiple participants (see Chapter two).

The results of the current study show that there are considerable differences between the reported beliefs of the learners and their predominantly English native-speaker teachers (see Table 19, Chapter four). Statistically significant differences were found in the responses to twenty of the thirty-seven questionnaire items common to both learners and teachers ($p < .001$). It is possible to see how many of these differences could have an influence on classroom practice and learning outcomes. Two recurring themes amongst the results in Table 19 are translation and the use of the L1, and error and error correction. The importance of the use of translation in language learning was identified by Kern (1995) as a topic of major difference between student and teacher belief. Likewise, error correction was identified by McCargar (1993) as a major area of disagreement between students and teachers.

In terms of translation, we can see from Item 32 (in Table 19) that 42% of the students believe that learning a word means learning the Japanese translation of the word, while only 2% of teachers subscribe to this view. From Item 41, we can see that 24% of students believe that in order to understand English, it must be translated into Japanese. However, all 34 teachers disagreed with this statement. From these teacher responses, we can assume that translation into the L1 is not encouraged in the classrooms of these teachers. More likely, it is being discouraged. In encouraging students to use only English, the curriculum of the participant institution requires students to purchase English-English dictionaries for use in and out of the classroom, and to maintain English only vocabulary

notebooks as part of their assessment (Internal manuscripts, 2004). However, with 42% of students believing in the need for translation in order to learn a word, it is possible to anticipate considerable frustration on the part of the learners, should this issue remain unaddressed by the class teachers. Despite the teachers' efforts to discourage translation, they still seem convinced that learners are relying on the L1 in trying to produce English. From Item 36, we can see that 97% of teachers believe that to say something in English, students first think how to say it in Japanese, before translating into English. Students, on the other hand, don't believe they are so reliant on the L1, but 60% of them agree that they do initially think of how to say something in Japanese, and then translate it to English.

To compare the results of the current study with Kern's (1995) BALLI results for the topic of translation, we can compare the BALLI item, "*learning another language is mostly a matter of translating from English*", with the item in this study, "*learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Japanese*". In both studies, 100% of teachers disagreed with these statements. In the Kern (1995) study, 76% of students disagreed, and in the current study, 88% of students disagreed.

In terms of student errors, or mistakes, we can see from Item 38 (in Table 19) that 41% of students want their teachers to correct all their mistakes, while only 3% of teachers believe they should be correcting all their students' mistakes. In addition, from Item 13, if students are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, 53% of students believe it is harder to get rid of the errors later on, while only 18% of teachers believe this to be the case. Comparison with Kern (1995) is complicated by his use of a 5-point Likert scale, which offers an option of "neither agree or disagree." However, for the same BALLI item as Item 13, 47% of students disagreed (the same as this study), and 50% of teachers disagreed (compared to 82% in this study). As with the issue of translation, above, it seems that it would be beneficial for teachers to address the issue of error and error correction with their students. Not only do nearly half of the students expect their errors to be continually corrected, they believe this to be justified, due to their belief that errors will be more difficult to rectify at a later stage.

Other differences include teachers reporting a stronger belief (74% agree) in the notion of learner aptitude than learners (28% agree), as seen in Item 30. Teachers also believe more strongly (94% agree) than learners (55% agree) that it is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one. In addition, more teachers (88%) than students (56%) believe that learning English is different from learning other subjects.

The results of two further items may also have repercussions for the classroom. In line with a communication-focused approach, 100% of the teachers believe that students can improve their English by speaking English with their classmates (Item 34). We can assume, therefore, that all the teachers participating employ activities to encourage as much meaningful student-student interaction as possible in the classroom. However, 23% of students believe they cannot improve their English by speaking with their classmates. McCargar (1993) also reported that students in his study "expected a more teacher-oriented environment than did the teachers" (p.200). On the other hand, students see much more value in listening to tapes and watching television programs than speaking with their classmates. We can see (in Table 19) that 96% of students in this study believe listening to tapes and watching television programs are very important in learning English (Item 15).

This statement, in fact, received the fourth highest mean score of 3.44. Only 70% of teachers, however, believe listening to tapes and watching television programs to be very important in learning English, with a mean score of 2.9.

The item with the greatest difference between student mean score and teacher mean score was Item 17, *If I learn to speak English well, I will have many opportunities to use it* (or *If the students learn to speak English well, they will have many opportunities to use it*). The student mean score was 3.22, with 83% of students believing that they will have many opportunities to use English if they learn to speak it well. This may be an optimistic viewpoint, but it is one which is encouraged by government policy, through the government's stated desire for 'internationalisation' and the cultivation of 'Japanese with English abilities' (MEXT, 2002). The (predominantly English native-speaker) teacher viewpoint, however, is different. With a mean score of 2.28, only 30% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that students will have many future opportunities to use English. Although English is the most widely spoken language in the world, with over 750 million users (Graddol, Leath, and Swann, 1996), the teachers in this study believe that Japanese students will, in reality, have few opportunities to use English in the future, even if they can speak English well. Despite recent efforts towards internationalisation, Japan remains predominantly a monolingual culture (Blair, 1997), and this seems to be reflected in the responses of 70% of the teachers. Similar results can be seen with Item 21, *If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job*. Once again, the student response (mean of 3.13, with 84% agreeing) seems to be much more optimistic than the teacher response (mean of 2.67, with only 64% agreeing).

The high number of significant differences between teacher and student beliefs (20 out of 37 items) reinforces the necessity for further research into the language learning beliefs of both learners and teachers. For too long, teachers have relied on "impressionistic descriptions of good or poor learners" (Abraham and Vann, 1987 p.98), which may result in "largely unnoticed gaps between the expectations of the teacher and students" (Cortazzi and Jin, 1996, p. 169). Such gaps need to be discovered and addressed before they have opportunity to negatively affect the learning process. Recurring themes in the research to date relate particularly to the issues of error correction and the use of translation in language learning. Students also appear to expect a more teacher-centred classroom and see little value in practicing English with their classmates. It seems crucial that teachers talk with students to try to identify mismatches in beliefs and expectations, and explain the theory behind the goals of the course, and the practices and methodology of the classroom. As Kern (1995) suggests:

Awareness of the assumptions that learners and teachers bring to the classroom can help us and our students to become more realistic in setting goals, it can shed light on our students' frustrations and difficulties, and it can allow us to provide more thoughtful (and ultimately more effective) guidance to our students in their efforts to learn a foreign language (Kern, 1995, p.82).

Failure to approach these mismatches in the implementation of a communicative approach may result in frustration, students' passive resistance, and a breakdown in the learning process (Ellis, 1996).

Research Question 3

Do students' beliefs about English language learning change over a course of study?

Although Pajares (1992) contends that beliefs are a stable phenomenon, self-perpetuating in nature, certain other research has pointed to the possibility of some students' language learning beliefs changing during a course of study (Keim et al., 1996; Kern, 1995; Sakui and Gaies, 1999; Sato, 2004; Sugiyama, 2003). Table 20 in chapter four shows eleven items with significantly different responses between the Time 1 and Time 2 administrations of the questionnaire (at $p < .01$), suggesting that many student responses, and the beliefs associated with these responses, may be susceptible to change over the nine-month period between Time 1 and Time 2.

Some of the results in Table 20 (chapter four) could be interpreted as negative in nature. Fewer students at Time 2 seem to be enjoying their studies (Item 43), think that they will someday be able to speak English very well (Item 4), think it is useful to communicate with English speaking people (Item 40), and believe they can improve their English by practicing with their classmates (Item 34). On the other hand, and representing more positive movement, at Time 2, fewer students would feel embarrassed speaking in front of others (Item 12), and fewer believe that learning an English word requires Japanese translation (Item 32).

Seven of the eleven items in Table 20 appear on the teacher questionnaire, and Table 25 compares the students' scores with the teachers' scores for these seven items.

Table 25. A comparison of teacher scores with student scores for items of significant student change between Time 1 and Time 2.

	Students					Teachers	
	Time 1		Time 2		Diff. In Mean	Mean	Answer 3 + 4 - %
	Mean	Answer 3 + 4 - %	Mean	Answer 3 + 4 - %			
42. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	2.58	54	2.73	63	0.15	3.24	94
30. Some people are born with a special ability, which is useful for learning English.	2.11	28	2.25	35	0.14	2.91	74
32. Learning a word means learning the Japanese translation.	2.35	42	2.24	36	0.11	1.63	6
34. I can improve my English by speaking English with my classmates.	2.91	77	2.8	72	0.11	3.5	100
9. It's O.K. to guess If you don't know a word in English.	3.08	90 (3=71, 4=19)	3.19	90 (3=60, 4=30)	0.11	3.62	100 (3=38, 4=68)
12. I would feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other Japanese students.	2.66	62	2.56	53	0.1	2.74	69
19. Learning English is different from learning other subjects.	2.64	59	2.74	64	0.1	3.24	88

A point of interest would be to identify whether changes in students' beliefs have been in a direction more in line with the beliefs of the teachers. This may indicate that students have in some way been influenced by the activities and practices of the classroom. We can see from Table 25, that student responses have changed in the direction of teacher responses for five of the seven items: Items 42, 30, 32, 9, and 19. We can also see that the teachers have strong beliefs about several of these particular items. In fact, all thirty-four of the teachers either agreed or strongly agreed with Items 9 and 34. Some researchers have suggested that teacher beliefs may have an effect on students' beliefs, either in reflection of the teacher's status as 'expert' (Horwitz, 1988), or through the teachers' instructional methods, actions and assessments in the classroom (Elbaum, Berg, and Dodd, 1993; Kern, 1995). In his 1995 study, Kern found that more than half of the student responses to the BALLI items changed over the course of one semester. Although many changed in the direction of teacher beliefs, just as many seemed to move away from those of the teachers. Unfortunately, there is no information concerning the significance of the changes in student beliefs. However, of note is the fact that students' and teachers' views on topics which showed some of the greatest differences in beliefs, views about pronunciation, error correction, and rule learning, contrasted more at the end of the semester than at the beginning.

Referring back to the current study, Item 9 in Table 25 is related to students guessing if they don't know a word, a strategy employed in communicative language teaching, and one which it is safe to assume the teachers in this study were encouraging their students to employ. We can see that the number of students strongly agreeing with this statement moved from 19% at Time 1 to 30% at Time 2. It could be possible that student belief about the effectiveness of guessing has been influenced here by the teachers' strong belief in this learning strategy, and the encouragement of its use in the classroom. Further research would obviously be required to investigate how teacher beliefs may influence student beliefs, but the results of this study show that there are some changes in student beliefs during a course of study, and in 71% of cases (five out of seven) the changes reported are in the direction of the teacher belief.

A contrary situation exists, however, with Item 34, related to the effectiveness of students speaking English with other students. We can assume once more, due to the unanimous agreement of the teachers' with this statement, that the teachers have been encouraging interaction between students in the classroom. In fact, in-house documentation of the participant institution describes and encourages student interaction in the form of pair work and group activities, strategies conducive to a communicative approach to language teaching. However, in the case of Item 34, the number of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with the effectiveness of speaking English with their classmates, fell from 77% at Time 1 to 72% at Time 2.

Following the Time 2 questionnaire administration, student discussion groups were formed to try to gain insight into changes in students' beliefs between Time 1 and Time 2. With reference to Item 34, the discussion group students reported that, at the beginning of the course, they welcomed the opportunity to practice speaking English with other students, something they had seldom had a chance to do in their high school English classes. However, by Time 2, and nine

months into their course, they became somewhat sceptical about the benefits of practising speaking with fellow students, as we can see from the following transcript excerpts.

Natsumi: “Learning English from my class just give me opportunity to speak English, not get good English, perfect English.”

Koki: “That person is not a native speaker. That person doesn’t give me good... effect... that person can’t teach me real English.”

The students also suggested that practicing with non-Japanese speaking classmates would be more beneficial, because of the tendency of students to slip into Japanese when speaking to Japanese classmates.

Natsuko: “If we speak with classmate. We use some Japanese if we don’t know the word in English.”

Natsumi: “If he doesn’t understand any Japanese, even if there are some words we don’t know, we will try hard just to explain in English. That is much better.”

However, ultimately, they believed by Time 2 that speaking with native speakers of English is the only way to acquire ‘perfect’ or ‘real’ English, therefore accounting for the significant change in Item 34, Table 25.

Data from the discussion groups has provided some valuable information on the topics of students’ feelings of confidence, hope, and emotions. These are topics which are difficult to interpret from the use of questionnaires alone. A recurring theme from the discussion groups was the loss in confidence and hope that many students experienced during their course. After a degree of initial euphoria at the notion of having native speaker English teachers, and the repeated opportunities to practise speaking English with others (see above), it seems that students began to realise just how much work was required to improve on their current level of English ability, and what a challenge an English only university program can present, compared to their English classes at Japanese high school. This finding was very similar to that of Sato (2004) in her study of Japanese students in Australia.

Natsuko: “Once they entered university, they have to study English in English, and it’s a very different situation from high school.”

Hitomi: “Japanese people are used to studying English in Japanese, and they lose their confidence because it’s a struggle.”

Yoshiko: “We had a spirit of challenge in April, but lost confidence.”

Shuji: “In April I was satisfied just to speak English. Enjoyable. After that, I found that I needed to study more grammar and to read more difficult books in English. So, in December, I decided there are many walls. It is not fun anymore. I like English. It is interesting, but difficult.”

Over the nine-month period of the study, students’ views appeared to change concerning the usefulness of being able to communicate with speakers of English, indicated by a significant downturn in agreement on Item 40 (Table 20), *I*

study English because it is useful to communicate with English speaking people. In discussing this question, student Natsumi stated that her views had changed concerning the 'nature of English'. At the beginning of the course, and on entry to university, she was of the view that English was just another subject to be mastered. By Time 2, however, she had come to think of English as a means of communication. Somewhat critical of students not conforming to this idea, she added, "language is the means of communication, so if they [all students] don't communicate....there is no meaning of studying." Meaningful communication, of course, is dependant upon having a message to communicate. This seems to be the crux of Natsumi's next comment, "even if I can speak English, if I don't have an opinion of my mind, speaking skill doesn't have any....purpose."

For these students, then, the differences between their university English classes and their high school English classes seem to present many problems. Not only are they faced with native-speaker English teachers, and the pressure of studying exclusively in English, but the communicative nature of the classes requires students to have thoughts and opinions to communicate. The students appear to equate 'communicating with English speaking people' with 'expressing and discussing opinions on interesting or important issues with English speaking people'. This is something they find very difficult to do. By Time 2, this realisation may have had a negative effect on students' responses to related questionnaire items, such as Item 43, related to enjoyment, Item 4, related to anticipated success, Item 40, the usefulness of communicating with English speaking people, and Item 34, the usefulness of speaking English with classmates.

This situation, of course, can also be very challenging for university teachers who are trying to encourage communication, discussion, or even debate on topics which they consider appropriate for university students. Much has been written about how the Japanese education system preaches conformity and fails to embrace the notions of critical and spontaneous thinking, particularly at the high school level (Inamori, 1997; Okano and Tsuchiya, 1999). The frustrations of a college lecturer in Japan perhaps exemplify the situation:

Seldom do [my students] read the newspaper or listen to the news to know what is going on in the world... Their lack of enthusiasm to participate in controversial debates or discussions shows that young Japanese people are not well aware of challenging world issues such as environmental problems. At times they remain quite oblivious to domestic issues as well. Further, they lack genuine interest about their future (Leveille, 1999).

As student Natsumi discovered, studying English at university may provide few rewards, and seem to have 'no meaning', if students have no message to communicate. Natsumi's remarks can be interpreted as an expression of frustration, aimed at both herself and her classmates, with their poor critical thinking skills and inability to form and express opinions on challenging issues, which, in turn, would help to give more purpose to their English classes. This is obviously an area requiring further exploration, but it is not within the scope of this study.

The statistical differences shown in Table 20 (chapter four) cannot be considered conclusive, given the large number of participants (n=504) in this study. It does become easier to reject the null hypothesis, and show a statistical difference, as the number of participants in a study increases (Hatch and Lazarson, 1991). However, data from the student discussion groups shows that, for these students, responses to many of the items in Table 20 did actually change between Time 1 and Time 2, with the changes in responses reflective of changes in beliefs about many of the item statements. Further research is obviously needed in the area of belief change, and perhaps more longitudinal interview research with students, for example, may give more insights into changes in student beliefs about language learning.

In summary, the results of this study indicate that some student beliefs may be susceptible to change over a nine-month period of university study. Responses to eleven of the forty-five questionnaire items showed significant difference between Time 1 and Time 2 administrations (Table 20).

Many of these changes could be considered negative in nature: fewer students appear to be enjoying their study (Item 43), fewer students appear to believe they will someday speak English well (Item 4), and fewer students appear to believe in the usefulness of communicating in English either with their classmates (Item 34) or with English speaking people (Item 40). These changes are reinforced by the data from the student discussion groups.

However, an alternative interpretation is that the students' views about language learning may have become more realistic over time. The Time 1 questionnaire was administered during the first few days of the participants' university life. The results obtained at Time 1, therefore, may have been influenced by an initial euphoric period, and the 'spirit of challenge' which student Yoshiko suggested existed at the beginning of the academic year.

The discussion group sessions also allowed an insight into students' feelings and emotions, with several of the students indicating that the challenges of the course had resulted in reduced feelings of confidence in their English ability. Even greater insight could have been provided into student beliefs by more extensive use of student discussion groups. A limitation of this study is that only two groups of four students participated in the post-test discussion sessions.

Research question 4

What relationships exist between student held beliefs about English language learning and English language proficiency level?

Few studies have been conducted into what effect learners' beliefs may actually have on language learning outcomes, and whether the holding of certain beliefs is more or less likely to lead to improved language proficiency (Ellis, 1994; Wenden, 1999), and only three studies have been identified. One study by Peacock (1999), using the BALLI, suggests that there is a direct link between student beliefs and proficiency scores, as certain beliefs render students less willing to participate in communicative classroom activities. In addition, Asbjornson (1999) found a significant correlation ($p < .01$) between students' oral proficiency scores and their responses to four items on the Sakui and Gaies questionnaire. In this

study, I was interested in investigating differences between the beliefs of more proficient learners of English and those of less proficient learners. Although a causal relationship could not be assumed between proficiency level and beliefs, such investigation might provide insights into the relationships between language learners' beliefs and the proficiency levels they have attained.

First, two groups of students were formed, according to their TOEFL test scores. Group A consisted of the highest scoring 149 students, and Group B consisted of the lowest scoring 138 students (see Table 22, Chapter four). Questionnaire responses were compared for these two groups of students, with t-tests revealing significant differences on six items ($p < .01$) (see Table 23, Chapter four). The higher proficiency students reported a stronger belief that they would someday speak English very well (Item 4), and that the longer they studied English, the more they enjoyed it (Item 43). On the other hand, the lower proficiency students reported a stronger belief that learning English is mostly a matter of translation (Item 20), that they prefer to have their teacher provide explanations in Japanese (Item 8), even if they are a native speaker (Item 39), and that people who are good at maths and science are not good at learning foreign languages (Item 23).

There appears to be a clear division amongst these six significantly different responses, between items related to a traditional paradigm in language learning, and items relating to a contemporary, communicative paradigm. The lower proficiency students clearly appear to relate more to the traditional notions of studying English in Japanese, through translation. The higher proficiency students believe they are enjoying their studies more, and believe more in their ultimate success in speaking the language. The latter two items both loaded into Factor 1 of the factor analysis, *Beliefs related to a communicative approach to learning English* (Table 17).

These results are also very similar to those of Asbjornson (1999), who found that more orally proficient learners reported that they enjoyed their English study more (Item 43), and believed more strongly that they would someday speak English very well (Item 4). As in this study, the more proficient learners also believed less in the importance of translating from Japanese (Item 33, related to Item 20). Huang and Tsai (2003) also found that higher proficiency students were more likely to believe that they would ultimately learn to speak English well, and believed less in the importance of translating and learning how to translate.

As a next step, I was interested in investigating further the relationship between beliefs conducive to a communicative orientation to language learning and students' proficiency. As in the Sakui and Gaies (1999) study, the factor analysis for this study isolated a set of beliefs in Factor 1, related to a communicative orientation to learning English. Proponents of a more communicative approach to language learning would suggest that activities and beliefs more conducive to such an approach are more likely to lead to successful language learning outcomes, and improved second language proficiency. However, although a communicative approach has become the accepted norm in second language teaching, other than the two studies highlighted above, little empirical evidence has been provided to support such claims (Richards, 2002). An interest in this study was to investigate the relationship between the proficiency

levels of the learners and their responses to the communicative-oriented beliefs of Factor 1 of the factor analysis. Did the more proficient learners, as defined by TOEFL test scores, report a stronger response to, and therefore stronger belief in the communicative-oriented statements?

Correlation of student TOEFL scores with student factor scores, calculated for Factor 1, showed that there is, in fact, no relationship between the two. Although there appear to be differences between the two proficiency groups for specific questionnaire items (see above), overall, the higher proficiency students, as measured by TOEFL scores, were neither more likely nor less likely to report beliefs conducive with a communicative orientation to language learning, than lower proficiency students.

Finally, having established no clear relationship between communicative-oriented beliefs and proficiency, as measured by students' TOEFL scores, students' end of semester English grades were used to investigate their relationship with communicative-oriented beliefs. The English language program of the participant institution emphasises developing students' communicative competence as a major goal. The courses are theme-based, emphasise the development of confidence and fluency, and are taught exclusively in English (Internal manuscripts, 2004). Thirty-to-forty percent of the students' end-of-semester grades are derived from their performance in speaking activities, such as semi-structured discussions and group presentations (see English course grades, p. 55). One could assume that there may be a relationship, then, between the strength of students' communicative-oriented beliefs and successful performance in the program. Did the more successful students, in terms of course grades, hold stronger beliefs concerning a communicative orientation to language learning?

Correlation of student grade scores with student factor scores, calculated for Factor 1, showed that there is, in fact, no relationship between the two. As with the results of the TOEFL score correlation, this suggests that the students with a higher grade score in this English program are neither more likely nor less likely to report beliefs conducive with a communicative orientation to language learning, than students with lower grade scores.

In summary, the results of this study indicate that there may be some differences between the language learning beliefs of more proficient learners and less proficient learners, and that items of significant difference can be divided along methodological lines. In particular, less proficient learners seem to believe more strongly in the need for translation and for receiving instruction in Japanese. Overall, however, there appears to be no evidence of a relationship between the proficiency of the learners, as measured by both TOEFL scores and end of semester English grades, and their responses to questionnaire items related to a communicative orientation to language learning.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the beliefs about English language learning of incoming first year students at a Japanese university, and is one of only very few studies into the beliefs about language learning of Japanese students. In employing the Japanese language questionnaire instrument of Sakui and Gaies (1999), it can be considered, in part, a replication study. The similarity between the results of this study and those reported by Sakui and Gaies (1999) ($r=0.8934$), together with the similarity between the results of Asbjornson (1999) and Sakui and Gaies (1999) ($r=0.92$), suggests that the instrument is consistent, and can be considered reliable. In addition, the principal components factor analysis for this study was similar to that of Sakui and Gaies (1999), particularly for Factor 1, *Beliefs relating to a communicative orientation to learning English* ($\alpha=0.7292$) and Factor 2, *Beliefs related to a traditional orientation to learning English* ($\alpha=0.6031$). The results suggest that the students in this study hold beliefs consistent with different methodological orientations to learning English, and that many of the students' strongest beliefs are congruent with a contemporary, communicative orientation to English learning.

In addition to identifying the beliefs of the students, this study aimed to investigate, empirically, the difference between students' and teachers' reported beliefs, whether students' beliefs about language learning change over a two-semester course of study, and the relationship between students' beliefs and their English proficiency scores.

Few studies have actually surveyed teachers to investigate the differences between student beliefs and teacher beliefs. The large number of significant differences discovered in this study between student beliefs and teacher beliefs, twenty in total, is an indication of the importance of investigating beliefs, as many of these differences have serious implications for the success of classroom language learning. Some of the major differences between student beliefs and teacher beliefs found in this study include differences about the need for error correction, the effectiveness of practicing English with classmates, and the role of the L1 in learning the L2. It seems that both students and teachers would benefit greatly from examining and sharing their own and each others' beliefs about language learning, prior to study commencing, in what Mantle-Bromley terms positive intervention (1995). Such examination and critical reflection may provide for effective belief change (Dole and Sinatra, 1994). The consequences of not doing so, as Richards and Lockhart (1996) point out, "are likely to be misunderstanding and mistrust" (p. 35), or even passive resistance leading to a breakdown in learning (Ellis, 1996).

The third research question broached the issue of belief change. Despite the often-quoted notion of the stability and self-preserving nature of beliefs (e.g. Pajares, 1992), the results of this study add to those of Keim et al., 1996, Kern,

1995, Sakui and Gaies, 1999, and Sugiyama, 2003, in suggesting that some beliefs are susceptible to change during a course of study. Responses to eleven items were significantly different at the Time 2 administration of the questionnaire, and many of the changes were supported by data from student discussion sessions. Some of these changes could be considered in a positive direction, others in a negative direction. There is also some evidence that some student beliefs may be influenced by the beliefs of their teachers. Movement on five of seven items common to both students and teachers was in the direction of teacher belief (Table 25). Further investigation in this particular area would shed more light on the influence of teacher beliefs, either directly or indirectly, on the beliefs of their students.

The student discussion sessions provided valuable data, particularly in the area of belief change. Most of the students in the two discussion groups talked about how their beliefs had changed during their first year at university. Unfortunately, many of the changes related to a loss of confidence during their nine months of the course, with students finding the course more challenging than they expected, and feeling less confident of improving on their current level of English. It is, therefore, of obvious importance to try to identify the basis for this loss of confidence and hope on the part of the students. The discussion group students in this study were all able to participate in the discussions in English, and, therefore, represent the higher end of the proficiency scale. By discussing beliefs and expectations with students on entry to university, teachers can help them gain a clearer and more realistic picture of their own language levels, and the expectations placed upon them as learners, and assist them in setting realistic targets for their continued progress.

The results of this study also indicate several differences between higher proficiency and lower proficiency students, in the responses to individual questionnaire items. The more proficient students tend to have higher aspirations (Item 4) and are gaining greater pleasure from their studies (Item 43), as also found by Asbjornson (1999). On the other hand, the less proficient students tend to believe that learning English is mostly a matter of translation (Item 20). They also prefer to have their teacher provide explanations in Japanese (Item 8), even if the teacher is an English native speaker (Item 39). All 34 teachers in this study disagree that English is mostly a matter of translation (Item 20), and a communicative approach to English language teaching is the norm in the participant institution. In addition, 56% of the teachers believe that it is not necessary for native speaker English teachers to be able to speak Japanese. These are indicators of potential clash areas, or gaps, between the beliefs of teachers and beliefs of the less proficient, and often least motivated, students.

The principal components factor analysis in this study allowed for a correlation between student proficiency scores and student factor scores, calculated for communication-oriented beliefs (Factor 1). It might be expected that students more sympathetic to items related to a communicative orientation to language learning would report greater success in their learning endeavours, as reflected in their proficiency scores. However, analyses revealed that there was no general pattern relating the strength of students' responses to these communication-oriented items, and their proficiency scores, as measured by both

TOEFL test scores and end-of-semester university English grades. It would seem that further research is needed into the complex relationship between student beliefs and levels of language attainment.

Limitations / Further research

There are always limits to what can be learned from research using closed-item questionnaires. Participants may possess other beliefs which are not covered by the questionnaire items. In addition, the accuracy of the data depends on the participants understanding and responding honestly to each item on each administration. However, as Dornyei (2003) asserts in a recent book, *Questionnaires in second language teaching*, questionnaires offer advantages when asking attitudinal questions, such as about language learning beliefs. One advantage, of course, is that questionnaires allow us to study a large group of participants, in this case 661 students and 34 teachers, in a short space of time. Continued research allows for the development of more accurate data collection methods, and further applications of the Sakui and Gaies instrument will allow a more accurate assessment of the validity and reliability of the instrument in investigating the language learning beliefs of Japanese students.

In order to gain deeper insight into the students' beliefs, discussion groups were formed following the second administration of the questionnaire. The discussion groups provided some valuable data, particularly concerning belief change, but a limitation of this study is that only eight students participated in these discussions. Further research, involving greater numbers of discussion participants, would allow for a much deeper insight into the beliefs and expectations of Japanese language students. It would also be beneficial if these could take place in the students' first language.

It must be noted that this is a study of 'reported' beliefs, in which participants respond to statements based on their perceptions of their own beliefs about language learning. As noted by Keim and associates (1996) (see Chapter 2), actual behaviour in the classroom is not always consistent with subjects' questionnaire responses. Further research employing extensive observational data could address the issue of consistency between reported beliefs and actual classroom behaviour.

Finally, this project was conducted on entering first year students at a single university in Japan, and some may consider this a limitation. The results obtained cannot be generalised to other institutions or other bodies of students. However, a large degree of control was ensured in terms of the description of the participants and the timing of the data collection. Further studies of other student groups, at other institutions in Japan, will enable a comparison of results to help produce a clearer picture of the beliefs and expectations about language learning of students at Japanese universities. As suggested in this dissertation, this is even more important at this time, as English language education in Japan finds itself in a complex period of transition.

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APPENDIX A

Student Questionnaire

英語学習に関する意識調査

学生のみなさんへ

アンケートにご協力いただきありがとうございます。このアンケートの研究目的は、学生のみなさんの英語や英語教育に関する考え方や、認識についてわれわれの理解を深めるためのものです。

このアンケートには、45項目の質問が書かれています。各項目を読んで、全くそう思わない、そう思わない、そう思う、非常にそう思う、の4つの選択肢のいずれかの枠の中にまるをつけてください。

例

全くそう思わない	そう思わない	そう思う	非常にそう思う
		○	

各項目はなるべくわかりやすく、明確に書かれているはずですが、もし不明なところがありましたら、わかる範囲で項目を理解し、選択肢を選んでください。あなたがたの先生には、アンケートに関する質問には答えないようにお願いしています。

各項目になるべく正直にお答えください。またアンケートはテストではないのでどの項目にも正解、不正解はありません。みなさんの考え方に一番近い選択肢を選んでください。

このアンケートはあくまでも研究目的のためのみおこなわれるものなので、誰も各個人の学生の名前、そしてアンケート結果がどれであるかを知らされません。

またアンケートを始める前に、下記の項目にお答えください。

名前 _____
ローマ字 _____ 漢字 _____

海外在住経験 (もしある場合は、国名と何年または何か月)
ある ()
ない

英会話学校などに通った経験 (もしある場合は、何年または何か月)
ある ()
ない

外国人に英語を習った経験 (もしある場合は、年数と月または週何回)
ある ()
ない

英語学習における生徒と教師の意識調査

Consent statement

- 1 この調査の目的は、英語学習に関する生徒と教師の意識に対するより深い理解を得るためです。そうした理解により、生徒の英語上達がさらなる成功へ導かれれば幸いです。
 - 2 この調査により得られたすべての情報は決して誰にも知られることはありません。
 - 3 何らかの理由がある場合は、拒否、または、いつでも中止することができます。
 - 4 この調査に同意頂ける場合は、回答にご協力お願いいたします。
-

- 1 子どもの方が、大人より英語を習得するのが容易である。
- 2 英語の授業は楽しくあるべきだ。
- 3 英語を上手に読み書きできるようになるには、学校の英語教育だけで充分である。
- 4 将来、自分は英語をとても上手に話せるようになると思う。
- 5 英語を話すために、英語圏の国々について知ることは必要なことだと思う。
- 6 正しく話せるようになるまで、英語を話すべきではないと思う。
- 7 英語を勉強した時間を考えると、自分の上達度に満足している。
- 8 英語のクラスでは、先生が日本語で説明してくれるほうがいい。
- 9 もし英語でわからない単語があったら、その意味を推測してもかまわない。
- 10 もし英語を毎日1時間ずつ勉強するとしたら、その人は何年で英語がりゅうちょうになると思いますか。
- 11 英語を習得するうえで、繰り返したり、練習をたくさんすることは重要なことである。
- 12 ほかの日本人の学生の前で英語を話すのは恥ずかしい。
- 13 もし初めの段階で、まちがいが許されたら、そのまちがいを後でなおすことは、むずかしいと思う。
- 14 英語を習得するということは、文法をたくさん学ぶことである。
- 15 テープを聞いたり、英語のテレビを見ることは、英語を学習するうえでとても大事である。
- 16 女子のほうが男子より英語を習得するのが上手である。
- 17 英語がとても上手に話せるようになったら、英語を使う機会が数多くあると思う。
- 18 英語を話すほうが、聞いて理解するより易しいと思う。
- 19 英語の学習は、ほかの学科を学ぶこととは異なると思う。
- 20 英語を習得するということは、日本語から英語に翻訳するということである。
- 21 英語を上手に話せるようになったら、将来いい仕事をみつけることに結びつくと思う。
- 22 英語を読み書きすることのほうが、話したり聞いて理解することより、易しいと思う。
- 23 数学や科学が得意な人は、外国語を習得するのが上手ではない。
- 24 日本人は、英語を話すことが大事だと思っている。
- 25 外国語を話せる人は、頭がよいと思う。
- 26 日本人は、外国語を習得するのが得意である。
- 27 英語を上手に話せたり聞けたりするようになるには、学校の英語教育だけで充分である。
- 28 習得するのに簡単な言語と難しい言語があると思う。

- 29 外国人の先生から英語を習ってのみ英語が上手に話せるようになる。
- 30 生まれながらにして、英語を習得する才能を持っている人がいる。
- 31 英語を話したり聞いたりすることのほうが、読み書きより役に立つ。
- 32 英単語を習うということは、それに対応する日本語訳を習うということである。
- 33 入学試験に合格するために英語を勉強した。
- 34 クラスメートと英語を話すことで英語が上達すると思う。
- 35 英語を充分勉強しないから、間違えるのだと思う。
- 36 英語で話すとき、まず日本語でどういうかを考えてから英語に訳す。
- 37 教えられたことは習得できるはずだ。
- 38 自分の間違いは、全部先生になおしてほしいと思う。
- 39 外国人の先生は、必要なとき、クラスで日本語を話せるべきだと思う。
- 40 英語を話す人達とコミュニケーションをするのに役立つから、英語を勉強している。
- 41 英語を理解するにはまず、日本語に訳さなければならない。
- 4 2 すでにある外国語を話せる人のほうが、そうでない人より別の言語を習得するのは易しいと思う。
- 43 英語を勉強すればするほど、楽しくなっている。
- 4 4 同じ年頃の外国人が英語を話しているのが聞こえたら、英会話の練習をするために、その人のところに行き、話しかけたい。
- 45 今まで自分が受けた英語教育に満足している。

APPENDIX B

Translation of Student Questionnaire

Beliefs about English language learning.

Dear Students,

Thank you for your cooperation in completing this questionnaire. The purpose of this questionnaire is to deepen our understanding about your views and beliefs of English and English language education.

This questionnaire contains 45 questions. Read each question and then circle one of the four choices, as shown below.

Example:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
		O	

Each question should be easy to understand, but if the question is not clear try to understand the meaning and choose one of the four answers. Your teacher has been asked not to answer any questions about the content of this questionnaire.

Please answer the questions honestly. This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Choose the answer which is closest to your thinking.

This questionnaire is for research purposes only and all information given is assured utmost confidentiality.

Before you begin, please answer the following questions:

Name _____

Experience living abroad (Which country and for how long?)

Experience of studying at English conversation school and the like (How many years/months?)

Experience of studying with a native speaker teacher (How many years/months? How many times a week?)

Consent Statement

Research into

Student and Teacher Beliefs about English Language Learning

1. The aim of this study is to gain a deeper understanding into the beliefs of students and teachers about the nature of English language learning. It is hoped that such an understanding will help to lead to more successful English language learning among students.
 2. All information given and used in this study is for research purposes only and complete confidentiality is assured.
 3. Any students and teachers invited to participate may choose not to do so. After the study has commenced, participants may withdraw at any time.
 4. By participating in the study, students and teachers consent to all necessary use of all information offered for the completion of the study.
-

1. It is easier for children than adults to learn English.
2. English class should be enjoyable.
3. In order to learn to read and write English very well, English education at school is enough.
4. I believe that someday I will speak English very well.
5. It is useful to know about English-speaking countries in order to speak English.
6. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can speak it correctly.
7. Considering the amount of time I have studied English, I'm satisfied with my progress.
8. In English classes, I prefer to have my teacher provide explanations in Japanese.
9. It's O.K. to guess If you don't know a word in English.
10. If a person studies English by himself for one hour a day, how many years will it take to become fluent?
11. In learning English it is important to repeat and practice a lot.
12. I would feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other Japanese students.
13. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on.
14. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.
15. Listening to tapes and watching English programs on television are very important in learning English.
16. Girls are better than boys at learning English.
17. If I learn to speak English very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.
18. It is easier to speak English than to understand it.
19. Learning English is different from learning other subjects.
20. Learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Japanese.
21. If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.
22. It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.
23. People who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages.
24. Japanese think it is important to speak English.
25. People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.
26. Japanese are good at learning foreign languages.
27. In order to speak and understand English very well, English education at school is enough.
28. Some languages are easier to learn than others.
29. You can learn to improve your English only from native speakers of English.
30. Some people are born with a special ability which is useful for learning English.
31. Speaking and listening to English are more useful than reading and writing English.
32. Learning a word means learning the Japanese translation.
33. I studied English only to pass the entrance exam.
34. I can improve my English by speaking English with my classmates.
35. I make mistakes because I do not study enough.
36. To say something in English, I think of how I would say it in Japanese and then translate it into English.
37. I should be able to learn everything I am taught.
38. I want my teacher to correct all my mistakes.
39. If my teacher is a native speaker, he/she should be able to speak Japanese when necessary.
40. I study English because it is useful to communicate with English speaking people.
41. To understand English, it must be translated into Japanese.
42. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.
43. The longer I study English, the more enjoyable I find it.
44. If I heard a foreigner of my age speaking English, I would go up to that person to practice speaking.
45. I am satisfied with the English education I received.

APPENDIX C

Questionnaire - Teacher Version Beliefs about English language learning

1. English class should be enjoyable.
2. In learning English it is important to repeat and practice a lot.
3. Listening to tapes and watching English programs on television are very important in learning English.
4. Students should be able to learn everything they are taught.
5. It is useful to know about English-speaking countries in order to speak English.
6. It is easier for children than adults to learn English.
7. Speaking and listening to English are more useful than reading and writing English.
8. Some languages are easier to learn than others.
9. If students learn to speak English very well, they will have many opportunities to use it.
10. If students learn to speak English very well, it will help them get a good job.
11. It's O.K. to guess if you don't know a word in English.
12. If the teacher is a native speaker, he/she should be able to speak Japanese when necessary.
13. Japanese people think it is important to speak English.
14. Japanese students feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other students.
15. To say something in English, most students think of how to say it in Japanese and then translate it into English.
16. Students can improve their English by speaking English with their classmates.
17. Learning English is different from learning other subjects.
18. It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.
19. Some people are born with a special ability which is useful for learning English.
20. Students make mistakes because they do not study enough.
21. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on.
22. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.
23. Teachers should correct all student mistakes.
24. People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.
25. It is easier to speak English than to understand it.
26. Learning a word means learning the Japanese translation.
27. To understand English, it must be translated into Japanese.
28. If a person studies English by himself for one hour a day, how many years will it take to become fluent?
29. Girls are better than boys at learning English.
30. You can learn to improve your English only from native speakers of English.
31. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.
32. Learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Japanese.
33. People who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages.
34. Japanese are good at learning foreign languages.
35. In order to learn to read and write English very well, English education at school is enough.
36. In order to speak and understand English very well, English education at school is enough.
37. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can speak it correctly.

APPENDIX D

Table D1. Average Scores for Test-Retest (n = 101)

April 2002 Test - retest					Test 1	Retest
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn English.					3.28	3.24
2. English class should be enjoyable.					3.67	3.65
3. In order to learn to read and write English very well, English education at school is enough.					1.87	2.04
4. I believe that someday I will speak English very well.					2.6	2.67
5. It is useful to know about English-speaking countries in order to speak English.					3.41	3.4
6. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can speak it correctly.					1.42	1.57
7. Considering the amount of time I have studied English, I'm satisfied with my progress.					1.54	1.71
8. In English classes, I prefer to have my teacher provide explanations in Japanese.					1.99	1.99
9. It's O.K. to guess if you don't know a word in English.					3.02	3.08
10. If a person studies English by himself for one hour a day, how many years will it take to become fluent?					2.42	2.41
11. In learning English it is important to repeat and practice a lot.					3.63	3.65
12. I would feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other Japanese students.					2.71	2.57
13. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on.					2.39	2.43
14. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.					2.11	2.07
15. Listening to tapes and watching English programs on television are very important in learning English.					3.45	3.54
16. Girls are better than boys at learning English.					1.85	2.03
17. If I learn to speak English very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.					3.12	3.1
18. It is easier to speak English than to understand it.					2.13	2.17
19. Learning English is different from learning other subjects.					2.58	2.57
20. Learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Japanese.					1.86	1.97
21. If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.					3.18	3.15
22. It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.					2.6	2.52
23. People who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages.					1.74	1.71
24. Japanese think it is important to speak English.					2.88	3
25. People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.					2.32	2.14
26. Japanese are good at learning foreign languages.					1.7	1.87
27. In order to speak and understand English very well, English education at school is enough.					1.63	1.74
28. Some languages are easier to learn than others.					3.09	3.03
29. You can learn to improve your English only from native speakers of English.					2.1	2.07
30. Some people are born with a special ability which is useful for learning English.					2.04	2.38
31. Speaking and listening to English are more useful than reading and writing English.					2.93	3.01
32. Learning a word means learning the Japanese translation.					2.33	2.28
33. I studied English only to pass the entrance exam.					2.17	2.46
34. I can improve my English by speaking English with my classmates.					2.88	2.85
35. I make mistakes because I do not study enough.					2.64	2.49
36. To say something in English, I think of how I would say it in Japanese and then translate it into English.					2.66	2.68
37. I should be able to learn everything I am taught.					2.73	2.78
38. I want my teacher to correct all my mistakes.					2.46	2.57
39. If my teacher is a native speaker, he/she should be able to speak Japanese when necessary.					2.65	2.71
40. I study English because it is useful to communicate with English speaking people.					3.28	3.22
41. To understand English, it must be translated into Japanese.					2.04	2.07
42. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.					2.57	2.67
43. The longer I study English, the more enjoyable I find it.					2.95	2.89
44. If I heard a foreigner of my age speaking English, I would go up to that person to practice speaking.					2.88	2.87
45. I am satisfied with the English education I received.					1.9	1.93

Table D2. Paired Sample t-tests for Test-Retest. (N=101)**Paired Samples t-Test**

		Paired Differences Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean	95% Conf. Interval of Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tail)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	A1 - B1	3.960E-02	.7200	7.164E-02	-.1025	.1817	.553	100	.582
Pair 2	A2 - B2	3.960E-02	.5277	5.250E-02	-6.4561E-02	.1438	.754	100	.452
Pair 3	A3 - B3	-.1782	.8173	8.132E-02	-.3396	-1.6880E-02	-2.192	100	.031
Pair 4	A4 - B4	-6.0000E-02	.5829	5.829E-02	-.1757	5.566E-02	-1.029	99	.306
Pair 5	A5 - B5	1.980E-02	.5474	5.446E-02	-8.8254E-02	.1279	.364	100	.717
Pair 6	A6 - B6	-.1584	.6890	6.855E-02	-.2944	-2.2408E-02	-2.311	100	.023
Pair 7	A7 - B7	-.1700	.5870	5.870E-02	-.2865	-5.3530E-02	-2.896	99	.005
Pair 8	A8 - B8	5.000E-03	.4949	4.949E-02	-9.3199E-02	.1032	.101	99	.920
Pair 9	A9 - B9	-4.1667E-02	.6793	6.933E-02	-.1793	9.597E-02	-.601	95	.549
Pair 10	A10 - B10	-1.9802E-02	.6779	6.746E-02	-.1536	.1140	-.294	100	.770
Pair 11	A11 - B11	-1.9802E-02	.5653	5.625E-02	-.1314	9.180E-02	-.352	100	.726
Pair 12	A12 - B12	.1300	.7608	7.608E-02	-2.0969E-02	.2810	1.709	99	.091
Pair 13	A13 - B13	-2.9703E-02	.7274	7.238E-02	-.1733	.1139	-.410	100	.682
Pair 14	A14 - B14	4.040E-02	.6534	6.567E-02	-8.9913E-02	.1707	.615	98	.540
Pair 15	A15 - B15	-8.9109E-02	.8012	7.973E-02	-.2473	6.907E-02	-1.118	100	.266
Pair 16	A16 - B16	-.1900	.7344	7.344E-02	-.3357	-4.4286E-02	-2.587	99	.011
Pair 17	A17 - B17	2.000E-02	.8987	8.987E-02	-.1583	.1983	.223	99	.824
Pair 18	A18 - B18	-5.9406E-02	.8812	8.768E-02	-.2334	.1145	-.678	100	.500
Pair 19	A19 - B19	.0000	.7348	7.312E-02	-.1451	.1451	.000	100	1.000
Pair 20	A20 - B20	-.1188	.7653	7.615E-02	-.2699	3.228E-02	-1.560	100	.122
Pair 21	A21 - B21	5.000E-02	.7703	7.703E-02	-.1029	.2029	.649	99	.518
Pair 22	A22 - B22	8.081E-02	.8652	8.695E-02	-9.1745E-02	.2534	.929	98	.355
Pair 23	A23 - B23	2.970E-02	.6396	6.364E-02	-9.6565E-02	.1560	.467	100	.642
Pair 24	A24 - B24	-.1287	.8082	8.042E-02	-.2883	3.085E-02	-1.600	100	.113
Pair 25	A25 - B25	.1683	.7358	7.321E-02	2.306E-02	.3136	2.299	100	.024
Pair 26	A26 - B26	-.1782	.5549	5.522E-02	-.2878	-6.8672E-02	-3.228	100	.002
Pair 27	A27 - B27	-.1188	.7251	7.215E-02	-.2620	2.433E-02	-1.647	100	.103
Pair 28	A28 - B28	5.155E-02	.6978	7.085E-02	-8.9088E-02	.1922	.728	96	.469
Pair 29	A29 - B29	1.020E-02	.6175	6.238E-02	-.1136	.1340	.164	97	.870
Pair 30	A30 - B30	-.4184	4.1862	.4229	-1.2576	.4209	-.989	97	.325
Pair 31	A31 - B31	-8.1633E-02	.6369	6.434E-02	-.2093	4.606E-02	-1.269	97	.208
Pair 32	A32 - B32	6.186E-02	.6894	7.000E-02	-7.7093E-02	.2008	.884	96	.379
Pair 33	A33 - B33	-.3061	.7787	7.866E-02	-.4622	-.1500	-3.892	97	.000
Pair 34	A34 - B34	2.083E-02	.6955	7.099E-02	-.1201	.1618	.293	95	.770
Pair 35	A35 - B35	.1224	.7359	7.434E-02	-2.5090E-02	.2700	1.647	97	.103
Pair 36	A36 - B36	-1.0204E-02	.8433	8.519E-02	-.1793	.1589	-.120	97	.905
Pair 37	A37 - B37	-5.2083E-02	.6707	6.846E-02	-.1880	8.382E-02	-.761	95	.449
Pair 38	A38 - B38	-.1224	.6622	6.689E-02	-.2552	1.031E-02	-1.831	97	.070
Pair 39	A39 - B39	-7.2165E-02	.6653	6.755E-02	-.2063	6.193E-02	-1.068	96	.288
Pair 40	A40 - B40	3.061E-02	.6168	6.231E-02	-9.3057E-02	.1543	.491	97	.624
Pair 41	A41 - B41	-6.1856E-02	.6092	6.186E-02	-.1846	6.093E-02	-1.000	96	.320
Pair 42	A42 - B42	-7.1429E-02	.7496	7.572E-02	-.2217	7.885E-02	-.943	97	.348
Pair 43	A43 - B43	5.155E-02	.7126	7.235E-02	-9.2065E-02	.1952	.712	96	.478
Pair 44	A44 - B44	.0000	.6649	6.786E-02	-.1347	.1347	.000	95	1.000
Pair 45	A45 - B45	-2.0408E-02	.5173	5.226E-02	-.1241	8.331E-02	-.391	97	.697

APPENDIX E

Table E1. Average Scores for Time 1 and Time2 (n=504)

	Time 1	Time 2
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn English.	3.35	3.39
2. English class should be enjoyable.	3.68	3.67
3. In order to learn to read and write English very well, English education at school is enough.	1.91	1.87
4. I believe that someday I will speak English very well.	2.68	2.46
5. It is useful to know about English-speaking countries in order to speak English.	3.38	3.34
6. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can speak it correctly.	1.31	1.3
7. Considering the amount of time I have studied English, I'm satisfied with my progress.	1.65	1.61
8. In English classes, I prefer to have my teacher provide explanations in Japanese.	2.05	2.1
9. It's O.K. to guess If you don't know a word in English.	3.08	3.19
10. If a person studies English by himself for one hour a day, how many years will it take to become fluent?	2.28	2.33
11. In learning English it is important to repeat and practice a lot.	3.61	3.57
12. I would feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other Japanese students.	2.66	2.56
13. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on.	2.54	2.6
14. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.	2.02	2.02
15. Listening to tapes and watching English programs on television are very important in learning English.	3.45	3.44
16. Girls are better than boys at learning English.	1.86	1.93
17. If I learn to speak English very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.	3.25	3.2
18. It is easier to speak English than to understand it.	2.25	2.17
19. Learning English is different from learning other subjects.	2.64	2.74
20. Learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Japanese.	1.84	1.77
21. If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.	3.16	3.15
22. It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.	2.55	2.62
23. People who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages.	1.73	1.75
24. Japanese think it is important to speak English.	2.91	2.96
25. People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.	2.43	2.41
26. Japanese are good at learning foreign languages.	1.75	1.74
27. In order to speak and understand English very well, English education at school is enough.	1.58	1.53
28. Some languages are easier to learn than others.	3.04	3.08
29. You can learn to improve your English only from native speakers of English.	2.1	2.11
30. Some people are born with a special ability which is useful for learning English.	2.11	2.25
31. Speaking and listening to English are more useful than reading and writing English.	3.01	3.02
32. Learning a word means learning the Japanese translation.	2.35	2.24
33. I studied English only to pass the entrance exam.	2.26	2.42
34. I can improve my English by speaking English with my classmates.	2.91	2.8
35. I make mistakes because I do not study enough.	2.62	2.56
36. To say something in English, I think of how I would say it in Japanese and then translate it into English.	2.59	2.53
37. I should be able to learn everything I am taught.	2.68	2.65
38. I want my teacher to correct all my mistakes.	2.38	2.42
39. If my teacher is a native speaker, he/she should be able to speak Japanese when necessary.	2.69	2.72
40. I study English because it is useful to communicate with English speaking people.	3.22	3.1
41. To understand English, it must be translated into Japanese.	2.09	2.04
42. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	2.58	2.73
43. The longer I study English, the more enjoyable I find it.	3.01	2.89
44. If I heard a foreigner of my age speaking English, I would go up to that person to practice speaking.	2.82	2.8
45. I am satisfied with the English education I received.	1.93	1.94

Table E2. Paired sample t-tests for Time 1 + Time 2 administrations

Paired Samples t-Test

		Paired Differences Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error Mean	95% Conf. Interval of Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	A1 - B1	-4.3738E-02	.8410	3.750E-02	-.1174	2.993E-02	-1.166	502	.244
Pair 2	A2 - B2	9.960E-03	.5228	2.334E-02	-3.5887E-02	5.581E-02	.427	501	.670
Pair 3	A3 - B3	4.108E-02	.8472	3.792E-02	-3.3429E-02	.1156	1.083	498	.279
Pair 4	A4 - B4	.2189	.6617	2.965E-02	.1606	.2771	7.381	497	.000
Pair 5	A5 - B5	3.386E-02	.7795	3.479E-02	-3.4490E-02	.1022	.973	501	.331
Pair 6	A6 - B6	1.295E-02	.5980	2.669E-02	-3.9491E-02	6.539E-02	.485	501	.628
Pair 7	A7 - B7	3.892E-02	.6633	2.963E-02	-1.9301E-02	9.715E-02	1.313	500	.190
Pair 8	A8 - B8	-4.6092E-02	.7754	3.471E-02	-.1143	2.211E-02	-1.328	498	.185
Pair 9	A9 - B9	-.1093	.6448	2.928E-02	-.1668	-5.1752E-02	-3.733	484	.000
Pair 10	A10 - B10	-5.4656E-02	.9485	4.267E-02	-.1385	2.919E-02	-1.281	493	.201
Pair 11	A11 - B11	4.573E-02	.7494	3.342E-02	-1.9926E-02	.1114	1.368	502	.172
Pair 12	A12 - B12	9.861E-02	.8169	3.646E-02	2.697E-02	.1702	2.704	501	.007
Pair 13	A13 - B13	-6.3126E-02	.7982	3.573E-02	-.1333	7.076E-03	-1.767	498	.078
Pair 14	A14 - B14	-4.9900E-03	.6895	3.081E-02	-6.5517E-02	5.554E-02	-.162	500	.871
Pair 15	A15 - B15	4.970E-03	.7630	3.402E-02	-6.1869E-02	7.181E-02	.146	502	.884
Pair 16	A16 - B16	-8.1162E-02	.8359	3.742E-02	-.1547	-7.6422E-03	-2.169	498	.031
Pair 17	A17 - B17	5.389E-02	.8241	3.682E-02	-1.8442E-02	.1262	1.464	500	.144
Pair 18	A18 - B18	8.717E-02	.9254	4.143E-02	5.783E-03	.1686	2.104	498	.036
Pair 19	A19 - B19	-9.9602E-02	.8177	3.650E-02	-.1713	-2.7894E-02	-2.729	501	.007
Pair 20	A20 - B20	7.485E-02	.7569	3.382E-02	8.412E-03	.1413	2.213	500	.027
Pair 21	A21 - B21	9.960E-03	.7991	3.567E-02	-6.0116E-02	8.004E-02	.279	501	.780
Pair 22	A22 - B22	-6.6866E-02	.8426	3.765E-02	-.1408	7.097E-03	-1.776	500	.076
Pair 23	A23 - B23	-1.9076E-02	.7185	3.220E-02	-8.2334E-02	4.418E-02	-.592	497	.554
Pair 24	A24 - B24	-5.3785E-02	.8401	3.749E-02	-.1274	1.988E-02	-1.435	501	.152
Pair 25	A25 - B25	2.305E-02	.8467	3.790E-02	-5.1421E-02	9.751E-02	.608	498	.543
Pair 26	A26 - B26	1.111E-02	.6507	2.925E-02	-4.6356E-02	6.858E-02	.380	494	.704
Pair 27	A27 - B27	5.090E-02	.7899	3.529E-02	-1.8435E-02	.1202	1.442	500	.150
Pair 28	A28 - B28	-3.8384E-02	.6857	3.082E-02	-9.8938E-02	2.217E-02	-1.245	494	.214
Pair 29	A29 - B29	-4.0568E-03	.6603	2.974E-02	-6.2484E-02	5.437E-02	-.136	492	.892
Pair 30	A30 - B30	-.1405	.8491	3.832E-02	-.2158	-6.5236E-02	-3.667	490	.000
Pair 31	A31 - B31	.0000	.7235	3.269E-02	-6.4223E-02	6.422E-02	.000	489	1.000
Pair 32	A32 - B32	.1121	.7647	3.469E-02	4.398E-02	.1803	3.233	485	.001
Pair 33	A33 - B33	-.1497	.8598	3.880E-02	-.2259	-7.3454E-02	-3.858	490	.000
Pair 34	A34 - B34	.1069	.7962	3.593E-02	3.632E-02	.1775	2.976	490	.003
Pair 35	A35 - B35	6.504E-02	.8363	3.770E-02	-9.0407E-03	.1391	1.725	491	.085
Pair 36	A36 - B36	5.918E-02	.7503	3.390E-02	-7.4145E-03	.1258	1.746	489	.081
Pair 37	A37 - B37	2.642E-02	.7307	3.294E-02	-3.8303E-02	9.115E-02	.802	491	.423
Pair 38	A38 - B38	-3.4765E-02	.7270	3.288E-02	-9.9359E-02	2.983E-02	-1.057	488	.291
Pair 39	A39 - B39	-2.9412E-02	.7845	3.533E-02	-9.8835E-02	4.001E-02	-.832	492	.406
Pair 40	A40 - B40	.1133	.7375	3.332E-02	4.780E-02	.1787	3.400	489	.001
Pair 41	A41 - B41	4.908E-02	.7779	3.518E-02	-2.0041E-02	.1182	1.395	488	.164
Pair 42	A42 - B42	-.1411	.8454	3.823E-02	-.2162	-6.5989E-02	-3.691	488	.000
Pair 43	A43 - B43	.1078	.7805	3.537E-02	3.831E-02	.1773	3.048	486	.002
Pair 44	A44 - B44	1.738E-02	.7790	3.523E-02	-5.1830E-02	8.659E-02	.493	488	.622
Pair 45	A45 - B45	-6.0976E-03	.7605	3.429E-02	-7.3464E-02	6.127E-02	-.178	491	.859

APPENDIX F

Table F1. Difference between students' and teachers' average scores, at Time 1, for 37 common items.

			Tchrs	Apr. Studs	Diff.
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn English.			3.12	3.34	0.22
2. English class should be enjoyable.			3.53	3.67	0.14
3. In order to learn to read and write English very well, English education at school is enough.			1.85	1.9	0.05
5. It is useful to know about English-speaking countries in order to speak English.			2.94	3.37	0.43
6. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can speak it correctly.			1.15	1.32	0.17
9. It's O.K. to guess if you don't know a word in English.			3.62	3.08	-0.54
10. If a person studies English by himself for one hour a day, how many years will it take to become fluent?			2.77	2.23	-0.54
11. In learning English it is important to repeat and practice a lot.			3.24	3.59	0.35
12. I would feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other Japanese students.			2.74	2.64	-0.1
13. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on.			1.93	2.53	0.6
14. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.			1.65	2.01	0.36
15. Listening to tapes and watching English programs on television are very important in learning English.			2.9	3.44	0.54
16. Girls are better than boys at learning English.			2.33	1.89	-0.44
17. If I learn to speak English very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.			2.28	3.22	0.94
18. It is easier to speak English than to understand it.			1.91	2.24	0.33
19. Learning English is different from learning other subjects.			3.24	2.6	-0.64
20. Learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Japanese.			1.53	1.84	0.31
21. If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.			2.67	3.13	0.46
22. It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.			2.27	2.53	0.26
23. People who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages.			1.79	1.71	-0.08
24. Japanese think it is important to speak English.			2.61	2.9	0.29
25. People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.			1.94	2.41	0.47
26. Japanese are good at learning foreign languages.			2.08	1.74	-0.34
27. In order to speak and understand English very well, English education at school is enough.			1.67	1.57	-0.1
28. Some languages are easier to learn than others.			3.12	3.03	-0.09
29. You can learn to improve your English only from native speakers of English.			1.65	2.09	0.44
30. Some people are born with a special ability which is useful for learning English.			2.91	2.09	-0.82
31. Speaking and listening to English are more useful than reading and writing English.			2.47	2.98	0.51
32. Learning a word means learning the Japanese translation.			1.63	2.35	0.72
34. I can improve my English by speaking English with my classmates.			3.5	2.9	-0.6
35. I make mistakes because I do not study enough.			1.74	2.58	0.84
36. To say something in English, I think of how I would say it in Japanese and then translate it into English.			3.02	2.57	-0.45
37. I should be able to learn everything I am taught.			2.18	2.65	0.47
38. I want my teacher to correct all my mistakes.			1.56	2.37	0.81
39. If my teacher is a native speaker, he/she should be able to speak Japanese when necessary.			2.47	2.68	0.21
41. To understand English, it must be translated into Japanese.			1.51	2.06	0.55
42. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.			3.24	2.6	-0.64

APPENDIX G

1) Principal components factor analysis - Time 1

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.733
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3708.810
	df	990
	Sig.	.000

Rotated Component Matrix

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
ITEM 43	.535	-.459		
ITEM 05	.499			
ITEM 15	.499			
ITEM 11	.496			
ITEM 34	.473			
ITEM 17	.460			
ITEM 02	.459			
ITEM 40	.451			
ITEM 44	.424	-.396		
ITEM 37	.420			
ITEM 21	.414			
ITEM 08	-.405	.377		
ITEM 36		.597		
ITEM 41		.477	.370	
ITEM 35		.475		
ITEM 04	.404	-.458		
ITEM 39		.400		
ITEM 32		.371		
ITEM 33		.363		
ITEM 13		.361		
ITEM 27			.589	
ITEM 26			.494	
ITEM 03			.445	
ITEM 20			.438	
ITEM 07		-.363	.417	
ITEM 16				.508
ITEM 23				.487
ITEM 42				.460
ITEM 30				.428
ITEM 25				.409
ITEM 19				.387

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
Rotation converged in 11 iterations.

2) Principal components factor analysis – Sakui and Gaies (1999)

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
ITEM 43	.630			
ITEM 40	.584			
ITEM 15	.573			
ITEM 17	.560			
ITEM 44	.550			
ITEM 05	.536			
ITEM 04	.513			
ITEM 21	.503	.367		
ITEM 02	.449			
ITEM 11	.423			
ITEM 9	.369			
ITEM 41		.676		
ITEM 36		.634		
ITEM 32		.585		
ITEM 20		.531		
ITEM 08	-.460	.413		
ITEM 14		.371	.356	
ITEM 45			.645	
ITEM 7			.636	
ITEM 27			.609	
ITEM 3			.555	
ITEM 26			.497	
ITEM 16				.736
ITEM 30				.608
ITEM 23				.594

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax

APPENDIX H

Table H1. Comparison of Group A Students' and Group B Students' Mean Scores

	Mean Scores			
	All students	Group A students	Group B students	A/B Diff.
1. It is easier for children than adults to learn English.	3.34	3.34	3.34	0
2. English class should be enjoyable.	3.67	3.7	3.66	0.04
3. In order to learn to read and write English very well, English education at school is enough.	1.9	1.91	1.94	0.03
4. I believe that someday I will speak English very well.	2.66	2.86	2.6	0.26
5. It is useful to know about English-speaking countries in order to speak English.	3.37	3.5	3.39	0.11
6. You shouldn't say anything in English until you can speak it correctly.	1.32	1.23	1.37	0.14
7. Considering the amount of time I have studied English, I'm satisfied with my progress.	1.66	1.63	1.63	0
8. In English classes, I prefer to have my teacher provide explanations in Japanese.	2.08	1.9	2.11	0.21
9. It's O.K. to guess If you don't know a word in English.	3.08	3.15	3.05	0.1
10. If a person studies English by himself for one hour a day, how many years will it take to become fluent?	2.23	2.35	2.22	0.13
11. In learning English it is important to repeat and practice a lot.	3.59	3.64	3.62	0.02
12. I would feel embarrassed to speak English in front of other Japanese students.	2.64	2.66	2.54	0.08
13. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on.	2.53	2.51	2.57	0.06
14. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning grammar rules.	2.01	2.01	1.99	0.02
15. Listening to tapes and watching English programs on television are very important in learning English.	3.44	3.52	3.41	0.11
16. Girls are better than boys at learning English.	1.89	1.85	1.9	0.05
17. If I learn to speak English very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.	3.22	3.19	3.31	0.12
18. It is easier to speak English than to understand it.	2.24	2.16	2.32	0.16
19. Learning English is different from learning other subjects.	2.6	2.66	2.66	0
20. Learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Japanese.	1.84	1.74	1.95	0.21
21. If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.	3.13	3.14	3.17	0.03
22. It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.	2.53	2.55	2.54	0.01
23. People who are good at math and science are not good at learning foreign languages.	1.71	1.59	1.77	0.18
24. Japanese think it is important to speak English.	2.9	2.9	2.93	0.03
25. People who speak more than one language well are very intelligent.	2.41	2.34	2.42	0.08
26. Japanese are good at learning foreign languages.	1.74	1.76	1.76	0
27. In order to speak and understand English very well, English education at school is enough.	1.57	1.53	1.62	0.09
28. Some languages are easier to learn than others.	3.03	3.01	3.03	0.02
29. You can learn to improve your English only from native speakers of English.	2.09	2.03	2.14	0.11
30. Some people are born with a special ability which is useful for learning English.	2.09	2.03	2.14	0.11
31. Speaking and listening to English are more useful than reading and writing English.	2.98	2.91	3.03	0.12
32. Learning a word means learning the Japanese translation.	2.35	2.28	2.4	0.12

33. I studied English only to pass the entrance exam.	2.25	2.11	2.37	0.26
34. I can improve my English by speaking English with my classmates.	2.9	2.92	2.89	0.03
35. I make mistakes because I do not study enough.	2.58	2.53	2.58	0.05
36. To say something in English, I think of how I would say it in Japanese and then translate it into English.	2.57	2.46	2.66	0.2
37. I should be able to learn everything I am taught.	2.65	2.77	2.62	0.15
38. I want my teacher to correct all my mistakes.	2.37	2.42	2.32	0.1
39. If my teacher is a native speaker, he/she should be able to speak Japanese when necessary.	2.68	2.46	2.66	0.2
40. I study English because it is useful to communicate with English speaking people.	3.2	3.3	3.15	0.15
41. To understand English, it must be translated into Japanese.	2.06	2.0	2.17	0.17
42. It is easier for someone who already speaks a foreign language to learn another one.	2.6	2.7	2.56	0.14
43. The longer I study English, the more enjoyable I find it.	2.99	3.15	2.9	0.25
44. If I heard a foreigner of my age speaking English, I would go up to that person to practice speaking.	2.78	2.92	2.78	0.14
45. I am satisfied with the English education I received.	1.95	2.04	1.87	0.17

APPENDIX I

Excerpts from Student Discussion Group Transcriptions

R = This Researcher

All student names are pseudonyms.

Concerning Item 4, I believe that someday I will speak English very well

Group 1

R: Hitomi, in April you believed in this, you agreed with this, and in December you changed and you said "I disagree".

Hitomi: I, I don't remember why I wrote differently, but I think now I don't study English so much so I don't think now I am....I don't think... I won't be a good English speaker because I don't study well.

R: Is that since you entered university?

Hitomi: Yes.

Hitomi: In April, in April I thought I wanna study English a lot, and I have to study English a lot. But now I'm not study hard.

R: Do you still think you want to study English a lot?

Hitomi: Yes.

R: Have to study English a lot?

Hitomi: Not 'have to'. I'd like to study English.

R: Ok. Anybody? Anything else?

Natsumi: Yes. When I wrote about that things I really believed that I will be a good English speaker. But after the summer vacation I didn't study at all about English so I just found that my English was very very bad. That time I didn't believe that I will be a good speaker because I think what is important is that the situation I was in.

R: But then, by December?

Natsumi: Now. I still believe that I won't be a good speaker. Otherwise I won't study hard.

R: So, if I had asked you the question in September?

Natsumi: I would change my opinion maybe.

R: Because of the summer vacation?

Natsumi: Mmmm.

Group 2

R: Kanako, in April you disagreed with this, but agreed in Dec.

Kanako: Maybe I was thinking that in Uni. I would have a large class and that many students who don't speak English at all. In Japan I can speak English very well compared to general J people, so I thought class would be too easy for me. But I was in advance class and everyone in my class was speaking very well, and I think I had a good time and I have improved, so I agreed with this in Dec.

Concerning Item 34, I can improve my English by speaking English with my classmates.

Group 1

R: I want to look at number 34, I can improve my English by speaking English with my classmates. Natsumi, in April you agreed and in December you disagreed. Koki, in April you agreed strongly, and in December you just agreed. So you 2 have moved in the same direction.

Natsumi: I think it's a good chance to speak English between my English friend because it makes me much...

R: Why did you disagree in December?

Natsumi: Because.....learning English from just NS gives me more good skill to my English. NS just speak English everyday because that is their language, so it is more benefit for us to learn and give chance for us to speak English.

R: So in April when you started did you believe you could improve your English speaking with your classmates?

Natsumi: I thought so.

R: And in December?

Natsumi: In December, learning English from my class just give me the opportunity to speak English, not get good English, perfect English.

R: Koki?

Koki: I agree with her. Speaking with classmates is just an opportunity to speak English. Even a person who speak English fluently, that person is not a NS. That person doesn't give me good... effect... that person can't teach me real English.

Natsuko: Just a practice to speak English.

Natsuko: And if we speak with classmate we use some Japanese if we don't know the word in English. So, that's not....

Natsumi: If he doesn't understand any Japanese, even if there are some words we don't know, we will try hard to explain just in English. That is much better.

R: So it's much better to practice with non-Japanese classmates.

Natsumi/Natsuko: Yes, non-Japanese classmates.

Concerning Item 40. I study English because it is useful to communicate with English speaking people.

Group 1

R: I study English because it is useful to communicate with English speaking people. With the whole group of students this item had the second biggest change. In April many students agreed and in December disagreed.

Natsuko/Natsumi/Hitomi: Have they lost confidence – what's wrong with these people?

Natsumi: Language is the means of communication so if they don't communicate with any people from other countries, it doesn't have any roles...there is no meaning of studying.

Hitomi: Maybe because there are too many assignments they lost confidence. They become to dislike English.

Koki: I think they just lost confidence.

Natsuko: I think that most students studied English in Japanese for 6 years. Once they entered uni. They have to study English in English. And it's a very different situation from high school.

Hitomi: Japanese people are used to studying English in Japanese, and they lose their confidence because it's a struggle.

R: How can you believe less that it is useful to communicate with English speaking people?

Natsumi: Why? I want to ask too.

Natsumi: Japanese people are afraid of making mistakes in front of foreigners. They have no confidence.

Hitomi: Japanese people cannot express their true opinion, so they adapt own opinion to others.

Group 2

R: Question 40 – I study English because it is useful to communicate with English speaking people. Many students agreed in April, but disagreed in Dec.

Shu: In class, students can't find the interesting point of learning English.

Kanako: Many students come to this university because of its reputation for (foreign) exchange students, but it is difficult to meet the exchange students because we have different classes. We need more opportunity to meet exchange students from other countries.

Kanako: Students lost confidence.

Shu: Students were hoping in April. They lost hope.

Yoshiko: We had a spirit of challenge in April, but lost confidence.

Shu: In April I was satisfied just to speak English (enjoyable). After that I found that I needed to study more grammar and to read more difficult books in English. So in December I decided there are many walls. It is not fun anymore. I like English. It is interesting but difficult.