

Case Study of Japanese Learning in Multicultural Learning Environment Where Different Students' Expectations May Exist in Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

The increasing number of international students whose teaching and learning practices are very different from the UK, is studying in the U.K. This study poses the question of whether Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is still the most effective and appropriate approach in today's multicultural society regardless of cultural differences. The Japanese teaching method (Japanisation) was presented as an alternative teaching method to CLT, and the study investigates any impacts on multicultural students in Japanese language teaching at a university in the south of England.

The study was conducted for one semester using two groups (total of 34 students) in 2009/2010. Two teaching methods, Japanisation and CLT, were applied. The concept of Japanisation is drawn from the study of Japanese car manufacturing industries and transferred to the language teaching context. Three tests which provided quantitative data to generate data.

The quantitative results showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two teaching methods regarding the attainment in the first two tests. However, Japanisation was associated with significantly higher results in the final test, compared with CLT.

The implication of this study is embedding elements of Japanisation and Japanese educational culture in the Japanese language teaching will possibly enhance students' learning of reading and writing skills. Those who develop the teaching curriculum are encouraged at a strategic level to examine other educational cultures and teaching practices from non-Anglophone countries and assess how they may be combined with CLT to reflect new international characteristics of teaching and learning environments. Key words: CLT; culture; effective language teaching; higher education; Japanese language teaching; multicultural

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Introduction

Globalisation has brought changes to the monoculture societies. The UK is one of the countries which have a diverse ethnic population. The changes also had impact on higher education. British university campuses are filled with international students from all over the world. Japanese language teaching in this study is also a significant part of internationalisation in education.

In a pilot study, less than half of the Japanese class were British and the remainder were Chinese, Egyptian, Latvian, Greek, French, Malaysian, Polish and Russian. This is a typical language classroom where teacher and students do not share the same educational culture. Teaching Japanese using the most popular Anglophone originated Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) method, I felt that this did not work well for some non-British students as they appeared to react somewhat differently from the British students. This experience made me formulate a hypothesis that CLT is only appropriate and effective for Anglophone students (Anglophone refers to USA, UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (NZ) within this paper). The issues of applying CLT to non-British students were not addressed when studying this teaching method, leaving me unsure on how to handle the challenges experienced in the classroom.

The next section discusses the framework of Anglophone and Japanese educational culture, which will help the understanding of the teaching methods used in the study, i.e. CLT and Japanisation. This is followed by methodology, data collection, data analysis, conclusions and implications.

Theoretical framework for analysing Anglophone and Japanese teaching approaches

Framework of the study

The two teaching methods used in this study are Japanisation and CLT as representative of two educational cultures. They will be explained based on the framework using Hofstede's five dimensions of culture. Hofstede (1991) identifies culture in five dimensions: power distance; individualism–collectivism; masculinity–femininity; uncertainty avoidance; and long-term–short-term. In this paper, three dimensions will be explained for the relevance of this study, that is, power distance, individualism–collectivism and uncertainty avoidance.

Hofstede summarises power distance as “the relationship to authority” (Hofstede: 1991: 13), and it is defined as “the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” (Hofstede: 1991: 28). A large Power Distance Index (PDI) in Hofstede's Power Distance (PD) dimension indicates that society accepts an unequal distribution of power. According to Dimmock, “many Asian societies are high PD cultures, while many Western societies have low PD values” (Dimmock: 2000: 47). Japan is ranked at 33rd place among the 50 countries (Hofstede: 1991: 26).

Hofstede defines individualism–collectivism as follows: “Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look

after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty" (Hofstede: 1991: 51). Compared with an individualist society, a collectivist society usually has strong group cohesion and loyalty towards the group. Dimmock summarises that "Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand are ranked towards the collectivist end... at the individualist end of the spectrum, the USA, Australia and Britain occupy the first three places" (Dimmock: 2000: 47). Generally speaking, Anglophone countries have an individualist society and Asian countries have a collectivist one.

Hofstede defines uncertainty avoidance as "the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations. This feeling is, among other things, expressed through nervous stress and in a need for predictability: a need for written and unwritten rules" (Hofstede: 1991: 113). High Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) scoring nations try to avoid ambiguous situations whenever possible, whereas low UAI scoring nations are not concerned about unknown situations. According to Hofstede (1991: 113), Japan is ranked at 7th place out of 50 countries, which shows a strong UAI. Generally, Anglophone countries appear to be labelled as weak uncertainty avoidance countries whereas Asian countries appear to be labelled as strong uncertainty avoidance countries.

Anglophone approaches to teaching and learning – CLT

CLT started in the late 1970s in Europe and gained momentum in the early 1980s. Since then it has taken hold and acquired the status of new dogma" (Hu: 2002: 94). In other words, CLT has been used for the last four decades. Three strengths of CLT are i) student-centred class, making students more proactive in learning, ii) it has "element of entertaining such as various language games" (Hu: 2002: 96) and iii) it is taught by themes and functions, rather than from easy to more difficult stages which is used in the grammar base teaching.

The weakness of CLT in multi-cultural language learning environment is that CLT appears to be based on the assumptions that relate more closely to Western teaching environments (Hu: 2002: 96) characterised by a strong ethos for individualism (Hofstede: 1991). However, some students coming from Confucius or collectivist societies could be considered as directly opposite from the Anglophone educational culture. Therefore, CLT appears to "conflict" (Hu: 2002: 102) or be "incompatible" (Hu: 2002: 102) with a multicultural teaching and learning environment, and thus may not offer a universal optimum language-teaching method.

Related to this study, Campbell and Wales's (1970) raises the question of whether communicative approach refers exclusively to the communicative knowledge or if there is any capability relating to grammatical competence. To answer this question, understanding the two broad theoretical positions existing in communicative approach might be useful (Canale and Swain: 1980). The first position focuses on communication knowledge exclusively and does not include grammatical competence. "Some linguists maintained that it was not necessary to teach grammar, that the ability to use a second language would develop automatically" (Nunan: 1989: 13). On the other hand, the second position allows the inclusion of grammatical competence

within communicative approach: “communication cannot take place in the absence of structure, or grammar... Canale and Swain (1980) did not suggest that grammar was unimportant... Grammar is important” (Savignon: 2002: 7). However, the interpretation of a communicative competence differs among linguists who advocate this position (e.g. Canale and Swain, 1980 and Munby, 1978). Savignon (2002), for example, states that “the principles apply equally to reading and writing... a teacher who has only a grammar-translation manual can certainly teach for communicative competence” (Savignon: 2002: 22). Another example of the different views among the same position can also be found between Munby (1978) and Canale and Swain (1980) with regards to whether grammatical competence should be taught first prior to communicative competence or vice versa. Nunan maintains that “there is a family of approaches, each member of which claims to be ‘communicative’. There is also frequent disagreement between different members of the communicative family” (Nunan: 1989: 23).

This study used communication knowledge exclusively and did not include grammatical competence. This is because this position appeared to be better suited for exploring the educational cultural influences on students without using grammatical competence.

Typical CLT procedures used in this study

CLT was applied to Group 2 (21 students). CLT adopts the following three of Hofstede’s educational cultural dimensions: small power distance, weak uncertainty avoidance, and individualism. CLT class was achieved by exposing the sample students to a combination of the following Hofstede’s three dimensions that characterise Anglophone educational culture:

Firstly, with regards to the large versus small power distance dimension, Anglophone educational culture prefers small power distance as “CLT is firmly opposed to teacher dominance in the classroom” (Hu: 2002: 95). This was created by creating a student centred class.

Secondly, with regards to the strong versus weak uncertainty avoidance dimension, Anglophone educational culture takes weak uncertainty avoidance. Uncertainty avoidance was achieved by encouraging students’ creativity and avoiding linguistic correction: “learners are not being constantly corrected. Errors are regarded with greater tolerance,” (Littlewood: 1981: 94), and CLT “avoid(s) linguistic correction entirely” (Brumfit and Johnson: 1979: 173).

Lastly, with regard to the individualism versus collectivism dimension, Anglophone educational culture adheres to individualism. Individualism was demonstrated through speaking activities with pair work such as a real life related information gap task and problem-solving tasks using a combination of a topic of theme (e.g. time, shopping, etc.). During pair work, students kept their cognitive activity engaged through tailored learning and learned at their own pace. Furthermore, students also have the opportunity to have one-to-one interactions with the tutor during the pair work.

Japanese approaches to teaching and learning – Japanisation

The concept of Japanisation is drawn from the study of Japanese car manufacturing industries and transferred to the language teaching context for the purpose of this study. There have been reports of non-Japanese car manufacturing industries successfully applying Japanisation all over the world, and there were suggestions to apply the manufacturing concept of Japanisation into educational management around a decade ago (Morley and Rasool: 2000). Japanisation has possibility to wider ramifications that go beyond the manufacturing industry and management. Musgrave claims that “schools can be viewed as organisations in some ways akin to factories” (Musgrave: 1968: 67), pointing out a significant relationship between schools and factories. This is also supported by Hofstede who claimed that “workers’ behaviour is an extension of behaviour acquired at school” (Hofstede: 1991: 235). However, the concept of Japanisation seems to have only been applied to organisational management and not to teaching.

There are some key words in Japanisation. One of them is Quality Control (QC) groups. In Japanese car manufacturing industry, QC groups are used to make use of all staff of very different experience and skills over an extended period of time in order to improve quality. QC groups are also known as Han groups at school. Han group is “only changes the grouping at the beginning of each term” (Benjamin: 1997: 53) which reminds QC group’s “extended period of time”. “Han group comprises a mixture of different academic abilities” (Okano and Tsuchiya: 1999: 59), which reminded QC groups very different experience and skills. Each Han group is responsible for everyone’s achievement within the group rather than just the achievement of each individual. When one person is underperforming, the rest of the members make sure that he/she equally completes the task. This is different from Anglophone group formation as most of the group work in Anglophone classrooms and especially those of language activities for the purpose of oral practice belong to informal groups usually generated through ad hoc formation and tend to include those of similar academic abilities. Lewis (1996) explains Japanese and American groups using terms “familylike” (Rohlen and LeTendre: 1996: 88) and “factorylike” (Rohlen and LeTendre: 1996: 88).

There is a difference in the nature of groups between Anglophone classrooms and Japanese classrooms which depends in part on whether the group characteristic is formal or informal in nature (Brumfit: 1985: 72). Formal groups are explained as “either more or less permanent with defined roles over a long period” (Brumfit: 1985: 72). Informal groups are explained as those which “occur primarily for social purposes whenever people interact” (Brumfit: 1985: 72). In contrast, Japanese Han groups are formal groups where there is usually an unspoken shared understanding among members that everyone should participate in the group activities, sharing their tasks and knowledge to do things together.

This indicates that Japanese groups appear to show one aspect of collectivist culture which underpins both the manufacturing and teaching contexts. Benjamin maintains: “the values and interaction patterns fostered in Han groups in the classroom are among those carried over into adult situations” (Benjamin: 1997: 64).

Typical Japanisation procedures used in this study

Japanisation was applied to Group 3 (13 students). Japanisation adopts the following three of Hofstede's educational cultural dimensions: large power distance, strong uncertainty avoidance, and collectivism. Japanisation class was achieved by exposing the sample students to a combination of the following Hofstede's three dimensions that characterise Japanese educational culture:

Firstly, with regards to the individualism versus collectivism dimension, Japanese educational culture adheres to collectivism. The value of collectivism was demonstrated by use of turn-taking and Han group. Students practised translation reading tasks within the member of the Han group, ideally using turn taking.

Secondly, with regards to the strong versus weak uncertainty avoidance dimension, Japanese educational culture takes strong uncertainty avoidance. This was achieved by one correct answer and elimination of errors. Therefore, a short reading and grammar substitution exercise worksheet that focused on one correct answer was used to achieve strong uncertainty avoidance. Japanisation intentionally places emphasis on reading and grammar in contrast to CLT's emphasis on speaking. In addition, students' mistakes were corrected.

Finally, with regards to the large versus small power distance dimension, Japanese educational culture takes the large power distance. This was created by a teacher-centred class, where students played a passive role in majority of the class. The strength of teacher-centred class is to provide same education for all. The weakness is that it requires flexibility from students.

Methodology

Research questions

In order to examine the impact of a native language teacher's educational culture to multicultural students, this study examines if any changes were observed among students quantitatively or qualitatively by comparing the results of Japanisation and CLT. This study addresses the following three Research Questions (RQ):

RQ1: Do students in the Japanese language classes taught using CLT and Japanisation methods show any differences in the performance of the Reading and Written Tests and Assignments?

RQ2: Do students' preferences relate to their ethnicity?

RQ3: How do students in a British university respond to being taught by Japanisation methods compared with being taught by CLT?

Design of the study

This study uses a mixed method design. The RQ1 was investigated by the test which provided quantitative data. The RQ2 was investigated by questionnaires which

provided quantitative and qualitative data. The RQ3 was investigated by both questionnaire and observation which provided qualitative data.

Sample

The sample is a mixture of undergraduate and postgraduate students who were studying Stage 1 Japanese at a university in the South of England in 2009/2010. The university offers 16 languages between stage 1 (no previous knowledge of Japanese) and stage 7 (near native). Japanese courses were offered as a non-credit bearing modules evening classes between stages 1 and 3 when the study was conducted. The total number was 34 students and the majority of the sample ages were between 18 and 25 years old. However, there are some mature students in the study. These were randomly assigned into two groups (Groups 2 and 3).

Table 1 Students' ethnicity in Group 2 and Group 3

	Group 2	Group 3
Australian	1	
British	9	2
British Chinese	2	1
British Indian		1
Bulgarian		1
Chinese	3	4
Egyptian	1	
Greek	2	
Hong Kong Chinese	1	
Indonesian		1
Korean	1	
Malaysian	1	2
NZ Chinese		1

A noticeable difference between Groups 2 and 3 is that the dominant ethnic group in Group 2 was British, whereas in Group 3 it was Chinese. Although the Chinese heritage students (Chinese, New Zealand-Chinese, British-Chinese) were the dominant group ethnicity in Group 3, it contained an almost equal number of students of other nationalities which might relates to create the group dynamics. Group 2 had 8 cultures among 13 students whereas Group 3 had 9 cultures among 21 students. These are good examples of multicultural learning environment where teacher and students do not share the same educational cultural background.

There are two limitations to discuss on sample. The first main limitation was the number of participants. The total number of participants in this study was 34 (Japanisation: 13, CLT: 21) which is a relatively small sample size especially for quantitative data purposes. It was not feasible to increase the size of the sample in the empirical study, as this was the maximum number of students in the two classes in the study conducted in 2009/2010. The total number of participants in the study limits the generalisability of the conclusions drawn from the results. Nonetheless, it may be possible to draw some conclusions about the specific sample population.

The second main limitation of this study relates to the difference between the two groups. The ratio of different ethnicities and work/school cultures in Groups 2 and 3 were not similar. Increasing the number of participants and equalising the ratios within the two groups was not feasible and the researcher is aware of limitations in this respect. Therefore, this will also limit the generalisability of this study's conclusions. Nonetheless, two groups constitute variety of nationalities, therefore, considered suitable for multicultural population for this study.

Data Collection

Quantitative data

This study used three tests. They are two pieces of assessed home assignments weighted at 10% each (20% of the total assessment) that are submitted on certain deadlines (submission in week 6 and week 9 of 12, respectively) and a timed and supervised assessment task, known as the Reading and Written Test, weighted at 40%. (Teaching and Assessment Guide: 2009/2010: 7–8). For simplicity, the first two assignments are referred to as Assignment 1 and Assignment 2 in this paper. The remaining 40% consists of communicative skills (listening skills 20% and oral skills 20%). Both listening skills and oral tests are administered within the class.

Questionnaire

Two questionnaires, that is, Researcher Questionnaire and the University's unit evaluation form, were administered and collected during the class on 19/01/2010 in Week 11. The reason for the use of two questionnaires is because students were aware that Researcher questionnaire was about educational culture and teaching, and they might be too cautious to write their opinions freely for sole use on my questionnaire. Researcher questionnaire is constructed specifically to investigate educational culture, whereas the University's questionnaire is constructed to acquire information related to the course. The university questionnaire consists of quantitative rating and general comments.

Two versions of the questionnaires were prepared to reflect the two different teaching methods experienced by each group: One was answered by Group 3 who experienced Japanisation and the other by Group 2, who experienced CLT. However, the majority of questions were duplicated for both groups. The format of the questionnaires mostly consisted of closed questions with some open-ended questions, and respondents were asked to tick the box against the applicable response. Questions asked about educational culture and Japanisation, and questions related to educational culture are based on Hofstede's theories of long-term versus short-term, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and collectivism versus individualism.

Observation

It may be difficult for students to answer on what the cause of the change of their behaviour is in the questionnaire because they might not even realise any change in their behaviour. For this reason, the simple observation with informal information gathering was chosen as the most suitable approach for the purpose of the study.

Students were observed to assess whether or not there were any behavioural changes relating to Hofstede's three dimensions during the Han group activity at the beginning compared with the end of the semester. Students' behaviour was observed with regards to changes from individualism to collectivism; from small power distance to large power distance; and from weak uncertainty avoidance to strong uncertainty avoidance. This was achieved by observing the students' behavioural changes in these three dimensions in relation to the key values of the two poles of each dimension. A change towards strong uncertainty avoidance was recorded if the students' attitude changed from the preferred value of creativity to being more conscious of the correct answer and being comfortable in a routinised class environment. A change in the power distance dimension was defined by students becoming more comfortable with a student-centred as opposed to a teacher-centred approach. Changes from an individualist to a collectivist educational culture were assessed by changes in students' preference for pair-work or Han group activity (Japanisation), and preferences for turn taking. Changes in this dimension were also evaluated by observing whether the students found learning under whole class instruction to be more comfortable than one-to-one interaction with the teacher. These key values also function as the baseline for qualitative analysis of the questionnaire. However, the main focus of the observation in this study was to assess any changes from the individualist to collectivist dimension.

There were six teaching observation diary entries/notes taken between Week 3 and Week 8). No observational records were taken before Week 3 or after Week 9 because the required student consent to take part in the research was not received until Week 2. The following four points were noted as a result of the Han group activity: i) if there are any similarities between non-British and British students' behaviours; ii) whether they accept the concept of the Han group or not; iii) if they did, which is closer to those of Japanese students' behaviours working in the Han group, non-British or British students?; iv) what kind of behaviours did they display? These points were recorded during the Han group activity. The researcher was able to do so because the main purpose of the Han group activity is for students to learn from each other by interacting with other group members, and I was monitoring students' activity during the Han group activity and teaching was not required.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics (Groups 2 and 3)

		Independent Samples Test								
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Assignment1	Equal variances assumed	.012	.913	-.818	33	.419	-.68357	.83592	-2.38425	1.01712
	Equal variances not assumed			-.842	27.611	.407	-.68357	.81211	-2.34815	.98102
Assignment2	Equal variances assumed	.062	.804	-.467	32	.643	-.61832	1.32304	-3.31326	2.07663
	Equal variances not assumed			-.488	29.086	.629	-.61832	1.26615	-3.20755	1.97092
ReadingandWrittenTest	Equal variances assumed	.080	.780	-2.402	29	.023	-6.96930	2.90129	-12.90310	-1.03550
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.423	24.209	.023	-6.96930	2.87626	-12.90289	-1.03571

Limitation of the methodology

Quantitative data cannot answer the research questions on students’ perceptions and feelings. Questionnaires were used to compensate this. However, options which were given in the questionnaire might have limited students’ responses. Also, students might not give honest opinions. Observation was used to compensate this. However, interpretation of observational data might be culturally biased.

5. Data Analysis

Quantitative data

Within the three sets of quantitative data, three contain both descriptive and statistical analysis of the data: mean, Standard Deviation (SD), minimum score, maximum score, skewness and kurtosis of the two groups, as well as an analysis of the significant differences between the teachings of two groups found with the independent-samples t-test, using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The other two sets of data have only descriptive data.

Qualitative data

The qualitative data was analysed by referring to Miles and Huberman’s 13 strategies for generating meaning (1994: 245) as follows: “noting patterns and themes; seeing plausibility; clustering; making metaphors; counting; making contrast/comparisons; partitioning variables; subsuming particulars into the general; factoring; noting relations between variables; finding intervening variables; building a logical chain of evidence; and making conceptual/theoretical coherence” (Miles and Huberman: 1994:

245). When analysing the data from the Researcher questionnaire, the students were grouped by ethnicity, and their perceptions were compared between the two groups. The results are presented with reference to Hofstede's four dimensions of culture. This enables to investigate which end of spectrum of Hofstede's three dimensions the student prefers, but also helps to understand each student's educational cultural preference as well as the understanding of students' preference for CLT or Japanisation.

Conclusions

The RQ1 asked was whether students in Japanese language classes taught in a British university using both traditional CLT and Japanisation methods show any differences in attainment in Reading and Written tests and assignments. Quantitative data (Appendices 3 and 4) showed that there were no significant differences between the two groups in scores in the first two Assignments. However, there was a significant difference between the two groups in the marks achieved in the Reading and Written Test, where the Japanisation class obtained higher marks than the CLT class.

Furthermore, the distribution of kurtosis of Group 3 was almost as twice as that of Group 2, meaning that the marks in Group 3 were more clustered around the average than the marks in Group 2. In addition, the mean score of Group 3 was 6.97 points higher than that of Group 2. Since Japanisation aims teaching around the average students, this may have been one of the factors contributing to the observed distribution of Group 3 where more students in Reading and Written tests were clustered around the average.

The RQ2 asked whether students' preferences relate to their ethnicity. In this study, if we refer to Hofstede's collectivist-individualist dimensions, the sample population seemed to consist of three types of students. Type 1 consisted of students who came from a collectivist educational cultural background and were now studying in an individualist educational culture. Type 2 covered students from an individualist educational cultural background continuing to study in an individualist educational culture. Type 3 comprised students from an individualist educational cultural background but who were also subject to a degree of collectivist influence (this was often the case where their parents are from a collectivist educational cultural background) studying in an individualist educational culture.

The RQ3 asked how students respond to being taught by Japanisation methods compared with being taught by CLT. The observation confirmed that some students showed a negative response in learning in a Japanisation class. Many occasions were noted during the observation and in the questionnaire where students showed difficulty in understanding the notion of the Han group. It was anticipated that type 1 students preferred Japanisation to CLT and they might have found it easier to acquire the concept of Japanisation. However, all three types of students preferred CLT to Japanisation, although observation records show that type 1 students did seem to understand the concept of Japanisation more easily than the other types. This seems to suggest that students' preference is likely to be influenced by three factors: students' educational cultural background, where they are currently studying and the place that the study was conducted. This study, which aims to examine the impact of the Japanese teaching method, was conducted in the UK. Where the study was conducted

may be an important factor in influencing the result of this study as the non-native students of English had been studying in the British educational culture.

There were two reactions from the students: rejection and acceptance. The results from the university questionnaire showed that students who could not accept a different educational culture expressed their frustrations in several forms: bad university quantitative rating; critical comments; and wishing to change the another class. These are understandable reactions and Byram and Morgan (1994: 43) caution that “Learners are ‘committed’ to their culture and to deny any part of it is to deny something within their own being” (Hinkel: 1999: 7). This could be particularly true for the mature language learners in second-language teaching. Students who accepted the different educational culture took it as a positive experience and tried to adapt to the new circumstances even if they only experienced it in the short-term. Students who accepted the different educational culture, mostly younger learners, took it as a positive experience and tried to adapt to the new circumstance even though it was of short-term duration.

Implications

The implications of the study for wider teaching practice are as important as the data themselves. It appears to have two emerging themes. The first implication raises the question of whether CLT is universally effective for all language students regardless of their educational cultural background. I found that meeting students’ requirement by one teaching method was difficult. The data collected in this study also suggest that using Japanisation only or CLT only did not work well for every student in both groups, which may be a consequence of cultural-cognitive differences between Asian and Western learners (Dimmock and Walker: 2005: 109). This could be explained by the consequence of cultural cognitive differences between Asians and Western learners (Dimmock and Walker: 2005: 109). Previous studies describe the cultural inappropriateness of CLT as follows: “a teaching or learning approach that is taken for granted and regarded as universal and common sense by people from one culture may be seen as idiosyncratic and ineffective in the eyes of people from a different culture” (Gu and Schweisfurth: 2006: 75). Sonaiya also points out that “while shared human values may make certain methods (or certain aspects of specific methods) universally applicable, this should not always be assumed to be the case” (Sonaiya: 2002: 107).

The second implication of the study concerns whether teaching should be focused on the minority of the high-ability and low-ability students or the majority of students who operate at an average level. According to Stevenson and Stiger (1994), individualist educational culture produces “educationally advantaged minority and disadvantaged majority” (Stevenson and Stigler: 1994: 223). CLT is an ideal teaching method for educational culture which prioritises one-to-one interaction and paying attention to the needs of individual students. However, paying attention to individual student’s needs may not necessarily meet the needs of all students as a class or the majority students. CLT has been claimed to be associated with the enhanced students’ communicative skills. The findings of this study suggested that the students in the CLT class struggled to read and write in Japanese, which became apparent when they took the Reading and Written Test. Reviewing what CLT has brought to today’s students, perhaps the area of grammar, reading and writing need more attention in using this method.

On the other hand, Japanisation associated with the enhanced students' reading and written skills from this study. The quantitative data results also showed that this teaching method produced more students clustered around the average. Japanisation pays more attention to the majority students, which is therefore beneficial for the large majority. However, this doesn't necessarily mean to meet the needs of individual or the needs of the minority individuals at either end of the ability spectrum. In order to meet the students' various preferences and expectations in learning, it is suggested to incorporate other teaching practices from non-Anglophone countries, as CLT focuses on individuals due to Anglophone originated theory.

Lastly, it is hoped that this study contributes the awareness and sensitivity of students' diverse preferences and expectations in the higher educational learning environment to the scholastic community, as educational culture is not universal all around the world.

It is also hoped that this study may contribute to the scholastic community to the development of a new theory that integrates some aspect of non-Anglophone teaching methods and making changes in the curriculum in order to reflect the current multicultural teaching and learning environment.

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