

What is the Difference in Thinking Process between General Japanese Students and Returnee Students?

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Introduction

What is the difference in thinking process between general Japanese students who have learned English as a foreign language and returnee students from English-speaking countries who have acquired English as a second language? In this research, the differences are demonstrated. Furthermore, suggestions for English education in Japan, are made.

Research method: Survey

A survey was conducted on students from three different schools.

Survey Questions

Questions about English learning background

- 1: Have you lived in an English speaking country for more than a month?
- 2: What is your mother language?
- 3: From what age did you start learning English?
- 4: Have you ever taken an English proficiency test? If so, what was your score?
- 5: Out of the four English skills, which skill is your best skill?

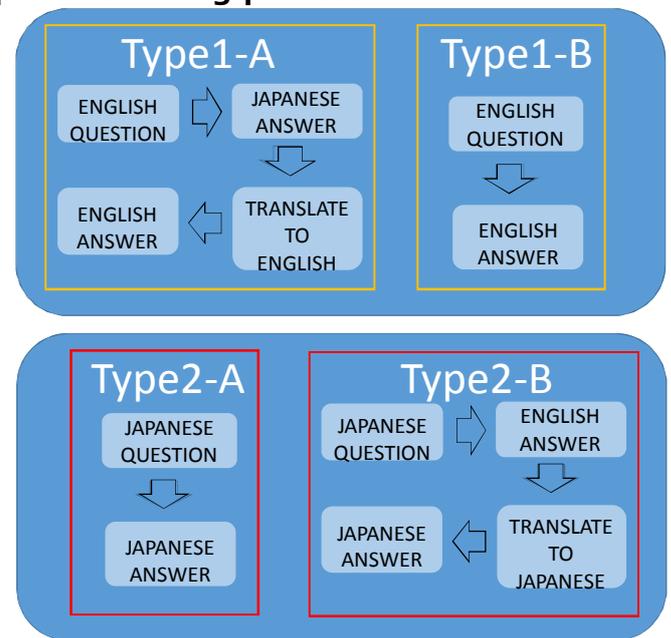
Questions to find out thinking process

- 6: Which country would you like to visit?
- 7: What do you think the biggest international problem is and why?
- 8: Japanese question: あなたの好きな色は何色ですか?
- 9: あなたは日本が移民を受け入れるべきだと思いますか?

Questions about thinking process

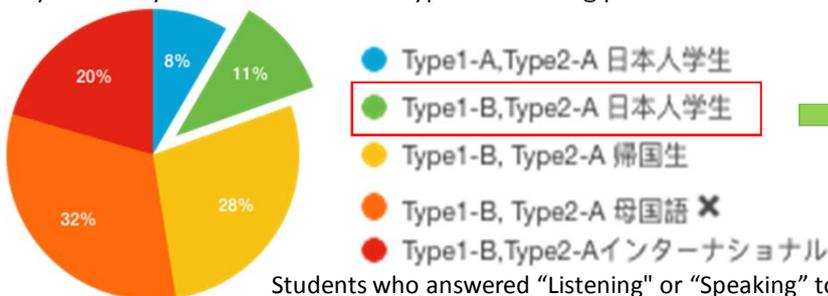
10. Which thinking process did you use when answering the English questions 6-7, Type 1-A or 1-B?
11. Which thinking process did you use when answering the Japanese questions 8-9, Type 2-A or 2-B?

A hypothesis was made with 4 different types of thinking processes.



Result

The students were divided in to 7 different types of groups. Some groups had similar answers for the questions on the survey and they also had the same type of thinking process.



They have the English level above grade 2 on the Eiken test.

Conclusion

In conclusion, general students who don't have a certain level in English yet can only think in Japanese. It is assumed that general Japanese students take more time to answer English questions because they have to translate their Japanese answers to English. While Japanese general students who have a certain level in English are able to distinguish the thinking process depending on the input language. In addition, many general Japanese students answered that they are better at skills other than speaking and listening, even though these two skills are used to communicate with English speaking foreigners. The two skills are also needed when thinking in English. Therefore, if a class that trains general Japanese students' speaking and listening skill is invented there is a chance they would be able to obtain the English thinking process which may lead to a higher English proficiency.