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Beliefs And Motivations Of Foreign Language Learners

Noriko Okura
Eastern Kentucky University

BELIEFS AND MOTIVATIONS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

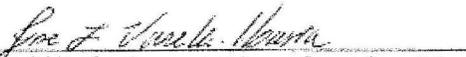By

Noriko Okura

Dissertation Approved:

_____

Dr. James Bliss, Advisory Committee Chair

_____

Dr. Charles Hausman, Advisory Committee Member

_____

Dr. José Varela-Ibarra, Advisory Committee Member

_____

Dr. Deborah West, Advisory Committee Member

_____

Dr. Jerry Pogatshnick, Graduate School Dean

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Signature _Noriko Okura_

Date _June 1, 2016_

BELIEFS AND MOTIVATIONS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS

By

Noriko Okura

Bachelor of Arts
Doshisha Women's College
Kyoto, Japan
2001

Master of Arts in Teaching
Mary Baldwin College
Staunton, Virginia
2005

Master of Arts in Japanese Pedagogy
Columbia University
New York, New York
2015

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
Eastern Kentucky University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the Eastern Kentucky University students' current characteristics, purposes, and expectations for learning Japanese and/or Spanish language. A survey was conducted to collect data on EKU students' demographics, as well as motivations and foreign language learning beliefs. Two hundred thirty eight students completed the questionnaire that includes a modified version of Horwitz's (1988) "Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory" (BALLI). Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, and frequencies were utilized to analyze the BALLI items. Results indicated that EKU students' demographics are diverse. Students in Japanese and Spanish language classes differed primarily in their language beliefs related to their motivations for studying their target language. While Japanese learners showed both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, Spanish learners leaned more toward extrinsic motivations. The statistical analysis of their responses revealed some interesting differences. Japanese learners expressed more confidence in their ability to learn the language and to interact with native speakers. This study also revealed that students of Japanese language demonstrated stronger belief in the contribution of knowing the relevant aspects of Japanese culture to their language learning experience.

Understanding students' characteristics and behavior and identifying the factors that motivate them to learn can have a major impact on student recruitment and retention, the development of curriculum for instruction, and eventually, student success. Ultimately, findings of this study proposed several administrative advice and pedagogical recommendations for further development of both the Japanese and Spanish language programs at Eastern Kentucky University.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language is important in a global society and an expectation for being a global citizen. Because of advancements in technology, ease of internet access, and mass communication, individuals' exposure to foreign culture and language is becoming increasingly common these days. Even though people are aware of the benefits of acquiring language skills, the reason why one chooses to learn a particular language varies from individual to individual. Interest is one of the strongest motivators for learning a foreign language. Motivation has been identified as one of the main factors affecting foreign-language learning (Gardner, 1985); yet motivation is more complex than people think. According to Gardner's social-educational model, he describes "motivation" as a combination of effort, the desire to achieve the goal of learning the language, plus a favorable attitude toward learning the language. Some individuals might want to learn a foreign language to communicative reasons. For example, one may wish to communicate with foreign friends, or to easily navigate a foreign country. Other reasons might be more personal and identity centered, such as the case with heritage learners. Still, others may seek to learn language for economic benefit, to improve employability, or to open up international opportunities. Finally, it may simple be the case that they are learning for enjoyment or to fulfill a language requirement for their university. These differences in motivation may account for a significant portion of the learning outcomes. Understanding students' perceptions of language learning is also important when trying to implement an effective teaching strategy. There is a need for language educators, coordinators, instructional designers, and school administrators to

consider the characteristics of the learners. Curran and Rosen (2006) claim that the environment in which colleges and universities operate nowadays has become more competitive. Attracting and retaining students has become critical for schools to survive and prosper. Numerous studies mention that the instructor is an important factor in course delivery and student satisfaction (Gremler & McCollough, 2002). The professionalism of the whole language learning enterprise is critical to the success of programs of less commonly taught languages (Brecht & Walton, 1994). Strategic planning must be initiated and it must be aimed at ensuring instruction. Dörnyei (1994) has noted that "the social and pragmatic dimensions of second language motivation is always dependent on *who* learns *what* languages *where"* (p. 275, Italics by Dörnyei).

According to the Modern Language Association of America (2015), among higher education enrollments in languages other than English, Spanish is the most popular language in the United States (790,756), followed by French (197,757), American Sign Language (109,577), German (86,700), Italian (71,285), and Japanese (66,740). Even though, these statistics showed a decrease from 2009 to 2013 in Spanish enrollment, falling from 861,008 to 790,756, this number is still greater than all other language enrollments combined. The 2013 American Community Survey, a national survey taken by the Census Bureau, estimated 38.4 million people aged five or older in the United States speak Spanish as their first language, totaling 13.0% of the total U.S. population (United States Census Bureau, 2013). As it stands, Hispanics and Latinos are one of the fastest growing demographics in the United States. In terms of total immigration to the United States, the number of Hispanic and Latin American immigrants is higher than from any other region in the world (Aldrich, 2010). In fact,

Hispanic and Latino Americans are the second fastest-growing ethnic group in the United States followed by Asian Americans, and became the leading minority group in the United States. As of 2014, the Hispanic population is 55.3 million which constitute 17.37 % of the United States population. Analysts predict that the Latino population will reach approximately 102,6 million by 2050 – one in four Americans will be of Latino origin; 128.8 million by 2060, making the US the largest Spanish speaking country in the world. Moreover, Latino students have been the leading minority population enrolled in college with a 16.5% share of all college enrollments since 2011 (Fry & Hugo, 2012). This shift in population has triggered policy makers to consider the possibility that Spanish can no longer be thought of as a foreign language, but rather a native language. American attitudes toward foreign languages have been found to be based on domestic demographic trends (Sternia, 2008). This is supported by data that shows the distribution of Spanish language speakers in the United States as follows: New Mexico having 47.0% Hispanic or Latino population, followed by California and Texas 38.2%, and Arizona 30.2%. These states border Mexico, further confirming Dörnyei's assertion of the importance of "who, what, and where."

Compared with Spanish, Japanese language is less popular; yet, it is the sixth most popular language for study in the United States. This remains true despite enrollments decreasing from 72,359 to 66,740 from 2009 to 2013. The desire to learn Japanese still maintains a presence within the States. When Japanese language learning enrollment is broken down by state, the top five states with the most Japanese language learners are California (37,361), Hawaii (13,566), Washington (10,344), New York (9,076), and Oregon (6,470). Notably, these numbers correspond to the largest Japanese-

American communities, with California's Japanese-American population being 272,528, Hawaii's being 185,502, New York's being 37,780, and Washington's being 35,008 according the 2010 census. Again, the importance of the "who, what, and where" is evident.

Language Education in Kentucky

Currently, Kentucky has a two-year or competency equivalent precollege curriculum requirement for admission to four-year colleges. However, there is no minimum foreign language requirement for graduation for high school students. Nevertheless, the Kentucky Department of Education (2013) has stated that it is vitally important for all Kentucky students to be prepared to engage with the world. As such, the Kentucky Department of Education encourages students to be globally competent in order to compete academically, economically, and politically and to be able to function successfully in a global society. In fact, according to data from the Modern Language Association of America (2015), the enrollment in languages other than English at higher education institutions within Kentucky itself totaled 20,530 students in the Fall semester of 2013.

Aside from English, the most common language taught in Kentucky is Spanish. Nearly all educational institutions in Kentucky from high school to college offer Spanish courses. Even though Hispanic and Latino populations are not large in Kentucky (makes up to 3.2% of Kentucky's total- Day Translations Inc., 2015), learning Spanish for work-related tasks is highly encouraged. For example, some companies have developed programs to help their employees learn Spanish to better serve the growing Spanish communities. One of these organizations is Kentucky's Governmental Services Center,

which implemented *Bienvenido mis amigos,* a program that offers employees two basic courses in the Spanish language and Hispanic culture (Kerrigan, 2010). At Eastern Kentucky University, the Police Academy offers Spanish language and culture courses for the state's police forces.

By contrast, there are only 18 institutions within Kentucky that have a Japanese language program, half of which are universities, including Eastern Kentucky University. It is true that compared with states such as California and New York in which there are numerous Japanese programs, there is a smaller presence of Japanese language learners in Kentucky, but it is still named one of the top five states within the US (Kentucky, Maryland, Tennessee, Kansa, and Nevada) that has demonstrated growth of Japanese language learners. This is interesting in relation to the relatively small percent of the Japanese population within Kentucky, 0.1% (4,125) of the 1.1% (48,930) of the Asian population (2010 Consensus Data for Kentucky). However, Japan is Kentucky's largest foreign investor. Consul-General of Japan, Motohiko Kato made a speech at the Kentucky Governor's Mansion on Jan 23, 2015, where he said that the relationship between Kentucky and Japan is very strong. To support this, Kentucky is home to over 150 Japanese companies including auto-related manufactures such as Toyota Motor Corporation and Hitachi Limited, as well as law firms and other companies that have provided 40,000 jobs to Kentuckians (Kentucky Department of Education, 2015). Accordingly, several public schools have begun to offer Japanese language to students starting at the elementary grade level.

General Education Requirement for Foreign Language at the College Level

A well-balanced education is necessary for students. At most colleges and universities, foreign language courses are a general education requirement. At Eastern Kentucky University, the general education requirement for foreign languages is six credits or two courses in "Diversity of Perspectives & Experiences." This empowers students by diversifying their education. Within the criteria for general education, courses must promote communication skills and expose students to different sciences, cultures, and societies. Therefore, the general education program at Eastern Kentucky University says that its mission is "to promote learning that is central to the intellectual pursuits associated with our educational programs and to enable students to make informed choices about matters of public and personal significance in a diverse community.

The university Department of Languages, Cultures, and Humanities (LCH) offers French, German, Japanese, Latin, and Spanish. Of the languages offered, Spanish is the most popular, having both a Spanish and a Spanish Teaching major, minor, and certificate. Typical enrollment in the first and second semester of Elementary Spanish classes generally amounts to more than 400 students. On the other hand, there is no major or minor in Japanese at Eastern Kentucky University, only a certificate in Japanese Language and Culture is offered. But enrollment in the language courses for Japanese is still encouraged by reminding prospective students that Japanese studies leads to, "the development of applicable skills that last a lifetime…The study of Japanese language and culture provides a massive range of careers and creative employment opportunities" (EKU, 2016).

Statement of the Problem

Students are a "frequently overlooked cohort of policymakers" (Met, 1994, p.154) and as such are one of the most important demographics to consider. The biggest threat to any language program is the lack of interest among students since student enrollment factors play a significant role in the success of the program. Educators need to consider multiple aspects of student interest and motivation to attract students. Japanese language classes today are experiencing increasing enrollment at the beginning levels. However, this does not continue to the more advanced levels of learning. The comparison of introductory and advanced undergraduate Japanese language course enrollments in 2013 in the United States shows that while there are 54,646 students in introductory levels, advance levels drop sharply to 11,534 (MLA, 2015).

This trend is seen at Eastern Kentucky University as well. Comparing first year and second year Japanese course enrollments at Eastern Kentucky University for the academic year 2014, the fall semester saw 65 students enroll in first year classes while second year classes saw only 13 enroll. These numbers changed for the spring semester, where 57 students enrolled in the first year of classes but the second year of classes had less than half (24) enrolled. Given the fact that universities are placing high priority on enrollment, this is a serious issue. In fact, in the past, advanced courses had to be cancelled due to low enrollment. In the worst possible case, the program may have to be abandoned altogether.

The Japan Foundation (2012) conducted a survey and asked institutions why their Japanese programs were being discontinued. The results revealed that most Japanese programs were discontinued solely due to low enrollment. Of the 165 institutions

surveyed, 30% agreed that low enrollment numbers were the first reason for discontinuing the program. Other reasons included budget cuts (23%), no qualified teachers (19%), and budget allocation (18%). Other problems and concerns discovered through The Japan Foundations' research were insufficient interest among learners which ranked the second highest percentage.

Purpose of the Study

Learning foreign languages is an inherently emotional experience. Students are likely to retain motivation when the class matches their goals. Other motivational factors affect the participation in language learning. Biggs (1995) emphasizes and notes, students are "only motivated to learn things that are important and meaningful to them" (p. 83). There is an abundance of studies in the literature suggesting the importance of motivation and attitudes in foreign language learning. By examining what drives the students to learn a particular language, educators can understand and better cater to their students and help facilitate a high-level of learning by making use of the students' needs.

Dörnyei (2001) suggested that a teacher's skill in motivating learners should be considered the central aspect of effective teaching. If an instructor does not understand their students at a fundamental level, it is not likely that the language program will succeed. Researchers have shown that educators need to know their students' attitudes and expectations at the beginning of the semester (Alalou, 2001; Alalou & Chamberlain, 1999). There are numerous previous studies that have investigated learning beliefs of Spanish learners, yet only few studies have existed among learners of Japanese.

The purpose of this study is to examine the general student profile, their purposes and motivational factors for taking the particular language at the university level, and to

identify the current characteristics of the students and their learning beliefs with the aim of improving the effectiveness of language program by correlating instructors' improved understanding of their students' language beliefs. Instructors need to know their students in order to arrange the classroom practice in the most effective way for learning. Understanding why students want to learn a particular language in the first place is a crucial step in determining course curriculum. It is important to recognize that there are distinct differences in learning backgrounds. These issues need to be brought to the attention of and to provide valuable information to the instructors, university administrators, advisors, and student development professionals. In particular, this information will be extremely valuable to the classroom teachers as Could (2012) claims, "Pedagogy is a teacher's stock in trade and it does make a difference to outcomes" (p. 21). Understanding student characteristics and behavior, and identifying the factors that motivate them to learn can have a major impact on student recruitment and retention, the development of curriculum for instruction, and eventually contribute to student success. This is especially important when it comes to language classes.

Research Questions

When students take foreign language classes, one obvious goal is to learn the language. However, students are seldom asked how/why they choose to study a particular language, and there is little inquiry into their language learning beliefs. A variety of factors might be expected to influence the selection of the foreign language as well as the motivation for the language learning. In order to better design a syllabus that fits the needs of students, it is also important to understand the students' background characteristics. Motivation influences learners' thought processes, feelings, and behavior.

Finding out about students' motivation offers new insights as to what American students expect and how they apply their expectations to their learning strategies. Therefore, the major research questions that are addressed in this study are:

Q1. What are the demographic characteristics of students enrolled in Japanese courses and students enrolled in Spanish courses at Eastern Kentucky University?

Q2. What are the students' primary reasons for studying Japanese and Spanish at Eastern Kentucky University? What differences, if any, exist among the two groups?

Q.3 What are the beliefs of Japanese language learners and Spanish language learners concerning language learning?

Conceptual Framework

The main focus of this study is to examine Eastern Kentucky students' language learning motivation. The casual factors affecting language learners in Kentucky considered in this study include: language learning beliefs, difficulty of the language, learning strategies, attitude and motivational orientation toward language study, and foreign language anxiety.

Significance of the Study

Finding out students' demographics and initial motivation toward language study will provide insightful information and will facilitate several practical implications for instructors as well as, academic advisors, university administrators, and policy makers. It is important to understand students' characteristics and motivational orientations toward language study in order to better design the courses.

Marckwardt (1948) has stated:

Any decision of the specific objectives of the foreign language curriculum must

take into account the impulses which lead students to elect these subjects, and that

the content of the courses and the techniques of the classroom must be planned in

accordance with the motives. (p.11)

This study is significant because these findings can be used to measure whether

Eastern Kentucky University's curriculum meet the students' needs in the design of the

programs. Furthermore, this understanding aids in planning better programs and services

for current and prospective students at Eastern Kentucky University. Moreover, this study

not only contributes to the development and promotion of the Japanese and Spanish

language programs at Eastern Kentucky University, but can be used as a foundation for

assessment of Japanese and Spanish language programs at other institutions. Numerous

studies showed that there are gaps and mismatched between teachers' and learners'

language learning beliefs. By examining students' beliefs about language learning,

educators will be able to better understand and cater to their students, helping them

succeed and attracting students to engage in study in order to become life-long learners.

With these results, if students are found to hold unrealistic beliefs and/or misconceptions

about their target language, instructors can modify their preconceived notions of learning

the language that may create or increase the students' anxiety. Findings of this study

proposed several administrative advice and pedagogical recommendations for further

development of both the Japanese and Spanish language programs at Eastern Kentucky

University.

Definition of Terms

The following were definitions of terms used in this research project:

ACTFL - The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Anime - An animation product from Japan featuring hand-drawn or computer animation. The word is the abbreviated pronunciation of "animation" in Japanese.

Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) - BALLI is a research tool for assessing students' beliefs about language learning developed by Horwitz (1987). Beliefs about language learning refer to students' opinions and perceptions on various issues related to language learning. This inventory has been translated into various languages, including Chinese, Korean, Turkish, for the students from different language background.

MLA - Modern Language Association.

Manga - the term *manga* refers to comics created in Japan, appearing in books, newspapers, magazines, and other printed mediums.

Second Language - is frequently defined as a language other than the learner's native language that is learned in the country where it is spoken.

Learning Strategies - "Specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (Oxford, 1990, p. 8).

UKCISA – UK Council for International Student Affairs.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Learning Beliefs

When people study a foreign language, it is natural for them to already possess some preconceived beliefs or ideas about the particular language. Puchta (2010) defines beliefs as, "guiding principles for our students' behavior and strong perceptual filters… they act as if they were true." Similarly to Puchta's conclusion, researchers have noted that learning beliefs have a significant impact on performance in class and are considered fundamental to the learners' progress (Barcelos, 2003; Dörnyei, 2005). "Beliefs are predispositions to action" (Rokeach, 1968, p. 113). Beliefs about language learning have an important influence on how people approach their language learning. A previous study showed that students' description of language learning strategy was found to be correlate with their stated beliefs about language learning (Wenden, 1987).

Beliefs regarding how languages operate and how they are learned may affect the variety and flexibility of strategies used (Vann & Abragam, 1990). In language learning, beliefs have been found to be related to learning strategies and can be powerful incentives for behaviors (McDonough, 1995). Researchers have examined beliefs about language learning from different perspectives, including culture-related differences in beliefs, domain-specific beliefs, learning impact of beliefs on language, and age and/or gender-related differences in beliefs (Bacon & Finnemann, 1992; Cortazzi, 199; Horwitz, 1999; McDonough, 1995; Mori, 1997; Victori & Lockhart, 1995).

For example, Rivera and Matsuzawa's (2007) study examines the students' perspectives on the first two years of their foreign language program at an East coast

college. Their study revealed that the students' learning priorities and learning beliefs were very different depending on whether they were learning more commonly taught languages (French, German, and Spanish) or less commonly taught languages (Chinese and Japanese). They compared the importance rating by language groups and found that the less commonly taught language group was awarded higher importance ratings in all language aspects (speaking, listening, reading, writing, grammar, and culture) than the commonly taught language group, with the exception of vocabulary.

Certain beliefs can heavily influence a learners' motivation to master a target language. Learner beliefs play a prominent role in the understanding of a student's expectations, commitment, success, and satisfaction in their respective language classes. Specifically, learners already have presumptions about what language learning is and how a second language should be learned (Horwitz, 1987, 1988). For example, Horwitz (1987, 1988) notes that second language learners generally hold different beliefs or notions regarding language learning. Some are influenced by previous experiences as language learners, and others are shaped by their own cultural backgrounds. In previous study, Horwitz (1986) surveyed the learning beliefs of language students (French, Spanish, and German) and found that her participants held several unrealistic beliefs. Some believed that only focusing on grammar, memorizing vocabulary, and translating between languages is all that is needed to be successful, while neglecting cultural components of the language. Others believed that merely immersing themselves in the target country is the best method. Victori and Lockhart (1995) note that if students develop and maintain misconceptions about their learning, they are less likely to adopt responsible and active attitudes about learning. Previous studies have noted that

misconceptions hamper learners' success in language learning, because preconceived beliefs are likely to restrict their strategical range (Horwitz, 1988; Horwitz, 1999; Oh, 1996).

Examples of Learner Beliefs

What are the common preconceived notions? When observing students' perceptions, Japanese is generally viewed as a difficult language to learn compared to the Spanish language. Previous studies reveal that while 60% of American students who studied more commonly taught languages (Spanish, French, German) viewed their target language as 'a language of medium difficulty' (Horwitz, 1999), 50% of American students learning Japanese judged it to be a relatively difficult language (Oh, 1996). In another study featuring beginning college German, French, and Spanish language learners, Horwitz (1988) found that over one-third of students sampled thought that learning these language could be accomplished in two years or less employing typical university study of one hour a day. However, Japanese learners had different perceptions.

Horwitz's (1999) study showed that American learners of Japanese generally judged Japanese to be more difficult. They estimated a longer amount of time needed to learn the language, and evaluated their own abilities as language learners at a lower level. Furthermore, the results showed that these students firmly believed in the importance of vocabulary and grammar, and valued them more. They also had stronger beliefs that their knowledge of the language would be of assistance, in mainly increasing their job opportunities.

Difficulty of Language Learning

For students whose first language is English, a number of studies have explored how difficult studying Japanese can be in comparison to Spanish. Thus, it is unsurprising that among American learners, Japanese has a reputation for being hard to acquire. There are several institutions that categorize according to the difficulty of language learning. For example, at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center in Monterey, CA, languages are categorized by level of difficulty and length of instruction in terms of the number of weeks that are required for learners to achieve an intermediate level of proficiency of the language. According to the data, Spanish is ranked as a Category I language, which is the easiest category for native English speakers to learn. In contrast, Japanese is ranked as a Category IV language, which is the most difficult category. It is estimated that it takes approximately 64 weeks to reach the intermediate level in Japanese, whereas it takes 26 weeks of work to attain the same level in Spanish.

A study by the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) of the Department of State also ranked Japanese as the most difficult language. In their study, FSI had categorized foreign languages taught in the United States into five classes. These classifications are based on the languages' linguistic distance to English, and the length of time it takes English-speaking students to achieve general professional proficiency in speaking and reading ("Language Learning Difficulty for English Speakers," n.d.). A category V language is a language considered to be exceptionally difficult for native English speakers to learn, and within this category are contained only a small number of languages, with Japanese being one of them. The FSI estimates that it takes approximately 2,200 class hours, with at least half of that time being spent in immersion

study, to reach a level of proficiency in Japanese ("Language Learning Difficulty for English Speakers," n.d.). Becoming proficient in Japanese takes three times as much intensive instruction to reach the same level of language proficiency as it does in Spanish (575-600 class hours) over the same time period. The same study also concludes that Japanese is the most difficult of all the Category V languages, which includes languages such as Chinese, Korean, and even Arabic.

Additionally, other research findings conclude that college students studying Japanese reach benchmark levels of proficiency more slowly than students of more commonly taught languages. For example, Walton's (1993) study reveals that native English-speaking students of Japanese require three times as long to acquire the same level of proficiency as students of French, German, or Spanish. Omagio (1986) mentions that it requires an average of 1,320 hours for native English speakers to reach the advanced-level speaking proficiency of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) guideline. To reiterate this difficulty, another source reveals the same conclusion: It takes native English speakers three times longer to reach the advanced-level proficiency in Japanese than in the Romance languages (Oh, 1996).

Differences between Japanese and Spanish

After considering all of the aforementioned research finding, it is natural to lean to the common root question: Why is learning Japanese harder than learning Spanish? There are several reasons that cause Americans to be challenged in their acquisition of Japanese language skills. First of all, unlike the Spanish language, one of the significant challenges that makes it hard for most American students to learn Japanese is the Japanese sentence structure. Within the exception of a couple word orders (adjective

before noun in English and noun before adjective in Spanish), Spanish and English have the same basic word order scheme: SVO (Subject, Verb, Object). However, Japanese sentence structures follow completely different grammatical orders, preventing students from immediately speaking in sentences. Secondly, both English and Spanish use the Roman alphabet, which helps Spanish learners to build a phonemic and phonological foundation. Conversely, the Japanese writing system is fundamentally different from the Western alphabetic systems, and it is complex. Kentucky Standard for World Language Proficiency (2013) concludes that compared to learning a Romance or Germanic language, "learning an Asian language means learning to read by character recognition and write by following precise stroke steps to form a single character" (Kentucky Standard for World Language Proficiency, 2013, p. 2). Specifically, Japanese writing scripts contain three different styles: Hiragana, Katakana, and Kanji. Therefore, unfamiliarity with these orthographic systems in Japanese frequently creates major cognitive barriers for learners to overcome. Due to these complicated writing systems, mastering the reading and writing of Japanese requires a significant amount of time. Consequently, it evokes negative reactions from students whose first language is English, because they have to learn how to write, read, and speak at the same time (Samimy & Tabuse, 1992). According to researchers Hamada and Grafstorm (2014) the most demotivating factor in learning Japanese lies in the difficulty of mastering the Japanese writing script, "kanji". In their study (Hamada & Grafstrom, 2014), student subjects responded that the "kanji" system includes too many characters that must be learned that are also easily forgotten without frequent use. Samimy and Tabuse (1992) also point out

that learning new writing system offers tremendous difficulties for American students learning Japanese.

Researchers note that learning less commonly taught or "non-cognate" and "truly foreign" (e.g. non-Indo European) languages (Jorden & Walton, 1987) such as Japanese is one of the most challenging tasks for English speakers to accomplish. Considering grammatical, structural, and written characteristics, it is understandable why learning Japanese presents an extra obstacle to American learners. Additionally, numerous studies support the proposition that the difficulties that American students face in learning Japanese not only stem from language itself, but also from cultural differences.

Spanish as a required subject in high school curriculum is a common practice in America. Moreover, with the growing Hispanic community, Americans are becoming more accustomed to the Spanish language and Hispanic culture. In contrast, most Americans have little contact with Japanese community. Hence, Japanese language and culture are not as familiar to Americans, and learning Japanese consequently becomes more challenge.

Language Learning and Teaching Approach

Over the last 50 years, language teaching trends have dramatically changed, including teaching approaches and philosophies. Until the 1960s, grammar translation was the most common learning method, with focus on perfect written translations and reading comprehension rather than on oral production. During this time, the fundamental purpose of learning a foreign language was to be able to read literature written in the target language; the basis of language instruction and the main tool for learning a foreign language was through reading books. In essence, foreign language teachers focused on

the language points, while neglecting to introduce culture in foreign language teaching-students learned vocabulary and grammar but they lacked the ability to use the language properly in a cultural context. Cultural exposure was very limited.

In the 1960's, the audio-lingual method of learning became popular, a break from the traditional grammar translation method. This method was developed in the United States during World War II when there was a surging need for people to learn foreign languages for military purposes. At that time, speaking was more important than just reading, translation, and the emphasis was not on the understanding of words and was on the acquisition of patterns in common everyday dialogue. As for some characteristics, grammatical explanations are kept to a minimum, audio-visual aids are used, new material was eventually presented in dialogue form and structural patterns were taught using repetitive drills; the theory of learning at that time was habit formation.

Entering the 1970's, the traditional grammar-translation method fell out of fashion and the communicative approach became the mainstream idea for language learning. The term 'communicative competence' was coined by the anthropological linguist Dell Hymes (1967; 1972) in his response to the theories of the formal linguist Noam Chomsky (Chomsky 1957, 1965) who focused on linguistic competence. Chomsky (1975) notes, "language is a mirror of mind in a deep and significant sense. It is a product of human intelligence, created anew each individual by operations that lie far beyond the reach of will or consciousness" (p. 4). The most obvious characteristics of the communicative approach is that language is viewed for communication. As Hymes (1972) argued, the goal of language teaching should be not simply grammatical competence. Communicative language teaching's objectives included functional skills as

well as linguistic objectives. Language and culture are more naturally integrated in this approach; culture instruction is connected to grammar instruction. Students gain knowledge of the linguistic forms, meaning, and functions. Use of authentic language materials are encouraged, and students work on all four (listening, reading, speaking, writing) domain skills.

In the 1980s, Canale and Swain (1980) introduced a new dimension to the theory of communicative competence. They claimed that to be successful communicators in a foreign language, students not only need grammatical knowledge to create adequate sentences, but also require strategic competence to use knowledge to guess what is being said within context clues. They introduced three components of communicative competence: Grammatical, Strategic, and Sociolinguistic. Canale (1983) further elaborated, adding discourse knowledge and skills. They described each component as follows:

1. <u>Grammatical Competence</u> – the knowledge of the language code (grammatical rules, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, etc.).
2. <u>Strategic Competence</u> – the knowledge of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies which enhance the efficiency of communication and, where necessary, enable the learner to overcome difficulties when communication breakdowns occur.
3. <u>Sociolinguistic Competence</u> – the mastery of the sociocultural code of language use (appropriate application of vocabulary, register, politeness and style in a given situation).
4. <u>Discourse Competence</u> – the ability to combine language structures into difference types of cohesive texts (e.g., political speech, poetry) to effectively clarify and negotiate meaning, give and receive help, and initiate or extend interaction.

Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century

The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), which was created in 1967 by the leadership of the Modern Language Association (MLA), is a national organization for the foreign language teaching profession. ACTFL announced National Standards for learning languages – *Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century*, first published in 1996. The Standards have been revised based on what language educators have learned from more than 15 years of implementing the Standards and have a significant impact on foreign language instructions today. Standards for Foreign Language guidelines have important implications for both curriculum and assessment.

In order to achieve the standards, the ACTFL came up with five goals for foreign language instruction, labeling them as the five C's of foreign language education. They are: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons and Communities. "Communication" includes engaging in conversations, providing and obtaining information, and being able to express opinions and emotions, as well as competently reading and writing within the language. "Cultures" includes being able to understand the relationship between the practices, products, and perspectives of a culture in which the language is based. "Connections" includes being able to expand their knowledge and acquire new information with their knowledge of a language. "Comparisons" include understanding comparison that can be made between their language and culture with the target language and culture. "Communities" includes using the language inside and outside of the classroom setting as well as becoming life-long learners and part of the global community. By integrating these five C's into classroom instructions, students do

not just learn about the grammatical patterns, vocabulary, and conjugations but also learn about how to communicate in a cultural context. Standards' philosophical tenets are informing students to be linguistically competent but also culturally competent in order to communicate successfully in a global professional world (Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century, 2006). Consequently, these five goals define the purposes of language learning and focus on how language is used in real-life situation.

Culture

Culture is a system of shared beliefs and values which are learned rather than inherited (Hurn & Tomalin, 2013). Hofstede (1994) defines culture as, "the collective programming of the mind, which distinguished the members of one group or category of people from another" (p. 5). The National Center for Cultural Competence gives a more detailed and specific definition of culture. Their explanation features, an integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, languages, practices, beliefs, values, customs, courtesies, rituals, manners of interacting and roles, relationships and expected behaviors of a racial, ethnic, religious or social group; and the ability to transmit the above to succeeding generations (Goode, Sockalingam, Brown, & Jones, 2000).

In previous studies, Duranti (1997) introduced linguistic anthropology and stated his view that culture is knowledge, but also a cognitive model used to perceive and interpret the world. According to him, learning culture is similar to learning a language. Just as language defines one's ability to understand and explain what individuals observe, culture is a means of framing both propositional ('know-that' types of statements) and procedural ('know-how' statements) knowledge of that which surrounds people (Duranti,

1997). Similar to Duranti, many studies affirm that language is a part of culture, and a

culture is part of a language (e.g., Brown, 2007). In other words, both language and

culture are so inherently tied to each other that one cannot be isolated and analyzed

separately. Indeed, this principle is especially evident in foreign language education

where cross-cultural awareness is imperative. Brooks (1968) understands the importance

of culture and notes, "instruction in a foreign language, even at the start, remains

inaccurate and incomplete unless it is completed by appropriate studies in culture" (p.

206). Furthermore, Bryam and Risager (1999) described the role of the language educator

as that of a "professional mediator between foreign languages and culture" (Bryam &

Risager, 1999, p. 58). National Standards echoes that, "students cannot truly master the

language until they have also mastered the cultural contexts in which the language

occurs" (National Standards, 1999, p. 31). Accordingly, *The Standards for Foreign

Language Learning in the 21st Century* (2006) announced six Standards for Expectations

for Initial Licensure Programs that reinforces the importance of learning language and

culture together:

> Standard 1: Language, Linguistics, Comparisons
> Standard 2: Cultures, Literatures, Cross-Disciplinary Concepts
> Standard 3: Language Acquisition Theories and Instructional Practices
> Standard 4: Integration of Standards into Curriculum and Instruction
> Standard 5: Assessment of Languages and Cultures
> Standard 6: Professionalism

Even though the majority of foreign language educators intuitively accept the

interrelationship between culture and language, in practice, culture is all too often a

"superficial aspect of language learning programs" (Lange, 1999, p. 58). Introducing

target culture to students is not an easy task. To assist in the integration of culture into the classroom, the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21*[st] *Century* advocates a framework of the "Three P's". The Three P's are cultural perspectives, cultural products, and cultural practices. Cultural perspectives are the values, beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions held within a culture. Cultural products refer to anything created by members of the culture, such as literature, music, and art. Cultural practices are the acceptable behavioral patterns, forms of discourse, and rites of passage within a specific culture. More specifically, they articulate "what to do, when, and where" such as how individuals in a certain culture might address one another. For example, in Japanese culture, language usage is heavily influenced by aspects such as age, sex, relationship, and relative status. Shibatani (1990) describes Japanese language as follows, "There are both specific and general features that characterize the difference between men's and women's speech in Japanese. Among specific features are lexical items that are characteristic of the different sexes" (p. 371). For example, the most prominent portion in the lexicon that demonstrates the difference between male and female's language usage addresses the first-person pronominal forms in Japanese. This variation can most obviously be seen in the references one makes to oneself because the organization of the pronominal forms is principally controlled by the sex of the speaker and the level of speech. In English, the mere letter "I" can be used as a place holder for oneself, but in Japan, a more complex and culturally bound set of words to illustrate the status, gender, and even rank of the speaker must be utilized. This can be a foreign concept to many Americans.

Another example of cultural practice can be observed in the greeting rituals of Japan. In typical greetings, physical contact does not occur, and greeters follow a refined, yet distant system of greeting with bows. The depth and length of the bow has elaborate implications that define the social standing of the participants. In reference to the degree of attitudinal deference displayed people of equal standing bow for the same depth and amount of time. However, if one person is elder, then the younger person bows longer and deeper. Alternatively, in Latino culture which is similar to American culture, a handshake is a common practice. In addition, a hug and a light kiss on the cheek are also common greeting practices between women, and men and women who are close friends or family. In the book, *"Latinization" – How Latino Culture is Transforming the U.S*., the author Benitez (2007) describes Latino culture as vibrant, loyal, family-centric, expressive, demonstrative, playful, fatalistic, romantic, colorful, dramatic, musical, hard-working, and courageous. Spanish speaking countries appear to be more similar to America than to Japan.

Davis, Ward, and Woodland (2010) emphasize that, "Differing cultural perspectives may include very different attitudes toward authority, the appropriate roles of men and women, the nature of time and change, even the value of words - attitudes that can have a decisive influence on how people relate to each other" (p. 1). Thus, not learning the cultural component of a language is problematic. Nowadays, many educators claim that culture is the fifth skill in language learning.

Hofstede's Theory (Cultural Dimension)

Hosftede's cultural dimension frameworks help to explain not only the cross-cultural communication patterns among American, Japanese, Hispanic and Latino

cultures, but also how the respective languages influence the culture. Hofstede (1980) defines culture as collective programming of the mind. He explored the differences in thinking and social action that exist among different nations by conducting surveys within numerous multinational business organizations. An example of one of his survey was the international attitude survey at HERMES data bank that stored about 117,000 survey questionnaires from 66 countries between 1967 and 1973. Another example was the international employee attitude survey that was conducted at IBM in 72 countries around 1968, and then again in 1972 which produced a total of more than 116,000 questionnaires. In his studies, Hofstede established cultural dimensions as a framework. In other words, cultural dimensions are the shared assumptions that vary from culture to culture, and the assumption exists that people who grew up in the same environment will share similar views about what is appropriate in everyday communication (Hofstede, 1980). According to his theory, culture can be viewed through five dimensions. The dimensions include:

> (1) power distance index (PDI)
>
> (2) individualism versus collectivism (IDV)
>
> (3) masculinity versus femininity (MAS)
>
> (4) uncertainty avoidance index (UAI)
>
> (5) short-term or long-term orientation (LTO)
>
> (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005).

Varying cultural dimensions influence human thoughts and behaviors (Hofstede, 1980). Understanding these dimensions helps to facilitate cultural understandings. In the

following text, the five dimensions of Hofstede's theory of cultural dimension will be discussed in greater detail.

Power Distance Index (PDI)

Power distance is a measure of the amount and strength of interpersonal influence between two parties (Hofstede, 1980). This measure refers to the degree of severity in status difference that people unconsciously and unconditionally accept in their society. There are many factors that contribute to power distance, and a high score on the Power Distance Index indicates that inequalities regarding power and wealth have been allowed to exist within the society. That is to say, these societies are likely to follow a caste system and hierarchy is clearly established and executed.

According to Hofstede, the United States has a score of 40 on the Power Distance Index results while Japan scored a 54, indicating the presence of a more prominent power distance culture. Japanese are constantly conscious of their hierarchical position in any social setting and act accordingly. To explain these outcomes, Bowman and Okuda (1985) articulated the rationale that Japanese tradition is founded upon, "classification, rank, order, and harmony". In contrast, American tradition is founded upon, "declassification, equality, and adventure" (Bowman & Okuda, 1985). Additionally, Nakane (1970) asserts that rank is truly one of the most significant characteristics of Japanese culture, and that all levels of interpersonal relations are marked by a differentiation in status. Furthermore, Davies and Ikeno (2002) explain Japanese relationship scheme in the following text:

Human relationships can be classified into vertical and horizontal hierarchies. The vertical includes relationships between parents and their children, while the

horizontal involves classmates or colleagues. In Japanese society vertical rankings

of human relationships have developed to a great extent and a seniority system is

prevalent in Japan. (p. 187).

In Japan, rank governs interpersonal behavior within a group, and it influences language

behavior (Backhouse, 1993). Thus, as many studies reemphasize, it is necessary to have

an understanding of one's own position in Japanese society as well as an understanding

of how to use language to create or maintain that respective position (e.g., Siegal, 1996).

Across Spanish-speaking countries, Hofstede revealed that there is a great

variation in scores on the Power Distance Index: Argentina (49), Chile (63), Columbia

(67), Costa Rica (35), Ecuador (78), Guatemala (95), Mexico (81), Panama (95), Peru

(64), Spain (42), Uruguay (61), and Venezuela (73). This result has shown that there is a

60 points gap between the highest and lowest ranking among Spanish-speaking countries.

Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)

This dimension focuses on the degree to which a society reinforces individual or

collective achievement. Previous studies have shown that collectivism is found in

societies that are relatively homogeneous (Hofstede, 1980, 1998) and frequently exhibit

the cultural behaviors associated with low-context communication practices. In

collectivistic culture, poor performance or the bad behavior of one person can cast deep

shame upon his or her family, company, or country (Hofstede, 2002). Thus, working with

a group and being consciously concern with the overall wellbeing of the entire group

plays very well into the mindset of collectivism. People are encouraged to appeal to their

group spirit and request cooperation (Birdwhistell, 1970), resisting the temptation to be

"inner-directed," and instead embracing control governed by the duty to not lose face

(Hofstede, 1980). Triandis (1995) augments that people in collectivistic cultures draw shaper distinctions between in-group and out-group people than do those in individualistic cultures. On the contrary, in individualist societies, every person is responsible for his or her own behavior and one usually doesn't feel ashamed of other people's behavior (Hofstede, 2002).

Hofstede's (1998) study proves the United States to be strongly individualistic (PDI score of 91), whereas Japan is shown to be a moderately collectivistic society (PDI score of 46). To expound, in the United States, people retain "I" consciousness and self-orientation. Their identity is based on the individual with emphasis on initiative and achievement, the ideal of leadership, and belief in individual decision. In contrast, Japanese people retain "we" consciousness and collectivity-orientation. Their identity is based on the social system with emphasis on belonging to organization so that membership is ideal and belief in group decisions (Hofstede, 1980). Therefore, in Japanese society, cooperation is emphasized rather than individualism, and because people are protected within the group, self-assertion is considered a form of disobedience. Moreover, according to their cultural values, the Japanese are expected to be modest and considerate of others (Davies and Ikeno, 2002).

Hofstede's results show that the United States and Spanish-speaking countries differ significantly along the individualism versus collectivism scale. While the United States considered as individualistic with a high score, Spanish-speaking countries have collectivist values with low index: Argentina (46), Chile (23), Columbia (13), Costa Rica (15), Mexico (30), Panama (11), Peru (16), Spain (51), Uruguay (36), and Venezuela (12). Guatemala scores only 6 points and Ecuador 8 points.

Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)

According to Hofstede's definition, masculinity stands for a society where social gender roles are clearly distinct. In other words, men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success while women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. In contrast, femininity represents a society in which social gender roles overlap: both men and women are to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life (Hofstede, 2001). Thus, whereas a low masculinity score indicates that the country has a low level of differentiation and discrimination between genders, a high masculinity score reflects a country that experiences a high degree of gender differentiation.

The results taken from an IBM survey showed that Japan ranked 1st with a masculinity index score of 95, whereas the United States scored a 62, placing it approximately average relative to the high and low scores among those countries surveyed. This figure is relatively similar to key Spanish-speaking countries, such as Mexico (69). However, the results have shown that Spanish-speaking countries present contrasting scores: Argentina (56), Chile (28), Costa Rica (21), Columbia (64), Ecuador (63), Guatemala (37), Mexico (69), Panama (44), Peru (42), Spain (42), Uruguay (38), and Venezuela (72). This result has shown that there is a 51 points gap between the highest and lowest ranking among Spanish-speaking countries.

Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)

The Uncertainty Avoidance Index measures the tolerance towards ambiguity in a society. It expresses the degree to which a person in society feels uncomfortable with a sense of uncertainty and ambiguity (Hofstede, 1997). People in countries with a high

score on the Uncertainty Avoidance Index try to minimize the possibility of unstructured situations by conforming to strict laws, rules, regulations, safety, and security measures in order to reduce the amount of uncertainty.

Hofstede reveals regarding this dimension, Japan received the highest score on the Uncertainty Avoidance Index with 92, while America scored 46. Okazaki (1993) examined informal conversation in Japanese and reported that the way Japanese speakers state their opinions differs from Americans speakers. The Japanese are reluctant to state their opinions directly and prefer a more indirect approach, while Americans explicitly state opinions first, and then provide supporting reasons.

Similar to Japan, Spanish-speaking countries have also shown a relatively high score on the Uncertainty Avoidance Index: Argentina (86), Chile (86), Columbia (80), Costa Rica (86), Ecuador (67), Guatemala (101), Mexico (82), Panama (86), Peru (87), Spain (86), Uruguay (99), and Venezuela (76). In these cultures where there is a very high preference for avoiding uncertainty, there exists an emotional reliance on explicit rules (even if the rules never seem to work).

Short-term or Long-term Orientation (LTO)

This dimension associates the connection of the past with the current and future actions and challenges. The long-term orientation dimension can be interpreted as dealing with society's search for virtue. Within the societies of a long-term orientation, people believe that truth depends very much on situation, context, and time.

As for the last dimension examined by Hofstede's study, it was found that the Japanese are long-term oriented (score of 88) while Americans scored on the lower side (score of 26), indicating their short-term orientation. Japanese interactants must always

explicitly show in the language they use how they view social relationship. Matsumoto (1988) notes, "preservation of face in Japanese culture is intimately bound up with showing recognition of one's relative position in the communicative context and with the maintenance of the social ranking order" (p. 415). Japanese people are always concerned with how their actions and words will impact others. All utterances are considered face-threatening in Japan.

Backhouse (1993) notes:

In Japan, we find a strong cultural preoccupation with social relationships, and this is clearly reflected in the language, where distinctions of social distance-both horizontal (in terms of the degree of familiarity between the speaker and the addressee) and vertical (in terms of deference paid by the speaker to the person talked about) – are systematically marked in grammar and vocabulary, and where many greetings and other social formulas make explicit reference to social ties obligations. (p. 6 - 7).

In contrast to the high score of Japan, Spanish-speaking countries demonstrated relatively low scores: Argentina (20), Chile (31), Columbia (13), Mexico (24), Peru (25), Spain (48), Uruguay (26), and Venezuela (16). According to Hofstede, people in countries which score low in this dimension prefer to maintain time-honored traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion. Consequently, people in these societies exhibit great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results.

Even though Latino culture has several dissimilarities with American culture, there is a great likelihood of finding native Spanish-speakers in the United States, and Spanish is the dominant foreign language in the United States. In fact, due to the

increased Hispanic and Latino population, the demands for Spanish language media (television, magazines, etc.) are high. Spanish is the most omnipresent language in the United States, and Americans can easily gain access to language and cultural contact without leaving country. An example can be found in the entertainment industry where Hispanic actors and singers are gaining fame and recognition outside their country.

Understanding Intercultural Dimensions in Language Teaching

There are variations in communication styles that can be seen from analyzing the intercultural dimensions. While the United States communication pattern has often been described as direct, assertive, informal, and explicit, the Japanese communication pattern is opposite (Bennett, 1991; Doi, 1973). These two nations possess divergent dissimilarities. Previous studies reiterate that socio-historical experience and cultural values offer an explanation for these divergent communication characteristics (McDanielle, 2002). Further an introduction of the concept of 'intercultural dimensions' helps to develop understandings of the influence of socio-historical experience and cultural values. The intercultural dimensions are concerned with:

- helping learners to understand how intercultural interaction takes place
- how social identities are part of all interactions
- how one's perceptions of others and others' perceptions of oneself influence the success of communication
- how one can find out for themselves more about the people with whom oneself is communicating (Byram, Gribkioya, Starkey, 2002).

They also noted that "the intercultural dimension in language teaching aims to develop learners as intercultural speakers or mediators who are able to engage with complexity and multiple identities and to avoid the stereotyping which accompanies

perceiving someone through a single identity" (p. 9-10). Ultimately, differing cultural perspectives provide various value, even in their communicative approaches. When dealing with two distinctive cultures, it is helpful to recognize some of each country's fundamental differences and to properly prepare individuals from both countries to deal with those stark differences to avoid misunderstandings and confusion.

Study Abroad

Study abroad provides an authentic experience to practice usage of foreign language. There is an abundance of research evidence suggesting that the experience of study abroad makes a valuable difference in students' lives. Studies have found that study abroad programs allow students to become more open-minded and tolerant individuals and also develop both language and cultural based skills (MLA, 2007). Needless to say, many believe that study abroad is a pedagogical pathway to both language acquisition and global education.

According to the educational exchange data from the Open Doors Report (2015), a report published annually by the Institute of International Education (IIE), the number of American students at colleges and universities who studied abroad during the 2013 – 2014 academic year was 304, 467. As the Table 2.1 proves, the number of students who participate study abroad programs has risen dramatically.

Table 2.1. Changes in the Number of Study Abroad Participants

Year	1994/1995	2004/2005	2007/2008	2010/2011	2013/2014
Number of Participants	84,403	205,983	262,416	273,996	304,467

Institute of International Education (2015)

The United Kingdom is the most popular destination for American students, followed by Italy, Spain, France, China, Germany, Costa Rica, Australia, Ireland, and finally Japan. Among many universities across the United States, study abroad is now considered an essential component of the foreign language curriculum.

However, study abroad is not a magical formula that automatically makes learning a foreign language effortless and blissful (Dekeyser, 2010). In other words, simply participating in studying abroad does not immediately increase language proficiency or cultural competence without the participant's full effort (Goldni, 2013). Significant effort must be applied to learning a language and adopting another culture— merely throwing oneself into the culturally and linguistically immersed environment is not enough to become totally fluent and well-versed in their customs. In reference to this mentality, Goodwin and Nacht (1988) notes, "Study abroad can never truly prosper or fulfil its great promise without a change in this attitude" (p. 122). There has to be a specific drive, mindset, set of personality traits and attributes, and motivation to work for advancement in foreign language. Kinginger (2010) indicated that students' opportunities for success while abroad can be enhanced when students are taught how to turn everyday experiences, events, and activities, including conflicts and obstacles, into opportunities for learning.

Culture Shock

Nevertheless, study abroad possesses strong credibility in enhancing language learning in every dimension, promoting language skills at a fast pace. Simultaneously, students cannot avoid the unfamiliar practices they encounter while staying in the foreign country. Awareness beforehand of the culture shock reduces the stress of students' study

abroad journeys. It is important to emphasize that culture shock is a normal process of an adjustment into a new culture and is usually unavoidable. The term 'culture shock' is attributed to Kalvero Oberg, who first coined the phrase during his field work in Brazil in 1958.

Oberg (1960) articulated the term culture shock as:

When an individual enters a strange culture, all or most of the familiar cues are removed. He is like a fish out of water. No matter how broad-minded or full of goodwill he may be, a series of props have been knocked out from under him.

(p. 28)

Culture Shock is likened by many authors to a period of mourning for the home world, characterized by feelings of grief and separation anxiety (Furnham, 1995; Furnham & Bochner, 1986).

Knowing the common challenges that students might face with understanding their cultural learning experience benefits both students and teachers.

UKCISA (2008) explains:

The experience can be a significant learning experience, making you more aware of aspects of your own culture as well as the new culture you have encountered. It will give you valuable skills that will serve you in many ways now and in the future and which will be part of the benefit of an international education. (p. 4)

Stages of Culture Shock

In the literature, there is some confusion as to when exactly the stage of culture shock takes place (Brown & Holloway, 2008). Differing models exist to illustrate the progression of culture shock. For example, in Lysgaard's (1995) model, adjustment to a

new culture follows a U-shaped curve: the first stage is characterized by positive feelings, the second stage consists of maladjustment, and finally the stage of adjustment is reached. In Oberg's (1960) model, adjustment is broken down into four stages: a first "Honeymoon Stage" of fascination, a second "Crisis Stage" of hostility and aggression, a third "Recovery Stage" in which the visitor feels more used to the new cultural environment and develops a sense of humor, and a fourth "Adjustment Stage," where adjustment is complete. In Mohamed's (1997) model, adjustment manifests in four stages: orientation and autonomy (learning new skills); transitions of self-worth (stress and ambivalence between complying with, and resisting new demands); consolidation of role identity (awareness of various systems); and competence and integrative maturity (development of hope and confidence).

It is also important to note that some students might undergo a significant change in their personal image and sense of self. As Benson, Barkhuizen, Bodycott, and Brown (2012) suggest, a sojourn abroad can lead to identity-related development on a relatively modest scale. They identified the potential for development in three domains: (1) identity-related proficiency, or pragmatic competence; (2) linguistic self-concept, which can include such attributes as self-esteem, confidence, or communicative autonomy; and (3) second language mediated personal development, or the ability to get things done, e.g., to successfully navigate a service encounter. Personal development is another unique feature of study abroad that educators should consider in the guidance of their students.

Intercultural Training

      Prior to a student's departure for study abroad, it is advisable that the student receives some instructions on cultural preparation. This preparation should not only prepare them for the physical departure but a mental one as well.

      Goldoni (2013) notes:

> Students' approaches to the study abroad experience, their level of engagement with members of the new culture, and their sociocultural identity and cultural values have an impact on their preparation for the experience, the quality of the sojourn, their perceptions of the sojourn, and the way in which they are perceived in the host society. (p. 359)

The majority of students will return back to their original countries after some time abroad and will have to readjust themselves once again. Studying abroad is a series of processes, and the right kind of preparation and training for these processes will help enhance most students' intercultural competence. Gertsen (1990) notes that intercultural training can potentially prepare participants on three levels:

(1) The cognitive level:
- Giving students knowledge about another culture so that they are better able to understand its complexity.
- Giving students an understanding of the nature of culture and how it influences all human beings in various contexts.
- Encouraging reduced oversimplification and use of stereotypes.

(2) The affective level:
- Making students' attitudes towards people from other cultures more positive.

(3) The communicative, behavioral level:
- Improving students' abilities to adjust their own communicative behavior.
- Improving participants' abilities to achieve positive relations to members of another culture. (p. 352)

National Standards (1999) addresses the importance of communication strategies as stated, "The United States must educate students who are linguistically and culturally equipped to communicate successfully in a pluralistic American society and abroad" (p. 7). It is apparent that with increasing globalization, an awareness of the nuances and intricacies of intercultural communication will become more urgent and imperative. Specifically referring to the benefits of cultural familiarity, Arne Duncan, the United States Secretary of Education, is quoted as saying at the opening event for International Education Week on November 18, 2003:

> Today, a nation's prosperity depends on its people's ability to thrive in the global marketplace. This is true for the United States and for our neighbors across the globe. What's more, in a nation as diverse as ours, the ability to interact comfortably and confidently with people of all backgrounds and points of view is critical. And that makes it more important than ever to provide all students with a well-rounded, world-class education - including opportunities to gain global competencies and world language skills; to understand other cultures; and to study abroad. (U.S. Department of Education, 2013, n.p)

Learning Strategies

Learning strategies are the techniques that allow not only language learning to be more effective and rapid, but also enjoyable and successful. Numerous studies draw attention to the importance of learning strategies in foreign language teaching and indicate that if students are given the tools for strategic learning, all students have the potential to become successful learners. To expound, when students use learning strategies, they tend to take more responsibility for their own learning, are more motivated to learn, and have a higher sense of self-efficacy or confidence in their own learning ability. Researchers have shown that learning strategies enable students to be

more autonomous, self-directed, and responsible for developing their own language proficiency (Wenden & Rubin, 1987; Yang, 2007). However, most language learners are normally unaware of the wide variety of learning strategies available to them and consequently, use a limited number of strategies. Integrating a wide variety of learning strategies into curriculum empowers teachers to accommodate learning-style variations among students.

Oxford and Crookall (1989) provide a classification system for language learning strategies that includes: Cognitive Strategies, Memory Strategies, Compensation Strategies, Communication Strategies, Metacognitive Strategies, Affective Strategies, and Social Strategies. Cognitive Strategies are focused what goes on inside the learner's head and include skills that involve manipulation or transformation of the language, including the use of mnemonics, note taking, making associations to native language words with common features, and guessing words from context. Memory Strategies are techniques to help learners store new information in memory and retrieve it later. Compensation Strategies are behaviors to compensate for missing knowledge. Communication Strategies are those compensation strategies used specifically while speaking. Ellis (1985) defines, communication strategies as, "psycholinguistic plans which exist as part of the language user's communicative competence. They are potentially conscious and serve as substitutes for production plans which the learner is unable to implement" (p. 182). Metacognitive Strategies are the cognitive operations by which behaviors monitor, analyze, regulate, and evaluate one's learning. By using these strategies, students can go beyond immediate involvement in the learning task and take a step back to assess their own progress. Previous studies have indicated that successful language learners apply

more frequent use of metacognitive strategies (Chamot, 1993). Affective Strategies, such as self-encouragement, reduce anxiety and help learners gain better control over their emotions, attitudes, and motivations. Social Strategies are actions which involve others in the language learning process such as asking questions and turn taking in conversations. A study conducted by Barnhardt, Carbonaro, Chamot, El-Dinary, and Robbins (1993) with college learners of Japanese, Russian, and Spanish have shown strong correlations between the use of language learning strategies and students' levels of confidence in their own language learning abilities.

Recently, attention has been paid to the relationship between the use of different language learning strategies and motivations. Schmidt and Watanabe (2001) found that motivation influences the use of strategies and preferences, and many studies provide that learners who are more motivated tend to use more learning strategies (Rivera-Mills & Plonsky, 2007). Another study by Zarei and Elekaei (2013) investigated the effect of motivation on the choices of memory, cognitive, compensation, meta-cognitive, affective and social strategies of Iranian EFL learners. The results revealed that the level of motivation influences students' choices of memory strategies, compensation strategies, and affective strategies. However, there was no significant effect of motivation on the choice of cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, and social strategies.

Learning strategies can be used for a variety of tasks. However, most students need guidance in transferring a familiar strategy to new problems. Ehrman, Leaver and Oxford (2003) claim that in order to make strategies useful, three factors should be considered: "(a) the strategy relates well to the L2 task at hand, (b) the strategy fits the particular student's learning style preferences to one degree or another, and (c) the

student employs the strategy effectively and links it with other relevant strategies" (p. 315). Learning strategies should be taught in class, and students should be capable of developing their learning strategies for self-directed and autonomous learning. Brown (2007) provides some examples on how to promote strategies in classroom. Several strategies concerning reading and listening have been proven to be effectively teachable.

Attitudes

Language learning requires a long-term commitment. In the 1920's, people considered intelligence to be the most important indicator of success in language learning (Henmon, 1929). However, after several years of testing and investigations, opinions have shifted. Nowadays, researchers confirm that a student's attitude toward learning is one of the most important factor in academic success (e.g., Gardner & Lambert 1972; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003; Gottfried, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2009). If students don't find any enjoyment in their course of study, the quality of students' learning will be greatly impaired, and eventually, students won't motivated to learn.

Bartley (1970) first examined the relationship between attitudes and the tendency to drop out of language programs. In her findings, she clearly demonstrated that the attitude of a student plays an important role in foreign language drop out. There are numerous studies that have investigated the relationship between attitudes and achievement in a second language, and many attitude studies emphasized the importance of affective or emotion component.

Attitudinal differences in language learning have been researched largely by Gardner and Lambert. Gardner and Lambert's (1959) study stressed that attitudinal factors may be an influence that is as, or important, or perhaps even more important than

the aptitude factors in learning second languages. Their study showed that motivation for language learning predicts language achievement at a level similar to the predictive value of language aptitude. Gardner (1982) explains that a potential reason for why attitudes are related to achievement in a second language is that attitudes influence how seriously the individual strives to acquire the language. In addition, regardless of how the foreign language is taught, students' attitudes are diverse, which makes promoting positive attitudes even more important. In more recent studies, researchers have proven that a higher motivation to learn has been linked not only to better academic performance, but to greater conceptual understanding, satisfaction with schools, self-esteem, and lower drop out rates (Gottfried, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2009).

Motivations

A motive is what prompts a person to act in a certain way or develop an inclination for specific behavior (Pardee, 1990). One definition of motivation can be characterized as the desire to do or achieve something not for the enjoyment of the thing itself, but because doing so leads to a certain result (Pintrich, 2003). More precisely, motivation is described as a combination of biological, emotional, and social forces that activate and direct behavior. Gardner (1985) considers motivation to be the combination of effort and desire to learn the second language, and identifies motivation as one of the main factors that affects foreign language learning. Accordingly, losing motivation to learn brings serious consequences that can culminate in students discontinuing learning, or even dropping out of school. Ellis (1997) claims that as teachers, we need to more fully assess the factors that are involved in motivating students to perform tasks well because we have some influence and control over those factors.

The Center on Education Policy (2012) notes:

Motivation can affect how students approach school in general, how they relate to teachers, how much time and effort they devote to their studies, how much support they seek when they're struggling, how much they attempt to engage or disengage their fellow students from academics, how they perform on assessments (and there how the school performs), and so on. (p. 2)

Previous studies (e.g., Gardner; Gardner & Lambert, 1959) have shown that positive correlations exist between language learning motivation and target language achievement. For example, studies have shown that motivation affects the learner's success in learning the foreign language as well as the length of time they continue to study the language (e.g., Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Hernandez, 2006; Masgoret & Gardner; 2003; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Ramage, 1990). Hence, motivation is one of the key constructs driving foreign language success (Dörnyei, 2001).

Motivation is a complex and multifaceted construct (Medina, 2014). Regarding dimensions of motivation, researchers have established the major characteristics that individuals need to possess in order to be motivated: competence (the belief that they are capable of doing something), control / autonomy (the ability to set appropriate goals and see a correlation between effort and outcome), interest / value (a vested interest in the task and a feeling that its value is worth the effort to complete it), and relatedness (the need to feel part of a group or social context and exhibit behavior appropriate to that group) (Murray, 2011; Pintrich, 2003).

Table 2.2 Four Dimensions of Motivation

Dimensions	Indicators
Competence (Am I capable?)	The student believes he or she has the ability to complete the task.
Control / autonomy (Can I control it?)	The student feels in control by seeing a direct a link between his or her actions and an outcome. The student retains autonomy by having some choice about whether or how to undertake the task.
Interest / value (Does it interest me? Is it worth the effort?)	The student has some interest in the task or sees the value of completing it.
Relatedness (What do others think?)	Completing the task brings the student social rewards, such as a sense of belonging to a classroom or other desired social group or approval from a person of social importance to the student.

Sources: Bandura, 1996; Dweck, 2010; Murray 2011; Pintrich, 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2000

Dörnyei (1998) presents the "Ten Commandments for Motivation Language Learners":

- Set a personal example with your own behavior

- Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom

- Present the task properly

- Develop a good relationship with the learners

- Increase the learner's linguistic self-confidence

- Make the language classes interesting

- Promote learner autonomy

- Personalize the learning process

- Increase the learner's goal-orientedness

- Familiarize learners with the target culture   (p. 131)

Instrumental and Integrative Motivation

In the field of foreign language learning, motivation is often categorized as instrumental or integrative, and these motivations are often seen to be in contrast to one another (e.g., Deci, Ryan, & Williams, 1996; Gardner, 1985, 2001; Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Instrumental motivation is identified as interest in studying the target language in order to use it to achieve a particular objective, such as obtaining a good job or fulfilling academic requirements. Integrative motivation is defined as a desire to interact with native speakers of the target language and culture. This distinction between instrumental and integrative is similar to the conceptualized distinction between the motivation constructs of intrinsic and extrinsic orientations.

The term "intrinsic" is connected with behavior which results from the reward of the activity itself: the intrinsically motivated learner studies because the act of learning is enjoyable and satisfying in and of itself (Dörnyei, 1994). Intrinsic motivation is the self-desire to seek out new things and new challenges, to analyze one's capacity, and to observe and to gain knowledge (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic goal orientation can reflect a unique concept of mastery goals in achievement goal theory. In other words, Pintrich et al. (1991) states that for students with a strong intrinsic goal orientation, learning is the end goal. On the contrary, extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity in order to attain a desired outcome and extrinsic goal orientation reflects the preference for performance goals in achievement goal theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Extrinsic motivated learners engage in academic tasks for externally imposed reasons such as high grades, language requirements, competitions, or expectations from others, and they equally expect extrinsic rewards. Therefore, for such a student, participating in the learning task

is a means to an end that is different than the act of learning. Vallerand, Blais, Briere, and Pelletier (1989) showed that students with greater intrinsic motivation and identified regulation, a form of extrinsic motivation in which behavior is self-determined, experienced more positive emotions in school, more enjoyment in academic work, and more satisfaction with school than those whose motivations were less self-determined.

Intrinsic Goal Orientation and Extrinsic Goal Orientation

Motivation theories propose that personal needs are the source of motivation for an individual's behavior. In other words, the goals set by students are dictated by their motivation. However, while student goal orientation influences motivation, motivations and goal theories differ. Goal orientation can be simply defined as students' perceived reasons for engaging in a learning task. The theory of goal orientation proposes that goals are "cognitive representations" that can "guide and direct academic behavior" (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2001).

Previous studies have shown that there are significant motivational difference among learners of Japanese and Spanish. Studies reveal that learners of Japanese have more intrinsic motivation than learners of Spanish. For example, Thomas (2010) aimed to identify principal reasons why college students choose particular languages to satisfy general education second language requirements. Results showed that while learners of Japanese chose primarily intrinsic (integrative) factors as the main reasons for studying Japanese such as communication factors, travel, or living there, Spanish learners chose extrinsic (instrumental) factors as the primary reasons for studying Spanish such as general education requirements and professional advantages. The statistics also revealed that Spanish learners showed little interest in language learning as shown by their low

selection of intrinsic orientations. A similar study conducted by Alalou (2001) also found

that the top reason students gave for taking Spanish was to fulfill the language

requirement as opposed to personal interest. In fact, when asked if they planned to study

the language beyond the initial language requirement, only 28% said that they would

continue to study Spanish.

Saito-Abbott and Samimy (1997) investigated influences on attrition in Japanese

language instruction in United States universities, and their findings revealed that when

addressing beginning and intermediate language learners, the specific type of motivation

a student experiences best predicts whether the student will continue in the language.

They note, "Beginning students with low integrative motivation were less likely to

continue, while intermediate students with lower levels of instrumental motivation were

less likely to continue" (p. 45). Yang's (2003) study of East Asian language learners'

motivational orientations showed that integrative motivation was more important than

instrumental motivation to East Asian language learners because they are highly

influenced by interest and language use. Ueno (2005) found that students who study less

commonly taught languages (Chinese, Japanese, and Russian) initially state their

attraction towards an uncommon language and the challenges that learning such

languages hold are reasons for learning them. However, at the second stage of learning,

the majority of the students expressed a development of intrinsic motivation with cultural

interests being especially prevalent among learners of Japanese. Ueno claimed that

experiencing a change in motivation and gaining a sense of accomplishment were

necessary for language learning to continue successfully, and they even encouraged

language instructors to incorporate course curriculum in unique ways in less commonly taught languages.

Self-Efficacy

The concept of self-efficacy is central to Canadian psychologist Professor Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura 1994; 1997), which was first introduced in the late 1970s. Bandura was concerned with how cognitions, such as a person's expectations of success or their judgment of capabilities would affect behavior. He claimed that efficacy should be studied and measured because specific measures of beliefs are intricately related to behavior.

Bandura (1994) defines self-efficacy as the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations. Bandura (1997) further states that efficacy beliefs are concerned with the exercise of control over action, in addition to the regulation of the thought process, motivation, and emotional and psychological states (Bandura, 1997). Furthermore, according to Schunk (1989), self-efficacy refers to students' belief about their ability to effectively apply knowledge and skills that they already possess to novel situations. Self-efficacy leads to the acquisition of new cognitive ability, which is interpreted as learning. Self-efficacy for learning focuses primarily on learners' beliefs about their own capabilities to do a particular task: it does not concern the linkage between the process and the outcome of a task (Bandura 1997, 1982; Pajares, 2007).

Previous studies have found that an individual's self-efficacy plays a major role in how goals, tasks, and challenges are approached because the approach to those goals, tasks, and challenges are directly influenced by a person's judgment of their capabilities

to complete a task successfully (Bandura, 1989). Bandura (1995) argued that people's beliefs regarding their efficacy are developed by four types of influences:

(1) mastery experience: individuals overcome obstacles through perseverance

(2) vicarious experiences: individuals observe similar models

(3) social persuasion: individuals' beliefs are strengthened by others

(4) physiological and emotional states: individuals judge their own capabilities

Strong beliefs concerning self-efficacy are influenced by these four forms, and they enable people to set high goals and commit themselves. Knowledge of the self and awareness of ones' own personal style are very important. As a result, with a higher level of self-efficacy, people tend to demonstrate greater persistence in the face of difficulty, greater effort, and better usage of learning strategies (Matthews, 2010). They also engage in learning tasks and activities with more effort and deliberation (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2008). Psychology expert, Cherry (2010) additionally noted that people with a strong sense of self-efficacy view challenging problems as tasks to be mastered, develop deeper interest in the activities in which they participate, form a strong sense of commitment to their interests and activities, and recover quickly from setbacks and disappointments. On the contrary, people with a weak sense of self-efficacy: avoid challenging tasks, believe that difficult tasks and situations are beyond their capabilities, focus on personal failings and negative outcomes, and quickly lose confidence in personal abilities (Cherry, 2010). In other words, while stronger self-efficacy predict higher academic achievement, weaker self-efficacy predicts lower academic achievement (Pajares, 2008). Previous studies (Bandura, 1986; Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992) show that student

perceptions of self-efficacy have been proven an effective predictor of academic outcomes.

Moreover, research has advanced that self-efficacy regarding the subject of a student's grade is a critical factor that influences his or her decision to continue language learning (e.g., Jorden & Lambert, 1991; Kondo, 1999). Gorsuch (2009) notes, **"**Self-efficacy is a worthwhile lens through which to view ways to help young adults develop their identities as lifelong learners and successful language learners" (p. 510).

Why Study Japanese?

The growth in student enrollment in the less commonly taught languages is generally related to the competition for global markets and reflection of international events. Therefore, student expectations in the past are likely different from the expectations they carry today. In fact, educators have observed that the types of students who are interested in Japanese language have changed over time. Specifically, interest in studying Japanese increased dramatically in the 1980s and 1990s (Samimy & Tabuse, 1992). During that time, economy in Japan was at its peak, and consequently, students who enrolled in Japanese courses were mostly majoring in business, and were motivated to study due to their future career goals. At that time, Japanese language programs attracted students with possible business practices as a result of Japanese economic success. Furthermore, the registration rate for Japanese language programs increased by 94.9 percent between 1986 and 1990 (Samimy, 1994). However, after 1989, the Japanese economy dropped and the majority of students no longer favored business. Now, a Japanese student's career goal is no longer the greatest motivation for studying Japanese.

Every three years, the Japan Foundation examines Japanese learners around the world by conducting an international survey on Japanese language education. In the past, popular culture interests such as *manga* and *anime* were not among the categories for student reasons for Japanese language study. However, Japanese popular culture is gaining momentum among American youth (Gee, 2003; Napier, 2001). Therefore, in 2009, the Japan Foundation added the categories of *manga* and *anime* to reflect the currents interests of Japanese language learners. According to the Japan Foundation's most recent study, which they conducted around the world in 136 different countries in 2012, data shows the top three reasons students listed for Japanese language study included, "interest in Japanese language" (62.2%), "communication in Japanese" (55.5%), and "interest in *manga*, *anime*, J-pop, etc." (54.0%). As this result confirms, the influence of *manga* and *anime* are becoming some of the most globally recognized aspects of Japanese culture. Similarly to Japan Foundation's results, Kumano's (2007) survey of 1,160 foreign students learning Japanese in Japan, found that 90% of the participants started studying Japanese because of their interest in Japanese popular culture, with 75.5% among them specifying *manga* and *anime*. Likewise, Shamoon (2010) also showed that the primary motive for students in North America and Europe to enroll in Japan studies was influenced by the Japanese pop culture interests in *manga*, *anime* and video games. Additionally, a research by Watanabe and Higurashi (2011) published the same findings. They conducted a survey for college students in San Diego State University and found that while a majority of the students named interests in Japanese culture, travel, and job opportunities, liking *manga* was the prevalent reason for studying Japanese.

To provide chronological context, Japanese *anime* became a main cultural export between 1980s and 1990s. According to the JETRO Economic Research Department (2005), Japanese *anime* has held the first position in the world of animation for nearly two decades. Over 60% of animated cartoons broadcast around the world are made in Japan, and the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) estimates that the United States market for Japanese *anime* alone is worth 4.35 billion dollars, indicating the strength of its global presence.

In America, a majority of the Japanese language learners grew up under the influence of Japanese products such as Hello Kitty, Pokemon, Dragonball-Z, *manga*, and Nintendo video games. With the influx of Japanese exposure, combined with immersion in the Pokemon generation, one of the most common factors motivating students to learn Japanese stem from Japanese popular cultural products. This phenomenon has been referred by Kelts (2006) as a cultural wave called "Japanophilla," which he defines as, "outsider's infatuation with Japan's cultural character." A*nime*, *manga*, video games, and character goods from fashion to music are an example of the influence of Japan's soft power rippling around the world, playing a role in recruiting students into Japanese programs (JETRO, 2005). In reference to this movement, McGray (2002) noted that "Japan's global cultural influence has quietly grown…from pop music to consumer electronics, architecture to fashion, and animation to cuisine," making it more of a cultural superpower today than the economic force of the past.

The term "soft power" was coined by Joseph Nye to explain the nontraditional ways a country can influence another country's wants, or its public values. "Soft power" refers to, "the ability to get what you want by attracting and persuading others to adopt

your goals," in contrast to the "hard power" of military or economic force (Nye, 2003). A *Wall Street Journal* article on August 5, 2004 titled, "Learning Japanese, once about resumes, is now about cool," addressed the trend of studying Japanese with the influence of popular culture. Parker (2004) focused on students at the University of Georgia who were no longer influenced by international business, but rather Japanese culture. She (2004) acknowledged the prevailing trend and noted that learning Japanese used to be, "a smart choice for ambitious, business-minded college students" but is becoming more out of personal interests and about "cool" pop culture such as comics, street fashion, and *anime*.

Foreign Language Anxiety

The concept of anxiety is complex and multi-faceted (Horwitz, 2010). Spielberger (1983) defines anxiety as the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system. Anxiety takes many different shapes and forms, but in terms of foreign language, classroom anxiety is a unique from of anxiety that carries distinct traits and characteristics, and has been suggested to be considered from a situation-specific perspective (Ellis, 2008; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Horwitz, Tallon, & Luo, 2010; Horwitz, 2001; Horwitz & Young, 1991; MacIntyre, 1999; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994).

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) conceptualize foreign language anxiety as a unique type specific to foreign language learning that is defined by a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to the classroom language learning process. Foreign language anxiety shares common feelings with general anxiety, such as tension and apprehension, but is also associated with worry and negative

emotional reactions in speaking, listening, and learning a second or foreign language (MacIntyre, 1999). Horwitz and Young (1990) divide foreign language anxiety into two different categories: 1) general anxiety being transferred into language learning contexts and 2) anxiety that is specific to language learning. In addition, these categories can be analyzed in three main components: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Communication apprehension involves anxiety in speaking and listening to other individuals. Test-anxiety is self-explanatory. Fear of negative evaluation includes the learner's perception of how others, including teachers, classmates, and native speakers, may negatively view their language ability. Anxiety possibly forms within these categories when students don't feel like themselves when speaking the target language or, in regards to cognition, have difficulty processing meaningful input and become less responsive to it (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Krashen, 1981, 1982, 1985).

Several studies have revealed that approximately one-third of American students studying a foreign language experience at least a moderate level of foreign language anxiety (e.g., Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Horwitz, Tallon, & Luo, 2009). It has been seen to have adverse and detrimental effects on second or foreign language achievement, as well as students' confidence, self-esteem, and level of participation (Gregersen & Horwits, 2002; Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Saito & Samimy, 1996). Foreign language anxiety becomes a major obstacle in learning because of its effect on spontaneous speaking activities and overall confidence. Students are less able to self-edit or identify language errors and, in worst cases, are more likely to end up not attending classes (Gregersen, 2003).

A number of studies found that as students gain language learning experience and increase language competence, their language anxiety tends to decrease. Because language anxiety seems to be related to native language skills and foreign language attitudes, for certain languages, course related anxiety has been shown to be higher for beginners than for experienced language learners (Ganschow & Aparks, 1996; Gardner, 1977; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Horwitz, Tallon, & Luo, 2010; Sparks et al, 1997). However, in the case of Japanese language, there is an unexpected result that students practicing in advanced levels of Japanese language experience higher anxiety than elementary or intermediate level students (Kitano, 2001).

Young (1991) pointed out that instructors likely to cause anxiety for their students are those who believed in correcting every single error and who behaved like a drill sergeant rather than a facilitator. Between students and instructors' mismatches in language belief can create anxiety generating tensions (Kern, 1995). One way to help decrease students' language anxiety might include teachers creating lessons from the students' perspectives. Researchers believe that awareness and understanding of the students' psychological experiences of language learning, such as frustration and discomfort, are important. If educators make an effort to combat the negative attitudes that students have about foreign language, it enables them to improve the learning environment, and ultimately, curb attribution in foreign language classrooms.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this study is to explore the reasons Eastern Kentucky students chose to study the particular language and to examine the trends of foreign language enrollment, and also to observe EKU Japanese and Spanish language learners' attitudes and expectations about language learning. The findings of this study will better inform language instructors about students' perceptions of their language experiences and will consequently contribute to further development of language programs, as well as aligning recruitment strategies for prospective students.

To answer the research questions, this study employed a quantitative approach with a survey that was divided into two sections. The first section gathered students' demographic information (such as gender, age, major, travel abroad experiences, etc.) and reasons and purposes for language study. The second section questioned students regarding their beliefs about language learning. This second part was a modified version of the Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) developed by Horwitz (1988).

The Study Context

Eastern Kentucky University (EKU), where the present study was conducted, is a regional coeducational, public institution offering general and liberal arts programs, as well as pre-professional and professional training programs in education and various other fields at both undergraduate and graduate levels. EKU's main campus is located in Richmond, Kentucky, an expanding community of approximately 30, 000 population.

Besides Richmond, EKU also maintains three regional campuses in Corbin, Danville, and Manchester. According to the data, 2014 enrollment, EKU has a total of 16,432 students: 14,035 undergraduate students and 2397 graduate students (see Table 3.1). The majority of the student population is White 13,706 (82%), and minority enrollments are as follows: Black 996, Latino 344, Asian 207, Native American 50, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander 23, multiple races 23, and unknown 1079 (see Table 3.2). The number of international students is 310, only 2 % of the student body. In-state enrollment is 14,118 (86%) and out-of-state enrollment is 2,014 (12%).

Table 3.1 Total EKU Enrollment 2014

Undergraduate (male 44 % female 56 %)	Graduate (male 32 % female 68 %)
Full-time students: 11,365 (81%)	Full-time students: 784 (33%)
Part-time students: 2,670 (19%)	Part-time students: 1,613 (67%)

EKU (2015)

Table 3.2 Total EKU Student Demographics

White	13,706
Black	996
Latino	344
Asian	207
Native American	50
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	23
Multiple Races	371
Unknown	1079

EKU (2015)

As a comprehensive public institution, EKU prepares students to lead productive, responsible, and enriched lives. To accomplish this, EKU's mission statements emphasize, Students Success, Regional Stewardship, Critical and Creative Thinking, and Effective Communication.

EKU confers the following degrees:

- Associate - Applied Science, Arts, General Studies, Science, Science in Nursing, and Science in Para medicine

- Baccalaureate - Arts, Business Administration, Fine Arts, Individualized Studies, Music, Social Work, Science, and Science in Nursing

- Specialist - Education and Psychology

- Master - Arts, Arts in Education, Arts in Teaching, Business Administration, Fine Arts, Music, Public Administration, Public Health, Science, and Science in Nursing

- Doctoral - Education. Nursing Practice, and Occupational Therapy

As indicated in Chapter 1, at EKU, the Department of Languages, Cultures, and Humanities offers French, German, Japanese, Latin, and Spanish. Chinese is also offered for the first time since fall 2014. Among these foreign languages, Spanish is the most popular language with typical enrollments of more than 400 students in the first and second semesters of beginning Spanish classes. The program offers a B.A. in Spanish, a B.A. in Spanish Teaching, Minors in Spanish, and a Certificate in Spanish. Figure 1 is a graphic representation which shows the number of students enrolled in Spanish 101, 102, 201, and 202 courses at EKU from 2009 to 2015. As the numbers show, compared with

fall semester and spring semester, fall semester's enrollments are always higher than spring enrollments (see Figure. 1).
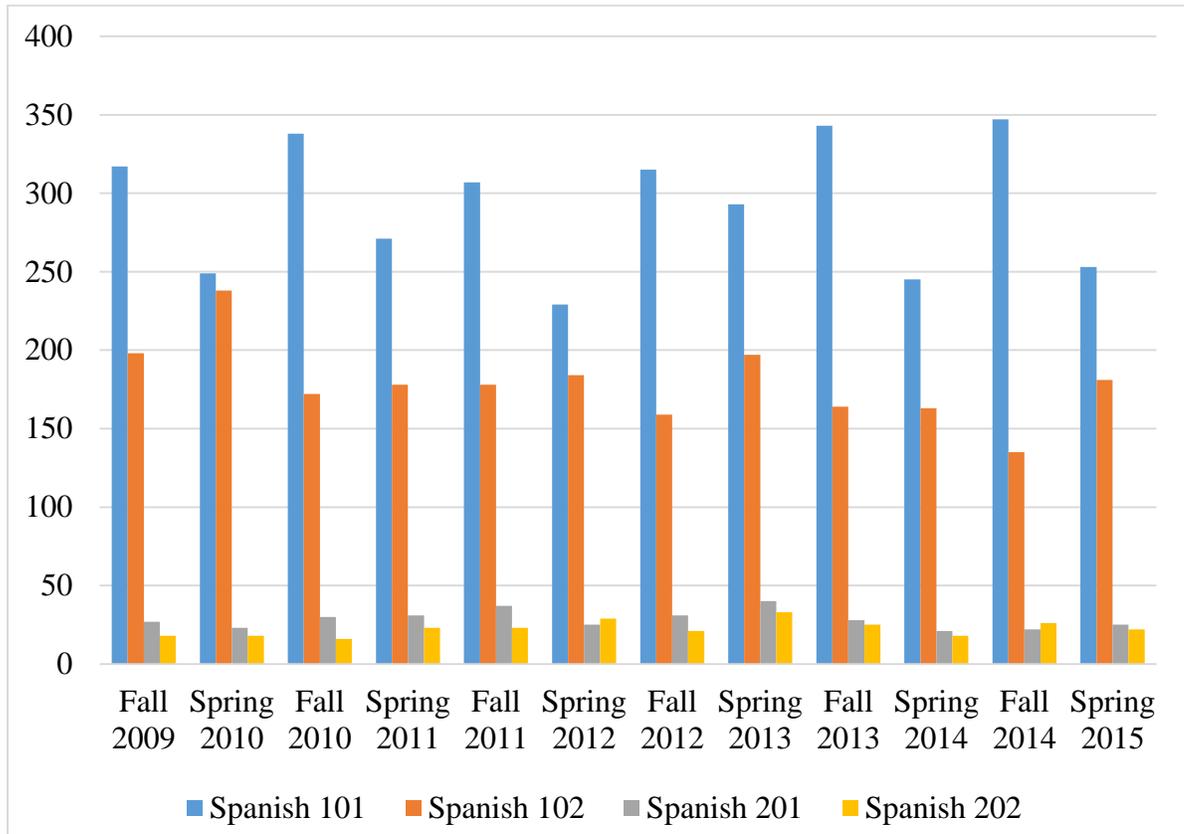
Figure 1. Number of Students Enrolled in Spanish Courses

In contrast to Spanish, no major or minor is offered in Japanese studies. However, upon completion of 15 credit hours (JPN 101, JPN 102, JPN 201, JPN 202, and FCC 210/227), students can obtain a certificate of Japanese at EKU. Figure 2 is a graphic representation which shows the number of students enrolled in Japanese 101, 102, 201, and 202 courses at EKU from 2010 to 2015. As of the spring 2015 semester, more than 80 students are enrolled in Japanese language classes.
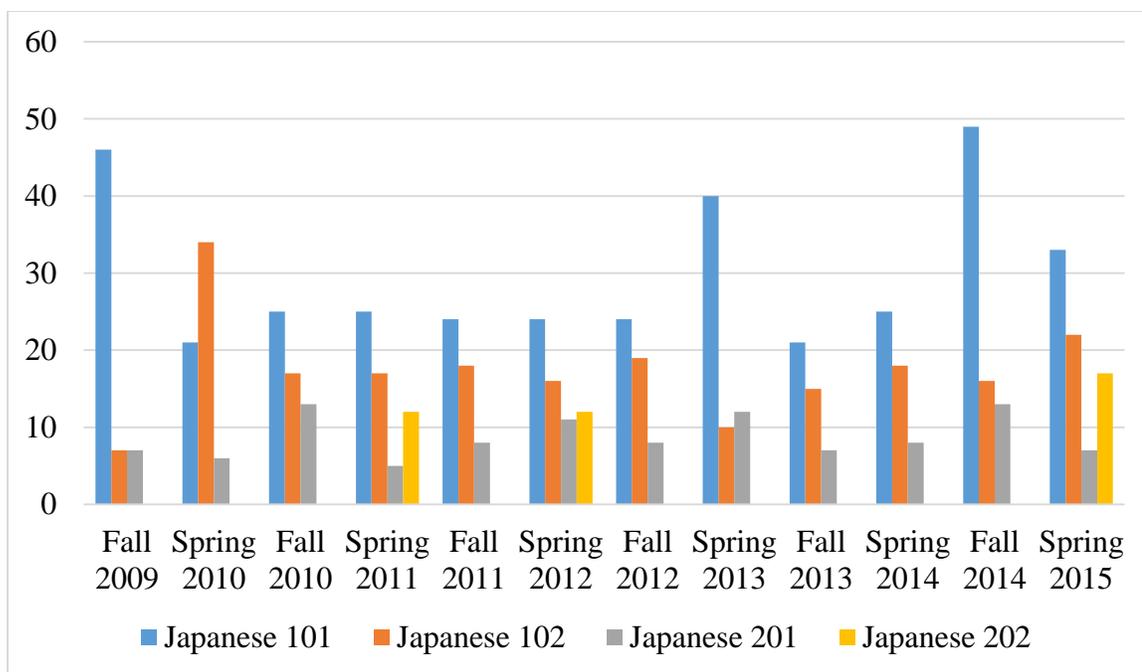
Figure 2. Number of Students Enrolled in Japanese Courses

The general education requirement for foreign languages at EKU requires 6 credits in "Diversity of Perspectives & Experiences". The general education goals and objectives (BLOCK VIII /ELEMENT 6) are listed below:

Students will be able to achieve the following objectives:
- Communicate effectively by applying skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening and through appropriate use of information technology. (GE Goal 1)
- Use appropriate methods of critical thinking and quantitative reasoning to examine issues and to identify solutions. (GE Goal 2)
- Distinguish the methods that underlie the search for knowledge in the arts, humanities, natural sciences, history, and social behavioral sciences. (GE Goal 7)
- Integrate knowledge that will deepen their understanding of, and will inform their own choices about, issues of personal and public importance. (GE Goal 8)
- Recognize perspectives from other cultures and/or historically marginalized groups. (GE Goal 9)

Japanese Instruction at Eastern Kentucky University

First year students use a textbook entitled "GENKI: An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese" by The Japan Times. The course descriptions are listed below:

JPN 101: Conversational Japanese I.

An introduction to the grammar and structure of Japanese taught in cultural context. Practice in pronunciation, reading, and writing systems with an emphasis on conversation. *Gen. Ed. Block VIII and Element 6.*

JPN 102: Conversational Japanese II.

Recommended: JPN 101 or equivalent proficiency. Continuation of JPN 101. Emphasis on conversation. Students entering JPN 102 by referral or placement will receive three hours credit for JPN 101 if they make an "A" in 102. Laboratory work required. *Gen. Ed. Block VIII and Element 6.*

Spanish Instruction at Eastern Kentucky University

First year students use a textbook entitled "Arriba!: Comunicacion y cultura". The course descriptions are listed below:

SPA 101: Conversational Spanish I

Prerequisite: completion of all required developmental reading and writing courses. Beginning Spanish for students with little or no previous study of Spanish. Qualified students should enroll at a higher level. Proficiency-based course emphasizing active communication in Spanish, and introducing the cultural diversity of the Spanish-speaking world. Conducted in Spanish. *Not open to students who have native or near-native fluency in Spanish. Gen. Ed. E-6.*

Population and Sample

The target population for this study included all students enrolled in first year Spanish (SPA 101, SPA 102) and Japanese (JPN 101, JPN 102) courses at Eastern Kentucky University in the Spring 2015 semester. Participation in this study was voluntary, anonymous, and posed no known risk to the participants.

The participants in this study were 238 students (see Table 3.3). The Japanese language group consisted of 48 students, and the Spanish language group consisted of 190 students. Forty-eight Japanese language learners completed the questionnaire, representing a rate of 87% Japanese language learners at EKU. From the Spanish group, a total of 190 respondents participated in the questionnaire, representing a rate of 44% Spanish language learners at EKU. Any responses that did not include the name of the course and/or did not complete the majority of the questionnaire were not included in this study.

Table 3.3 Participants' Distribution

	Male Students	Female Students	Total
JPN 101	19	9	28
JPN 102	15	5	20
SPA 101	58	56	114
SPA 102	34	42	76
Total	126	112	238

Data Collection Instruments

The survey instruments used in this study included a demographic profile and a replication of previous research completed by Horwitz (1988): "Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI)" (see Appendix A and B).

Background Information Questionnaire:

The background section included the following topics: gender, age, course name, native language, year in school, academic major, and language study focus (certificate, minor, major), nationality, residency, travel abroad experiences, and reasons and purposes for taking the foreign language.

Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI):

The BALLI was developed by Horwitz. BALLI allows teachers and researchers to examine the beliefs of groups of language learners (Horwitz, 1999). The number of BALLI studies have been increasing and researchers claim that beliefs about language learning have been found to relate to learning strategies (e.g., Park 1995). Horwitz (1999) notes, "The BALLI has proven very useful in the identification of learner beliefs about language learning which in turn may be connected to other important factors such as motivation, anxiety about language learning, and learner strategies" (p. 576).

The Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) is a self-report instrument designed to assess students' language learning beliefs and is the most widely used questionnaire for investigating learner beliefs (Barcelos, 2003). BALLI consists of the following five major areas: (a) beliefs about the difficulty of language learning, which

concerns the general difficulty of learning a second language as well as perceptions of the difficulty of a specific target language; (b) foreign language aptitude, which concerns the existence of aptitude and opinions about the kind of individuals who possess it; (c) nature of language learning, which concerns student ideas about "what it means to learn a language and how to go about it" (Horwitz, 1999, p. 565); (d) learning and communication strategies; and (e) motivations and expectations (Horwitz, 1988, 1999). The original BALLI is composed of 34 discrete items. However, this study omits (b) foreign language aptitude. Therefore, the inventory used for this study consists of 24 items which is comprised of four separate components: The Difficulty of Language Learning, The Nature of Language Learning, Learning and Communication Strategies, and Motivations and Expectation. The survey items related to each components are as follows:

The Difficulty of Language Learning
- Some languages are easier to learn than others.
- Japanese/Spanish is: 5) a very difficult language, 4) a difficult language, 3) a language of medium difficulty, 2) an easy language, 1) a very easy language.
- I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak this language very well.
- If someone spent one hour a day learning Japanese / Spanish, how long would it take him/her to become fluent? 5) less than a year, 4) 1-2 years, 3) 3-5 years, 2) 5-10 years, 1) you cannot learn Japanese / Spanish in 1 hour a day.
- It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.
- It is easier to read and write this language than to speak and understand it.

The Nature of Language Learning
- It is necessary to know the foreign culture in order to speak the foreign language.

- It is better to learn a foreign language in the foreign country.
- Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words.
- Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.
- Learning a foreign language is different from learning other school subjects.
- Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of translating from English.

Learning and Communication Strategies

Learning Strategies

- It is important to repeat and practice a lot.
- It is important to practice with the audio materials.

Communication Strategies

- It is important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent.
- You should not say anything in the foreign language until you can say it correctly.
- If I heard someone speak Japanese, I would go up to them so that I could practice speaking the language.
- It is OK to guess if you do not know a word in the foreign language.
- I feel self-conscious speaking the foreign language in front of other people.
- If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on.

Motivations and Expectations

- If I get to speak this language very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.
- If I learn to speak this language very well, it will help me get a good job.
- Americans think that it is important to speak a foreign language.
- I would like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers better.

Among the 24 items above, students responded on a five-point Likert scale: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree. The

questionnaire is presented in Appendix A and B. Two items (question two and ten) have different response scales. Question 2 asked about students' perceptions toward Japanese/Spanish language study. The question was presented as follows: Japanese/Spanish is 5) a very difficult language, 4) a difficult language, 3) a language of medium difficulty, 2) an easy language, or 1) a very easy language. Students were supposed to choose one answer from 5 to 1. Question 10 asked about the amount of time needed to learn Japanese/Spanish. The question was presented as follows: If someone spent one hour a day learning Japanese/Spanish, how long would it take him/her to become fluent? Students were asked to choose one answer from, 5) less than a year, 4) 1-2 years, 3) 3-5 years, 2) 5-10 years, or 1) you cannot learn Japanese/Spanish in 1 hour a day.

Validity and Reliability of the BALLI

Reliability is an important psychometric property of research as score unreliability affects statistical power (Henson, 2001).There are five sources to determine validity when collecting data by means of a test or instrument (Mertler, 2005). Those are construct validity, predictive validity, content validity, concurrent validity, and consequential validity. Many researchers in different studies checked its validity and reliability by using Cronbach's alpha. Cronbach's alpha is computed by splitting a scale into as many parts as it has items, calculating the correlation between each subpair, and taking the average of all correlations (Cronbach, 1951).

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection took place during the Spring semester of 2015. Since all students were actively enrolled in the aforementioned courses (JPN 101 and/or 102, SPA 101 and/or102), the researcher coordinated with the professors of the desired courses and asked them to distribute the survey in the classroom. Two Japanese professors (including myself) and five Spanish professors cooperated to administer the questionnaires. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire in the classroom environment using a paper-pencil tool, those students who did not have time to complete the questionnaires outside of class submitted them later after completion. Again, participation in this study was voluntary, anonymous, and posed no known risk to the participants. Hence, any student not wishing to participate was not required to do so. However, the students were requested not to consult their classmates while working with the survey in order to ensure that the answers reflected each student's own beliefs. The questionnaire is presented in Appendix A and B.

Data Analysis Procedures

The purpose of this study is to examine the Eastern Kentucky students' general profile, their purposes and motivational factors to study the particular language and their language learning beliefs. The research questions are provided below:

Q1. What are the demographic characteristics of students enrolled in Japanese courses and students enrolled in Spanish courses at Eastern Kentucky University?

Q2. What are the students' primary reasons for studying Japanese and Spanish at Eastern Kentucky University? What differences, if any, exist among the two groups?

Q.3 What are the beliefs of Japanese language learners and Spanish language learners concerning language learning?

To answer these research questions, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was utilized to summarize the data gathered from the demographic and the BALLI questionnaires; it reports a descriptive study of Eastern Kentucky student's motivation and learning beliefs toward their target language. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, and t test for each of the components' means, standard deviations, and standard error means were used to compute the responses to BALLI items.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study is that data was collected only from Spring 2015 and the target was only first year Japanese and Spanish language learners at EKU. Again, the participants in this study were 238 students, which represents a rate of 87% first-year Japanese language learners and 44% Spanish learners at EKU. Because this study was only conducted at EKU, generalization of the findings is limited.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the study designed to address the following research questions:

Q1. What are the demographic characteristics of students enrolled in Japanese courses and students enrolled in Spanish courses at Eastern Kentucky University?

Q2. What are the students' primary reasons for studying Japanese and Spanish at Eastern Kentucky University? What differences, if any, exist among the two groups?

Q.3 What are the beliefs of Japanese language learners and Spanish language learners concerning language learning?

Results of the demographic questionnaire and results of the BALLI for Japanese and Spanish language learners are presented below.

Results of the Background Questionnaire

<u>Research Question 1 and 2</u>

The first research question surveyed the demographic characteristics of Japanese language learners and Spanish language learners. The purpose is to examine the general profile of students in each course and to identify their reasons and purposes for studying the specific language course for the development of language programs, as well as aligning recruitment strategies for prospective students. Eight responses were discarded due to the omission of background information. Consequently, samples of 48 Japanese

language learners and 190 Spanish language learners were used to profile demographic characteristics. Descriptive statistical analysis was utilized to examine the demographic characteristics.

Table 4.1 displays the descriptive statistics on gender distribution for the 238 participants whose questionnaires were used for analysis. Table 4.1 for Japanese language learners reveals that 34 (71 %) were male and 14 (29 %) were female students. As for Spanish language learners, participants were fairly balanced with 92 males (48 %) and 98 (52 %) females.

Table 4.1 Participants' Gender Distribution

		Japanese Language Learners		Spanish Language Learners	
Variable	Category	N	%	N	%
Gender	Male	34	70.8	92	48.4
	Female	14	29.2	98	51.6
	Total	48	100.0	190	100.0

First Semester Japanese Language Learners

Of the 28 participants, 19 (68%) were men and 9 (32%) women. As for the age distribution, the minimum age was 18-years-old and the maximum was 30. The average (mean) age was 21. First semester students' of Japanese age distribution are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 First Semester Japanese Language Learners Age Distribution

Age Distrubution for Japanese 101

[Bar chart: X-axis "Age (Years)" with values 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 30; Y-axis "Number of Students" from 0 to 8. Bar heights: 18=2, 19=8, 20=5, 21=2, 22=3, 23=3, 24=1, 25=2, 28=1, 30=1]
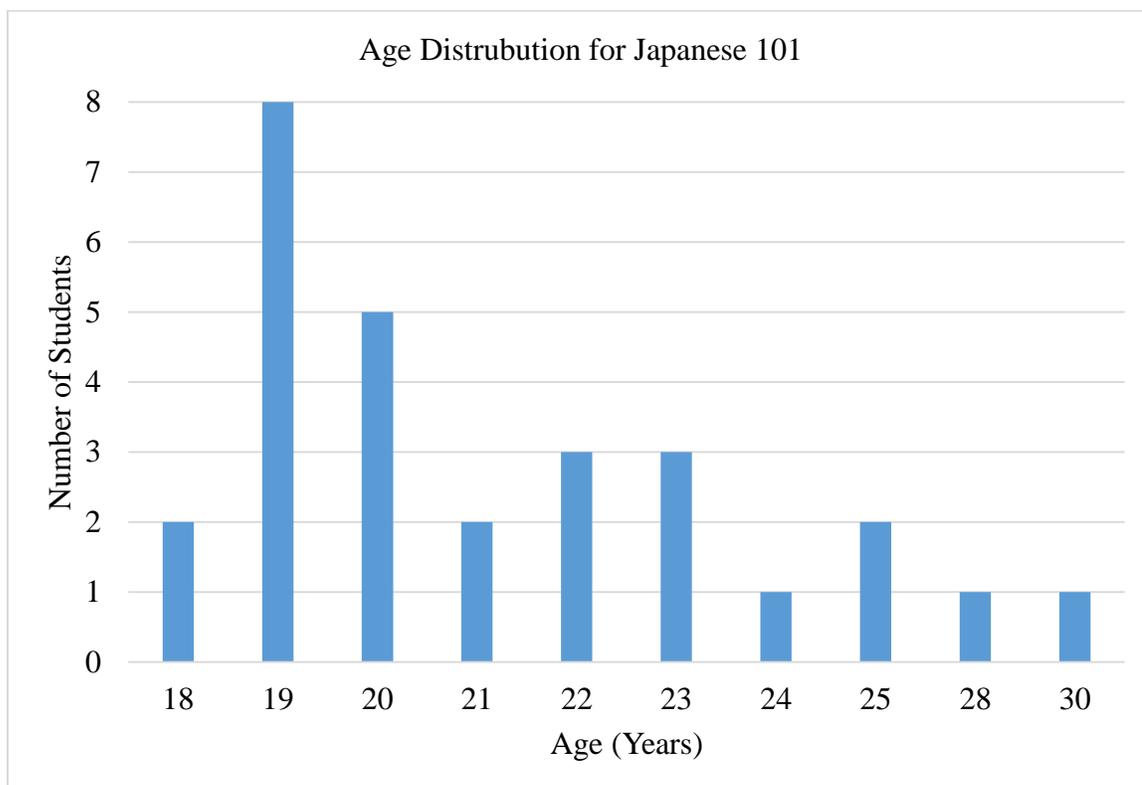
Among this group, 93 % of the participants were native English speakers, while the remaining 7% spoke different native languages. Ten students were freshman (36%), with six sophomores (21%), seven juniors (25%), and five seniors (18%).

In terms of their academic majors, participants were varied. The number of students with the following majors were as follows: Anthropology (1), Aviation (1), Broadcasting (3), Computer Electronic Networking (1), Computer Science (1), Criminal Justice (1), Dietetics (1), Electronics (1), Elementary Education (2), English (1), English Teaching (1), Film Techniques & Tech (1), Geography (1), Geology (1), Homeland Security (1), Music Performance (1), Network Security (2), Nursing (1), Physics (1),

Police Studies (1), Public Relations (1), Pre-Medical Science (2), and Psychology (1). The number of students with the following academic minors were as follows: Archeology (1), Art (1). Asian Studies (2), Computer Information Systems (1), Computer Science (1), Military Science (1), Music (1), Police Studies (1), Psychology (1), and Visual Media.

In regard to the Japanese certificate program, a large percentage of students (71%) expressed their desire to obtain a certificate in Japanese: 20 students answered yes (71%), while 8 students answered no (29%). In regard to their nationality, 25 students were originally from the United States, one student was from Germany, one student from Liberia, and one from Bahrain. However, all 28 students were residents of Kentucky. When asked about their travel abroad experience, 13 students (46%) indicated having had travel abroad experience, while the rest indicated no travel abroad experience.

Among the reasons and purposes listed for Japanese language study, the top responses were "interest in Japanese language" (96.4%) and "interest in Japanese culture" (89.3%). The third response was "interest in popular culture" (75.0%), "interest in visiting Japan" (75.0 %), and "communication in Japanese" (75.0 %). More than half of the students also indicated "interest in living in Japan" (60.7%) and "interest in studying abroad" (57.1%) for their reasons and purposes for their language study. In addition, "for my future careers" (57.1) was also a prevalent answer to more than half of the students.

Interestingly, no student indicated "parental wishes" as for their reasons and purposes for their language study. As for other reasons, students answered, due to friend's influence (1 student), family member's strong interests in Japan (1 student), interests in religious beliefs (1 student), history (1 student), Japanese literature (1

student), and passion to teach in Japan (1 student). Percentage results of the reasons and

purposes for language study questionnaire are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 First Semester Japanese Language Learners
Reasons and Purposes for Japanese Language Study

Interest in Japanese culture	*(25) 89.3 %
Interest in Japanese language	(27) 96.4 %
Interest in popular culture	(21) 75.0 %
Interest in visiting Japan	(21) 75.0 %
Interest in living in Japan	(17) 60.7 %
Interest in studying abroad	(16) 57.1 %
Took Japanese in high school	(1) 3.6 %
For my future career	(16) 57.1 %
I have a Japanese cultural heritage	(3) 10.7 %
I have a Japanese speaking family member	(4) 14.3 %
I have friends who speak Japanese	(6) 21.4 %
Parental wishes	(0) 0 %
To communicate in Japanese	(21) 75.0 %
To fulfill a requirement	(7) 25.0 %
Other (please specify)	(4) 21.4 %

*Note: ( ) are the number of students

Second Semester Japanese Language Learners

The second semester students were also predominantly male (75%) while females numbered 25%. Age breakdown was as follows: minimum age, 17-years-old and maximum was 35. One student left the age item blank. The average/mean age was also 21. Second semester students' of Japanese age distribution are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Second Semester Japanese Language Learners Age Distribution
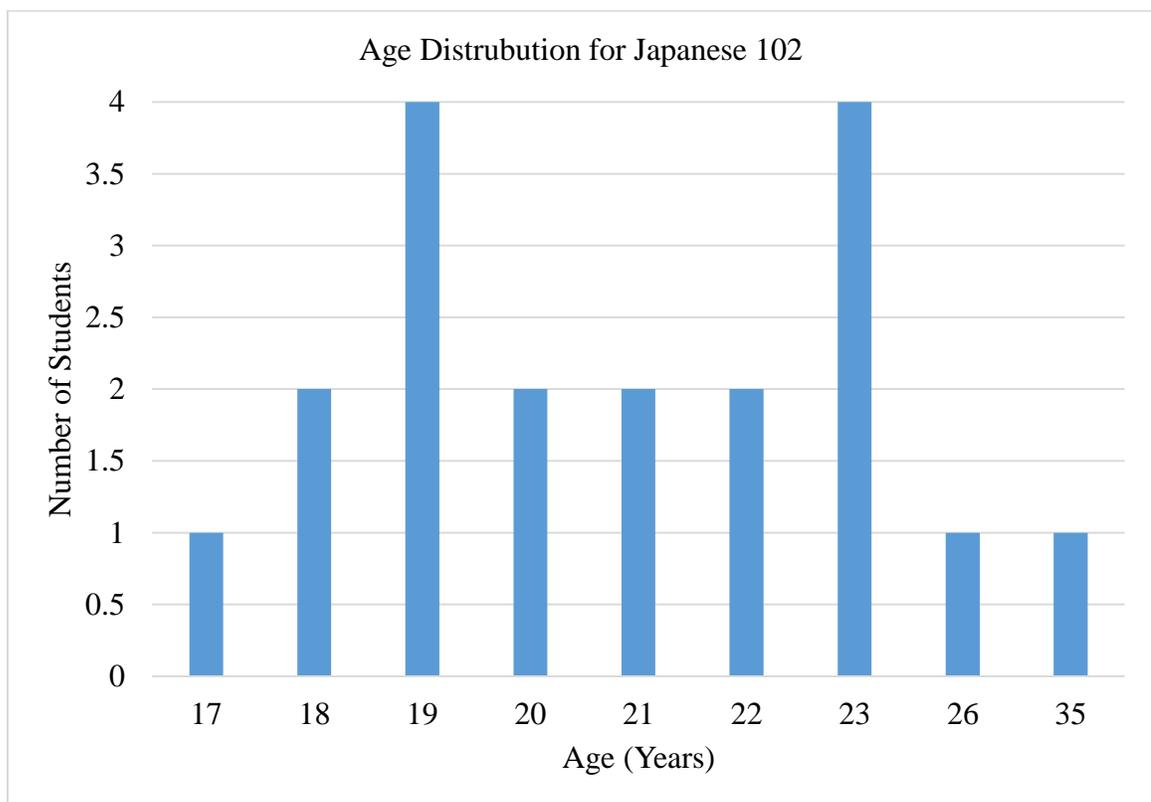
Ninety-five percent of students were native English speakers, while one student indicated Chinese as his/her native language. Six students were freshman (30%), with four sophomores (20%), two juniors (10%), six seniors (30%), and two students (10%) were high school students.

In terms of their academic majors, responses were varied. The number of students with the following majors were as follows: Accounting (2), Art (1), Biology (1), Broadcasting (1), Communication Studies (1), Computer Science (1), Criminal Justice (1), Electronic Media (1), English (1), Forensic Science (1), Geology (1), Marketing (1), Psychology (2), Science for Engineering (1), and Theatre (1). In regard to their academic minors, the responses were as follows: Asian Studies (2), Chemistry (1). Music (1), and Studio Art (1).

Regarding the Japanese certificate program, half of the second semester Japanese language learners (50%) expressed their interest in obtaining a certificate in Japanese. All 20 students were from the United States. Nineteen students were residents of Kentucky, leaving one from out-of-state. When asked about their travel abroad experience, seven students (35%) indicated having had travel abroad experience, while the rest indicated no travel abroad experience.

Among the reasons and purposes listed for Japanese language study, all students presented interest in Japanese culture and language. They also showed "interests in visiting Japan" (90%), followed by "interest in popular culture" (70%), "interest in studying abroad" (70%), and "communication in Japanese" (70 %). This finding is consistent with prior studies conducted by Japan Foundation (2009), Kumano (2007), Thomas (2010), Watanabe and Higurashi (2011), whose findings revealed that Japanese learners hold strong instrumental motivation. The result also revealed that 65 % of second semester Japanese students also chose "for future career" as for their reasons and purposes for their language study. No one from the second semester of Japanese group applied to the reason that "took Japanese in high school" (0%), "I have a Japanese

cultural heritage" (0%), "I have a Japanese speaking family member" (0%), nor "parental wishes" (0%). Percentage results of the reasons and purposes for language study questionnaire are presented in Table 4.5. As for other reasons, students described, due to military (1 student), religious beliefs/talk to Japanese people about Jesus (1 student), love of Japanese community (1 student), and interests in Japanese literature (1 student).

Table 4.5 Second Semester Japanese Language Learners
Reasons and Purposes for Japanese Language Study

Interest in Japanese culture	*(20) 100 %
Interest in Japanese language	(20) 100 %
Interest in popular culture	(14) 70 %
Interest in visiting Japan	(18) 90 %
Interest in living in Japan	(11) 55 %
Interest in studying abroad	(14) 70 %
Took Japanese in high school	(0) 0 %
For my future career	(13) 65 %
I have a Japanese cultural heritage	(0) 0 %
I have a Japanese speaking family member	(0) 0 %
I have friends who speak Japanese	(6) 30 %
Parental wishes	(0) 0 %
To communicate in Japanese	(14) 70 %
To fulfill a requirement	(10) 50 %
Other (please specify)	(6) 30 %

*Note: ( ) are the number of students

First Semester Spanish Language Learners

Of the 114 participants, 58 (51%) were men and 56 (49%) women. As for age, the minimum age was 18, and the maximum was 45. The average (mean) age was 21. First semester Spanish language learners' age distribution are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 First Semester Spanish Language Learners Age Distribution
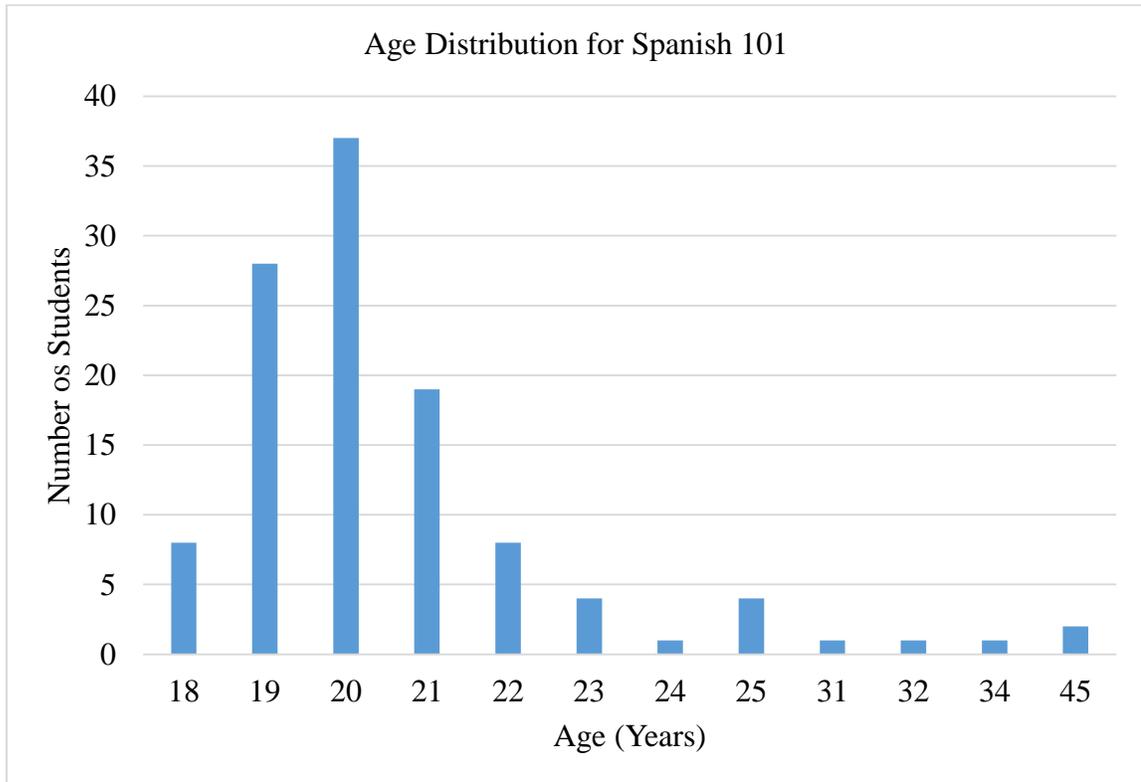
In regard to their native languages, 98 % indicated that they are native English speakers, while the remaining 2% had other native languages (one Chinese and one German). The students' years in school were as follows: 35 students were freshmen (30%), with 43 sophomores (38%), 25 juniors (22%), 9 seniors (8%), and 2 "others" (2%).

In terms of their academic majors, participants made varied responses. The number of students with the following academic majors were as follows: Accounting (5),

Agriculture (2), Anthropology (1), Aquatic Biology (1), American Sign Language (1), Aviation (1), Aviation Management (1), Biology (1), Biology Teaching (1), Broadcasting (1), Business (1), Business Management (3), Communication Disorders (1), Communication Studies (1), Computer Information System (6), Computer Science (2), Construction Management (1), Criminal Justice (11), Deaf and Hard of Hearing (1), Economics (1), Education (1), Elementary Education (3), Emergency Medical Care (1), English Teaching (3), Finance (1), Fire Administration (1), Fire and Engineering Technology (1), Fire, Arson and Explosion Investigation (1), Forensic Science (2), General Studies (1), Globalization (1), Gold Management (1), Health Science (1), History (1), History Teaching (1), Homeland Security (5), Human Resource Management (1), International Business (1), Journalism (1), Justice Safety (1), Marketing (3), Military Science & Leadership (1), Music Performance (2), Nursing (8), Occupational Science (1), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (1), Paralegal Studies (2), Physical Education (1), Physics (1), Physics Engineering (1), Police Studies (3), Political Science (1), Pre-Nursing (3), Pre-Occupational Science (1), Pre-Pharmacy (1), Pre-Veterinary Medicine (2), Psychology (4), Public Health (1), Recreation and Park Administration (3), Social Justice (1), Theatre (2), and Therapeutic Recreation (1). The number of students with the following academic minors were as follows: Aviation (1), Business (1), Chemistry (2), Construction Management (1), Criminal Justice (1), Education (1), Fire, Arson and Explosion Investigation (1), Homeland Security (1), Management (1), Military Science (1), Political Science (1), Psychology (1), Risk Management Insurance (1), Security Management (1), Spanish (8), and Tourism and Resort Recreation (1).

Regarding Spanish language learners' plans for obtaining a B.A. in Spanish, a

B.A. in Spanish Teaching, a minor in Spanish, or a certificate in Spanish, quite a small number of students showed an interest in pursuing further study of Spanish. Out of 114 students, three students showed an interest in obtaining a B.A. in Spanish. None of them indicated an interest in pursuing a B.A. in Spanish Teaching. Sixteen students displayed an interest in pursuing a minor in Spanish. Fifteen responded with an interest in obtaining a certificate in Spanish.

One hundred thirteen students were originally from the United States, and one student was from Austria. Out of 114 students, 14 students (12%) were not residents of Kentucky. When asked about their travel abroad experience, forty-seven students (41%) indicated having had travel abroad experience, while the rest had had no travel abroad experience.

Among the reasons and purposes listed for Spanish language study, the most prevalent reason was due to a language requirement. Seventy-eight out of one hundred and fourteen students indicated "to fulfill a requirement" (68.4 %) as for their reasons for language study. "Took Spanish in high school" (65.8%). "Interest in Spanish language" (63.1%) were also predominant responses. More than half of the students also indicated "interest in visiting a Spanish-speaking country" (57.0%) and "for future career" (56.1%). Interestingly, unlike the students of Japanese, as seen in Table 4.7, "interest in Hispanic/Latino culture" (32.4%) and "interest in popular culture" (22.8%) were not the leading answers among Spanish learners. More Spanish students showed communication factor than culture. As for other, one student specified "my girlfriend is Hispanic" as for his motive.

Table 4.7 First Semester Spanish Language Learners
Reasons and Purposes for Spanish Language Study

Interest in Hispanic/Latino culture	*(37) 32.4 %
Interest in Spanish language	(72) 63.1 %
Interest in popular culture (music, dance, food, etc)	(26) 22.8 %
Interest in visiting a Spanish-speaking country	(65) 57.0 %
Interest in living in a Spanish-speaking country	(11) 9.6 %
Interest in studying abroad	(27) 23.7 %
Took Spanish in high school	(75) 65.8 %
For my future career	(64) 56.1 %
I have a Hispanic/Latino cultural heritage	(2) 1.7 %
I have a Spanish speaking family member	(9) 7.9 %
I have friends who speak Spanish	(36) 31.6 %
Parental wishes	(7) 6.1 %
To communicate in Spanish	(54) 47.4 %
To fulfill a requirement	(78) 68.4 %
Other (please specify)	(1) 0.9 %

*Note: ( ) are the number of students

Second Semester Spanish Language Learners

Of the 76 participants, 34 (45%) were men and 42 (55%) were women. As for the

age, the 75 respondents to this question ranged from 16 to 50-years-old. The

average/mean age of respondents was 20. Table 4.8 displays the second semester Spanish

language learners' age distribution.

Table 4.8 Second Semester Spanish Language Learners Age Distribution
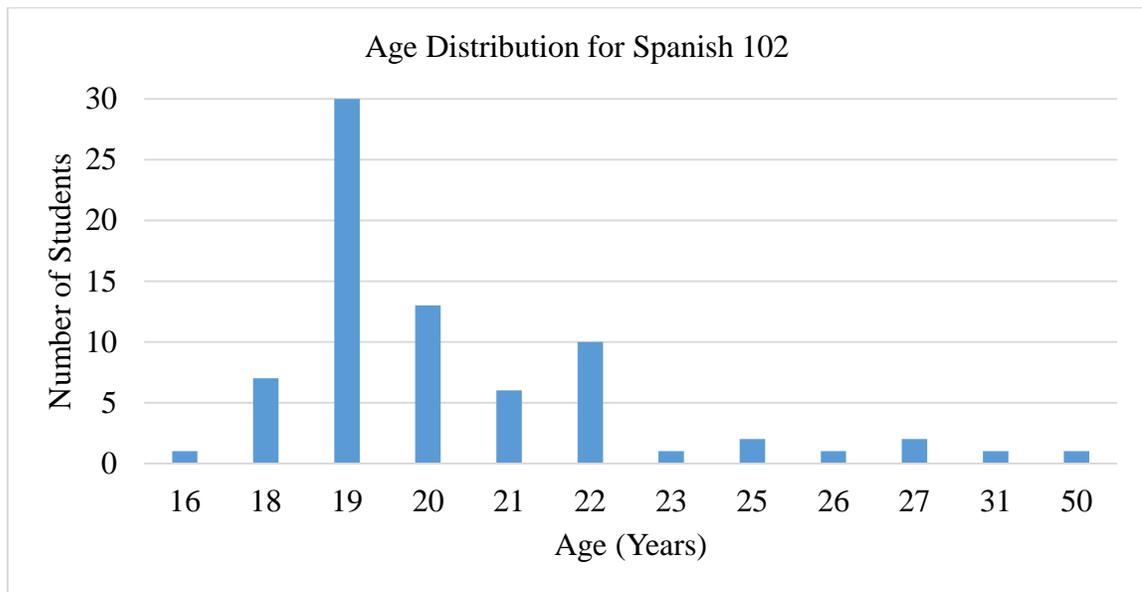
Ninety-nine percent of the participants were native English speakers, while the remaining

1% (one student) spoke Spanish as his/her native language. Eighteen students were

freshmen (24%), twenty six were sophomores (34%), twelve were juniors (16%),

seventeen were seniors (22%), and three others (4%) were neither of those. Among the

other category, two students were in high school, and one did not responded to the

question.

In terms of their academic majors, participants provided varied responses. The

number of students with the following majors were as follows: Accounting (2),

Agriculture (1), Animal Studies (1), American Sign Language Studies (2), Bio-Chemistry (1), Biology (3), Business (1), Chemistry (5), Chemistry Education (1), Computer Information Systems (1), Computer Science (2), Creative Writing (1), Criminal Justice (18), Education (1), English (1), English Education (1), Entrepreneurship (1), English as a Second Language (1), Forensic Science (2), General Studies (4), Globalization and International Affairs (1), Health Science (1), History (1), Homeland Security (6), International Business (1), Marketing (2), Mathematics (1), Middle School Education (1), Music Marketing (1), Nursing (1), Occupational Science (2), PGA Golf Management (1), Philosophy (4), Physics (1), Police Studies (1), Political Science (2), Pre-Homeland Security (1), Pre-Medical Science (1), Psychology (3), Public Health (4), Recreation and Park Administration (1), Social Work (1), Spanish (1), Theatre (3), and Wildlife Management (1). In regard to their academic minors, the responses were as follows: Chemistry (1), Coaching (1), General Dietetics (1), Geography (1), History (1), Homeland Security (1), International Studies (1), Military Science & Leadership (1), Police Studies (1), Psychology (1), and Spanish (2).

Regarding Spanish language learners' consideration about obtaining a B.A. in Spanish, a B.A. in Spanish Teaching, a minor in Spanish, or a certificate in Spanish, 5 out of 76 students (6%) are considering a B.A. in Spanish. Three students (4%) are considering a B.A. in Spanish Teaching. One student (1%) indicated she/he may pursue a B.A. in Spanish Teaching. Fifteen students (20%) said that they are considering a minor in Spanish. Two indicated that they may consider it. And 7 students (9%) responded that they are interested in pursuing a certificate in Spanish.

When asked about their nationality, 75 students (99%) were originally from the United States. One student (1%) from Bulgaria. Out of 76 students, 14 students (18%) were not residents of Kentucky (18%). When asked about their travel abroad experience, thirty-four students (45%) indicated having had travel abroad experience, while the rest indicated no travel abroad experience.

Among the reasons and purposes listed for Spanish language study, similar to first semester Spanish language students, majority of the participants indicated "to fill a requirement" (77.6 %) and "took Spanish in high school" (69.7%) as their predominate reasons, followed with "Interest in visiting Spanish-speaking country" (67.1%) and "interest in Spanish language" (64.5%). Future career factor was also common, and more than half students indicated. "Cultural Heritage" (10.5%) and individual's background "I have a Spanish speaking family member" (13.1 %) were not a large number, but noteworthy students' responses. Percentage results of the reasons and purposes for language study questionnaire are presented in Table 4.9. No one from the second semester of Spanish group indicated "Other".

Table 4.9 Second Semester Spanish Language Learners
Reasons and Purposes for Spanish Language Study

Interest in Hispanic/Latino culture	*(31)	40.8 %
Interest in Spanish language	(49)	64.5 %
Interest in popular culture (music, dance, food, etc)	(14)	18.4 %
Interest in visiting a Spanish-speaking country	(51)	67.1 %
Interest in living in a Spanish-speaking country	(14)	18.4 %
Interest in studying abroad	(26)	34.2 %
Took Spanish in high school	(53)	69.7 %
For my future career	(42)	55.2 %
I have a Hispanic/Latino cultural heritage	(8)	10.5 %
I have a Spanish speaking family member	(10)	13.1 %
I have friends who speak Spanish	(21)	27.6 %
Parental wishes	(6)	7.9 %
To communicate in Spanish	(41)	54.0 %
To fulfill a requirement	(59)	77.6 %
Other (please specify)	0%	

*Note: ( ) are the number of students

Descriptive Analyses of the BALLI

In section two of this study, the BALLI was administered to examine students' beliefs regarding language learning. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the BALLI used in this study consists of 24 items which is comprised of four separate components: The Difficulty of Language Learning, The Nature of Language Learning, Learning and Communication Strategies, and Motivations and Expectation.

Analyses of the BALLI responses were addressed to the third research question: What are the beliefs of Japanese language learners and Spanish language learners concerning language learning?

Reliability of the BALLI

The value of Cronbach's alpha for each components of the reliability was determined by using Cronbach's alpha coefficients. The reliability scores for each components are as follows: the Difficulty of Language Learning (6 items) has an alpha of 0.958, and the Nature of Language Learning (6 items) has an alpha of 0.972. Learning and Communication Strategies were sub-divided into Learning Strategies and Communication Strategies: Learning Strategies (2 items) has an alpha of 0.836, and Communication Strategies (6 items) has an alpha of 0.978. Motivations and Expectation (4 items) has an alpha of 0.956. These numbers are shown in Table 4.10 through 4.14. Scores above 0.70 indicate that the components give internally consistent measurements and show evidence of reliability.

Table 4.10 The Difficulty of the Language Learning Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.958	6

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Case Valid	236	99.2
*Excluded	2	.8
Total	**238**	**100.0**

* Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure

Table 4.11 The Nature of Language Learning Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.972	6

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Case Valid	237	99.6
*Excluded	1	.4
Total	**238**	**100.0**

* Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure

Table 4.12 Learning Strategies Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.836	2

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Case Valid	238	100.0
*Excluded	0	0
Total	**238**	**100.0**

* Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure

Table 4.13 Communication Strategies Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.978	6

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Case Valid	236	99.2
*Excluded	2	.8
Total	**238**	**100.0**

* Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure

Table 4.14 Motivations and Expectations Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.956	4

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Case Valid	238	100.0
*Excluded	0	.0
Total	**238**	**100.0**

* Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure

Results of the BALLI

Research Question 3.1

The T-test compares the beliefs of Japanese learners and Spanish learners and computes the mean and standard deviations for each of the questionnaire categories. Table 4.15 presents the comparison of each BALLI's components on a scale of 1 to 5 among the two groups: the first year Japanese students combined JPN 101 and JPN 102 and the first Spanish students combined SPA 101 and SPA 102. As the table 4.15 indicates, in general, both groups reported similar responses and a high level of similarity occurred among the two groups. Table 4.16 through 4.20 present the correlations for each category among the two group.

Table 4.15 Comparisons of Japanese and Spanish Learners for BALLI Test

Comparison of Japanese and Spanish Students of each BALLI's Components on a Scale of 1-5
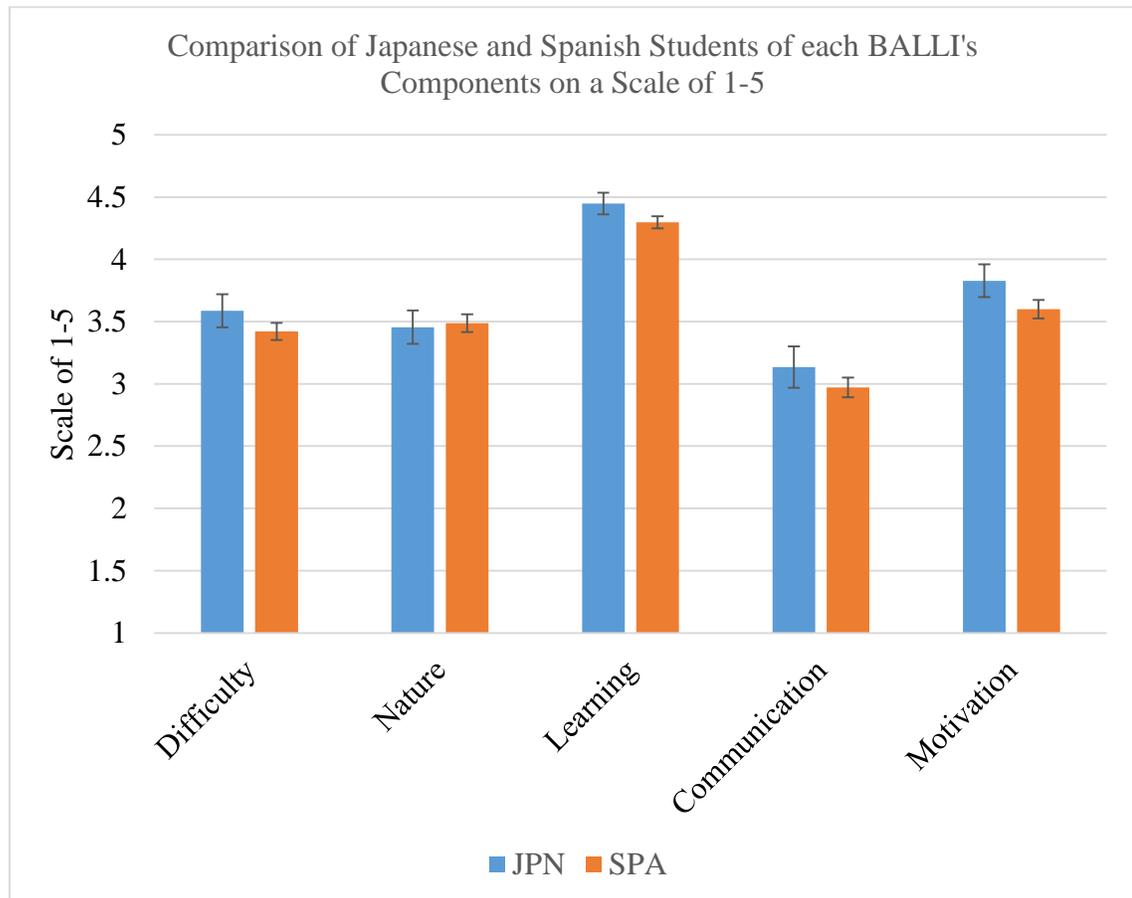
Table 4.16 The Difficulty of Language Learning Descriptive Statistics

Language	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
JPN	48	3.5868	.91222	.13167
SPA	190	3.4211	.94649	.06867

Table 4.17 The Nature of Language Learning Descriptive Statistics

Language	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
JPN	48	3.4549	.92939	.13415
SPA	190	3.4877	.97733	.07090

Table 4.18 Learning Strategies Descriptive Statistics

Language	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
JPN	48	4.4479	.60353	.08711
SPA	190	4.2974	.67631	.04906

Table 4.19 Communication Strategies Descriptive Statistics

Language	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
JPN	48	3.1354	1.14785	.16568
SPA	190	2.9711	1.09869	.07971

Table 4.20 Motivations and Expectations Descriptive Statistics

Language	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
JPN	48	3.8281	.91407	.13193
SPA	190	3.6000	1.01340	.07352

Beliefs about language learning have influence on how the individual approaches the material and create an impact on performance in class. To assist students to be successful learners, educators must understand accurate information regarding students' beliefs about language learning. The aim of this study is to improve effectiveness of language programs by correlating instructors' improved understanding of their students and to provide valuable information to language instructors. Therefore, rather than mere mean / standard deviations, the percentage of students' samples answering strongly agree (SA) to strongly disagree (SD) for each question provides an additional insight into the beliefs of language learners and allows a deeper understanding of language learning beliefs among Japanese and Spanish students. The overall frequency (%) on each item, the percentage was computed. All percentages reported are rounded to the nearest whole number. In order to build an effective teaching/learning practice, it is important for language instructors to consider what learners are expecting from their language classes and what learning behavior they are likely to adhere to. Tables 4.21 through 4.25 present the results. Despite the fact that there wasn't a large difference between the two groups, the numbers showed an interesting trend among the two groups.

Table 4.21 The Difficulty of Language Learning Item Frequency

		*5	4	3	2	1
Q.1 Some languages are easier to learn than others.						
	JPN	42	38	15	6	0
	SPA	38	41	16	3	2
Q. 2 Japanese/Spanish is: 5) a very difficult language, 4) a difficult language, 3) a language of medium difficulty, 2) an easy language, 1) a very easy language.						
	JPN	10	46	42	2	0
	**SPA	6	24	55	13	1
Q.3 I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak this language very well.						
	JPN	42	29	19	6	4
	SPA	12	25	41	15	7
Q. 10 If someone spent one hour a day learning Japanese/Spanish, how long would it take him/her to become fluent? 5) less than a year, 4) 1-2 years, 3) 3-5 years, 2) 5-10 years, 1) you cannot learn Japanese/Spanish in 1 hour a day.						
	JPN	0	42	42	14	2
	***SPA	15	55	23	5	2
Q. 18 It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.						
	JPN	19	13	25	27	17
	SPA	9	14	32	31	14
Q. 19 It is easier to read and write this language than to speak and understand it.						
	JPN	27	29	31	4	8
	SPA	27	28	24	13	7

*Note: 5 = strongly agree, 4=agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.
**Note: Two students didn't answer this question and were omitted. This percentage reflects the answer from 187 out of 189 students.
***Note: One student didn't answer this question and were omitted. This percentage reflects the answer from 188 out of 189 students.

The perceived difficulty of the target language may cause insecurities in students regarding their ability to eventually acquire the language. Interestingly, nearly 80% of both Japanese and Spanish learners either strongly agreed or agreed that some languages are easier to learn than others. These findings in relation to Spanish learners percentage corroborates with Horwitz's (1988) result where she examined language learners (French, Spanish, and German) learning beliefs. When asked about the degree of difficulty involved in learning the target language, 10% of Japanese learners responded that Japanese is a very difficult language, while 6% of Spanish learners agreed that Spanish is a very difficult language. In regards to the language being difficult, 46 % of Japanese students believed Japanese is a difficult language whereas only 24% of Spanish students agreed that Spanish is a difficult language. 42 % felt that Japanese was a language of medium difficulty, while 55% of Spanish learners felt the same way about Spanish. It is noteworthy only 2% indicated that Japanese is an easy language. On the contrary, 13 % of Spanish learners disagreed that Spanish is an easy language. No one from the sample group believed Japanese to be a very easy language to learn and only 1% of Spanish learners believed that their target language is very easy to learn. This finding indicated different perception among two groups. That is, the perception of target language difficulty is higher in Japanese learners than Spanish learners. This finding corroborates with prior studies conducted by Horwitz (1999) and Oh (1996), whose findings revealed that American learners of Japanese generally assess Japanese to be more difficult.

As for Item 3, "I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak Japanese / Spanish very well," Japanese students revealed significantly more confidence in their ability to become fluent in Japanese than Spanish students becoming fluent in Spanish. This,

despite the previous finding that the target language difficulty perception is higher in Japanese learners.

While, the majority (71%) of Japanese learners believed that they will learn to speak Japanese very well, only 12 % of Spanish learners strongly believed that they will ultimately learn to speak Spanish very well. One fourth of the Spanish learners showed moderate beliefs of their ultimate success, and the majority of Spanish students (41%) indicated neutral responses.

As to Item 10, when asked about the years of study needed to become fluent if a person spent one hour a day studying, although both groups considered the target language to be difficult, the result showed that Japanese learners believed learning their target language would take more time than Spanish learners believed it would take for them. Japanese students rated either 1-2 years (42%) and 3-5 years (42%) for the time it takes to learn Japanese. These number present a contradiction of the findings of Oh (1996), whose results indicate that: nearly half of students believed that studying Japanese takes 3-5 years to acquire, almost one-fifth students believed that it takes 5-10 years, and more than 15 % of students agreed that one cannot learn Japanese in 1 hour a day. The result also showed that there was no single student of Japanese who believed that it is possible to become fluent in the language in less than one year. Spanish learners, on the other hand, more than 10 % believed that it is possible to master Spanish in less than a year, and many of them endorsed that it takes 1-2 years to become fluent. This result was consistent with Horwitz (1988)'s findings. In her study, more than 40 % of language learners of Spanish felt that they could become fluent in Spanish in two years or less.

With regard to ease of the developing language skills, 32% of Japanese learners either strongly believed or believed that speaking is easier than understanding; both groups agreed that reading in the target language is easier than writing, speaking and comprehending. Fifty-six percent of Japanese students agreed that it is easier to read and write than to speak and understand it. Nearly 23% of Spanish students either strongly believed or believed that speaking is easier than understanding and 55% of Spanish learners either strongly agreed or agreed that it is easier to read and write than to speak and comprehend when listening.

Table 4.22 The Nature of Language Learning Item Frequency

	*5	4	3	2	1
Q.5 It is necessary to know the foreign culture in order to speak the foreign language.					
JPN	31	33	29	4	2
SPA	12	35	31	16	5
Q. 7 It is better to learn a foreign language in the foreign country.					
JPN	21	27	46	4	2
**SPA	20	35	23	16	5
Q.11 Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words.					
JPN	10	35	25	23	6
SPA	13	30	34	14	8
Q. 15 Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.					
JPN	19	35	29	15	2
SPA	19	41	31	8	1

Table 4.22 (continued)

	*5	4	3	2	1
Q. 20 Learning a foreign language is different from learning other school subjects.					
**JPN	47	45	6	2	0
SPA	43	41	12	3	2
Q. 21 Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of translating from English.					
JPN	4	8	21	35	31
SPA	8	22	38	24	8

*Note: 5 = strongly agree, 4=agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.
**Note: One student didn't answer this question. Therefore, this study omitted one student from this item; this percentage reflects the answer from 47 out of 48 students.

When it comes to the nature of language learning (Table 4.22), the majority of Japanese language learners agreed that having an understanding of the culture is an essential aspect of speaking a foreign language. However, less than half of the students surveyed strongly agreed that it is important to learn Japanese while studying in Japan. Almost half of the students surveyed had neutral responses and neither agreed or disagreed. Similarly, in regard to Spanish learners, many of the students (47 %) surveyed agreed that knowing about the culture of the language one wishes to learn is an essential aspect of learning a foreign language. About half of the participants felt that it is better to learn a foreign language while studying in that country. Accordingly, the results revealed that even though both groups realize the value of learning about culture in order to fully comprehend the target language, Japanese learners displayed a stronger belief and placed a higher emphasis on learning culture than Spanish learners. This result is consistent with earlier study conducted by Rivera and Matsuzawa (2007), who compared students' learning priorities and beliefs, and found that less commonly taught language students

inclined to present higher importance on culture than commonly taught language students.

In regard to vocabulary and grammar, Japanese language learners expressed a strong belief in the importance of developing a large vocabulary (45%) and over half agreed that learning a foreign language is mostly about understanding the rules of grammar (54%). This results is consistent with findings in study of Horwitz (1988) in which she found that many Japanese learners valued learning vocabulary and grammar rules. Similar percentages of Spanish learners also endorsed the importance of vocabulary learning and grammar rules in learning a language.

Interestingly, the results showed that although a small minority of both groups showed disagreement that learning a foreign language is different from learning other school subjects, the overwhelming majority of both groups believed that learning a foreign language is different from learning other school subjects.

When asked about the perception regarding translation, the results indicated that two groups differed considerably on their responses. Sixty-six percent of Japanese learners either strongly disagreed or disagreed, while 21 % are neutral. More Japanese learners disagreed with the statement that learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of translating from English, as opposed to the Spanish learners: 8 % strongly disagree, 24 % disagree, 38 % neither agree nor disagree, 22 % agree, and 8 % strongly agree. This result contradicts Howitz's (1988) findings that in her study Spanish learners overwhelmingly agreed that learning a foreign language mainly consisted of translation.

In her study, more than 75 % Spanish learners (36 % strongly agree, and 39 % agree) supported the idea that learning a foreign language is mainly a matter of learning to translate from English.

Table 4.23 Learning and Strategies Item Frequency

		*5	4	3	2	1
Q.12 It is important to repeat and practice a lot.						
	JPN	83	17	0	0	0
	SPA	67	28	4	1	0
Q. 16 It is important to practice with the audio materials.						
	JPN	38	38	19	6	0
	SPA	28	45	25	2	1

*Note: 5 = strongly agree, 4=agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.

With respect to the learning and strategies (Table 4.23), the findings revealed that both Japanese and Spanish learners agreed with the statements on the importance of repetition and practice with and without audio materials. Yet the results showed that Japanese learners rated this item to be of much higher importance than Spanish learners. Japanese students unanimously endorsed that practice and repetition is the key to successfully mastering a language; 83 % of students strongly agreed and 17 % of students agreed. Thus, none of the participants disagreed. This finding is consistent with prior study conducted by Oh (1996) where she investigated learning beliefs of Japanese students. In the case of Spanish learners, the percentage are: 67 % strongly agree, and 28 % agree. This finding also corresponds with earlier research by Rivera and Matuszawa (2007) whose study revealed that less commonly taught language students (Japanese)

awarded higher importance ratings on speaking and listening than commonly taught language students (Spanish).

When asked about the importance of practicing with audio material, the vast majority of the both groups believed in the importance of practicing with audio materials. This result is consistent with previous findings (Horwitz, 1988; Oh, 1996) in which they found that students endorse the importance of practicing with audio materials.

Table 4.24 Communication Strategies Item Frequency

	*5	4	3	2	1
Q. 4 It is important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent.					
JPN	25	44	21	6	4
**SPA	15	26	39	15	4
Q. 6 You should not say anything in the foreign language until you can say it correctly.					
JPN	6	15	21	25	33
SPA	7	14	26	33	20
Q. 8 If I heard someone speak Japanese/Spanish, I would go up to them so that I could practice speaking the language.					
JPN	8	25	44	8	15
SPA	3	12	28	38	18
Q. 9 It is OK to guess if you do not know a word in the foreign language.					
***JPN	13	28	26	13	21
SPA	6	21	33	23	17
Q. 13 I feel self-conscious speaking the foreign language in front of other people.					
JPN	33	29	23	8	6
SPA	26	25	28	13	7

		*5	4	3	2	1
Q. 14 If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on.						
	JPN	19	15	23	29	15
	SPA	18	29	23	20	10

*Note: 5 = strongly agree, 4=agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.
**Note: One student didn't answer this question. Therefore, this study omitted one student from this item; this percentage reflects the answer from 188 out of 189 students.
***Note: One student didn't answer this question. Therefore, this study omitted one student from this item; this percentage reflects the answer from 47 out of 48 students.

When it comes to communication strategies (Table 4.24), regarding acquiring excellent accents, the survey showed that both groups of students agreed with the statements indicating the importance of having an excellent accent as well as pronunciation skills. Comparing two groups, Japanese learners valued excellent pronunciation more highly than Spanish learners.

In reference to Item 6, "you should not say anything in the foreign language until you can say it correctly," 21% of the both groups agreed. However, when it comes to the speaking in front of the people, the results show that Japanese learners had higher levels of anxiety than Spanish learners.

As for Item 8, "if I heard someone speaking Spanish, I would go up to them so that I could practice speaking the language," 15 % of the Spanish participants agreed, and nearly half of the students believed that mistakes in the beginning would be hard to get rid of later. Japanese learners displayed more self-confidence when approaching individuals speaking their target language, as opposed to Spanish learners who seemed more hesitant and less assured in their language-speaking skills.

As for Item 9, when asked if it is okay to guess if one does not know a word, the percentage of the each group (Japanese and Spanish) varied. In case of Japanese learners, 41% of the students answered "yes" 26 % were neutral, and 34% showed disagreement. In case of Spanish learners, 27% of the participants answered "yes." 33 % of the students gave neutral responses, and 40% of the participants showed disagreement.

As for Item 13, "I feel self-conscious speaking the foreign language in front of other people," more half of both groups agreed that they feel self-conscious when speaking in front of other people. This survey also showed that more than 60% of Japanese learners feel timid when speaking Japanese in front of other people. This result is consistent with Samimy and Tabuse (1992), who investigated students' performance in beginning Japanese classes and found that their students are highly anxious about speaking Japanese in the classroom. The present study is also consistent with Aida's results (1994); she investigated Japanese language students' foreign language anxiety, and compared levels of anxiety with those subjects in Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's (1986) study (French, Spanish, and German), and discovered that Japanese learners' anxiety are slightly higher than Spanish learners.

As for Item 14, "if you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on," the results showed contradictory findings among each same group. While 34 % of the Japanese learners believed that mistakes made by students in the beginning would be hard to get rid of later, 44 % disagreed. While 47 % of the Spanish learners agreed, 30 % disagreed with the statement.

Table 4.25 Motivations and Expectations Item Frequency

		*5	4	3	2	1
Q. 17 If I get to speak this language very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.						
	JPN	40	38	19	2	2
	SPA	43	32	20	4	2
Q. 22 If I learn to speak this language very well, it will help me get a job.						
	JPN	40	27	31	2	0
	SPA	29	36	25	10	1
Q. 23 Americans think that it is important to speak a foreign language.						
	JPN	15	13	29	25	19
	SPA	11	22	29	24	15
Q. 24 I would like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers better.						
	JPN	52	38	6	4	0
	SPA	24	27	36	10	3

*Note: 5 = strongly agree, 4=agree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.

As seen in Table 4.25, in the category relating to motivations and expectations, there are both similarities and differences between the two groups. The results showed that the majority of Japanese language learners agreed they will have many opportunities to use the foreign language they have been studying, 67 % of students agreed that it would help them get a good job in the future. This result is consistent with Horwitz's (1999) results where her participants displayed positive standpoints that their knowledge of the target language would help increase their job opportunities. The results also support Saito's (1995) findings that Japanese learners are highly motivated students who place high career value on learning Japanese. As for Item 23, "Americans think that it is

important to speak a foreign language," the results were varied: 28% agreed, 29% were neutral, and 44% disagreed. As for Item 24, "I would like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers better," the vast majority of Japanese learners (90%) agreed that they want to learn a foreign language in order to get to know native speakers better.

As for motivations and expectations among Spanish learners, many (75%) believed that if they learned to speak Spanish very well, they would have many opportunities to use it. Sixty-five percent believed that learning Spanish would help them get a good job, while 11% disagreed. As for Item 23, "Americans think it is important to speak a foreign language," the results were varied: 11% strongly agreed, 22% agreed, 29% neither agreed nor disagreed, 24% disagreed, and 15% strongly disagreed. Regarding the desires to get to know the native speaker, the frequencies of the responses were dissimilar among Japanese and Spanish learners. About half of the Spanish students indicated that they would like to learn Spanish so that they could get to know Spanish speakers better, while 90 % in Japanese. Thus, Japanese learners showed more enthusiasm in getting to know speakers of the target language than Spanish learners.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussions and Implications of the Results

This chapter discusses the results of the study designed to address the following questions:

Q1. What are the demographic characteristics of students enrolled in Japanese courses and students enrolled in Spanish courses at Eastern Kentucky University?

Q2. What are the students' primary reasons for studying Japanese and Spanish at Eastern Kentucky University? What differences, if any, exist among the two groups?

Q.3 What are the beliefs of Japanese language learners and Spanish language learners concerning language learning?

Research Question 1

In order to build an effective language program, it is necessary to know the demographic characteristics of the target students. Demographically, EKU language students' ages range from 16 to 50 years. However, among both Japanese and Spanish students, the bulk of the students are within the 19 to 20 age range, enrolled during their first two years of college. This sample introduced a realistic population, because EKU welcome non-traditional students at different stages in life.

Given that EKU language students' age gaps are varied, selection of learning materials and topic must be carefully prearranged. That is, while traditional students find a "dorm-life" topic relevant, some adult students find such topics irrelevant. Research on learners (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2014) has shown that older students learn differently from younger students. They come to a class with different experiences, background, motivation, and goals. It is also expected that adult students tend to attend school only part time, as opposed to traditional full time status. Majority of them might have family obligations and their priorities are different. That is, their amount of the time where they can commit themselves might be different. These traits should be taken into considerations when planning curriculums. Additionally, instructors should adjust teaching strategies to better meet the needs of these students.

Among the 238 students surveyed, only six were non-native English speakers. A majority of the students were enrolled as freshmen (29%) or sophomores (33%). Regarding their major and minor considerations, many of the students were undecided. Among the students who declared their major and minor, the selections ran the gamut from accounting to wildlife management.

For students of Japanese, computer technology was the most popular choice. As discussed earlier, these students grew up being influenced by Japanese technology through Japanese popular culture which includes *anime* and *manga*, as well as NINTENDO computer games. It is also possible that these students see future career possibilities at the intersection of Japanese language and computer technology fields.

In the case of Spanish learners, criminal justice, homeland security, and nursing majors outweighed the others. Since these positions deal with the general public which

include many Spanish-speaking people, Spanish language skills are highly desirable in these careers. These demographics call for different approaches to curriculum and pedagogical development.

The data also revealed that more than half of the students of Japanese language intended to obtain a Japanese language certificate. This demonstrates the serious intentions and ambitions of the targeted students. With the knowledge of this degree of ambition, administrators can justify supporting a Japanese language program through the certificate level and even to the degree of minor. This incremental approach to building a Japanese program is necessary since Japanese is not a Romance language and, therefore, presents some learning challenges which may initially intimidate students. This intimidation factor is surely reduced by students' fascination with Japanese popular culture. Instructors need to take advantage of this information to encourage students and to motivate them to learn as much Japanese as possible to fulfill their interests and to further their career opportunities.

In the case of Spanish, as the result of survey question revealed, even though more than 60 % of these Spanish learners had prior experience in Spanish, they are still enrolled at the beginner level (most likely they did not improve their language level during their high school). Unlike Japanese learners, Spanish learners indicated very little interests in studying Spanish beyond the language requirement. This is because the students surveyed here were enrolled in the first year of language study. Possibly, if they develop their level of language, it is expected that more students would show interest toward seeking a degree; that is for advanced learners, learning Spanish is clearly more than a requirement they need to fulfill. In any case, the goal should be encourage students

to become genuinely interested and inspired to go further beyond the minimum educational requirement. The knowledge of this demographic should challenge curriculum developers as well as instructors to find ways to motivate students by, perhaps, building on their career interests and the value of Spanish to those careers.

The data regarding students' travel abroad experience is also noteworthy. About 42%-43% of EKU students had travelled abroad. This information is very valuable for language educators at EKU, because it seems that many EKU foreign language professors are not aware of this. On the first day of the class, while many of the language professors ask their students' background of the target language, they tend not ask about students' travel abroad experiences which could help them foster a more intimate connection with their students. Without this information, instructors might underestimate their students' cultural exposure and miss an opportunity to build on that experience in order to stimulate interest in a serious study of the target language and culture. They might also miss the opportunity to utilize the experiences of those who have traveled abroad to motivate other students' to explore a culture outside of their own. Taking the time to better understand student's immersion in a foreign culture may help the educator set proper expectations for the student. These expectations can significantly influence a student's study habits.

Research Question 2

Understanding students' reasons for wanting to learn the particular language can provide useful information for curriculum design, creating a lesson plan, and selecting classroom activities. The results revealed that students' reasons and purposes varied

widely between Japanese and Spanish learners. One of the most significant differences

among Japanese and Spanish languages was that Spanish learners indicated much higher

extrinsic motivation - to fulfill a language requirement; both first and second semester

Spanish language students' main motivation was to complete the general education

requirement (They chose the language requirement at the highest frequency). This result

is similar to Alalou's (2001) previous findings where he investigated students' goals in a

liberal arts college setting. According to Alalou's research, the majority of students chose

Spanish to fulfill language requirements (71%), followed by liking the language (61%),

personal interest (56%), travel (56%), and career plans (43%). The result regarding

Spanish learners at EKU corresponds to Alalou's findings which was carried out almost

fifteen years ago. In 2010, a study conducted by Thomas (2010) produced the same result

as Alalou; the study showed students continued to enroll in Spanish courses just to fulfill

graduation requirement. From these findings one might conclude that the demographics

of Spanish learners haven't changed over the past fifteen years. As previously discussed,

as for language pre-requisite in universities, many studies have been done using a

population who has taken obligatory language class and this affects many of the research

samples with some who had no desire or incentive for learning languages. Given that

Spanish learners' the most popular reason for learning the language is

instrumental/extrinsic motivation, educators' missions would be boost integrated/intrinsic

motivation to the students in order for the long-term success in language program.

Students must have an emotional connection to the subject if they wish to succeed. As

previous studies (Gottfried, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2009) have proven, higher motivation to

learn has been linked not only to better academic performance, but satisfaction with schools, individual self-esteem, and a lower likelihood to drop out.

Spanish language dominates all other foreign languages in American public schools. Familiarity is the key to selection of Spanish, however, this fact should raise attention among Spanish instructors. If students had prior experience with Spanish language, in some cases, enrolling them in beginners' courses will be too easy. Other reasons students may repeat beginners Spanish are the difficulty in retaining the language structure taught in high school, lack of confidence, or the need for a refresher. Therefore, educators should provide students with a placement test and accommodate students with their appropriate level of the course. On student information sheet, asking each student about his/her prior language experience is critical.

By contrast, students of Japanese language chose primarily integrative/intrinsic factors as their primary reasons for studying Japanese. Ninety-eight percent of students showed genuine interest in learning the Japanese language. Ninety-four percent of students chose Japanese for cultural reasons ranging from *anime* (a significant presence in the minds of students learning Japanese today), *manga*, films, and video games. Japanese popular culture is a significant motivator for stimulating students to learn Japanese. Especially *anime* has had an undeniable effect on Japanese learners. English-translated Japanese *anime* and *manga* seem to have stimulated students' interest in both language and culture, as the students' generation was raised watching Japanese *anime*. Ueno (2005) mentioned that cultural interests were especially high among learners of Japanese. The EKU survey confirms Ueno's conclusion. Also, the fact that "interest in *manga*, *anime*, *J-pop*" was more frequently selected than "future employment" made it

clear that Japanese popular culture had significant impact on students who enrolled in Japanese study. Many studies indicate that the quality of learning is the most important factor influencing student interest in course selection (e.g., Durran & Rosen, 2006). Therefore, from this data, what educators can learn is the strategic planning to use cultural products, such as "*manga*" and "*anime*" for teaching materials. Armour (2011) claims that multimodal examples of Japanese language input such as *'manga'* and *anime* have become the default choice for curriculum designers, material developers, and classroom instructors in order to make learning 'fun'. Consideration of student motivations, such as interest in popular culture, is very important in developing course materials and in creating relevant courses. Differentiated teaching approaches, such as enriching language study with cultural dimensions, are desirable for effective teaching. Since *anime* and *manga* fevers are apparent, instructors should consider using these media - the authentic materials to teach in order to motivate students.

The data also revealed that both Japanese and Spanish learners are interested in study abroad programs. Remarkably, over 60% of Japanese and 28% of Spanish language students showed a motivation to study abroad. This is promising for the Languages and Cultures and Humanities (LCH) Department at EKU, and this number must need to acknowledge not only in the foreign language department but also school itself. For this reason, this study disagreed with the common believe that Kentucky students tend to glue themselves inside Kentucky and are less eager to leave their hometown. This data should provide educators with justifications for creating and supporting study abroad programs to more deeply engage students in studying their target language. Such programs would likely attract interested students to more serious study and would also be likely to retain

them in their studies so that they will be able to enjoy their study abroad opportunities. EKU has a number of study abroad affiliates or exchange programs to choose from. LCH can use this feature to attract prospective students using study abroad brochures. Collaboration with international office or study abroad office to market a language program can also be effective.

Studying abroad is a wonderful opportunity to advance ones' education, however, it should not be blindly encouraged. Instead, educators should not only encourage their students to participate, they should also properly prepare their students for such an exchange. It becomes obligation to the educator to provide their students with all the resources needed to ensure their success. An example of integrating this idea into a lesson plan would be to have a day in which someone from the study abroad office could come into the class and answer any questions or doubts about studying abroad. This might help students, who want to study abroad by providing information that will assist with planning and developing strategies.

EKU's study abroad program are both short-term (such as summer and winter) and long-term program. However, in the case of study abroad Japanese, students are required to complete 12 hours of language study in order to qualify for a long-term study abroad program. Which means they need to sustain their motivation to stay in the language program. This reflects their opinions toward obtaining a Japanese certificate. The fact that a high number of students of Japanese indicated their desire to not only to visit but to live in Japan implies that the students of Japanese show strong dedication to learning Japanese. Many Spanish students also showed a desire to visit a Spanish

speaking country but did not want to live there. This data must be considered when creating lesson plans in order to keep students motivated in pursuing their goals.

The results also indicated that more than half students from both groups selected "interest in visiting Japanese/Spanish-speaking country" for their reason of foreign language study. Japanese is only spoken in Japan, but Spanish is the official language in 20 countries (including most of Latin America). When traveling to countries, if people want to explore the area and get to know the local people, people need to know the language. Knowing the language allows to move from the role of observer to that of an active participant, and completely transform one's travel experience. Interestingly, 55% of Japanese learners showed an interest in living in Japan. Knowledge of this interest among students of Japanese, provides strong justification for developing Japanese curricula that include intermediate and advanced levels of coursework. Consequently, this data must be considered when creating lesson plans in order to develop materials and to create interactive learning experiences that will prepare students to have a meaningful experience when living in Japan. Most importantly, international study administrators should take from this information the value of working with language teachers to promote study abroad programs and/or internship opportunity to interested students who may not know they exist. Language teachers should also learn from this data that it is important to network with study abroad administrators to capture student interest and to build on it to strengthen the Japanese learning experience and to encourage students to continue their study toward advanced levels.

Career goals were a strong consideration for students choosing their target language. Students of Japanese rated this consideration at 60%, while Spanish students

rated at 56%, granted many of the students in both groups indicated their instrumental / extrinsic motivation. This finding confirms several studies (Jorden & Lambert, 1991; Saito, 1995) that claim that Japanese language learners have high instrumental motivations and primarily want to learn Japanese in order to improve their job opportunities. It is also noteworthy to mention that among the first and second levels of Japanese learners, it appears that second semester students perceive Japanese with a higher career value. For the students of Japanese, given central Kentucky's job market with Japanese-based companies (including Toyota, Hitachi, and Okaya), it was apparent that students were aware of career opportunities. This also suggests that even though students of Japanese displayed a higher interest in popular culture than career goals, they are still very much goal-oriented.

Knowing students' goal is one of the most important things for teachers to consider when developing curricula and specific courses. It is also important for instructors to help students stay focused on serious study of the language. A study in the United States by Agirdag (2014) found that bilingualism has substantial economic benefits as bilingual people were found to make around $3,000 more per year in salary than monolinguals people. This information should further motivate students to continue their study of the language. Instructors might also provide students with information on careers in which some knowledge of the target language is desired. As earlier studies have shown, language learners who are integrative/intrinsically motivated are more successful in the long-term than those who are instrumentally/extrinsically motivated. Therefore, it is desirable for educators to encourage students to recognize not only extrinsic goals but also intrinsic goals for studying the target language. Educators who

know the primary reasons students study a language can develop ways to broaden students' natural inclinations to include lesser recognized reasons for studying.

Since more than half of both groups showed future career aspirations as their reason to study a language, the motivation here is to fortify their career opportunities. Instrumental / extrinsic motivation in itself is not problematic. However, it is necessary for classroom instructors to make sure that the students do not lose track of their interests for learning. For these reasons, not only instrumental / extrinsic motivation, but also integrative / intrinsic motivation is essential elements of success. As studies have shown, language learners who are integrative / intrinsic motivated are more successful in the long-term than those who are instrumentally / extrinsic motivated.

Research Question 3

Beliefs about language learning have profoundly influenced how an individual approaches the subject matter. Difficulty of learning a new language is a true and real concept but varies from person to person, depending on the person's native and acquired languages in relation to the target language and the geographic location of teaching institute. The target population for this study includes all students enrolled in first year Japanese (JPN 101, JPN 102) and Spanish (SPA 101, SPA 102) courses at Eastern Kentucky.

The Difficulty of Language Learning

The results showed the large majority of students surveyed believed that some languages are easy to learn: 42% strongly agree and 38% agree for Japanese, 38%

strongly agree and 41% agree for Spanish learners. These answers indicate that there is a preconceived notion that some languages are easier to learn than others. However, this doesn't explain whether their target language is the one that is harder to learn or not. This question only used the wording, "some languages," and this wording is not specific to their target language. When it comes to the students' judgement about the difficulty of learning their target language, not only within the two groups (Japanese and Spanish), but also inside each language group, answers differed as to the difficulty level of the target language. As previously discussed, several studies (e.g., Oh, 1996; Omagio, 1986) indicated that Japanese is harder than Spanish. Accordingly, as expected, a higher percentage of Japanese language learners believed that Japanese is either difficult or has medium difficulty, and no student viewed Japanese as a very easy language. Spanish learners mostly believed that their target language was of medium difficulty. This might be because Japanese is so structurally different than any European language that students struggle to bridge the gap. Within each group, very few students believe that their target language as a very easy language. However, responses ranged from "a very difficult language" to "an easy language" for the case of Japanese, and "a very easy language" for the case of Spanish. This result indicated that within each group, students possess very different assessments of their target language. It is possible that Spanish learners select this specific language to fulfill their language requirement as they viewed Spanish as a less difficult language compared with other languages.

In terms of the time requirement for fluency in their target language, estimates vary from less than a year (Spanish), 1-2 years (Japanese), to the statement that a language cannot be learned in one hour a day. In Japanese, students expressed their belief

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that Japanese takes more time to learn and presented a higher challenge than Spanish students believed; a large number of students perceived that becoming fluent in Japanese could be done in either 1-2 years or 3-5 years. In Spanish, more than half of the students believed fluency could be achieved in 1-2 years. This seems to suggest that students of Japanese are more committed to studying the language long term because they perceived it to be a more difficult language. Even though, each group contained few students who believed it is impossible to be fluent at a frequency of 1 hour a day, a substantial number of students in each group felt that five years of language study is enough to be fluent. Thus, this reflects students' positive outlook on their language study – they are generally optimistic about their own prospects as language learners. As indicated in Chapter II of this study, previous research maintains that college students studying Japanese reach benchmark levels of proficiency more slowly than students of other more commonly taught languages. This survey confirms that conclusion. However, considering the amount of the time, Japanese learners' estimation contrasted with previous studies finding. It is crucial that students have a realistic expectation of success and work with their schedule to make it possible to achieve their proficiency. If Japanese learners entered such misconception, they will face with disappointment as it usually takes longer as it explained earlier. A realistic picture should be given at the outset of the learning process about the necessity of spending far more time beyond the classroom. Again, it is desirable to inform the students in advance to give them some realistic expectations in the learning language. Horwitz (1988) remarks that students' language learning beliefs are formed based on limited knowledge which might never be challenged. If students do not believe in their ability to succeed in their language study, their disbelief is likely to hinder

their attainment. Learning a foreign language is not an easy task. Thus, educators need to confront erroneous beliefs with new insights.

Concerning ultimate success in their target language, a large majority of Japanese learners agreed that they will ultimately learn the language very well. A majority (71%) of Japanese students believe that they will learn to speak Japanese very well. This suggests that students of Japanese had a much more positive outlook about their ultimate ability to achieve their goals. Thus, regardless of their belief that Japanese is a difficult language, they also believe they will ultimately succeed in learning the language. This result was not consistent with Horwitz's (1990) study, where American learners of Japanese showed lower evaluation of their own language abilities. Other studies conducted by Horwitz (1987; 1988) reveal that students' judgements about the difficulty of language learning are critical to the development of their learning expectations and to their commitment to language study. These numbers indicate a stronger motivation to succeed among students of Japanese. Question 10 supports this by showing Japanese learners' dedication to prolonged study to achieve fluency even though they believe the language to be difficult to learn. It would be useful for students that instructors integrate specific goals of instructions and announce "can do" statements to students in the beginning of the class. In the case of Spanish learners, this data implies that Spanish students are less confident in their positive outcomes. Their perception that the target language is easier to learn leads them to be less likely to commit to the time it takes to become fluent.

Knowing that both Japanese and Spanish students believe their target language is difficult, instructors should provide teaching materials and should use teaching strategies

to help students conquer their learning challenges. Moreover, academic administrators should provide appropriate funds to support these initiatives. Also, institutions can offer tutoring sessions and provide technological support to help students succeed in learning the target languages.

As for item 19, "it is easier to read and write this language than to speak and understand it," regardless of what languages they are learning, most of students indicated that reading and writing are easier to learn than speaking and understanding. In the case of Spanish, this might be due to the Spanish writing system. In fact, 30 % to 40 % of all words in English have a related word in Spanish with similar appearance, sound, and meaning - these cognates helping Spanish learners to transfer word knowledge into their target language. In any cases, accepting these perceptions, instructors would be well served by shifting the focus to speaking once their competency in reading and writing has been achieved. An implication for the finding that speaking is more difficult than reading and writing is to put more emphasis on classroom speaking practice.

The Nature of Language Learning

Beliefs regarding the nature of language learning gives insights to instructors about how their students conceive foreign language learning process in their study. Although, BALLI questions 5, 7, 11, 15, 20, and 21, do not specify either specific the target language or not, they determine the students' perceptions toward their foreign language study.

The results showed that more than 30 percent of Japanese learners either strongly agree or agree that cultural aspects influence the ability to understand and speak the

language. Twelve percent of Spanish learners strongly agree and 35 percent agree that it is necessary to know the target culture in order to speak the language. However, a few students from the Japanese group and several students from Spanish group either disagree or strongly disagree with this assumption. This data is very informative for language instructors since it reflects the idea that students are aware of the importance of cultural differences and cultural values.

Language studies are intertwined with culture in more than one ways - not only the target culture but also the students' culture. Cultural context is an important factor for foreign language learning, especially for learning Japanese. Comparing these two groups (Japanese and Spanish), fewer numbers of Spanish learners saw the importance of cultural components to language learning. This is likely a result of cultural similarity between English and Spanish speakers and the strong Hispanic influence in the American culture. The mere geographic distance between Japan and United States creates limits in such cultural intermingling. The closest Spanish speaking country, Mexico, shares a border with the United States, whereas the closest Japanese speaking locality is thousands of miles away from Kentucky. This may explain some of the differences since students and teachers have more exposure to the Spanish language and culture in United States than Japanese language and culture. The results of the study could greatly be influenced by such proximity or distance. In addition to the target language culture, that of the student culture is another important factor to consider in language studies. Students often struggle because they apply their cultural norms to the target language which causes a disconnect. One must be cognizant of the interplay between the target country and students' native culture. Particularly, in the case of Japanese learning, as students become

more proficient in the language, the understanding of the culture will become more necessary to increase fluency. Next question brings focus to the role of cultural contact and language immersion in language achievement: "It is better to learn a foreign language in the foreign country." Both Spanish and Japanese learners tend to agree that learning the language in their target country would be beneficial. However, 16% Spanish learners disagree and 5% strongly agree with the statement. This is likely the result of heavy Latino presence in the United States and the ease with which students are able to encounter cultural differences without leaving their local geography. Of course, the gold standard in language immersion is living in the country of the target language. However, merely living there with full 24/7 exposure without any language exchange would not lead to language proficiency. Compared to Spanish learners, a large group of Japanese learners didn't have any opinion. This could indicate trepidation on part of the Japanese learners to immerse themselves in a culture for which they are unprepared.

Measuring the students' preconception of the target language learning requirement, despite some disagreement, more than 40 % of both groups agreed that learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of memorizing extensive vocabulary and grammar rules. Students' beliefs that vocabulary and grammar are equally important in language study reflects positive attitude toward their language study. However, this belief could cause the students to invest too much time in memorizing vocabulary and grammar at the expense of other language learning tasks. Furthermore, Horwitz (1988) claimed placing too much importance on learning vocabulary and grammar rules may be distracting learners from attending to the meaning of the input. In fact, Johnson (1998)'s study confirmed that students who believed that language learning mostly involves

grammar, spent more energy on learning grammar. As the five C's of Foreign Language Standards inform, in order to communicate successfully, students should not just learn about the grammatical patterns and vocabulary, but also need to develop communication competence.

Question 20, "learning a foreign language is different from learning other school subjects," determines whether students view foreign language learning different from other types of learning. Although, a small number of students disagreed with this statement, a large number of the students in each language group either strongly agreed or agreed that learning a language differs from learning other school subjects. This is because learning a foreign language is a linear learning process and learner must understand the material step by step before moving on to the next stage, whereas in other subjects, the student learn and understand the material in a non-linear. To learn a foreign language, people need to use different strategies and techniques in their study compared with other subjects and require the use of a different region of their brain. Language learning requires daily practice, time commitment, effort and active involvement in order to be successful. Comparing both groups, a higher percentage of Japanese students either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement. This could be a result of the completely unique writing system required in Japanese.

As for the last item, "learning a foreign language is a matter of translating from English," the results indicated that most Spanish learners had neutral opinions about this and a statistical analysis presented a classic bell curve. Strikingly, this results is significantly contradictory to Horwitz's (1988) findings, whose study was conducted more than 35 years ago. It is possible that communicative approach was not much

emphasized at that time, and classroom instructions were still followed by traditional style. Hence, a large number of students valued the importance of translation as an important part of learning and classroom curriculum in those days.

The results also showed that a large number of Japanese learners do not believe foreign language is mostly a matter of translating from English. This data implies that students know merely translating from English doesn't help interpret Japanese. Students of Japanese believe learning a foreign language is a very intricate process that goes far beyond just translating from English. This is reasonable because of cultural differences between the Japanese and American cultures. For example, Japan has a high context culture, "No" means "Yes", "Yes" means "No" depending on the context. In the case of Spanish, the popular stance was a neutral position and the result showed a classic bell curve with symmetrical sides and distribution. This could relate to the demographic of the target population. Spanish speakers are everywhere in the United States and there are lots of cultural and structural similarities between the languages. In foreign language learning, there are many cultural differences that students should consider because without the proper awareness and preparation, their chances to attain language proficiency will be diminished by misguided interactions.

As teaching culture is a goal of language instruction, instructors should include cultural aspects into the lesson, the combination of language and culture-based education is extremely encouraged. Williams and Burden (1997) note, "the learning of a foreign language involves far more than simply learning skills, or a system of rules, or a grammar; it involves an alteration in self-image, the adoption of new social and cultural behaviors and ways of being, and therefore has a significant impact on the social nature

of the learner" (p. 115). Knowing that students recognize the importance of cultural

context, instructors can develop teaching materials and strategies that demonstrate the

interrelationship between language and culture.

<u>Learning Strategies</u>

Repetition and practice give a clear road map in structuring effective language

learning. Learning style is an individual's habitual pattern of acquiring and processing

information during learning [process]. Many studies have suggested that students can

perform better on tests if they change study habits by determining their dominant learning

styles to fit their own personal learning styles. Assessing students' beliefs and identifying

each student's learning style, play a great role in effective teaching methods. This will

help develop coping strategies to compensate for the students' weaknesses and capitalize

on their strengths.

With regard to traditional learning strategy beliefs, there are several similarities

between Japanese and Spanish students. More than 90 percent of each group either

strongly agree or agree with the importance of repetition and practice. Since most

learning occurs from repetition and practice, the students' beliefs are confirmed. This

finding correlates with many other studies on language acquisition and demonstrates that

constant repetition is necessary for a word to become truly owned and stored in the long

term memory.

In comparison of the two groups, the results also showed that Japanese learners

hold a higher value of importance of repetition and practice. These results correspond

with White's (1995) finding that learners of Japanese preferred repetition. She conducted

a comparative study on learning strategies and her results concluded that according to the language being studied, learning strategies are different.

Since students acknowledge the importance of these strategies, instructors can use this knowledge to create engaging activities in order to keep repetition from being a boring exercise. Teaching a language course could include coaching on language learning strategies. Students should be told about the significance and effectiveness of repetition in terms of repeated listening and repeated speaking. Interestingly, a few students didn't perceive repetition and practice as important. The reasons are not clear, yet practice is fundamental and comes naturally when aligned with the students' interests and their need to communicate.

Regarding the importance of practicing with audio materials, a majority of both groups agreed that practice with audio materials is important. Audio materials are good learning resources for students and enables them to get input and output practice. Theoretically, by utilizing audio materials, students can study by themselves outside of the classroom without instruction. Unquestionably, audio materials influence the procedures of learning, and these supplementary materials are very important in language instruction. In this study, the results also showed that a large portion of students of Japanese strongly agree with this statement. This could be because Japanese use a different writing system. Input comes from listening, if they don't know how to read, they cannot learn. Similarly pronunciation comes from listening, if students don't know the character, Japanese learners cannot produce the word. Language departments must keep up the pace with the use of effective technological tools for teaching and learning even though funding could be an issue. With the rapid rise of the revolution in internet,

social media and information technology, authentic resources to connect to the target language and culture are abundant. It is fair to assume that the students are good at finding more up-to-date resources than instructors. Nowadays, students can listen to audio materials everywhere using their cell-phones. Accordingly, one of the effective strategies for teachers would be encouraging and collaborating with the students to utilize technological devices.

Communication Strategies

The obtained data concerning communication strategies are of special interest to language instructors since communication strategies are essential to foreign language education. Communication strategies involve language anxiety. The results show that Japanese learners focus on the importance of having an excellent accent (twenty-five percent marked "strongly agree" and forty-four percent checked "agree"). This data suggests that many Japanese learners are concerned about pronunciation so they overemphasize accuracy. One can assume that this is because Western pronunciation differences are based on stress whereas Japanese is based on pitch accent that is difficult for many American students to apprehend. Moreover, Japanese has many more homophones than English, and the differences among they are critical to communication. For example, the emphasis in *'hashi'* [chopsticks] (accent on first mora) versus that in *'hashi'* [bridge] (accent on second mora), differentiates between these two words; two words can consist of the exact same sounds, yet they can mean two totally different things depending on where the words are accented.

The results also show that Spanish learners are relatively less intense in their emphasis (fifteen percent "strongly agree" and twenty-six percent "agree") on the importance of having excellent accents, and the majority of Spanish learners take a neutral stance on the importance of excellent accents. The specific reasons behind students' beliefs are not clear, but there are several possible implications for this result. It is possible, as several studies (e.g., Arteaga, 2000; Hurtado, 2010; Lord, 2005) have shown, pronunciation explanations and practices tend to be limited to advanced levels (in most cases Spanish phonetics and phonology classes), and Spanish pronunciation is rarely taught in introductory classes. That it, students might have not faced with any difficulties of pronunciation and/or students might be not aware of pronunciation distinctions in Spanish. For example, one of the noteworthy differences between Spanish and English pronunciation is the variation in the degree of aspiration of the three voices stops /p, t, k/ in stressed syllables, and the voiced tap /r/ and trill /r/ production (Lord, 2005). However, since students do not have specific courses that focus on pronunciation, they might not realize how pronunciation affects meaning in some languages. It is also possible that since Spanish has so many dialects, students might conceive that having an excellent accent is not a priority in terms of communication. If they receive pronunciation instructions, more of them would value the importance of an excellent accent.

In spite of the agreement on the importance of a correct accent, it is true that pronunciation is often underemphasized in foreign language instruction. Several studies (Griffiths, 2011) argue that pronunciation has been neglected in language instruction. However, Morley's (1994) study shows that good pronunciation creates a positive image of the speaker's ability, whereas poor pronunciation forms a negative image. To illustrate

the importance of pronunciation instruction, Lord (2005) added that even if a speaker has a strong command of grammar and vocabulary, a speaker may not be understood if a strong foreign accent is present. Likewise, Arteaga (2000) argues that "it [is] ironic that the purpose of learning a language is to communicate, and yet if the pronunciation is too far off, you will not be understood no matter how good the grammar and how correct the words you use (p. 342)."

Speaking with a near-native accent offers many advantages. Knowing that more than half of Japanese language learners endorse the importance of an excellent accent, language instructors should take into account this finding from the beginning of Japanese language instruction. Since many Japanese learners have a strong desire to use Japanese in their future careers, speaking Japanese with excellent pronunciation will be an important goal for them. It is essential for teachers of Japanese to develop lessons that incorporate theoretical pronunciation explanations. At the same time, instructors have to also make clear to students that developing good pronunciation skills is vital, but this does not mean that foreign speakers need to sound exactly like native speakers.

Horwitz (1988) explains that over-stressing the importance of target language accuracy can contribute to anxiety in foreign language learning because ultimately communication is more important than an excellent accent. In other words, it is more important to communicate productively than to communicate perfectly, according to Horwitz. On the other hand, without explicitly teaching pronunciation, students can make serious pronunciation errors, establish pronunciation habits (Krashen & Terrell, 1996), and develop some errors that might never disappear entirely. To illustrate this, Littlewood (1984) says "such errors are often described as fossilized, meaning that they become

permanent features of the learner's speech" (p. 34). Pronunciation affects students'
performance in their oral communication. Many scholars (e.g., Arteaga, 2000; Lord,
2005; Hurtado, 2010) elucidate the benefits of an emphasis on pronunciation and suggest
an early introduction of pronunciation instruction in foreign language classes. Although
the overuse of repetition and drill practice is not congruent with a contemporary
approach, in order to develop confidence in production, repetition and drill practice is a
key to developing and enhancing learners' pronunciation.

For the following statement, "you should not say anything in the foreign language
until you can say it correctly," more than fifty-percent of each group reject this belief.
Among Japanese learners, thirty-three percent "strongly disagree" and twenty-five
percent "disagree"; among Spanish learners, twenty-percent "strongly agree," and thirty-
three percent "disagree." This suggests that many students support the idea that guessing
a word in the foreign language is acceptable and trying to say it is all right. Perhaps, this
question correlates to item 9: "Is it OK to guess if you do not know a word in the foreign
language." Interestingly, more than one fourth of both groups neither "agrees" nor
"disagrees" with this question; more than one-third of each group tends not to guess if
they are unsure about the answer, and students' beliefs varied from "strongly agree" to
"strongly disagree." The implication here is that surveyed students have mixed
philosophies about trying to speak a foreign language when one is not highly skilled in
the language.

When it comes to the item, "if I heard someone speak Japanese/Spanish, I would
go up to them so that I could practice speaking the language," students' range of
responses shows several dissimilarities. Comparing the two groups, Japanese and

Spanish, a higher percentage of Japanese learners support this statement. This reflects their confidence in their language-speaking skills. Moreover, a willingness "to try" attitude varies between the two groups. This could be because there are many Spanish speakers in the United States, and, therefore, there are many opportunities to use the language. However, Japanese is not common and students seldom have the opportunity to use it. Therefore, Japanese learners might feel excited to see Japanese speakers and might be eager to try speaking in Japanese.

With regard to the statement, "I feel self-conscious speaking the foreign language in front of other people," which examines foreign language anxiety, the results also reveal that a large number of both Japanese and Spanish students feel self-conscious while learning a new language; more than half of the students indicate that they feel self-conscious about speaking in front of people. This finding should be highlighted because anxiety may have a negative effect on students' motivation and participation in class activities. Foreign language classrooms involve many speaking activities, and active oral participation are necessary in order to develop proficiency. Several studies (e.g., Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Young, 1990) have shown that the speaking component of language learning is most likely to be associated with foreign language anxiety.

As for the item, "if you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on, " Japanese learners disagreed while Spanish students agreed. There is a significant gap between the groups. Again, Japanese learners show a "trying spirit" higher than that of Spanish learners. Students who are not willing "to try" miss the value of learning from their mistakes. As discussed in Chapter II, if students are scared of making mistakes, their learning approaches tend to become passive because

their language anxiety causes them to be quieter and less willing to participate. Such anxiety hampers students' learning ability. Instructors should work to dispel such anxiety and help their students gain confidence. A mere affirmation by the teacher, as an authority figure, can go a long way toward alleviating students' language-learning ability. Such affirmation would work equally well with students' concerns regarding the use of proper accents.

Because many students feel anxious about language study, the teacher's goal should be to reduce students' anxiety and their negative emotions. Young's research (1994) categorizes the sources of foreign language anxiety into three general groups: sources associated with the learner, the instructor, and the institutional practices. Instructor factors, such as harsh manners of teaching and judgmental teaching attitudes are linked to student fear in the classroom. Instructors must seek ways to reduce students' anxiety and must help students navigate outside of their comfort zone. It is the educator's responsibility to create environments that build student self-confidence. This can be done, for example, by creating a warm and cooperative classroom atmosphere and/or by creating small groups in which students practice their language skills rather than have them practice in front of a larger number of students. Another way to reduce student anxiety would be to create learning groups that are homogeneous in age and gender. This will be helpful because when learning a language, students are more inclined to be comfortable with classmates similar to themselves. An uncomfortable environment can cause frustration when students have to speak before an audience. In other words, students' learning environments and activities influence their learning progress and outcomes.

Ornstein and Lasley (2000) remark, "Good teachers do things well and know conceptually why they do them well – they have an explanation for what grounds their practices" (p. 5), "Good teachers use and combine a variety of technical skills in ways that create fluid opportunities for learning" (p. 1). Furthermore, instructors can assure students that mistakes are a natural part of language learning and that people learn from mistakes as language acquisition gets easier over time. It is important, however, for teachers to consider carefully the timing, amount, and manner of correction. If teachers correct errors too harshly or too negatively, students become anxious. Anxious students can easily lose their train of thought and forget what they were talking about when their anxiety levels increase. Therefore, teachers should collect information about their students and consider how their individual students react to error correction. Awareness of each student's individual learning styles and preferences can guide teachers on whether to correct their students implicitly or explicitly. Many scholars agree that a practical and effective way to correct speaking errors is through the use of an inductive method where instructors ask students to correct themselves. Most importantly, teachers can enhance students' self-esteem by providing encouragement and reassurance.

Motivations and Expectations

Conflicting beliefs about language learning between students and instructors may create anxiety-producing tensions (Kern, 1995). Oxford and Shearin (1994) stress the importance of identifying and understanding students' motivations for language study. According to their study, "Research shows that motivation directly influences how often students use foreign language learning strategies, how much students interact with native

speakers, how much input they receive in the language being learned (the target language), how well they do on curriculum-related achievement tests, how high their general proficiency level becomes, and how long they preserve and maintain L2 skills after language study is over" (p.13). In this study, Japanese and Spanish students expressed some similarities and differences in their beliefs regarding motivations and expectations about language study. Although, a small percent of both groups express a pessimistic attitude about opportunities to use their target language, more than seventy percent of both groups believe the statement, "if I get to speak this language very well, I will have many opportunities to use it." More than half of both groups also believe that the target language will increase their career opportunities.

This data reveals both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations for language study. However, when comparing both Japanese and Spanish students, Spanish learners are less positive about how much their knowledge of Spanish will increase their career opportunities. Perhaps, this is because Spanish is the second language in America. Since there are already so many people who can speak Spanish in the United States, students might believe that in order to work in a Spanish-related environment, a higher-level of proficiency is expected. Since Kentucky is home to over 150 Japanese companies, it is not surprising that many Japanese learners place high value on career opportunities and goals as motivation for studying Japanese. These motivations can be realized in Kentucky because there are several Japanese companies in Kentucky where students might envision job opportunities that consider knowledge of Japanese an asset. Needless to say, this data reflects students' strong extrinsic motivation for learning Japanese.

Recognizing the fact that Japanese language learners show a desire to work in a foreign language immersed environment, they know there are job opportunities for them which relate to their goals. Administrators should try to reach out and build positive relationships with the local Japan-related companies and set up strong contacts with them to encourage and enhance this objective. Furthermore, Japanese pedagogy should include cultural dimensions of business settings as Japanese business culture is conservative with many customs and rules. For example, if a student has a job interview with a Japanese company, the instructor could be of help in developing cultural sensitivity in order to create a good first impression by greeting his/her interviewer with the Japanese manner – including depth of the bow should be adjusted based on the status of the person with whom they are interacting.

As to the belief, "Americans think that it is important to speak a foreign language," students' most popular response was neither "agree" nor "disagree," but more students showed disagreement than agreement. This could reflect the belief that America is an individualistic not a collectivist society. English may not be the most widely spoken language in the world, yet English is the most commonly used language among foreign language speakers. America thrives on diversity, yet Americans can survive without knowing any foreign language. Young people all over the world are striving to learn English and that might make those who speak English have less incentive to learn another language. In reality, all languages of the world, are and will be, in competition with the English language.

One interesting revelation of this study is that students of Japanese had a greater desire to know native speakers than did Spanish students. As for the final item, "I would

like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers better," more than half of the Japanese learners strongly agreed with the statement, whereas Spanish learners responded more moderately: less than one-fourth of the Spanish students strongly agreed with the statement. This shows that students studying Japanese were much more comfortable with the language and had a stronger intrinsic motivation for language learning.

These findings are consistent with Japanese learners' reasons and purposes for language study since they chose "to communicate in Japanese" as their strongest motivational factor. As indicated in Chapter 2, having both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations is ideal in language studies. Students who select language courses primarily to fulfill a requirement most likely will not continue language study beyond the requirement, unless instructors create learning environments that will bring about intrinsic motivations to learn the language. Knowing that Spanish students are less intrinsically motivated, instructors should strive to create activities that will capture their students' interests. For example, Bateman (2002) integrated interviews with native speakers into Spanish classes and observed that the interviews positively affected many college students' attitudes toward studying Spanish and boosted their desire to learn the language.

Pekrun et. al (2002) note, "Academic emotions are significantly related to students' motivation, learning strategies, cognitive resources, self-regulation, and academic achievement" (p.91). Educators who are aware of students' beliefs can assist them more effectively in achieving their goals.

<u>Conclusions</u>

Oxford (1992) demonstrates that in order to teach effectively, educators must be aware of variables such as gender, age, motivation, anxiety, language learning strategies, and many other factors. Students' motivation impacts their learning. An accurate understanding of students' motivations and a deeper understanding of students' beliefs regarding language learning is critical in the design of instruction for optimized learning. By understanding students' incentives for pursuing foreign language study, school administrators can build meaningful language programs that attract students to foreign language study, and language instructors can also develop and design enjoyable curriculums that will increase students' both integrated/intrinsic and instrumental/extrinsic motivations. It is imperative for educators to understand their students in order to better serve them and cater to their educational needs. Pratt (1998) highlighted that "if people want to understand and influence teaching, they must go beneath the surface to consider the intensions and beliefs underlying behavior" (p. 11).

As Routman (2003) notes, good teaching does not necessarily equate to hours spend planning. Instead, good teaching requires a lot of thinking – thinking about what matters to students, what students need to know, how educators can move their students forward, and to ensure that the students comprehend what is being taught. If students study only because they want to obtain a good grade, they probably would not achieve as much in understanding and mastering the language as they would for a student who choose to learn because of their interest in the language. Educators are responsible for curriculum development. Educators have a great responsibility to support, help, mentor, stimulate, lead, assist, and encourage students in order to make a difference in their

learning experience. Students should be considered as an asset in giving recommendation to educators on how a language class can improve teaching. Special attention to each student, awareness of individual needs and expectations, the fundamental "caring" feelings, and ultimately the investment in their students will lead to the success of the program. Knowledge and its management will play a central role in obtaining students' enrollment.

Recommendations for Further Research

In this research, the focus was only on first year students. Previous studies have shown that beliefs about learning a language change between the first two years of study, especially in regard to learning Japanese. Even though, this study did not compare student beliefs between first semester (101) and second semester (102) students, second semester students showed some different beliefs. It seems that in higher levels of Japanese studies, the work tended to be more demanding; thus students seemed to be more discouraged. In future studies, it would be interesting to learn how students' beliefs develop as their language studies become more complex.

Moreover, all the students who participated in this research had experienced at least once semester of studying the target language. That surely influenced their responses to the questionnaire. In the future, it would be insightful to get responses from students as they begin to learn the new language. Moreover, it would also be insightful to differentiate between the students who had traveled abroad and those who had not, because cultural experiences also influence beliefs about learning a language.

Furthermore, the same study in Hawaii, where Japanese is predominant second language and less Spanish speaking people there, would possibly result in different conclusions.

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APPENDIX A: Language Learning Beliefs Survey

(For Japanese Learners)

Language Learning Beliefs Survey

I, Noriko Okura, am a doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership & Policy Studies at Eastern Kentucky University. Currently, I am conducting research regarding beliefs about language learning.

This survey takes approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Participation is voluntary and anonymous. All collected information will be kept confidential. The results of this study survey will help curriculum designers design courses that will meet your needs. There are no known risks associated with your participation in this study, and participation will not affect your grades or academic standing in any way.

By completing the survey, you agree to participate in the study.

Thank you for participating in this study, "どうもありがとうございます" ☺

Questions about the Study: For any further information regarding this study, please feel free to contact me. Noriko Okura, noriko_okura@mymail.eku.edu

Survey Questions

Section 1 (Demographics)

Please answer the following questions about yourself.

1. Gender: Male   /   Female

2. Age: _____ years old.

3. Currently, I am taking: JPN 101   /   JPN 102

4. What is your first language? English / Other(s) (please specify) _____

5. School year: Freshman   /   Sophomore   /   Junior   /   Senior   /   Other

6. Academic major: _____   minor: _____

7. Are you considering obtaining a certificate?   No   /   Yes

8. Where are you from?   USA   /   Other (please specify):_____

9. Are you a resident of Kentucky?   No   /   Yes

10. Have you ever traveled abroad (outside of the U.S.)?

    No   /   Yes (where? _____)

11. Reasons and Purposes for Japanese language study (select all that apply)

1		Interest in Japanese culture
2		Interest in Japanese language
3		Interest in popular culture (music, *anime, manga*, fashion, etc) (please write examples _____)
4		Interest in visiting Japan
5		Interest in living in Japan
6		Interest in studying abroad
7		Took Japanese in high school
8		For my future career
9		I have a Japanese cultural heritage
10		I have a Japanese-speaking family member
11		I have Japanese friends
12		Parental wishes
13		To Communicate in Japanese
14		To fulfill a requirement
15		Other (please specify)

Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory Questionnaire

Section 2

The following questions ask about your language beliefs about Japanese language study.
Please choose the most appropriate answer for each question.

> 5 = strongly agree
> 4 = agree
> 3 = neither agree nor disagree
> 2 = disagree
> 1 = strongly disagree

1. Some languages are easier to learn than others.   5   4   3   2   1

2. Japanese is: 5) a very difficult language,
     4) a difficult language,
     3) a language of medium difficulty,
     2) an easy language,
     1) a very easy language.

3. I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak this language very well.
     5   4   3   2   1

4. It is important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent.
     5   4   3   2   1

5. It is necessary to know the foreign culture in order to speak the foreign language.
     5   4   3   2   1

6. You should not say anything in the foreign language until you can say it correctly.
     5   4   3   2   1

7. It is better to learn a foreign language in the foreign country.
     5   4   3   2   1

8. If I heard someone speak Japanese, I would go up to them so that I could practice speaking the language.   5   4   3   2   1

9. It is OK to guess if you do not know a word in the foreign language.
     5   4   3   2   1

10. If someone spent one hour a day learning Japanese, how long would it take him/her to become fluent?
     5) less than a year,
     4) 1-2 years,
     3) 3-5 years,

2) 5-10 years,
1) you cannot learn Japanese in 1 hour a day.

11. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words.

(strongly agree) 5   4   3   2   1 (strongly disagree)

12. It is important to repeat and practice a lot.

        5   4   3   2   1

13. I feel self-conscious speaking the foreign language in front of other people.

        5   4   3   2   1

14. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on.   5   4   3   2   1

15. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.

        5   4   3   2   1

16. It is important to practice with the audio materials.

        5   4   3   2   1

17. If I get to speak this language very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.

        5   4   3   2   1

18. It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.

        5   4   3   2   1

19. It is easier to read and write this language than to speak and understand it.

        5   4   3   2   1

20. Learning a foreign language is different from learning other school subjects.

        5   4   3   2   1

21. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of translating from English.

        5   4   3   2   1

22. If I learn to speak this language very well, it will help me get a good job

        5   4   3   2   1

23. Americans think that it is important to speak a foreign language.

        5   4   3   2   1

24. I would like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers better.

        5   4   3   2   1

APPENDIX B: Language Learning Beliefs Survey

(For Spanish Learners)

Language Learning Beliefs Survey

I, Noriko Okura, am a doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership & Policy Studies at Eastern Kentucky University. Currently, I am conducting research regarding beliefs about language learning.

This survey takes approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Participation is voluntary and anonymous. All collected information will be kept confidential. The results of this study survey will help curriculum designers design courses that will meet your needs. There are no known risks associated with your participation in this study, and participation will not affect your grades or academic standing in any way.

By completing the survey, you agree to participate in the study.

Thank you for participating in this study, "Muchas Gracias!" ☺

Questions about the Study: For any further information regarding this study, please feel free to contact me. Noriko Okura, noriko_okura@mymail.eku.edu

Survey Questions

Section 1 (Demographics)

Please answer the following questions about yourself.

1. Gender: Male   /   Female

2. Age: _____ years old.

3. Currently, I am taking: SPA 101   /   SPA 102

4. What is your first language? English / Other(s) (please specify) _____

5. School year: Freshman   /   Sophomore   /   Junior   /   Senior   /

   Other

6. Academic major: _____   minor: _____

7. Are you considering obtaining a B.A. in Spanish?   No /   Yes
                                           a B.A. in Spanish Teaching?   No /   Yes
                                           a minor in Spanish?   No /   Yes
                                           a certificate in Spanish?   No /   Yes

8. Where are you from?   USA   /   Others (please specify):_____

9. Are you a resident of Kentucky?   No   /   Yes

10. Have you ever traveled abroad (outside of the U.S.)?
                            No   /   Yes (where? _____)

11. Reasons and Purposes for Spanish language study (select all that apply)

1		Interest in Hispanic/Latino culture
2		Interest in Spanish language
3		Interest in popular culture (music, dance, food, etc) (please write examples _____)
4		Interest in visiting a Spanish-speaking country
5		Interest in living in a Spanish-speaking country
6		Interest in studying abroad
7		Took Spanish in high school
8		For my future career
9		I have a Hispanic/Latino cultural heritage
10		I have a Spanish speaking family member
11		I have friends who speak Spanish
12		Parental wishes
13		To communicate in Spanish
14		To fulfill a requirement
15		Other (please specify)

Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory Questionnaire

Section 2

The following questions ask about your language beliefs about Spanish language study.
Please choose the most appropriate answer for each question.

        5 = strongly agree
        4 = agree
        3 = neither agree nor disagree
        2 = disagree
        1 = strongly disagree

1. Some languages are easier to learn than others.   5   4   3   2   1

2. Spanish is: 5) a very difficult language,
        4) a difficult language,
        3) a language of medium difficulty,
        2) an easy language,
        1) a very easy language.

3. I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak this language very well.
        5   4   3   2   1

4. It is important to speak a foreign language with an excellent accent.
        5   4   3   2   1

5. It is necessary to know the foreign culture in order to speak the foreign language.
        5   4   3   2   1

6. You should not say anything in the foreign language until you can say it correctly.
        5   4   3   2   1

7. It is better to learn a foreign language in the foreign country.
        5   4   3   2   1

8. If I heard someone speak Spanish, I would go up to them so that I could practice speaking the language.   5   4   3   2   1

9. It is OK to guess if you do not know a word in the foreign language.
        5   4   3   2   1

10. If someone spent one hour a day learning Spanish, how long would it take him/her to become fluent?
        5) less than a year,
        4) 1-2 years,

3) 3-5 years,
2) 5-10 years,
1) you cannot learn Spanish in 1 hour a day.

11. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words.
(strongly agree) 5   4   3   2   1 (strongly disagree)

12. It is important to repeat and practice a lot.
                5   4   3   2   1

13. I feel self-conscious speaking the foreign language in front of other people.
                5   4   3   2   1

14. If you are allowed to make mistakes in the beginning, it will be hard to get rid of them later on.   5   4   3   2   1

15. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.
                5   4   3   2   1

16. It is important to practice with the audio materials.
                5   4   3   2   1

17. If I get to speak this language very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.
                5   4   3   2   1

18. It is easier to speak than understand a foreign language.
                5   4   3   2   1

19. It is easier to read and write this language than to speak and understand it.
                5   4   3   2   1

20. Learning a foreign language is different from learning other school subjects.
                5   4   3   2   1

21. Learning a foreign language is mostly a matter of translating from English.
                5   4   3   2   1

22. If I learn to speak this language very well, it will help me get a good job
                5   4   3   2   1

23. Americans think that it is important to speak a foreign language.
                5   4   3   2   1

24. I would like to learn this language so that I can get to know its speakers better.
                5   4   3   2   1