

Student SLA Beliefs at Two Japanese High Schools

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This paper compares the beliefs about second-language acquisition (SLA) of students at two different senior high schools in Japan. Participants were surveyed about behaviorist, innatist, and cognitive/developmentalist theories of SLA. Questionnaire data was then analyzed to compare the differences between the two groups of students as well as determine discrepancies between respondents' beliefs and SLA theories. Results indicate that both schools hold very different beliefs about several SLA theories. These results provide a useful insight into the respondents' language learning beliefs which could be used to better inform the teaching styles used and decisions made in both the secondary and tertiary classroom.

Key Words : Language Learning Beliefs, SLA, TESOL

1. Introduction

Teaching English as a foreign language requires not only teaching knowledge but also knowledge of the cultural context in which the language is taught. For learners, learning a language is not just an exercise in building knowledge; it can also mean exposure to new educational styles. All of the choices teachers make are informed by the beliefs they hold about how language is learned. It is important for teachers to understand the beliefs of their students and to communicate with the students the beliefs that they themselves hold.

This study is a comparison of the language learning beliefs of students from two different senior high schools. The two groups of students are different in many aspects including school location, type of school, English language ability, and type of high school course. By comparing two contrasting groups it may be possible to identify which language learning beliefs are prone to fluctuation and which beliefs may hold more constant within the Japanese context.

Therefore, this study has two research goals:

- ① To survey and compare the language learning beliefs of students from two senior high schools and;
- ② To compare these beliefs with current second-language acquisition (SLA) theories.

2. Review of the Literature

In the SLA field, multiple schools of thought have developed to explain exactly how language is acquired. The three main theoretical positions are the behaviorist, the innatist, and the cognitive/developmentalist (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 10).

2.1 Behaviorist Theories

The behaviorist approach is an early theory of learning. Of special importance were psychologists Pavlov and Skinner, known for their experiments with habit formation and conditioning (Brown, 2007, pp. 87-91). Behaviorists view learning as a kind of conditioning which involves "learning, stimulus, and response" (Harmer, 2007, p. 51). With a rigorous adherence to the scientific method, they study only observable behavior and ignore the inner workings of the learner's mind (Brown, 2007, p. 10). This approach gave rise to audiolingualism, which gives priority to spoken over written language, emphasizes drilling to enforce habits, and avoids grammar teaching. Learners are put in an essentially passive role, being fed language through a

* 原稿受付 2019年3月29日

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teacher-centered style of learning (Nunan, 1999).

One specific behaviorist hypothesis is the contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH), which comes from the focus on habit formation. The hypothesis states that habits from the first language interfere with the formation of habits in the second language (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 34). Robert Lado asserted, "...We can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning, and those that will not cause difficulty, by comparing systematically the language . . . to be learned with the language . . . of the student" (1957, as cited in Wardhaugh, 1970, p. 3). This relates to the concept of positive and negative transfer, wherein previous knowledge either benefits or interferes with the learning task (Brown, 2007, p. 102). The CAH has been criticized because it fails to account for all errors that learners make, and learners from different backgrounds might make similar errors in the target language (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 34).

2.2 Innatist Theories

Contrary to behaviorism, the innatist approach claims that we are not blank slates but are instead born with built-in knowledge that helps us learn language. This approach was heavily influenced by Chomsky, who believed that one must take into account not only observable data but also subjective data when analyzing language (deBot, Lowie, & Verspoor, 2005, p. 29). According to Chomsky's "universal grammar", children innately have access to the universal principles of grammar which underlie all languages.

Chomsky's thoughts on universal grammar had a major influence on Stephen Krashen's monitor model (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, pp. 35-36), which had an enormous impact on the study of SLA. Specifically, it strongly impacted the "communicative approach" and gave rise to the natural approach to language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). It is comprised of five hypotheses, each of which have been very influential but also heavily criticized.

The first, the acquisition-learning hypothesis, makes a distinction between learning and acquisition, which reflect Palmer's concepts of "spontaneous" and "studial" capacities (1921). Krashen defined learning as the conscious study of rules, while acquisition is a subconscious process similar to how children learn language. He asserted that these two processes are independent of one another, and the ability to spontaneously produce language relies solely on what has been acquired, not learned (Krashen, 1982, pp. 10-11). Gregg (1984, pp. 79-82) criticized Krashen for failing to clearly define "subconscious," and "conscious" as well as failing to prove that learning cannot become acquisition.

Krashen's second hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, states that acquired language is used in spontaneous speech and learned language is used in editing or "monitoring" that speech. Such editing may only occur if the learner has enough time, is focused on form, and is aware of the rule (Krashen, 1982, pp. 15-16). Krashen claimed that children are superior to adults in L2 acquisition because of their lack of a monitor (McLaughlin, 1987, as cited in Zafar, 2009, p. 142). McLaughlin opposed this claim, asserting that adults are equally capable of L2 acquisition (McLaughlin, 1992).

The natural order hypothesis asserts that the acquisition of grammar naturally occurs in a particular order. This followed from earlier studies on morphology by Dulay and Burt (1974 and 1975, as cited in Krashen, 1982, p. 12). However, Krashen failed to account for the impact of the first language (L1) on the second language (L2) and has been accused of oversimplification (Wode, 1977; Zobl, 1980; 1982, as cited in Zafar, 2009, p. 142).

Fourth, the input hypothesis, suggests that learners acquire language when input is slightly beyond their current level. This is represented in the formula " $i+1$," where " i " is the learner's current level and " $i+1$ " is the next level (Krashen, 1982, pp. 20-22). This can be compared to Pienemann's "teachability hypothesis", which states that learners at the level of " X " must reach " $X+1$ " before they can reach " $X+2$ " (Pienemann, 1989, p. 61). In contrast, the more recent dynamic systems theory suggests that, rather than a linear progression, language learning acts as a complex dynamic system which constantly reorganizes itself (deBot et al., 2005).

Finally, the affective filter hypothesis states that learners with high motivation, high self-confidence, and low anxiety do better in second language acquisition (Krashen, 1982, p. 31). This relates to the humanistic psychology of Carl Rogers, who stressed the importance of students' emotional involvement in learning (Harmer, 2007, p. 58). Krashen claimed that adults' relative difficulty with acquisition compared to children is due to having a higher affective filter (Krashen, 1982, p. 45). However, Gregg points out that children also have emotions that affect acquisition (1984, p. 91).

2.3 Cognitive/Developmental Theories

The cognitive/developmental approach grew out of a need to account for the insufficiency of universal grammar (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 38) and looks at language acquisition as the processing of knowledge from controlled to automatic (Brown, 2007, p. 300). The main tenants include the interaction hypothesis, negotiation of meaning, the output hypothesis, and connectionism.

The interaction hypothesis proposes that conversational interaction is the key to providing comprehensible input. Speakers modify their speech in order to make it more comprehensible to learners, which leads to acquisition (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 43). It was previously believed that interaction is only a means of practicing what has been learned. Long, however, believed that language acquisition happened *through* interaction (Brown, 2007, p. 305). He described fifteen strategies and tactics that learners use to make input comprehensible (Long, 1983). Integral to this hypothesis is “negotiating meaning,” wherein overcoming communication breakdowns leads to acquisition (Skehan, 2001, p. 82).

Reactions to these theories have been varied. Pica et al. (1996, p. 61) stated that when learners negotiate meaning, their opportunities for learning are multiplied and strengthened. One critic of the theory, Aston (1986), contended that attempts to negotiate meaning cause learners to feign understanding in order to make the interaction appear successful.

Merrill Swain introduced the output hypothesis. This hypothesis suggests that, when negotiating meaning, students must be “pushed” towards accurate output. This allows the learner to test out hypotheses and process language syntactically (Swain, 1985, p. 248). Skehan outlines additional roles including the development of automaticity, discourse skills, and a personal voice (Skehan, 2001, pp. 80-81). One study by Nobuyoshi and Ellis found that certain learners may benefit more than others by being “pushed,” and some grammar structures may lend themselves more readily to this approach (1993). Krashen strongly criticized the hypothesis, claiming, “There is no direct evidence that comprehensible output leads to language acquisition” (1998, p. 180).

Connectionism differs drastically from innatism by refocusing attention onto environmental factors of language learning (Ellis, 1994, p. 407; Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 23). Connectionists posit that language is learned by establishing and strengthening connections between stimuli and responses (Saville-Troike, 2006, p. 27). The neural network of the human brain is compared to computer networks. Through exposure to multiple examples, computer programs can “learn” by making generalizations based on multiple examples (Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p. 23). Therefore, there is no need for explicit understanding of language rules (Rumelhart & McClelland, 1986, as cited in Ellis, 1994, p. 407). Pinker & Prince (1989, as cited in Ellis, 1994, p. 407) criticized this theory for being reductionist due to its similarity to behaviorism.

3. Study Design

3.1 Instrument

A questionnaire was designed to investigate behaviorist, innatist, and cognitive/developmental beliefs among English students at the senior high school level. The questionnaire was translated into Japanese by one of the researchers and a native speaker of Japanese. It was then piloted with two individuals to check for translation and question interpretation accuracy.

The questionnaire included a series of statements reflecting behaviorist, innatist, and cognitive/developmental beliefs. Each theory was represented by eight statements, where four original statements were duplicated and given the opposite or near-opposite meaning. In total, the questionnaire was made up of 24 items and ordering was determined via a random number generator. A Likert scale was used for all items with options ranging from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree”. Demographic questions were also included. The Japanese translation for the 24 items can be found in the Appendix.

3.2 Participants

Participants from this study came from two different senior high schools in Japan. The first, an urban private girls-only school (hereby referred to as School A) and the second, a rural private co-ed school (hereby referred to as School B). A total of 43 students from School A and 54 from School B were surveyed. However, responses from seven individuals from School

A and eight individuals from School B were not included because it was evident that participants did not truthfully answer the questionnaire. Due to the questionnaire's design, all items have an opposite. Therefore, it was decided that any participant who either agreed or disagreed with both items of a pair at least four times would be deemed as a hostile participant and their data would be excluded. This safeguard in the questionnaire increases the internal validity of the study.

In total, responses from 36 students from School A and 46 students from School B are included in this study. At the time of data collection, all participants were in their second semester and therefore already familiar with the course curriculum, the instructor's expectations, and their classmates. Exactly half the students from School A were in their second year and half in their third year. All students belonged to the international course at their school which, compared to other courses, places a special emphasis on learning foreign language, culture, and preparation for study abroad. Students also self-reported their English ability and only one student claimed to be a beginner, six reported lower-intermediate, 23 intermediate, five upper-intermediate, and one advanced. Students from School B were enrolled in a "regular" senior-high course and all students reported their English ability to be either beginner or lower-intermediate level, 31 and 15 respectively.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Questionnaires were administered during regular class hours and students were made aware that participation was optional and had no effect on their course grade. Descriptive statistics were first used to interpret the results. IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) v.25 was then used to run Independent Samples *t*-tests to determine if there was a statistically significant difference in means between responses from School A and School B.

4. Results

As discussed in Section 3.1, the questionnaire consisted of 24 items testing three different theories of language learning beliefs. In Table 1, items are organized in pairs, with the item agreeing with a specific SLA theory in green, and the item disagreeing with that SLA theory in red. Included in Table 1 are the means and standard deviations (*SD*) of all questionnaire items for both School A ($n=36$) and School B ($n=46$). Since all items were answered on a five-point Likert scale, a mean of 3 would signify neither agreement nor disagreement. Disagreement with an item strengthens as the mean approaches the minimum possible score of 1, and agreement for items grows stronger as the mean increases, with a potential maximum score of 5.

Also included in Table 1 are 95% confidence interval (*CI*) values from Independent Samples *t*-tests. 95% *CI*s with both values on the same side of zero signify statistical significance equivalent to $p < .05$. Both Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests of normality confirmed normality for all questionnaire items. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was run on each item and variances were confirmed to be not statistically different for all items except for items 2, 4, 7, 13, 15, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23. When variances were statistically different, reported *CI* values are from SPSS's "Equal variances not assumed" output.

4.1 Behaviorist Theory Beliefs

The first eight items represent behaviorist theory. Participants whose ideas are in line with behaviorist theory should agree with statements 1, 4, and 9 and disagree with Items 7, 15, and 17. Agreement with Item 14 and disagreement with Item 24 would represent agreement with the contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH).

The first pair of questions tested the respondents' beliefs about what type of errors should be corrected. School A was rather unsure if learners should have all errors corrected (Item 1, mean = 3.00) and slightly disagreed that only major errors should be corrected (Item 17, mean = 2.64). School B echoed this relative uncertainty about the need for all errors to be corrected (mean = 2.96) but felt a little stronger about the belief that only major errors should be corrected (mean = 3.30).

School A agreed with the behaviorist position that practice through repetition of imitable behavior is the best way to learn a language, which is represented by strong agreement on Item 4 (mean = 4.25). This is in contrast to School B who had a slightly unfavorable view of repetition of imitable behavior (mean = 2.87). This difference is statistically significant with *CI*s

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and t-test Confidence Intervals from Student Questionnaire

Theory	Tested Hypothesis	Questionnaire Item	School A <i>M / SD</i>	School B <i>M / SD</i>	<i>CI</i>
Behaviorist	General Behaviorist Beliefs	1) Language learners need to have all of their errors corrected.	3.00 / 0.79	2.96 / 0.94	-0.35, 0.43
		17) Learners only need their major errors corrected.	2.64 / 0.87	3.30 / 0.84	-1.05, -0.29
		4) Language is best learned by imitating what one hears over and over again.	4.25 / 0.55	2.87 / 1.09	1.01, 1.75
		7) Expressing one's own ideas spontaneously is better than just rote repetition practice.	3.94 / 0.67	3.61 / 0.98	-0.03, 0.70
		9) Developing and reinforcing habits helps learners learn language.	4.50 / 0.66	1.98 / 0.95	2.15, 2.89
		15) The creation and reinforcement of habits is irrelevant to language learning.	2.06 / 0.67	3.70 / 1.05	-2.02, -1.26
	Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH)	14) A major difficulty in learning a new language is the interference of one's own native language.	2.69 / 0.95	3.87 / 0.81	-1.56, -0.79
		24) Knowledge of one's native language is helpful in learning a new language.	4.03 / 0.77	3.28 / 0.96	0.35, 1.14
Innatist	Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis	12) The ability to pick up a language in a natural situation is superior to consciously memorizing rules and language forms.	3.75 / 0.77	3.98 / 0.75	-0.56, 0.11
		3) It is more useful to study language rules and memorize vocabulary than to pick up language from conversation.	2.58 / 0.77	3.52 / 0.91	-1.32, -0.56
	Natural Order Hypothesis	16) Some grammatical structures are naturally learned earlier than others, regardless of the order in which grammar is taught.	3.08 / 0.69	3.80 / 0.58	-1.00, -0.44
		22) The order in which grammatical structures are learned can vary from person to person.	3.78 / 0.68	3.07 / 1.16	0.30, 1.15
	Input Hypothesis	19) Learners learn best with material that is slightly above their current level.	3.14 / 0.76	2.20 / 1.13	0.53, 1.36
		5) Exposure to material much higher than one's current level is helpful for learning a language.	2.53 / 0.61	3.24 / 0.79	-1.03, -0.39
	Affective Filter Hypothesis	8) Language learners' feelings, motives, needs and attitudes affect how much they learn.	4.08 / 0.69	4.48 / 0.59	-0.68, -0.11
		2) Language learners learn a language regardless of individual emotional factors.	3.28 / 0.82	2.70 / 1.19	0.14, 1.02
Cognitive / Developmentalist	Interaction Hypothesis	13) Learners learn a language by speaking that language with others.	4.33 / 0.63	2.50 / 0.96	1.48, 2.19
		20) One can learn a language without ever using that language to interact with others.	2.11 / 0.75	3.80 / 0.81	-2.04, -1.35
	Negotiating Meaning	18) Language learners learn by testing out and modifying their guesses about language.	3.92 / 0.55	3.07 / 1.16	0.46, 1.24
		21) Learners' own guesses about how language works are irrelevant to the learning process.	2.58 / 0.77	2.54 / 1.09	-0.37, 0.45
	Output Hypothesis	23) Hearing and reading language is not enough. Learners must also practice producing language which is understandable to others.	4.00 / 0.68	2.67 / 0.92	0.98, 1.68
		10) Hearing and reading a language is all that is needed to learn it.	3.72 / 1.00	3.57 / 0.75	-0.23, 0.54
	Connection-ism	6) Learners can best learn the rules of language by making generalizations based on multiple examples.	3.25 / 0.73	3.89 / 0.85	-1.00, -0.29
		11) It is necessary to be told the rules about a language in order to learn it. Exposure to examples alone is not enough.	3.78 / 0.64	3.74 / 0.88	-0.31, 0.39

of [1.01, 1.75]. That being said, both schools held the belief that spontaneous expression of one's ideas is better than just repetition practice (Item 7, School A mean = 3.94 and School B mean = 3.61).

The role of habit formation is a principle about which both schools had very differing opinions. School A agreed strongly with Item 9 (mean = 4.50), supporting the behaviorists claim that developing and reinforcing habits helps to learn a language. However, School B did not agree (mean = 1.98). There is further evidence of this with Item 9's opposite, Item 15, which states that habit formation is irrelevant to language learning. School A disagreed that habit formation was irrelevant (mean = 2.06) but School B believed it was irrelevant (mean = 3.70). Both of these responses were statistically different with Item 9's *CIs* being [2.15, 2.89] and Item 15's being [-2.02, -1.26].

In regards to the CAH, School A appeared to show a lack of support and School B showed support. School A slightly disagreed that interference from the learner's L1 is a major difficulty to learning a new language (Item 14, mean = 2.69) and agrees with Item's 14 opposite, Item 24 (mean = 4.03), which states that the L1 is helpful when learning a L2. On the other hand, School B leans slightly towards agreeing that the L1 is helpful (Item 24, mean = 3.28) but strongly agrees that the L1 causes major interference when learning a new language (Item 14, mean = 3.87). Difference to the responses of Items 14 and 24 were statistically significant. Item 14 has *CIs* of [-1.56, -0.79] and Item 24 has *CIs* of [0.35, 1.14].

4.2 Innatist Theory Beliefs

Innatist theory is represented by the middle section of Table 1. The first hypothesis tested from the innatist school of thought was the acquisition-learning hypothesis. Participants who support the acquisition-learning hypothesis would agree with Item 12 and disagree with Item 3. Both School A and B agreed with the hypothesis that learning a language through a natural situation is better than learning a language through memorization and rules (Item 12, School A mean = 3.75 and School B mean = 3.98). School A further showed support for this hypothesis by disagreeing with Item 3 (mean = 2.58), which states that it is more useful to learn rules and memorize vocabulary than it is to learn a language through conversation. However, School B believed that learning rules and memorizing vocabulary is actually more useful (mean = 3.52).

The natural order hypothesis was tested through Items 16 and 22. Those who agree with the natural order hypothesis would be expected to agree with Item 16 and disagree with 22. School A remained neutral on Item 16 (mean = 3.08) while School B's level of agreement was strong (mean = 3.80). Item 16's opposite, Item 22, asked if the order grammar is learned varies from person to person and School A agreed (mean = 3.78) while School B remained neutral (mean = 3.07). This signifies that School A most likely disagrees with the hypothesis while School B leans towards agreement.

The third innatist hypothesis tested was the input hypothesis. Agreement with the input hypothesis would be signified by agreement with Item 19 and disagreement with Item 5. School A showed stronger support for learning with materials that are only slightly higher than one's current ability (Item 19, mean = 3.14) than with much more advanced materials (Item 5, mean = 2.53). On the other hand, School B believed more advanced materials are more beneficial (mean = 3.24) than materials only slightly above one's current level (mean = 2.20). The difference in Item 19's responses were statistically significant with *CIs* of [0.53, 1.36], as well as Item 5, with *CIs* of [-1.03, -0.39].

The final hypothesis that was tested was the affective filter hypothesis, which states that those with high confidence, high motivation, and low anxiety learn language best. Agreement with Item 8 and disagreement with Item 2 would be expected for agreement with the hypothesis. Both School A (mean = 4.08) and School B (mean = 4.48) agreed with Item 8 that a learner's feelings, motives, needs, and attitudes affect language learning. However, School A seemed to agree that a language can be learned regardless of emotion (Item 2, mean = 3.28) whereas School B did not (mean = 2.70), which confirms School B's agreement with the hypothesis. Despite School A's slight disagreement with Item 2, strong agreement with Item 8 most likely signifies agreement with the hypothesis.

4.3 Cognitive/Developmentalist Theory Beliefs

The final third of Table 1 corresponds to beliefs about the cognitive/developmentalist theory of language learning. The first hypothesis tested was the interaction hypothesis. Agreement with Item 13 and disagreement with Item 20 would signify agreement with the interaction hypothesis. School A had very strong agreement on Item 13 (mean = 4.33), showing support

for the belief that a language is learned through conversation whereas School B showed disagreement (mean = 2.50). School A continued to show agreement for the interaction hypothesis by disagreeing with Item 20, stating that a language can be learned without ever using that language to interact with others (mean = 2.11). School B continued to disagree with the interaction hypothesis by agreeing with Item 20 (mean = 3.80). These differences are statistically significant for Item 13 (*CI*s: [1.48, 2.19]) and Item 20 (*CI*s: [-2.04, -1.35]).

Agreement with Item 18 and disagreement with Item 21 would support negotiating meaning. School A agreed with Item 18 (mean = 3.92) that making guesses about language is how learners learn and disagreed with Item 21 (mean = 2.58), stating that negotiating meaning is irrelevant to the learning process. This shows that School A agreed with the cognitive/developmental principle of negotiating meaning. School B appeared to also lean slightly towards agreement with negotiating meaning by remaining neutral on the belief that negotiating meaning is how learners learn (Item 18, mean = 3.07) and disagreeing with the belief that guesses are irrelevant (mean = 2.54). While both schools had a positive response on Item 18, School A's level of agreement was significantly stronger with *CI*s of [0.46, 1.24].

The third hypothesis tested was the output hypothesis, which is rooted in the belief that when learning a language output is necessary. A preference for the output hypothesis would mean agreement with Item 23 and disagreement with Item 10. School A's responses were contradictory due to agreement with Item 23 (mean = 4.00) and agreement with Item 10 (mean = 3.72). However, School B disagreed with Item 23 that output is necessary (mean = 2.67) and agreed with Item 10 that hearing and reading are enough (mean = 3.57), providing evidence in School B's disagreement with the output hypothesis. The difference in responses for Item 23 is statistically significant having *CI*s of [0.98, 1.68].

The final set of questions is related to connectionism. Those whose ideas are in line with connectionism would agree with Item 6 and disagree with Item 11. School A again contradicted itself by agreeing that learners can learn the rules of a language by making generalizations based on examples (Item 6, mean = 3.25) but also agreeing that it is necessary to be told the rules of a language (Item 11, mean = 3.78). School B's beliefs were also not clear as there was strong agreement with Item 6 (mean = 3.89) and also strong agreement on Item 11 (mean = 3.74).

5. Discussion

School A and School B hold very contrasting opinions in regards to behaviorism. School B's responses on each item that represents behaviorism's general principles indicate disagreement with the behaviorist school of thought whereas School A agrees with behaviorism that importance should be placed on habit formation and repetition. Pedagogically, behaviorist beliefs may result in too much emphasis being placed on habit formation and rote memorization, with not enough time spent on communicative activities.

School A's alignment with these behaviorist beliefs may stem from the fact that many Japanese schools still use *yakudoku*, the Japanese version of grammar-translation, which is used to prepare students for university entrance examinations (O'Donnell, 2005). Students of an international course would most likely be expected to take the English section of a college admissions test, therefore this need to pass exams may be why School A's learners hesitate to let go of old learning methods. It may be necessary to make students and teachers aware at School A that behaviorism has been largely discredited (deBot et al., 2005, p. 34). It may also be helpful to emphasize that communicative teaching methods *can* be used to help prepare students for exams. In fact, according to Willis & Willis (2007, p. 132) "task-based learners are actually better prepared for exams than their form-focused counterparts."

In regards to the CAH, School A's belief that the native language is helpful, instead of harmful, to learning a new language may be an indication that this belief changes with L2 ability. School A's students self-reported to be of a higher level than School B's students and School B's students reported that the native language is more harmful than helpful to the learning process. It is possible that as L2 proficiency increases, so does the ability to recognize and ignore the type of interference the native language causes.

School B's response in regards to the innatist acquisition-learning hypothesis was rather intriguing. While the students understand that learning a language through natural situations may be the best way to learn a language, they may believe that

for them learning through the memorization of rules and vocabulary is more useful. One possible explanation for this is that School B's students still do not have the confidence necessary to communicate in the L2 and would rather study by themselves. Classroom activities that help boost oral communication confidence may be useful to implement in School B. On the other hand, School A disagreed with the acquisition-learning hypothesis, which shows that despite showing some preference for behaviorist theories, they may be open to more conversation based lessons.

There is a possible explanation for the difference in responses from both schools regarding the input hypothesis. First, both groups of learners may trust that the learning materials they are getting from their coursework is the best material for them. However, both groups may be studying very similar material as they are both soon going to be taking university entrance exams. Therefore, the more advanced a learner the smaller the gap is between their ability and the materials. A study of the materials used in both classrooms could lead to further understanding of this difference.

Arguably one of the most contrasting differences about both schools' language learning beliefs is the differing opinions on the interaction hypothesis and the output hypothesis. School A strongly agrees with the interaction hypothesis that to learn a language it is necessary to use that language to interact with others. However, School B disagrees with this, as well as the output hypothesis, and believes that being able to read and hear a language is all that is necessary to learn that language. It may be necessary to educate School B's students that in order to become proficient in a language it is necessary to practice producing the language as the skills necessary to comprehend a text or listening passage are different than the skills required to hold a conversation.

As this study shows, different groups of learners hold very different beliefs in regards to language learning. Instructors should always be aware of the beliefs their students hold as teaching in contradiction to those beliefs can lead to students losing confidence in their instructor. It is also necessary to understand these beliefs in order to educate the students that the beliefs they hold might be incorrect. Instructors should take the time to communicate their beliefs with their students, and educate the students on the beliefs they hold.

6. Conclusion

A survey about second language acquisition was conducted with students at two senior-high schools to contrast the SLA beliefs of two different groups of students and to determine discrepancies between participants' beliefs and SLA theories. Both groups agreed with SLA principles such as the affective filter hypothesis and negotiating meaning. However, both groups disagreed on behaviorism, and hypotheses such as the input hypothesis, interaction hypothesis and output hypothesis. No school sided solely with one specific theory as each group agreed and disagreed with aspects of each of the three schools of thought. This research provides evidence that each group of students hold different language learning beliefs and therefore practitioners should be aware of the beliefs their students hold and use those beliefs to inform teaching methodologies in the classroom. Teachers should be encouraged to survey their students to understand their language learning beliefs and this paper provides one example of a method to do so.

7. Limitations and Further Research

Limitations of the study include sample size of students and a lack of qualitative data. Further, several contradictory results emerged where respondents agreed (or disagreed) with two statements which were intended to have opposite meanings. It is possible that the statements were unclear or misinterpreted, but may also show that respondents simultaneously hold conflicting beliefs. Qualitative data in the form of respondent interviews would give further insight into why respondents believe what they do and why different groups of students hold drastically different beliefs.

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9. Appendix

1. 語学学習者によいては、すべての誤りを訂正する必要がある。
2. 語学学習は、その時の感情に左右されずに語学を学ぶ。
3. 実際の会話から無意識に言語を身につけるよりも文法を勉強したり単語を暗記する方が効果的である。
4. 言語は何度も繰り返し聴いた後で、真似をするのが最も良い学習法である。
5. 学習者のレベルよりもはるかにレベルの高い教材を使うのは効果的である。
6. 文法を学ぶ最良の方法は、実例からパターンを見つけ出すことである。
7. ただ決められた練習を繰り返すよりも自発的に自らの考えを表現する方が学習者にとって良い。
8. 学習者の気持ち、動機、ニーズ、態度は、学習者がどれくらい学習してきたかに影響します。
9. 継続的な習慣を身につけることが言語習得に役立つ。
10. 言語を聴くことや読むことが、言語を学ぶことに必要な全てである。

11. ただ例文を用いて学ぶだけでは十分ではなく、言語のルールを教わる必要がある。
12. 意識的に文法を勉強したり単語を暗記するよりも実際の会話から無意識に言語を身につける方が効果的である。
13. 学習者は、言語を他の人と話すことによってその言語を習得する。
14. 新しい言語を学ぶことが難しい原因は、母国語と混乱してしまうことである。
15. 継続的な習慣を身につけることと言語習得とは無関係である。
16. いくつかの特定の文法の構造は教わった順序に関わらず、他の文法よりも自然に身につけられる。
17. 学習者は重要な誤りのみを訂正すれば良い。
18. 学習者は言語について自ら予測し、試し、修正することで学ぶ。
19. 語学は、学習者にとって、本人の現在のレベルをわずかに上回る教材を使うことで最もよく学べる。
20. 他の人と一切交わらなくとも言語を学べる。
21. 語学の働きを学習者が自ら予測し学ぶことは不要である。
22. 人それぞれによって文法を学ぶ順序は異なる。
23. ヒアリングとリーディングをするだけでは不十分である。他人が理解できるように言語を使うようになることで学習できたと言える。
24. 母国語の知識を持つことは他言語を学ぶ際に役に立つ。

(2019 年 4 月 26 日受理)