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Intrinsic Motivation in English Language Learning in Japan: A Review of

Previous Studies

Hayate Tanaka

Tokyo Future University, Department of Child Psychology, Student

22s12178@tokyomirai.jp

Tomoko Hashimoto

Tokyo Future University, Department of Child Psychology

hashimoto-tomoko@tokyomirai.jp

【Abstract】

 This preliminary study aims to compare and examine previous studies on intrinsic motivation in English language learning written in Japanese. In traditional Japanese education, there has been a strong reliance on extrinsic motivation, such as tests and evaluations. However, these often fail to sufficiently cultivate learners’ autonomy and creativity, leading to a recent increasing interest in intrinsic motivation. By examining prior studies in this field, this research seeks to provide practitioners with insights into recent trends and emerging issues.

A literature search was conducted using CiNii Research (an inter-university academic database service widely used in Japanese to search for research written primarily in Japanese) -with the keywords “motivation(doukizuke), “Englis(eigo),” and “intrinsic(naihatuteki).” The decision to examine articles in CiNii Research stemmed and learners compared to global, English-language database. Initially, the search was performed with the keyword combination “intrinsic motivations English,” which resulted in nine articles. This number was considered insufficient for conducting a comprehensive analysis and comparison, and for minimizing the risk of biased conclusions. Therefore, the keyword “intrinsic motivation” were separated into “intrinsic” and “motivation,” increasing the number of articles to 69, which was deemed to be an adequate number for analysis.

 From the 69 articles retrieved, the study categorized studies. It was found that research targeting university or vocational students was the most prevalent (58%), followed by high school students (5%), middle students (7%), elementary students (7%), instructs (2%), and other (20%). This indicates university and vocational students are frequently set as research subjects, whereas studies targeting high school students and below significantly fewer. Moving forward, this study intends to further the classification and focus on comparing and analyzing prior research targeting university and vocational students.

Keywords: Intrinsic motivation, English language learning, Japan