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A Survey of Japanese University Students' Future Use of English Goal Orientations*

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The aim of this study is to present preliminary results from an ongoing large-scale study of English-language future goal orientations held by Japanese university students. The work here involves an investigation of learners in multiple disciplines, from five universities, both public and private, in the Kanto-region of Japan, and their perspective on their future use of English. The results summarize written essays on L2-goal orientations.
Preliminary results indicate Japanese learners (n = 629) as a whole have disparate L2-learning goals; however, these can be summarized into four broad categories: career, personal life, study, and general; and early findings indicate that most learners (63.56%) are oriented to career or personal goal orientations, while others are oriented to study and general. These early results help us to gain a better understanding of the future goals of Japanese university learners and their views of English usage in the future. (146 words)

[goal orientation/future use of English/Japanese university students]

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Japanese Education

Two generations ago, less than half of all junior high school graduates enrolled in high school, whereas today, nearly 98% do so; likewise, in 1955, the number of high school

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graduates who entered some form of tertiary education was less than 10%, today this number is more than two-thirds of high school graduates (MEXT, 2006). Unfortunately, this increasing democratization of education may result in the devaluing of learning Rohlen, 1983).

Historically, the Japanese education model, the J-mode credential oriented society, emphasized the meritocratic nature of education (Kariya, 2009). In this model, learners who persevered rose to the top—the top being the highest, most prestigious universities in Japan, such as the public University of Tokyo or the private Waseda University. Once admitted to these prestigious universities, the meritorious students were assured of golden futures. However, as early as the 1970s, Rohlen (1983) questioned the veracity of this model, and wondered whether the examinations and the subsequent streaming into schools at the upper secondary and tertiary level reflected family background, i.e. socioeconomic strata streamed students into appropriate schools rather than streaming based on any notion of merit and perseverance.

In the 1980s, a number of structural changes began to take place in Japanese society, and education was no exception. These changes shifted education from the J-mode-style to a learning capital society (Kariya, 2009). The result is that individuals themselves have become responsible for education and development: "Responsibility for human capital accumulation has shifted to workers themselves" (Kariya, p. 98). Japanese newspaper and magazine reports are now filled with accounts of the record number of Japanese university juniors and seniors who are unable to secure employment following graduation, who, as a result, do not complete graduation so that they remain eligible for *shushokukatsudo*—job hunting (Honda, 2011; Hosaka, 2011). Furthermore, Japanese university students are aware that more Japanese companies are requiring their workers to be able to use English in the workplace through a variety of means, including both Rakuten (Igarashi, 2010) and Uniqlo (Nannichi, 2010) two trendy Japanese companies, where English has been made the official language of the respective companies.

2. Goal orientation

Goal orientation is a mental process to promote outcome A (e.g. high status employment) over outcome B (e.g. low status employment or unemployment) (Oettingen & Gollwitzer, 2009). To successfully reach goals, people need to complete two different tasks: goal setting and goal attainment (Oettingen, Hönig, & Gollwitzer, 2000). According to Carver and Scheier (2009), at any given time, we orient to a series of hierarchical disparate goals. However, our resources are finite. As a result, our

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consciousness is likely to be fully accessible for the most important goal only (Carver & Scheier, 2009), the goal to which we direct most available resources. Learners that maintain their resources fixated on long-term goals, such as passing the entrance examination to a prestigious university, or becoming bilingual, need to delay gratification. That is, pleasure will be experienced in the distant future. In the meantime, much effort needs to be expended to achieve those distal goals.Also, different individuals direct different amounts of resources to different goals. Goals with less prioritization may be lost or forfeited. Goals may shift upwards or downwards, in that a lower-ranked goal is deemed more important, or a higher-ranked goal is now felt less important (Carver & Scheier). Or, new goals may arise and previous goal hierarchies are readjusted. Goals to which one orient may be perceived as positive-approach (study vocabulary so that I can learn the L2), or negative-avoidance (study vocabulary so that I don't fail the test).

The more proximal one is to a goal, the greater the value one places on that goal (Förster & Liberman, 2009). However, we interpret goals on different levels: high-level —abstract representations of outcomes; and low-level—concrete representations of the same outcomes (Förster & Liberman). For example, students may interpret success on a future English-language job-hunting experience as a joyful, satisfying, life-enriching experience on a high-level; or as a tiresome, boring, and challenging experience on a low-level. The focal point for each individual is different. Again, using the model of delayed gratification, those who are oriented to long-term academic success are likely to be able to view this experience on a high-level, as joyful, satisfying, and life-enriching; but learners who do not see long-term success as viable or acceptable, or who are without a long-term goal orientation are likely to view the experience of studying English for future job prospects, for example, on a low-level, as boring, tiresome, challenging, and impossible.

Previously, Japanese university learners were found to acknowledge the importance of learning English for their future career and private life (Irie, 2003). Recent conversations with our students, however, leave us with the impression that many are anxious about their futures; and at the same time they believe English will play an important role in their life after university graduation, and thus, many tell us that they are orienting toward their goal of a future of using English. Our research is guided one important question. What are the goal orientations for Japanese university students regarding future English-language use? This paper reports on early results from a study investigating the English-language goal orientations of Japanese university learners in which learners wrote short compositions in their L1 or L2 describing their English-language learning goals.

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II. RESEARCH DESIGN

1. Subjects

A total of 629 respondents from five universities participated in this study. This included 301 males and 328 females. See Table 1 for details. Of these numbers, 44 males and 88 females have had overseas experiences in an L1-English speaking environment, such as participating in a homestay program or ESL classes. The largest number of participants was 1st year students (43.08%), followed by 2nd year students (34.66), 3rd year students (17.81%), 4th year (3.82) and 5th year (0.64%).

The five universities represent both public and private universities with a range of *hensachi* (standardized university entrance exam scores) from 40 to 59[2]. This represents approximately one standard deviation above and below the average hensachi score. University 5 Private (English & Other[3]), a female-only university had the lowest rank hensachi, and University 3 Public (Science) had the highest. The number of participants from each university varied from the lowest of 96 from University 3 to 191 from the highest in University 5. The ratio between male and female participants differs over the 5 universities. On the one hand, Universities 3, 2, 4 have a high percentage of male participants (92.31%, 86.46% and 70.07% male participants respectively). On the other hand, Universities 5 and 1 have a high percentage of female participants (100% and 74.26% female participants respectively). The percentage of those participants who had experience overseas from University 1 (English majors) were the highest at 39.60%, and the lowest from University 2 at 9.38%.

TABLE 1

Participants by University, Gender, and Overseas Experience

University (Department) (Hensachi)	Totals Raw value (%)	Male (overseas)	Female (overseas)
1. Private (English) (54)	101 (16.06%)	26 (6)	75 (34)
2. Private (Science) (53)	96 15.26%)	83 (8)	13 (1)
3. Public (Science) (59)	104 (16.53%)	96 (18)	8 (2)
4. Public (Science & Sports) (54 & 56)	137 (21.78%)	96 (12)	41 (12)
5. Private (English & Other) (40)	191 (30.37%)	-	191 (39)
Total	629	301 (44)	328 (88)

[1] By comparison, the highest ranked department at the University of Tokyo had a hensachi of 83 (Benesse Corporation, 2011).

[2] Other represents learners from multiple disciplines, including Arts, Sociology, Nutrition, and Home Economics, who are enrolled in non-required English communication classes at University 5.

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2. Procedure

Within the first three weeks of the school year, all participants completed a one-page questionnaire with a short background survey and a written response to a prompt. The background survey contained questions about their university and department, gender, year at school, experience with English tests (EIKEN[3], TOEFL, TOEIC and other), and experience overseas (living abroad, homestay, study abroad). The written prompt was "What are your future goals for learning English?" in Japanese, the L1, or in English, the L2, with five lines of text for the former, and 50 words for the latter. See Appendix A. The participants had 25 minutes to complete the one-page questionnaire, although most students completed the task in less than 20 minutes.

An academic translator translated into English all L1-written responses, and a bilingual Japanese-English researcher verified these translations. For each written response, two trained graders coded the response no goal (0), less specific goal (1) or more specific goal (2) across four categories; career, personal, study or general. As an example, the following response was written in both Japanese and English by one participant, and the codes across three categories, career (2), study (1), and personal (1), have been inserted in the participant output. See Table 2.

TABLE 2

Example of Student L1/L2 Response to FUE Written

Japanese response	私は大学在学中もしくは卒業後に、長期の留学を経験し、海外で自分の学びたい分野を専門的に学び高いスキルをみに付けたいです[study (1)]。将来は最終的に国際秘書として世界の重要な架け橋になりたいです[career (2)]。もう一つの夢は国際結婚をする事です[personal (1)]。
English response	I want to study abroad in long term when I am at school or after graduate [study (1)]. In my future I want to be a International secretary and be a bridge between all over the world and Japan [career (2)]. Another my dream is international marriage [personal (1)]
Coding	Career (2), study (1) and personal (1)

The data from the background survey, the translated written responses and subsequent codes were input manually in a spreadsheet by two researcher assistants, and the two researchers verified the data set. The raw counts and percentage values for this data set were calculated using SPSS for university, gender, overseas experience, department, English test experience and year at school. However, disagreements in coding between the graders, which occurred in less than 10% of all learner responses, were discussed between

[3] EIKEN, produced and administered by the Society for Testing English Proficiency, is an English Language Proficiency test used widely in Japan.

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the graders until agreement was reached. Table 3 below displays examples of learner output per category and code. Responses that covered multiple categories were given a code for each category described by the learner.

TABLE 3

Coding Categories with Examples from Learner Output

Category: Definition	Code 1: Less specific	Code 2: More specific
Career: Response specific to career	Have enough skills to benefit me at work	Want to spread hospital art to Japanese hospitals, contact hospitals in the UK where hospital art has been used for 20-30 years, and want JP staff to understand the medical benefits of art work in hospitals
Personal: Response specific to personal use	Understand lyrics to songs	Understand what Johnny Depp says in Pirates of Caribbean
Study: Response specific to study	Improve vocabulary	Be able to present at international conferences, write research papers in English and talk about my field with other specialists
General: Response which was not specific to career, personal or study	Be able to communicate	Be able to read, write, converse in English smoothly, put strength in to writing and conversation, understand programs in English and be able to speak fluently with foreigners

III. RESULTS

1. Orientations

A total of 689 participants took part in some aspects of data collection for this study; however, 60 (8.71%) of the participants were removed from the study including 55 (7.98%) whose returned papers were not valid for analysis. This invalidity was due to missing information on either the background information, or no response to the written composition. A further five (0.73%) participants had no English goal orientations. The 629 valid participants' responses were coded, and a total of 826 disparate goals, organized in four broad categories, were identified. These are summarized in Table 4 below. Goal orientations were highest for career (36.32%), personal (27.24%), general (19.49%) and, finally, study (16.95%). Of this total, 590 (71.43%) responses were less specific and 236 (28.57%) responses were more specific goals.

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TABLE 4

Japanese University Students Orientations (raw count and percentage)

		Career	Personal	Study	General	Total
Raw count	Less specific	148	202	91	149	590
	More specific	152	23	49	12	236
	Total	300	225	140	161	826
Percentage	Less specific	17.92	24.46	11.02	18.04	71.43
	More specific	18.40	2.78	5.93	1.45	28.57
	Total	36.32	27.24	16.95	19.49	100.00

2. Career goal orientations

Participants from University 5, the university with the lowest hensachi, wrote the most career specific goal orientations (83), followed by participants from Universities 1 and 4 (64 each), then participants from University 3 (50) and University 2 (39). However, in terms of percentage of career specific goal orientations per university, University 1 (English department students only) had the highest number (63.37%). No other percentage per university was above 50%. In the case of more or less specific, learners from University 1 were more specific in their career goals at 33.66% followed by University 4 (29.20%), University 5 (23.56%), University 3 (18.27%) and University 2 being the least specific at (14.58%). See Table 5.

TABLE 5

Career Goal Oriented Learners by University (raw count and percentage)

	Code	Uni 1	Uni 2	Uni 3	Uni 4	Uni 5	Total
	Less specific	30	25	31	24	38	148
Raw count	More specific	34	14	19	40	45	152
	Total	64	39	50	64	83	300
	Less specific	29.70	26.04	29.81	17.52	19.90	
Percentage	More specific	33.66	14.58	18.27	29.20	23.56	
	Total	63.37	40.63	48.08	46.72	43.46	

Male participants wrote 135 (45%) career-specific career orientations, including 64 more specific, compared with 165 (55%) for female participants, including 86 more specific. Of the 44 males with overseas experience, 23 (52.27%) described a career specific goal orientation, including 13 (29.55%) who described a more specific career goal orientation. Of the 88 females with overseas experience, 49 (55.68%) described a career specific goal orientation, including 27 (30.68%) who described a more specific career goal orientation. The results showed that those participants, both male and female, with overseas experience described more career goal orientations than those with no overseas experience. See Appendix B.

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There were diverse career specific goal orientations; however, the following sub-categories were identified across the 300 responses. Occupation specific (141) was the most common at 47%. For example, "I am studying English to become an English teacher at junior high school," (4th year male, Uni 1). A further 112 (37%) want to improve or gain conversational skills of varying degrees from complete fluency, to daily conversation level. For example, "I want to gain perfect comprehension of grammar and conversation in English. I want to be a translator of children's books," (3rd year female, Uni 1). Another 53 (18%) responses were specific towards good enough English so as not to be at a disadvantage when job hunting or at work. "Japan requires workers competent in English. I want to study English and make my skills an advantage for job hunting. Once I have a job, I want to make English my strength," (2nd year male, Uni 4). Still another 28 (9%) responses were specific to gaining business English skills, "currently looking for work where English can be used, aiming for business English level conversation" (4th year female, Uni 1); and 16 responses (5%) were related to improving TOEIC scores for job hunting purpose, "my aim is to get over 730 in TOEIC and get a job that requires the use of English," (3rd year female, Uni 5). In more than 10% of the learner output, responses included more than one sub-category. For example, "I want to become a teacher (Math and Information). However the educational literature on the Internet is often in English [occupation specific]. There may also be children who speak English as a first language so it will be necessary to speak English in the classroom [skill specific]," (2nd year male, Uni 2).

The respondents identified career dependent skills as necessary or useful. For example, future athletes and teachers (non-English), those aiming for the service industry (hotel, travel), and other non-English teaching related careers such as nutritionists mentioned conversational skills. "I want to work for hotels or at the airport. I want to communicate with foreign business associates in English," (2nd year female, Uni 5). Future English teachers frequently mentioned the 4 skills, while future engineers mentioned business English, English for specific purpose and presentation skills. Future doctors mentioned conversation skills to treat patients, reading research papers and presentation skills.

3. Personal goal orientations

Participants from University 5, the university with the lowest hensachi, again wrote the most personal specific goal orientations (72), followed by respondents from University 3 (48), then participants from University 2 (38), University 4 (35) and lastly University 1 (32). However, in terms of percentage of personal specific goal orientations per university, University 3 (public science learners) had the highest number (46.15%). No other percentage per university was above 40% and University 4 had the least personal goal

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orientations (25.55%). In the case of more or less specific, there were a much higher percentage of learners who had less specific goals in comparison to more specific personal goals. Learners from University 4 were most specific in their personal goals at a low 5.11% followed by University 3 (4.51%), University 5 (3.66%), University 2 (2.08%) and University 1 (1.98). See Table 6 for specifics.

TABLE 6

Personal Goal Orientations by University (raw count and percentage)

	Code	Uni 1	Uni 2	Uni 3	Uni 4	Uni 5	Total
Raw count	Less specific	30	36	43	28	65	202
	More specific	2	2	5	7	7	23
	Total	32	38	48	35	72	225
Percentage	Less specific	29.70	37.50	41.35	20.44	34.03	
	More specific	1.98	2.08	4.81	5.11	3.66	
	Total	31.68	39.58	46.15	25.55	37.70	

Male participants wrote 112 (49.78%) specific personal orientations, including 15 more specific, compared with about the same number of goals at 113 (50.22%) for female participants, including 8 more specific. Of the 44 males with overseas experience, 16 (7.11%) described a personal specific goal orientation, including only 3 (1.33%) who described a more specific personal goal orientation. Of the 88 females with overseas experience, 29 (12.89%) described a personal specific goal orientation, including 4 (1.78%) who described a more specific personal goal orientation. See Appendix C.

There were again, diverse personal specific goal orientations; however, the following purposes were identified across the 225 responses. Travel and living abroad was given by 114 learners (51%). For example, "I want to gain basic grammar and conversation skills for travel. I want to be able to understand what is said," (1st year male, Uni 4). A further 70 responses (31%) were from those who wanted to improve or gain conversational skills of varying degrees such as becoming fluent or enough basic skills simply to communicate with the locals, people around the world, foreigners and English speaking friends. Responses from 40 learners (18%), across all five universities, were to be able to watch movies without subtitles and be able to read books without a dictionary. "I like movies, so want to be good enough to be able to watch movies without subtitles," (1st year female, Uni 5). "I like watching movies, sometimes foreign movies; I want to watch movies without subtitles," (2nd year male, Uni 3). There were 28 learners (12%) who wanted to use English in the future in or to develop friendships and have a relationship. For example, "I want to be able to enjoy talking to foreign friends. Don't have ambitions to use English for work, but want to study English for my own pleasure," (3rd year, female, Uni 5). Finally, there were 11 responses (5%) from learners who wish to talk to locals to learn first hand. "I want

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to use English to learn other cultures and understand international affairs and problems," (3rd year male, Uni 1).

Of the personal goal orientation responses, there were only 23 (10.22%) that were more specific compared to the 202 (89.78%) less specific personal goal orientation responses. Examples of these more specific responses are: "When I have children, I want to teach my children English to broaden their scope of activity," (1st year male, Uni 4) and "I want to go to a library in a foreign country and end the day reading there. I would like to gain different knowledge by reading books from different genre," (3rd year male, Uni 1).

4. Study goal orientations

Participants from University 5, again wrote the most study specific goal orientations (38), followed by participants from Universities 3 (36), then from University 4 (31), University 1 (19) and lastly University 2 (16). However, in terms of percentage of study specific goal orientations per university, University 3 with the highest hensachi had the highest percentage (34.62%). No other percentage per university was above 25% and University 2 was the lowest at 16.67%. In the case of more or less specific, learners from University 4 were more specific in their career goals at 12.41% followed by University 1 (10.89%), University 5 (5.76%), University 2 (5.21%) and University 3 was the least more specific at 4.81%. See Table 7 for specifics.

TABLE 7

Study Goal Oriented Learners by University (raw count and percentage)

	Code	Uni 1	Uni 2	Uni 3	Uni 4	Uni 5	Totals
Raw count	Less specific	8	11	31	14	27	91
	More specific	11	5	5	17	11	49
	Total	19	16	36	31	38	140
Percentage	Less specific	7.92	11.46	29.81	10.22	14.14	
	More specific	10.89	5.21	4.81	12.41	5.76	
	Total	18.81	16.67	34.62	22.63	19.90	

Male participants wrote 79 (55.63%) specific study orientations, including 25 more specific, compared to 63 (44.37%) for female participants, including 28 more specific. Of the 44 males with overseas experience, 11 (9.99%) described a study specific goal orientation, including again only 3 (2.45%) who described a more specific study goal orientation. Of the 88 females with overseas experience, 15 (12.18%) described a study specific goal orientation, including 10 (8.19%) who described a more specific study goal orientation. See Appendix D.

Of the 140 study-related orientations, 26% of the learners (37%) were towards reading, writing and presenting research papers. For example, "I'm reading a math book written in

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English, want to improve on vocabulary so I don't have to rely on a dictionary to understand the content," (5th year male, Uni 2); a further 29 responses (21%) wanted to gain a high score, improve or maintain their current scores on TOEIC and STEP, "I want to increase vocabulary and aim for 600 points in TOEIC," (1st year female, Uni 5); 13 (9%) want to exchange ideas with other academics in their field of specialization, "I want to be able to talk about my field of specialty with other specialists," (1st year male, Uni 4); and 13 (9%) wanted to gain fluency or some speaking ability, "I want to be able to speak to native speakers fluently and want to gain basic conversational skills. Want to study abroad to gain these skills," (1st year, female, Uni 4).

5. General goal orientations

Participants from University 4 wrote the most general specific goal orientations (53), followed by participants from Universities 5 (39), then participants from University 2 (32), University 1 (21), and University 3 (16). In terms of percentage of general specific goal orientations per university, University 4 remained with the highest number (38.69%). Percentages per university for the other four universities ranged from 15.38% to 20.79%. In the case of more or less specific, learners from University 4 were more specific in their general goals at 4.38% followed by University 2 (2.08%), University 4 (1.05%), while University 1 and 3 were found to have the fewest number of more specific goal orientations at less than 1%. See Table 8 for specifics.

TABLE 8

General Goal Oriented Learners by University (raw count and percentage)

	Code	Uni 1	Uni 2	Uni 3	Uni 4	Uni 5	Totals
Raw count	Less specific	20	30	15	47	37	149
	More specific	1	2	1	6	2	12
	Total	21	32	16	53	39	161
Percentage	Less specific	19.80	31.25	14.42	34.31	19.37	
	More specific	0.99	2.08	0.96	4.38	1.05	
	Total	20.79	33.33	15.38	38.69	20.42	

Male participants wrote 79 (53.02%) general specific orientations, including 5 more specific, compared with about the same number of goals at 70 (46.98%) for female participants, including 7 more specific. Of the 44 males with overseas experience, 6 (6.09%) described a general specific goal orientation, including just 1 (1.04%) that described a more specific general goal orientation. Of the 88 females with overseas experience, 22 (15.61%) described a general specific goal orientation, including only 2 (1.46%) who described a more specific general goal orientation. See Appendix E.

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From the diverse general specific goal orientations, the following three major purposes were identified across the 161 responses. The largest number, 44 responses (27%) were specific to communicative fluency. For example, "I want to become competent in daily conversations," (1st year female, Uni 5). Then 25 responses (16%) were goals aimed to read newspapers, Internet and books, and understand without the use of a dictionary. For example "I want to be able to read books fluently. Also I want to be able to read newspapers. I want to understand what the writer wants to convey and understand the text as a whole," (3rd year female, Uni5). Lastly 16 responses (10%) were specific to wanting to help foreigners in Japan. For example "I want to be able to speak to foreigners well. I want to be able to help foreigners in need of help," (3rd year female, Uni1). These three major purposes covered over 50% of the total general specific goal orientations. Other responses were geared towards broadening one's views by learning about another culture, having a richer lifestyle and getting information firsthand. An example of a more specific general goal orientation was: "I want to be able to speak English to many foreigners and become knowledgeable of the differences in how they feel and differences in lifestyle," (2nd year female, Uni 5).

IV. DISCUSSION

1. Learner goal orientations

Our provisional findings deepen our understanding of the goal orientations of Japanese university learners from a variety of university settings. Furthermore, these findings complement, in part, earlier work by Irie (2003) who had predicted that learners had career and personal goal orientations. Indeed, the primary goal orientation for learners from all five universities in this study was related to future use of English in career. In light of the current state of employment prospects for university graduates (Hosaka, 2011; Honda, 2011), and the shift to a learning capital society (Kariya, 2009), these results are hardly surprising. Still it must be noted that nearly 45% of the learners from Universities 2 through 4, that is students whose major is not English indicated a future career goal orientation using English. Moreover, nearly two-thirds of participants at University 1, English Department Majors, wrote a career specific goal orientation. This, however, should not be surprising due to their field of study. That is, they are learning English at university, for many it seems, to advance their careers. Female learners wrote more career specific goal orientations than their male counterparts but this may be a reflection of the bias in the data, that is University 1 and University 5 (English, and English + Other majors) which

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accounted for large numbers of career-specific goal orientations, are either predominantly or completely female. Finally, it should be noted that the most frequent response types were occupation specific career goal orientations; such as hotel employees, teachers or engineers. The next most frequent response types were found to be skill-based, such as wanting to speak English with colleagues, during business meetings or while participating at international sporting events or conferences. The pressure, perhaps these participants are feeling in the tightening job market is evident when we consider that the third most frequent response types were related to wanting to have English skills so as not be at a disadvantage when job hunting or when at work.

Additionally, as per Irie (2003), personal goal orientations were the second most common goal orientation type with more than one-third of the participants describing such a goal to use English. More than 80% of responses were less specific goal orientations; however, male participants were found to have written a larger number of more specific personal goal orientations than their female counterparts. The most frequent response types were related to living or traveling abroad, conversing with foreigners, and watching English language movies without subtitles.

However, study goal orientations and general goal orientations were also often described by the respondents. Of these, study goal orientations were the least most common goal orientation type. More than one-third of the participants from University 3 (Public, Sciences) wrote about a study goal orientation. This may not be surprising considering these learners attend a university with the highest hensachi. The most frequent response types were related to reading, writing and presenting research papers; tasks that learners at University 3 are expected to do. Finally, general goal orientations were the third most common, and of these, most responses were less specific. Of the total goal orientations described, more specific general goal orientations were 1.45%. There were no differences between males and females, but there were differences by university. Approximately 20% or less of the responses from Universities 1, 3, and 5 were general goal orientations, while more than one-third of the responses from Universities 2 and 4 were general goal orientations. General communicative fluency was the most frequent response type. Finally, we believe that general goal orientations reflect a less-specific goal orientation. Learners could have written career, personal, or study specific orientations. General, then, is a catchall of less specific goal orientations. Learners from University 3 were found to be least general goal oriented; and we believe because these learners, all second-year university students at the highest ranked university in our study, have been clear about their distal future goals for some time.

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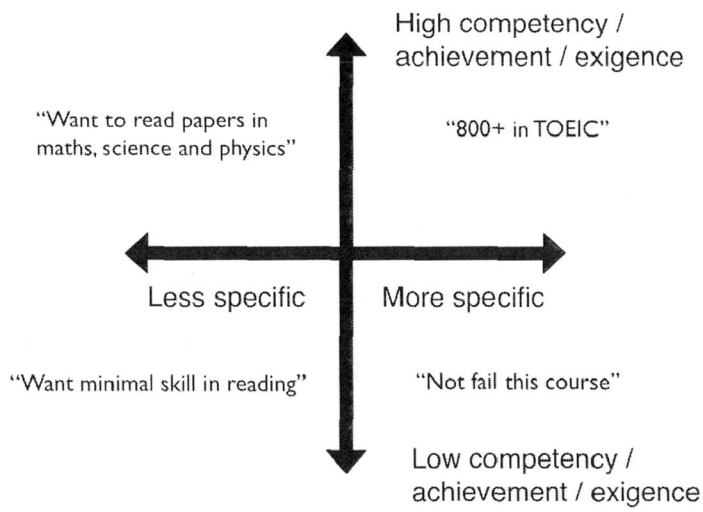
2. Coding and dimensionality

Coding of goal orientations was none (0), less specific (1) or more specific (2); however, we believe this coding scheme does not reflect the multidimensionality of the participants' goals. As an example, "I want to be able conduct presentations in English for conferences" (5th year male, Uni 2 student). This response was coded 1 for less specific but this code fails to capture the high competency, achievement level or exigence of this learner's goal orientation. As further examples of responses we coded less specific (1) but which we now believe attain a higher plane on a dimension other than specificity include:

- "I want to be able to speak to native speakers comfortably and show my host family how much I have improved" (3rd year female, Uni 1);
- "I am studying science now so want to be able to read and write research papers in English" (2nd year male, Uni 3 student);
- "If I become an academic, I'd like to be able to read research papers and debate in English" (1st year male, Uni 4 student);
- "I would like to be able to read and understand research papers which have not been translated in to Japanese" (3rd year female, Uni 5).

FIGURE 1

Theoretical Multidimensional Goal Orientation Scale



In total, 33 responses (4.00% of all goal orientations) were found to be less specific (1)

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in their goal orientation but which attain a higher level of a competency, achievement, or exigence. Of these 33, 23 (69.70%) were responses by learners at University 3 (Public, Science), the university with the highest hensachi. Likewise, there were also responses that we coded less (1) or more specific (2) but which we believe attain a lower plane on a dimension other than specificity, and these include:

- "I want minimal skill in reading, writing and speaking" (1st year male, Uni);
- "I want to prevent failing English and graduate from university" (1st year male, Uni 4);
- "I would like to maintain Eiken 3 grade. I am not aiming for conversational level" (3rd year female, Uni 5).

Thus, while our initial concept of goal orientations for Japanese university learners was along a unidimensional scale of zero – less – more specificity, and for most learner responses, this was applicable, it may be possible to conceive learner goal orientations on a multidimensional scale, similar to Figure 1 above.

V. CONCLUSION

The primary goal of this paper was to describe the preliminary findings of a large scale investigation of written learner goal orientations. Earlier investigations with Japanese university participants revealed future use of English goal orientation as a dichotomous construct. That is, learners were found to be oriented towards using English in their career and or personal life. Many of the findings presented here showed similarity to this earlier dichotomous construct. For example, career orientations, such as occupation and skill-based specific ones, and personal goal orientations, such as those related to travel, friendship, and culture, were by far the most often described future use of English goal orientations by the participants in our study. In addition to these orientations, the results revealed two newer constructs: future use of English for study purposes and general English goal orientations. The significance of the results here are twofold. First, they build on the dichotomous goal-orientation construct as described. Second, the unidimensional construct of specific goal orientations was useful for most responses; however, it fails to capture some of the higher or lower competencies, achievements or exigences of a certain number of participants. These findings have been useful in developing survey items for a quantitative psychometric scale of English goal orientations (Richard & Uehara, 2011).

A number of questions remain for future study in this area. First, a comparison was not made between participants by school year due to the imbalanced number of participants. A future study with a balanced number of participants per year at university should investigate the role of year at school. It is likely that university students nearer to

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graduation have clearer, more specific goal orientations as their post-university futures are more proximal. Second, it may be that subject area plays an important role in the future use of English goal orientation. However, the participant data here was heavily colored by the university that learners attended. For example, science majors at Universities 3 and 4, those with higher hensachi scores, were found to be more career and study goal oriented than science majors at the lower-ranked University 2. Future studies would need to gather data from several departments each from several universities at different hensachi levels for a valid and meaningful comparison. Third, while English test results were gathered in the background survey, these were self-reports; many of which included question marks next to the participants own responses which indicted that they were not sure of their own results, while most other participants left this section blank. A future study should include scores from standardized tests taken as part of the study; and it is likely that more able learners will be found to have clearer future use of English goal orientations. Fourth, it was found that learners with overseas experience are more likely to describe a future use of English goal orientation than their peers without overseas experience. A future study should investigate further this relationship. Is it the fact that participants travel overseas that encourages them to be English-goal oriented, or are those who are English-goal oriented more likely to travel overseas? Or is there a higher order factor involved, such as university hensachi or learner capital that affects this relationship? Finally, data for this study was gathered once, near the beginning of a new academic year. A future study should have a repeated measures design to investigate change in participants' goal orientations.

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APPENDIX A

English Translation of Background Survey and Written Question for Future Use of English

This survey is about your English environment.
For each question, mark the most appropriate answer or fill in details as required.

(QU1) University		(QU2) Department	

(QU3) Gender	①	Male	②	Female

(QU4) School Year	①	1st	②	2nd	③	3rd	④	4th	⑤	5th / other

(QU5) English tests	Eiken	TOEFL	TOEIC	other
High score				
Date				

(QU6) Experience Abroad (multiple answers OK)	Yes	No	Location (city, country)	Duration
a. Have you experience living abroad ?	①	②		
b. Have you experienced a homestay?	①	②		
c. Have you experienced a study abroad program to learn English?	①	②		

Answer the following question. You can write in Japanese or English. If you write in Japanese, write approximately 5 lines. If you write in English, write approximately 50 words.

Q. What are your future goals for learning English?

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APPENDIX B

Career Goal Orientations by Gender, Overseas experience, Goal specifics, and University (raw count and percentage)

	Gender	Overseas	Goal specifics	Uni 1	Uni 2	Uni 3	Uni 4	Uni 5	Total
Raw count	Male	No	Less	4	17	23	17	-	61
			More	8	11	15	17	-	51
		Yes	Less	1	4	3	2	-	10
			More	4	1	2	6	-	13
			Male total	17	33	43	42	-	135
	Female	No	Less	14	3	4	3	33	57
			More	13	2	2	12	30	59
		Yes	Less	11	1	1	2	7	22
			More	9	0	0	5	13	27
			Female total	47	6	7	22	83	165
			Total	64	39	50	64	83	300
Percentage	Male	No	Less	3.96	17.71	22.12	12.41	-	56.19
			More	7.92	11.46	14.42	12.41	-	46.21
		Yes	Less	0.99	4.17	2.88	1.46	-	9.50
			More	3.96	1.04	2.08	4.38	-	11.46
			Male total	16.83	34.38	41.35	30.66	-	45.00
	Female	No	Less	13.86	3.13	3.85	2.19	17.28	40.30
			More	12.87	2.08	1.92	8.76	15.71	41.34
		Yes	Less	10.89	1.04	0.96	1.46	3.66	18.02
			More	8.91	0.00	0.00	3.65	6.81	19.37
			Female total	46.53	6.25	6.73	16.06	43.46	55.00
			Total	63.37	40.63	48.08	46.72	33.51	

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APPENDIX C

Personal Goal Orientations by Gender, Overseas Experience, Goal Specifications and University (raw count and percentage)

	Gender	Overseas	Goal specifics	Uni 1	Uni 2	Uni 3	Uni 4	Uni 5	Total
Raw count	Male	No	Less	7	29	30	18	-	84
			More	2	2	3	5	-	12
		Yes	Less	2	1	8	2	-	13
			More	0	0	2	1	-	3
			Male total	11	32	43	26	-	112
	Female	No	Less	10	6	3	6	55	80
			More	0	0	0	0	4	4
		Yes	Less	11	0	2	2	10	25
			More	0	0	0	1	3	4
			Female total	21	6	5	9	72	113
			Total	32	38	48	35	72	225
Percentage	Male	No	Less	6.93	30.21	28.85	13.14	-	37.33
			More	1.98	2.08	2.88	3.65	-	5.33
		Yes	Less	1.98	1.04	7.69	1.46	-	5.78
			More	0.00	0.00	2.08	0.73	-	1.33
			Male total	10.89	33.33	41.35	18.98	-	49.78
	Female	No	Less	9.90	6.25	2.88	4.38	28.80	35.56
			More	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.09	1.78
		Yes	Less	10.89	0.00	1.92	1.46	5.24	11.11
			More	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.73	1.57	1.78
			Female total	20.79	6.25	131.73	6.57	37.70	50.22
			Total	31.68	39.58	46.15	25.55	37.70	100.00

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APPENDIX D

Study Goal Orientations by gender, overseas experience, goal specifics and university (raw count and percentage)

	Gender	Overseas	Goal specifics	Uni 1	Uni 2	Uni 3	Uni 4	Uni 5	Total
Raw count	Male	No	Less	2	8	23	13	-	46
			More	2	4	5	11	-	22
		Yes	Less	0	1	6	1	-	8
			More	1	0	0	2	-	3
			Male total	5	13	34	27	-	79
	Female	No	Less	2	2	1	0	25	30
			More	5	1	0	3	9	18
		Yes	Less	2	0	1	0	2	5
			More	5	0	0	3	2	10
			Female total	14	3	2	6	38	63
			Total	19	16	36	33	38	142
Percentage	Male	No	Less	1.98	8.33	22.12	9.49	-	41.92
			More	1.98	4.17	4.81	8.03	-	18.98
		Yes	Less	0.00	1.04	5.77	0.73	-	7.54
			More	0.99	0.00	0.00	1.46	-	2.45
			Male total	4.95	13.54	32.69	19.71	-	55.63
	Female	No	Less	1.98	2.08	0.96	0.00	13.09	18.11
			More	4.95	1.04	0.00	2.19	4.71	12.89
		Yes	Less	1.98	0.00	0.96	0.00	1.05	3.99
			More	4.95	0.00	0.00	2.19	1.05	8.19
			Female total	13.86	3.13	1.92	4.38	19.90	44.37
			Total	63.37	16.67	34.62	24.09	33.51	

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APPENDIX E

General Goal Orientations by Gender, Overseas Experience, Goal Specifications and University (raw count and percentage)

	Gender	Overseas	Goal specifics	Uni 1	Uni 2	Uni 3	Uni 4	Uni 5	Total
Raw count	Male	No	Less	2	24	12	31	-	69
			More	0	1	1	2	-	4
		Yes	Less	0	3	2	0	-	5
			More	0	1	0	0	-	1
			Male total	2	29	15	33	-	79
	Female	No	Less	11	3	1	2	26	43
			More	1	0	0	2	2	5
		Yes	Less	7	0	0	2	11	20
			More	0	0	0	2	0	2
			Female total	19	3	1	8	39	70
			Total	21	32	16	41	39	149
Percentage	Male	No	Less	1.98	25.00	11.54	22.63	-	61.15
			More	0.00	1.04	0.96	1.46	-	3.46
		Yes	Less	0.00	3.13	1.92	0.00	-	5.05
			More	0.00	1.04	0.00	0.00	-	1.04
			Male total	1.98	30.21	14.42	24.09	-	53.02
	Female	No	Less	10.89	3.13	0.96	1.46	13.61	30.05
			More	0.99	0.00	0.00	1.46	1.05	3.50
		Yes	Less	6.93	0.00	0.00	1.46	5.76	14.15
			More	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.46	0.00	1.46
			Female total	18.81	3.13	0.96	5.48	20.42	49.98
			Total	63.37	33.33	15.38	29.93	33.51	

Examples in: English and Japanese
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: University

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