

Current and future English goals and needs of English as a foreign language students at Kansai University

関西大学の英語を学ぶ学生の現在及び将来の学習目標とニーズ

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日本政府や企業は、大学に対して英語でのコミュニケーション能力を持ったグローバル人材の育成を求めている。本研究では、関西大学に通う英語を専攻していない 552 名の学生を対象に、英語学習に関する現在の目標や将来の英語使用、また大学の英語の授業に関する調査を実施した。調査結果から、学生の現在の英語学習の目標は、流暢さの向上、コミュニケーション能力の強化、テストの得点向上に重点が置かれていることがわかった。さらに将来英語を使用する際の目的として、日本での仕事、海外旅行、娯楽が主に挙げられた。また、学生たちは、より実践的なコミュニケーション能力の向上を図れる授業を求めていることが明らかになった。

Keywords

EFL, higher education, Japan, learning goals, needs analysis

1. Introduction

English as a foreign language (EFL) education has become ubiquitous in Japan, permeating classrooms from elementary school until post-secondary education. The majority of students enrolled in EFL classes at the university level are non-English majors, and although the government, businesses, and educational institutions alike highlight the necessity of English for future careers, students' specific goals while enrolled at university and how the curricula helps them to reach their current and future goals remain under-researched.

1.1 The growing role of English as a foreign language in Japan

In Japan, foreign language (FL) education has been closely associated with a perceived need for economic development. The intensified globalization starting in the 1970s, followed by a period of large economic growth in the 1980s and 90s, boosted the demand for a labor force capable of working across borders and across cultures.

In response to globalization forces, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) presented in 2002 a plan to foster “Japanese with English Abilities”, stressing the importance of English as a common international language and its role “both in terms of the future of our children and the further development of Japan as a nation” (MEXT, 2002).

Calls by the industry sector, represented by the Japan Business Federation, have since emphasized the demand for global *jinzai*, i.e., global human resources (GHR), defined as “Japanese or foreign talent who are able to take on the burden of globalising Japanese companies’ business activities and take part in global business” (Japan Business Federation, 2011, as cited in Burgess, 2014, p.494). An interim report published by The Council on Promotion of Human Resource for Globalization Development (2011) further defined GHR as those possessing “rich linguistic and communication skills and intercultural experiences, and [able to] thrive internationally” (p.3).

While originally emerging from the business sector, the concept of GHR has permeated educational institutions, particularly at the tertiary level, who have been tasked with preparing interculturally and globally competent graduates (MEXT, 2017). In higher education, much of the development of GHR has been associated with FL skills, particularly English communicative skills (Hofmeyr, 2021). Through internationalization strategies, in general, and EFL education, in particular, universities are thus expected to complement compulsory English language education at the elementary and secondary levels, and to prepare linguistically competent graduates who can help to globalize Japanese companies.

Globalization trends in recent years have led to an increase in the frequency and variety of intercultural contact in Japan, further highlighting a demand for FL skills. The rise in the number of incoming international students post-pandemic (Japan Student Services Organization [JASSO], 2024), a diversification of foreign workers (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan [MOFA], 2024), and booming tourism (Swift, 2024) have further highlighted the need for FL skills in domestic settings. English, in particular, has strengthened its role as a common language of communication in social media as well as the means to access international entertainment platforms, although these fields remain under-researched.

1.2 Towards a more communicative approach?

EFL education in Japan has traditionally been associated with the grammar-translation method. Critics of this method have maintained that, despite the emphasis placed on EFL classes, Japanese students often graduate high school without being able to communicate in English (Inuzuka, 2017). Recent policies that emphasize the demand for English as a real communication tool, however, have provided a shift towards a communicative approach, and teachers are now tasked with helping students to avoid or overcome problems arising from intercultural communication (Matsusaka, 2020).

With the emphasis placed on communication, more practice-oriented publications, such as *The Language Teacher*, the bi-monthly publication of the Japan Association for Language Teaching, are offering teachers local applications of Kumaravadivelu's (2003) post-method perspective. These include Murphey's (2021) feature article on student-produced and student-selected materials, Elgueta's (2023) experiences from communicative methods in teacher training to grammar translation method in the field to post-method in the teaching assistance column, and Jackson's (2024) interview with critical pedagogue Graham Cookes, exploring critical language pedagogy in a variety of teaching contexts in Japan, sharing agency given to teachers with students.

The shift in teaching approaches, however, has been slow and uneven. While at the policy level the emphasis is on communication, approaches vary at the ground level. Prichard and Moore (2016a; 2016b) compared English language programs at the university level in Japan and the United States in terms of program coordination, teacher autonomy and collaboration. They found significantly high levels of coordination and collaboration as well as autonomy in programs in the United States; on the other hand, while high levels of autonomy were also found in programs in Japan, they found significantly lower levels of both coordination and collaboration. In other words, while a program in Japan may have at the policy level a communicative approach, at the implementation level, an open classroom door on one side of the hall may sound more like the grammar-translation method while an open classroom door on the other side of the hall may sound more like post-method critical language pedagogy, depending on the teacher.

In addition, assessment of English proficiency remains closely linked to both the grammar-translation method and standardized testing (Fujikawa, 2014), such as through the university entrance exams designed by the National Center for University Entrance Examinations or through externally designed proficiency tests, such as the TOEFL and the TOEIC. In practice, the heavy weight of such tests on students' university and career options risks reducing the

value of a communicative approach for both the students and their educators, who may opt out of more communicative lessons to teach to the test and increase their students' chances of "success" (Matsusaka, 2020).

1.3 EFL student goals and motivation in Japan

Some research has been conducted, mainly at the institutional level, on the goals of EFL students at Japanese universities. Overall, results indicate that non-English major EFL students focus on achieving skill mastery, although some variations occur between students with higher and lower proficiency levels.

A study of 157 non-English major EFL students at a public university in Japan by Wong (2017) concluded that students prioritized academic mastery, i.e. the mastery of FL skills, as opposed to social goals in EFL classrooms. Similarly, a needs analysis study conducted by Carreira (2015) among 505 Economics and Management majors identified an inclination towards academic goals. However, Carreira also noted that students with a higher TOEIC score were more oriented towards further improving their FL skills and TOEIC scores than students with lower TOEIC scores, who focused on learning simple English grammar and on enjoying their EFL classes.

A recent study by Fujii (2023) with 84 EFL students at a national university found that learning goals were connected with willingness to communicate (WTC), and that whereas students with high WTC aimed to improve their English skills for discussion, research and overseas travel purposes, students with low WTC aimed mainly to be able to read books and journal articles in English and to communicate to a certain desirable level without experiencing great difficulties.

2. Methodology

This study sought to explore the goals and needs of non-English major EFL students at Kansai University, a 4-year large private university in the Kansai area, as well as the role of the current curriculum in helping students to achieve their goals. By conducting a needs analysis, it is hoped that future curricula design can closely align with students' needs and expectations.

At Kansai University, non-English majors, regardless of their faculty, are required to take compulsory Listening/Speaking and Reading/Writing courses during their first and second years (four semesters) for a total of two koma (three hours) per week over 15 weeks per semester. Classes are divided by faculty, and students may be placed in one of three levels based on their

proficiency level, generally ranging from CEFR A1 to B1+. The goals of the English program are standardized across faculties and proficiency levels; however, teachers are encouraged some flexibility in their course design and textbook selection to better fit their students' learning styles and their own teaching approach.

Amounting to a total of 45 contact hours per semester, EFL courses play a significant role in students' education. Yet, a research gap remains regarding the goals and needs of this diverse body of students at Kansai University, and the extent to which the current curriculum meets their needs.

2.1 Research questions

Taking into consideration the compulsory nature of EFL courses for first- and second-year non-English major students at Kansai University, the present study aimed to answer the following three research questions:

1. What are students' current goals for learning English?
2. How do students plan to use English in the future?
3. To what extent do English courses at Kansai University help students to reach their language learning goals?

2.2 Data collection and analysis

Data was collected through voluntary response during weeks 6–8 of the Spring Semester, i.e., halfway through the first semester, of the 2024 academic year. The study was initially advertised through fliers to EFL faculty at Kansai University, who could then opt to share the flyers with their students. It was made clear in the fliers that participation was voluntary and anonymous. An incentive was offered to participating students in the form of a lottery draw of ten Tosho Cards worth 1,000 yen each, which were then distributed online by email to randomly selected participants during the Fall Semester.

Responses were collected online via Survey Monkey over a three-week period. The questionnaire was made available directly to students via a QR code in the advertisement flier, and all of the responses were collected anonymously. Only the researchers had access to the data.

The questionnaire was made available in both Japanese and English, and it consisted of 16 questions. Six questions were used to determine participant demographics, namely their year, faculty, gender, course level, and whether they were learning a foreign language other than English. Eight questions were asked to determine students' experiences with English courses at Kansai University as well as their future needs and goals involving English. Students were also

given the opportunity to provide their email address if they wished to participate in the lottery draw to win a Toshō Card, and to be informed of the results of the survey.

Quantitative data from the questionnaires was summarized and analyzed using SPSS software for descriptive statistics and overall trends and patterns, so as to provide a snapshot of the current goals and needs of EFL students at Kansai University. Independent sample t-tests and One-Way ANOVAs were used to compare means between groups.

Qualitative data from open-ended questions was collected in the original language used by the students, English or Japanese, and the Japanese answers were translated to English by the researchers to facilitate the coding process. Data was coded in several rounds and checked for consistency by both researchers.

Answers relating to goals were coded inductively into several main categories: "Communication", "Fluency", and/or "Test(s)", as well as "Credit", "Study Abroad", "Travel", and/or "Work". If the answer did not fit into any of these main observed categories, it was coded as "Other", and if no goal(s) were specified, the answer was coded as "None". Answers relating to students' EFL needs were first coded deductively using the categories emerging from student goals; however, a new category - "Level" - emerged and was added to the coding scheme. "Other" and "Communication" were coded to several sub-levels as student answers became more specific. For example, "Communication" was further coded to specific skills - "Listening", "Reading", "Speaking", and/or "Writing". Once coded, data analysis was conducted by faculty, year, and level.

3. Participants

A total of 552 EFL students submitted completed questionnaires (Table 1). Among these, 68.3% were first-year students and 31.3% were second-year students. Only two respondents were in their third or fourth year. The majority of respondents were male (48.5%), 41.5% were female, 3.3% identified as a different gender or preferred not to state their gender, and 6.7% chose not to answer the question.

Overall, responses were collected from students at 10 out of the 13 undergraduate faculties at Kansai University, with 6.5% of students taking beginner level classes, 40.9% intermediate level classes, and 51.6% advanced level classes. Five students were unsure of the level of their course. It should also be noted that, at the time of data collection, 75.7% of respondents were learning a second foreign language in addition to English - Chinese (30.4%) and Korean (26%) being the most popular choices.

Table 1. Participant demographics

	1st Year (n=377)	2nd Year (n=173)	3rd / 4th Year (n=2)
Faculty			
Law	40	3	0
Letters	53	5	0
Economics	36	9	0
Business & Commerce	47	34	1
Sociology	44	60	0
Policy Studies	41	24	0
Informatics	52	0	0
Engineering Science	37	11	0
Environmental and Urban Engineering	5	14	0
Chemistry, Materials, and Bioengineering	22	13	1
Course Level			
Beginner	35	1	0
Intermediate	224	2	0
Advanced	114	169	1
Unknown	4	1	1
Gender			
Male	196	72	0
Female	147	82	0
Other / Prefer not to say	9	8	1
2nd Foreign Language			
Chinese	104	14	0
Korean	83	18	0
Spanish	52	14	0
French	34	8	0
German	30	6	0
Russian	14	0	0
Japanese	7	0	0
Multiple languages	2	2	0

Data was also collected about the students' participation in foreign-language related programs and activities at Kansai University other than the compulsory EFL courses (Table 2). Students were asked about which programs they had used in the past as well as which programs they intended to use in the future.

As shown in Table 2, the majority of respondents had not and did not intend to use FL programs at Kansai University other than the mandatory EFL courses they were already taking. The exception to this trend were plans by 45.3% of first-year students who intended to

enroll in a study abroad program either for less than one semester (33.4%) or for one semester or more (11.9%). Study abroad was also an attractive option for 38.7% of second-year students, who were considering enrolling in either a short-term study abroad program (23.7%) or a program lasting at least one semester (15%) in the future.

Table 2. Student participation in foreign language programs

FL Programs	1st Year (n=377)	2nd Year (n=173)	3rd / 4th Year (n=2)
Past Use			
Study abroad (<1 semester)	13	12	0
Study abroad (1+ semester)	3	2	0
Mi-Room	21	25	0
KUICC General Course	5	3	0
KUICC Advanced Course	3	0	0
Other	5	4	0
Intended Future Use			
Study abroad (<1 semester)	126	41	1
Study abroad (1+ semester)	45	26	0
Mi-Room	35	26	0
KUICC General Course	18	5	0
KUICC Advanced Course	8	2	0
Other	4	1	0

4. Findings

Overall findings indicate that the majority of students across all faculties set fluency, communication, and test score goals (particularly in relation to the TOEIC) as their current priorities. As regards the use of English in the future, most students felt that work in Japan would be the main situation in which they would encounter English, although traveling abroad and access to entertainment were also popular uses among respondents. Despite perceiving using English in a variety of future situations, most respondents believed they would use English only occasionally, with a very small minority stating that they were likely to use English on a regular basis. In terms of their needs from Kansai University EFL courses, most students had no comments. Students who opted to comment on this question mainly requested more speaking in class and/or classes with an easier degree of difficulty.

4.1 Current goals

The first research question aimed to investigate the current goals for learning English of EFL students at Kansai University. The most common goals were related to fluency (35.5%), followed by communication (30.1%), and test(s) (24.8%). Goals relating to skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and/or writing, or proficiency in general fell under the “fluency” category, whereas goals relating to conversation and dialogue and/or comprehension and understanding in general fell under the “communication” category. Table 3 shows goals by faculty. There was little to no difference in the percentage between first- and second-year students in goals relating to fluency (30.8%/30.1%), communication (35.3%/33.5%), and tests (26.0%/24.3%).

Few students specified what fluency, communication, and/or tests were for, such as credits (4.9%), study abroad (2.9%), work (2.7%), and/or travel (0.9%). More students specified who they were interested in communicating with, for example, English speakers from other countries (9.1%). Of the students who specified a test, more students specified TOEIC (81.0%) than any other test combined: for example, EIKEN (9.9%), IELTS (4.9%), and TOEFL (4.2%). This was true for all 10 faculties surveyed.

Table 3. Current goals of EFL students by faculty

	Law (n=43)	Letters (n=58)	Economics (n=45)	Business & Commerce (n=82)	Sociology (n=104)	Policy Studies (n=65)	Informatics (n=52)	Engineering Science (n=48)	Environmental & Urban Engineering (n=19)	Chemistry, Materials, and Bioengineering (n=36)	Total (N=552)
Communication	25.6%	46.6%	31.1%	31.7%	24.0%	33.8%	15.4%	27.1%	36.8%	36.1%	30.1%
Fluency	30.2%	24.1%	31.1%	40.2%	33.7%	33.8%	46.2%	50.0%	42.1%	25.0%	35.5%
Tests	23.3%	13.8%	28.9%	29.3%	28.8%	15.4%	46.2%	18.8%	10.5%	19.4%	24.8%

By level, the percentage of students with goals relating to tests at the beginner level (41.7%) was around twice that of students at the intermediate level (20.8%) and the advanced level (26.3%). The percentage of students with goals relating to fluency was also the highest at the beginner level (44.4%) compared to students at the intermediate level (34.1%) and at the advanced level (34.0%). In contrast, the percentage of students with goals relating to communication were the lowest at the beginner level (19.4%) compared to students at the intermediate level (32.7%) and the advanced level (28.8%).

4.2 Plans to use English in the future

As shown in Table 4, the majority of students across faculties (62.7%) considered work in Japan to be the situation in which they would use English the most in the future. This was also the most chosen option in six faculties, particularly among Engineering Science students (79.2%) and Chemistry, Materials, and Bioengineering students (77.8%). The second and third most popular choices were traveling abroad (52.4%) and access to entertainment (49.5%), respectively.

The use of English to study abroad (23.4%), in social situations and relationships (19.7%), and to work abroad (10.7%) were the least popular respondent choices. In fact, English as the means to work abroad was the least popular choice among students of all faculties except for Business and Commerce students (19.5% of students compared to 14.6% for social purposes) and Environmental and Urban Engineering students (5.3% of students for both working abroad and social situations).

Table 4. Perceived use of English in the future by faculty

English use in the future	Law (n=43)	Letters (n=58)	Economics (n=45)	Business and Commerce (n=82)	Sociology (n=104)	Policy Studies (n=65)	Informatics (n=52)	Engineering Science (n=48)	Environmental and Urban Engineering (n=19)	Chemistry, Materials, and Bioengineering (n=36)	Total (N=552)
Situation											
Travel abroad	55.8%	63.7%	53.3%	63.4%	51.9%	52.3%	34.6%	41.6%	57.9%	41.7%	52.4%
Study abroad	14.0%	12.1%	35.6%	35.4%	18.3%	33.8%	11.5%	22.9%	21.1%	25%	23.4%
Work in Japan	60.5%	60.3%	48.9%	62.2%	62.5%	55.4%	65.4%	79.2%	57.9%	77.8%	62.7%
Work abroad	4.7%	5.2%	8.9%	19.5%	9.6%	13.8%	5.8%	10.4%	5.3%	16.7%	10.7%
Entertainment	34.9%	56.9%	44.4%	48.8%	63.5%	52.3%	36.5%	39.6%	36.8%	55.6%	49.5%
Socially	25.6%	13.8%	15.6%	14.6%	14.4%	26.2%	34.6%	20.8%	5.3%	27.8%	19.7%
Other	2.3%	0%	2.2%	0%	0%	0%	1.9%	2.1%	0%	0%	0.7%
Frequency											
Regularly	2.3%	1.7%	8.9%	2.4%	2.9%	9.2%	3.8%	2.1%	0%	0%	3.6%
Often	14%	13.8%	20%	20.7%	13.5%	20%	9.6%	16.7%	10.5%	22.2%	16.3%
Occasionally	55.8%	55.2%	35.5%	53.8%	45.2%	49.2%	42.3%	66.7%	68.4%	50%	50.7%
Rarely	20.9%	19%	26.7%	18.3%	31.7%	16.9%	30.9%	14.5%	21.1%	19.4%	22.6%
Never	2.3%	3.4%	2.2%	2.4%	2.9%	1.6%	9.6%	0%	0%	2.8%	3%
Unknown	4.7%	6.9%	6.7%	2.4%	3.8%	3.1%	3.8%	0%	0%	5.6%	3.8%

Among the students who selected “Other” as an option, answers were varied. One student mentioned the use of English to read articles, one mentioned the use of English for exams, one wrote they had plans for a working holiday, and one student stated that they were only learning English because they were required to.

In terms of the perceived frequency of English use in the future, the majority of students across all faculties thought they would only use English either occasionally (50.7%) or rarely (22.6%). Only a small minority of respondents (3.6%) perceived themselves as using English on a regular basis, with the average being slightly higher among Policy Studies (9.2%) and Economics (8.9%) students.

4.3 English education needs at Kansai University

To determine what EFL students at Kansai University need from their courses, participants were also asked the extent to which their current courses were helping them to reach their English language goals, as well as what else they felt they needed from their courses. As shown by Figure 1, the majority of respondents felt that both their Listening and Speaking courses and their Reading and Writing courses were useful in helping them to reach their goals. Although, overall, more respondents rated Listening and Speaking courses as being very useful (17.4%) in comparison to Reading and Writing courses (13.6%), the difference was not found to be statistically significant.

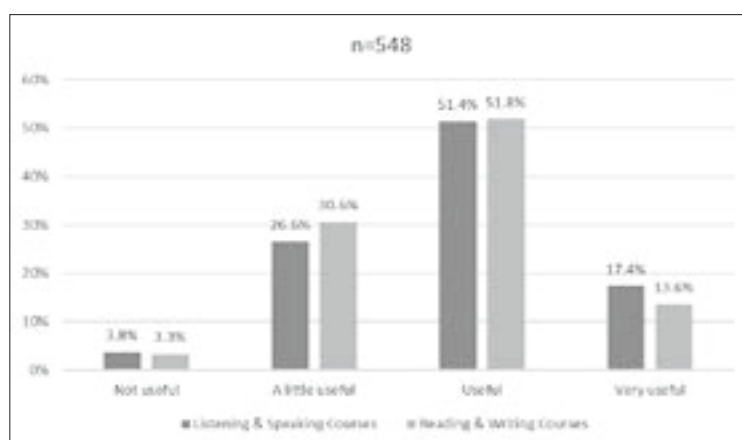


Figure 1. Extent to which Kansai University EFL courses help students to reach their goals

Only a small minority of students (3.8% and 3.3%, respectively) rated their courses as not being useful in helping them to reach their English language goals. However, a One-way

ANOVA revealed that students who identified their gender as “other/prefer not to say” were statistically more dissatisfied with both their Listening and Speaking ($MD=-.660$; $p=.002$) and their Reading and Writing ($MD=-.808$; $p < .001$) courses than students who identified as male or female, suggesting that more inclusivity may be necessary in these courses. Nevertheless, as only 18 respondents fell into this category, more research in this field is necessary.

Students were also given an optional open-ended question where they could add comments about what they felt they needed from English courses at Kansai University. Almost half (47.8%) of all students surveyed either did not answer the question (42.9%) or answered “nothing” (4.9%). Among students who did not answer, the percentage of second-year students (60.7%) was almost twice that of first years (34.2%), including over half the advanced students (52.3%), over a third of intermediate students (34.5%), and 19.4% of beginner students.

The most commonly mentioned needs were related to communication (13.4%). In terms of general communication skills, more students said they need more “speaking” (60.8%) than any other skills - “listening” (21.6%), “reading” (13.5%), and “writing” (6.8%) - combined. More specifically, students stated they need more “conversation” (6.3%), “interaction” (1.8%), or “active” learning (0.7%). In terms of conversation, students said they need more opportunities for “easy” / “informal” / “simple” conversations for “daily (life)” / “everyday” practice with “classmates” / “English speakers from other countries” / “teachers.” The percentage of answers related to “fluency” (6.7%), which was the most common current goal for learning English, was just over half that of communication, the second-most common goal.

As for comments regarding their level, more students said they need their classes to be at a lower level, “easy” / “easier” (50.0%) or “basic” (19.4%), than at a higher level, which accounted for just 1.3% of students overall. Of the students who said they need “easier” classes, 16.7% were taking beginner English, 22.2% were taking intermediate English, and 61.1% were taking advanced English; moreover, 88.9% of these respondents said that they need “easy” / “easier to understand” classes. One student placed in an intermediate English course commented, “Even in the same class, different teachers teach completely different things.”

Two other common answers were the requests for more “practical” / “use(ful)” (6.3%) and “fun” / “enjoy(able)” (4.3%) EFL classes. There was little to no overlap of the two; however, around 80% of both the students who answered either “practical” (79.2%) or “fun” (82.9%) were first-year students. By level, slightly more advanced- and intermediate-level students answered “practical” than “fun” (68.2% and 55.9%, respectively). Students provided very few examples of what they meant by “practical” English, mostly relating back to conversation, none relating specifically to their faculty, and even fewer examples of what they meant by “fun” English. For

comparison, while 2.7% said they need preparation for “test(s),” less than 1% of students said they needed preparation for “study abroad,” “travel,” and/or “work” combined (0.7%).

5. Discussion

This study aimed to answer three research questions. First, it sought to investigate the goals for learning English among non-English major EFL students at Kansai University. Findings suggest that students are particularly invested in developing their fluency, specifically their speaking skills, over communication goals. These results echo research from Wong (2017) that indicated that non-English major EFL students at a public university prioritized skill mastery over social goals. Interestingly, in the case of respondents at Kansai University, fluency and higher test scores were mainly highlighted by students placed in beginner classes, whereas students who were placed in higher proficiency courses tended to prioritize the development of communication skills in social situations. These results suggest that student priorities change with their proficiency level and future research may opt to dwell deeper into the underlying reasons. In addition to these goals, students also indicated that they aim to improve their English exam scores, indicating that they may still connect fluency with scores in standardized tests, as discussed by Fujikawa (2014).

Second, the study aimed to explore student perceptions of English use in the future. Results showed that most students expect to use English mainly at work in Japan, particularly compared to the minority of students who anticipates working abroad in the future. These results mirror the GHR rhetoric at the policy level, which stresses the importance of English as a key skill for graduates who will take on the responsibility of globalizing Japanese companies (The Council on Promotion of Human Resource for Globalization Development, 2011). In addition to work in Japan, a large percentage of respondents also expected to use English to travel abroad and to access entertainment in the future. The latter may be connected to recent globalization trends affecting the diffusion of popular entertainment, streaming services, and social media. However, the role of FL courses in providing students with the tools to access worldwide entertainment is severely under-researched. Furthermore, despite the various ways in which students perceived using English in the future, the majority of respondents indicated that they were likely to use English either occasionally or rarely in the future, suggesting that further research may want to focus on perceived vs. actual English use post-graduation.

Finally, this research study aimed to determine the extent to which English courses at Kansai University help students to reach their language learning goals. Overall, students felt positively

about the impact of both Listening/Speaking and Writing/Courses. The only exception was among students who identified neither as male nor female, who were statistically more dissatisfied with courses. While only a minority of participants fell into this category, these results might warrant further research on diversity and inclusion in EFL courses at a larger scale. In addition, despite overall positive feedback, a significant number of students mentioned that they would like to have more communicative activities in class, particularly more conversation, interaction, and active learning. These results suggest that there might still be some reluctance among educators in moving towards a more communicative approach despite an overall policy shift (Matsusaka, 2020), although teaching approaches might also be influenced by factors such as class size.

An unanticipated result of this survey was the low participation rate in co-curricular FL programs among the respondents. As shown in Table 2, only a small minority of students took part in co-curricular opportunities to develop FL skills such as study abroad programs, the Mi-Room on campus, and the KUICC communicative programs held twice a year. Most students also showed a lack of interest in participating in these programs in the future, although a higher percentage of students indicated being interested in short-term study abroad programs. Overall, the reasons for lack of participation were not investigated as part of this study; as such, further research may be needed in order to optimize the impact of co-curricular programs as complementary to the compulsory FL education on campus.

5.1. Limitations and further research

In addition to the further research mentioned above, several points also emerged from this study's limitations. First, data for this research focused on the goals and needs of EFL students at Kansai University at one point in time halfway through the Spring Semester. In order to determine how students' goals and needs are affected by their specific curricular and co-curricular experiences, it may be useful to design a longitudinal study that analyzes the progression of needs and goals through the completion of the two years of compulsory EFL education.

Moreover, while the EFL program at Kansai University shares common goals across faculties and levels, educators are encouraged to select textbooks from a diverse list that best fit their students and their teaching approach. This prevents broader generalizations based on the data collected and it indicates that a study including not only student perspectives but also teacher information about their courses may provide useful insights into the role of grammar-translation and communicative methods in student learning.

Finally, data regarding students' goals and needs was collected at a single private university

ranking in the top 100 Japanese universities (THE Rankings, 2023). However, Japan has a strongly hierarchical tertiary education system (Kawaguchi & Ono, 2013), and university choices are directly related to scholastic ability as well as career prospects. These factors may in turn affect the goals and needs of university students at different tier institutions, so further research would benefit from a meta-analysis of existing studies as well as comprehensive comparative study across institutions.

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