

**Are the characteristics of a ‘good’ language learner identifiable?:
An examination of the ‘good’ language learner assumption in a
young learner EFL classroom**

Matthew J. Davies

University of Birmingham
MA TEFL/TESL
Centre for English Language Studies

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Do you think that there is such a thing as a ‘good language learner’? To what extent do you think that it is possible for people to become ‘better’ language learners? Discuss with reference to your own students, past or present.

1. Introduction

Foreign or second language (hereafter referred to as L2) acquisition is a highly complex process in which individual learners undergo unique integration of their knowledge of the target language and their first language (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 189; Brown, 2007: 8). Although at present there is a great awareness among researchers in regards to ‘what’ L2 language learners learn, there still remains great uncertainty as to ‘how’ that learning happens, and the pattern of the language acquisition process has been found to be variable among learners and across different contexts (Brown, 2007: 114; Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 10). It is thus understandable that no past studies have been able to conclusively define the process of language acquisition (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 50).

Nevertheless, many studies have observed learners’ individual differences in ‘efficiency’ or ‘progress speed’ with L2 acquisition over a specific period of time (Brown, 2007: 105; Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 54). Such observations have attracted a number of studies which have attempted to identify the general attributes of a ‘good’ language learner (Brown, 2007: Ch. 5). Rubin and Thompson (1982, in Brown 2007: 132-33), for example, proposed fourteen characteristics of good language learners (Appendix 1). More recently, Brown (2007: 145) suggested ten characteristics or learning styles of good language learners (Appendix 2).

Over the last three decades, the notion that particular language learning strategies and/or personal attributes of a learner may help a L2 learner achieve more ‘successful’ results has become widely accepted in the field of ESL/EFL research (Brown, 2007: 137). It is crucial to note that there is an underlying assumption here that there is such a thing as a ‘good’ language learner. Despite the wide acceptance of the above notion, the validity of this underlying assumption has not been questioned or examined in the recent research. If that is the case, can we really identify a ‘good’ or ‘successful’ language learner who is inclined to think or behave in a certain way? This is the major question addressed in the current study.

In this essay, I do not intend to contribute to the current debate on what attributes or learning strategies can be observed among ‘good’ language learners (*e.g.* Lightbown and Spada, 2006: Ch. 3; Ellis and Sinclair, 1989; Rubin: 1979, in Pride 1979: 17-26). Rather, I focus on invalidating the recent popular assumption that there is a ‘good’ language learner who can be identified through particular personal characteristics and/or strategic preferences in language learning.

In order to investigate my assertion that ‘good’ language learners cannot be identified through particular personal characteristics and/or strategic preferences in L2 learning, I conducted a series of quizzes and surveys on my own child students and their parents. I also proposed an approach to supporting and assisting these students to achieve their potential in the process of L2 acquisition.

2. The analysis of a ‘good language learner’ – literature review

2.1. Assessing language learner’s ‘progress’

The measurement of the language acquisition progress of individual L2 learners can be one of the essential steps when examining ‘success’ in L2 learning (*e.g.* Lightbown and Spada, 2006). However, the progress of L2 acquisition is usually a qualitative variable which can only be measured in the broadest sense (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 55). The results of measurement thus may not reflect the true L2 ability or learning efficiency of a specific learner (Nunan, 1999: 85). A high score in a grammar test, for instance, can hardly confirm that a student is able to apply their grammatical knowledge in an authentic context (Swan, 1985: 76; Skehan, 2001: 84).

Moreover, different assessment systems may favour different learner’s personalities and learning styles (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 58). Kagan (1965), in a study of children learning how to read, observed that there were two main groups of children; (1) the impulsive readers who learned the task of reading through a great number of mistakes, and (2) the slower and more reflective children who made fewer mistakes and learned reading through carefully assessing their errors. It was found that both types of readers were able to ultimately master similar reading tasks but differed in their strengths. These findings

imply that different reading assessment systems, which focus on different strengths could make either of the two groups in this study appear to be better than the other. Here, a question may arise: how comparable are students who have completely different learning styles, strengths and personalities? Furthermore, when a standardised testing system is applied to assess the progress of such diverse students, how reliable would the measured differences in their performance be?

In addition, the timing of when the assessment of L2 learners' progress is conducted can also be controversial. For most language learners, the accuracy of language forms does not increase in a linear way with time; in fact, it appears to sometimes rise and fall (Nunan 2001). In reality, there are no 'adequate' time frames within which the learner's progress should be measured. But, such time frames are often subjectively decided by teachers or educational institutions (Nunan, 1999: 84). When language acquisition is as yet an undefinable process, how can a teacher or a school determine which students are progressing more 'efficiently' in their learning at a given point of time?

It is also important to be critical of researcher's comments in regards to assessing language learner's 'progress'. For example, Brown (2007: 105) claimed that 'some people are indeed able to learn languages faster and more efficiently than others'. This claim however, was based purely on 'anecdotal evidence'. Empirical data which proves such a claim is actually scarce (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 49).

2.2. Definition of a 'good' language learner

The term 'good' is a relative concept. If a good language learner could be defined, the opposite end of spectrum (*i.e.* a bad language learner) should also exist. However, how could a teacher or a test define the specific point where 'good' becomes 'bad'? The answer to this question would be highly subjective and would vary significantly depending on numerous factors such as class dynamics, objectives of the language acquisition and, the scale and duration of the study (Slimani, 2001: 287). It is thus practically impossible to define a universally 'good' language learner. If the key term is undefinable, the assumption that there is a good language learner cannot be substantiated.

2.3. The characteristics of a ‘good’ language learner

As mentioned above, previous studies have suggested several attributes of language learners which may affect the L2 acquisition progress and which in turn determine how ‘good’ they are as L2 learners. Brown (2007: 145) suggested ‘a “maxim” for good language learning’ (Appendix 2) and developed a ‘learning style checklist’ which can be used to assess the learning styles of L2 students. He argued that the checklist can be applied as one of the teaching tools for strategy-based instruction (SBI). Based on the list, particularly ‘successful’ or ‘beneficial’ strategies for L2 learning may be suggested to students, formally or informally. The implication here is that there is an ideal (*i.e.* good) language learner and that he or she is identifiable through particular assessment methods. Later in the chapter, however, Brown contradicted himself by stating that it was not possible to accurately identify a good language learner (Brown, 2007: 147). With such an apparent contradiction in his argument, how can we assume that the characteristics on Brown’s checklist represent the general qualities of the majority of good language learners (that is if such learners exist)?

There has been, in fact, considerable contradictory evidence and vague notions as to which personal attributes have a significant influence on language learning. The definition and interpretation of the variables proposed to be associated with a good language learner are arguable and inconclusive. Counter-examples for each of the good language learner’s attributes that Brown claimed were summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Claims for and against Brown's 'maxim' of good language learners (2007)

Characteristics adapted from Brown's 'maxim' for good language learning (2007: 145)	Studies which support Brown's claims	Contradictory claims / findings
Low inhibitions	A good language learner tends to feel secure enough to be able to lower their inhibitions. He or she may create a new L2 identity to experiment with L2 (Brown, 2007: 158; Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 61).	Different studies on inhibitions have highlighted terminological uncertainty (as to what 'inhibitions' really are), and have not been able to confirm any claims. (Scovel: 2001, in Brown 2007: 158; Guiora et al, 1980, in Brown 2007: 159).
Risk taking ability	A good language learner tends to take more risks. Without risks, there would be an absence of error and therefore an absence of learning (Brown, 2007; Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 77; Corder, 1967)	Learners who are very cautious and take few risks can also excel in certain learning environments (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 58). It is arguable as to how much or what degree of risk should be considered 'optimal' (Goodman, 1970).
High self-confidence	A learner's self-confidence can be proportional to their level of autonomy. A good language learner tends to have the confidence to take responsibility for their own learning progress (Rubin and Thompson, 1982, in Brown 2007: 132; Rubin, 1979, in Pride 1979: 17-26).	Learners who are too self-confident in their approach may ignore their teachers' advice. This can lead to skewed language skills and eventually result in premature fossilisation of linguistic competence (Skehan, 2001: 84).
Intrinsic motivation	A language learner tends to be successful if they are intrinsically motivated to acquire the target language (Corder, 1967). Intrinsic motivation to communicate in L2 is likely to enhance a learner's learning experiences (Skehan, 2001, in Candlin and Mercer 2001: 80). Brown stated that 'intrinsic and extrinsic factors can be easily identified' and that a teachers 'ultimate quest' is to 'harness the power of intrinsically motivated learners' (2007: 174).	Extrinsic motivation can also promote success in acquiring the target language (Gardner and MacIntyre, 1992, in Brown 2007: 171; Lukmani, 1972, in Brown 2007: 171). Moreover, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation are often closely related and it is difficult or not practical to make a distinction between the two (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 64).
Cooperative learning skills	A good language learner, commonly through group activities or pair work, tends to produce comprehensible L2 with their language learning peers (Brown, 2007; Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 44-45).	Some learners do well without relying on their language learning peers for any assistance (Skehan, 2001: 84). In addition, for some aspects of linguistics, a cooperative learning style may not have significant effect on learning efficiency (Prabhu, 1987: 82) (<i>e.g.</i> independent study using multimedia programs have been promoted by many researchers (Prabhu, 1987: 46)). McDonough's (2004) study on EFL learners in Thailand found many learners who had proactively engaged in pair and group activities did not regard it as 'useful'.

Table1. continued

Characteristics adapted from Brown's 'maxim' for good language learning (2007: 145)	Studies which support Brown's claims	Contradictory claims / findings
Right-brain processes	A good language learner tends to utilise right-brain processes in order to communicate at a level beyond their current metalinguistic knowledge. Right-brain processes may help the learner comprehend whole chunks of the target language as well as help the learner reproduce the 'melody' of the target language when they speak (Brown, 2007: 132/133; Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 188).	Language learners also utilise left-brain processes in order to analyse the form of the target language (Brown, 2007: 280). In addition, both sides of the brain appear to be capable of supposedly left- or right-brain functions (Paul, 2003: 178). 'Left- and right-brain differences tend to draw more attention than the research warrants at the present time' (Scovel, 1982, in Brown 2007: 125).
High ambiguity tolerance	A good language learner tends to not feel overwhelmed by ambiguity, rather they regard ambiguity as an opportunity to seek clarification and to understand more about the different communication aspects of the target language (Brown, 2007: 132; Lightbown and Spada, 2006:184).	Analytical thinking and intolerance of ambiguity can be beneficial for a learner in some areas such as developing their metalinguistic knowledge (Brown, 2007: 280).
Intuition	A good language learner tends to use their intuition to understand the contents and contexts of the target language. The learner's intuition is used to compensate for what they have not learnt about the target language (Brown, 2007; Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 192).	Intuition is often regarded as one of the innate qualities or abilities in all individuals (Brown, 2007: 312). Hence, in the process of L2 acquisition, all learners seem to rely on their intuition to some degree. Also, it is usually very difficult to clearly distinguish intuitive ideas from ideas based on previous experiences or rational processes (Brown, 2007: 313).
Error feedback processing skills	A good language learner tends to learn the target language, including pragmatics, through a process of assessing their own trials and errors (Brown, 2007: 257; Roberts, 2001: 118).	It is arguable as to what frequency or depth of assessment of errors is 'optimal' (Brown, 2007: 152). In some cases, learners who demonstrated very little reflective assessment of their errors have also progressed as much as more reflective learners (Goodman, 1970).
Personal goals	A good language learner tends to be clear about what they want to accomplish (Rubin and Thompson, 1982, in Brown 2007: 132). Also, 'successful language learners tend to take charge of their own attainment, proactively seeking means for acquisition' (Brown, 2007: 258).	In many TEFL situations, organizational objectives and/or externally imposed goals are used (at least initially) as a learning stimulus (Nunan, 1999: 192). Many L2 learners have shown that they can progress greatly in these situations without strong personal motivation or interest in L2 acquisition (Gardner and MacIntyre: 1992, in Brown 2007: 171; Lukmani, 1972, in Brown 2007: 171). Moreover, learners who set unrealistic personal goals could be severely disheartened or stressed by not attaining them (Graves, 2001: 182-83).

Without clear definitions of terminology, standard measurements of the learner's personal attributes and learning preference are hardly achievable (Brown, 2007: 8). Many variables cited in the previous studies are intangible concepts (*e.g.* self confidence and motivation) (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 55). The measurements of such variables are usually subjected to the judgement of both students who provide their personal views and teachers who examine and interpret collected data (Brown, 2007: 180).

Operationalization of these variables however, is often not a part of the studies which analyse a 'successful' language learner. Here again, a question should be asked: how reliable and standardised are the measurements in the studies which assess the effects of learners' personal qualities on their L2 acquisition efficiency?

Even if operationalization was applied for each variable and its measurement was standardised, the question of reliability of data may remain unsolved. There are numerous related or seemingly unrelated factors which can interact with the investigated variables (Gardner and Lambert, 1972, in Brown 2007: 193). Also, such variables can be interconnected among themselves (Norton and Toohy, 2001, in Lightbown and Spada 2006: 56). It is, however, usually extremely difficult, if not impossible, to describe such interrelationships among multiple variables and to precisely isolate the factors affecting the outcome of the language acquisition process of individual learners (Brown, 2007: 147; Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 56). Considering the combination effects of different variables, Brown's list of characteristics of a good language learner is obviously over-simplified and cannot be a reliable indicator of a good language learner (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 56).

Another frequently argued factor which may affect learners' success in L2 acquisition is the learner's intelligence. Lightbown and Spada (2006: 56) stated that the intelligence quotient (IQ) can be closely related to specific aptitudes of L2 learners (*e.g.* metalinguistic knowledge). Conversely, the same authors (2006: 57) also claimed, based on Genesee's research (1976), that a high IQ in the traditional sense is unimportant for learning a target language. On a further note, Goleman (1998) suggested that emotional intelligence might be the most influential intelligence on an individual's level of success in acquiring a target language. Emotional intelligence, however, cannot be (at least at this stage) a reliable measure of

one's intelligence as it is a relatively new psychological concept and its definition has constantly been amended (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 123).

2.5. Potential risk of categorising

Brown (2007) argued that the way a learner answers the 'language learning checklist' can be 'indicative of successful approaches to language learning' (mentioned above). In other words, if a learner is inclined to answer the questionnaire in a particular way, he/she can be categorised as 'a good language learner' or 'a bad language learner'.

Paul (2003) warned that it could be detrimental to categorise learners based on particular types of abilities or intelligences. At best, current research can only reinforce the common sense that there are individual differences among learners and these differences should not be measured against each other or some ideal standard (Paul, 2003: 169).

If the term 'good' or 'successful' language learner was defined and the students were categorised based on such a definition, a number of negative ramifications could eventuate. The teachers, for instance, may feel inappropriate frustration or resentment towards the 'unsuccessful' language learners who are differentiated from the 'good' language learners. Learners may also feel unnecessarily self-conscious if they believe that their approach to language learning is being judged by others (Toohey, 2000, in Lightbown and Spada 2006: 66). Surveys which claim to reveal 'good' language learning attributes (*e.g.* Brown, 2007: 144) could create self-doubt in a learner, which may then impede a learner's progress. Even if a student was classified as a 'good' language learner, the categorisation of the student may restrict their proactive approach to search for new and possibly better learning styles or strategies.

Although the concept of a good language learner has never been clearly defined, in reality, many teachers and schools may already have adapted some sort of categorising system which can divide their students into groups of 'good' and 'bad' learners. This may be the reason why the testing of language proficiency receives so much emphasis in current L2 educational systems.

3. Case study: children's classes in my private school

In order to further investigate the validity of the assumption that there is a 'good' language learner and the claim that a good language learner can be identified based on particular behavioural tendencies, I conducted a case study in my private English school in Japan. As the majority of my students are elementary school age, I focused this case study on children who learn English as a foreign language.

I also considered the effects of socio-cultural factors on a language learner's attitudes and behaviour in relation to L2 learning, which can consequently affect their L2 acquisition process in the long term (Brown, 2007: Ch. 7; Schumann and Wood, 2004; 185/176). It was suggested that for children who learn English in the EFL situation, parents (or guardians) can be one of the most influential socio-cultural factors (Brown, 2007: 71). In the present case study, therefore, the following two hypotheses were examined:

- 1) The students who obtain a relatively high score in a particular L2 learning efficiency test have distinguishable language learning behavioural tendencies and/or strategic preferences.
- 2) The students who obtain a relatively high score in a particular L2 learning efficiency test are influenced by certain aspects of their home environment and/or parents' attitudes towards English learning.

3.1. Students in this study

Two groups of students who come to my school once a week for a 45-minute lesson were selected in the study. One group (group 1) consisted of eight fourth grade elementary school students (age: 9-10 years old). The other (group 2) comprised eight first grade elementary school students (age: 6-7 years old). All students started studying English for the first time when they entered my school.

3.2. Data collection (quiz and questionnaires)

Three types of assessment were conducted in the current study.

a) Assessment of learning efficiency (progress)

I designed an assessment quiz for each group of children to ascertain the learner's proficiency in regards to their current listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills (Appendix 3a and 3b). Each learner completed the quiz individually at my school. I instructed all of the tasks in the quiz in English. The total score (in %) from each quiz was then divided by the number of months which the learner had studied in my school. This was regarded as an indicator of student's learning efficiency (learning efficiency score - LES).

b) Assessment of personal learning style and strategy use

I devised a 25-question survey based on Brown's learning style checklist (Brown, 2007: 144) to investigate the learner's personal learning style and strategies (Appendix 4a). Brown's original survey questions were adapted to make them more easily understandable and answerable for children (*e.g.* 'yes' or 'no' answers instead of sliding scale answers). The modified survey was translated into Japanese (Appendix 4b). The children's parents then administered the survey to their children at home (in Japanese).

Based on Brown's 'maxim' of good language strategies (Brown, 2007: 145), a 'correct' answer (1 point) or an 'incorrect' answer (0 points) was determined for each question in the survey. The collected surveys were marked according to this scoring system (good language learning score - GLLS).

c) Assessment of socio-cultural factors (home environment)

A survey was derived to examine the home environment including the parent's beliefs and actions in relation to the children's L2 acquisition (Appendix 5a). The questionnaire comprised 36 questions. It was translated into Japanese and completed by the student's parents at home (Appendix 5b). In addition, I also calculated the percentage of the lessons (over the last 60 lessons) in which each student submitted his/her homework (homework score - HWS).

3.3. Results

The results of the assessment quiz and the calculated L2 learning efficiency scores are shown in Appendix 6. For the purpose of analysis, each student was scaled in terms of the LES (learning efficiency score) and was coded from 'A' to 'H' (*i.e.* 'A' achieved the highest LES and 'H' achieved the lowest). The answers obtained from each student for the two questionnaires are summarised in Appendices 7 and 8. The record of homework over 60 consecutive lessons is shown in Appendix 9.

To examine the relationship between the LES and GLLS (good language learning score) of each individual, the two scores were plotted (Figure 1 for group 1, Figure 2 for group 2). The HWS (homework score) was also compared with the corresponding LES (Figure 3 for group 1, Figure 4 for group 2).

The LES, GLLS and HWS of the two groups were then combined and two scatter plots were created to investigate any effects of the GLLS and/or HWS on the LES (Figures 5 and 6).

As can be seen in Figures 1, 2 and 5, there are no noticeable relationships between the LES and the GLLS. For instance, student 1A who obtained the highest LES in group 1 had the lowest GLLS in the same group. On the other hand, student 2A got the highest points for both the LES and GLLS in group 2. Similarly, no apparent correlation between the LES and the HWS were observed (see Figures 3, 4 and 6). Although student 1H's LES and the HWS were the lowest in group 1, the same pattern was not observed for 2H in group 2.

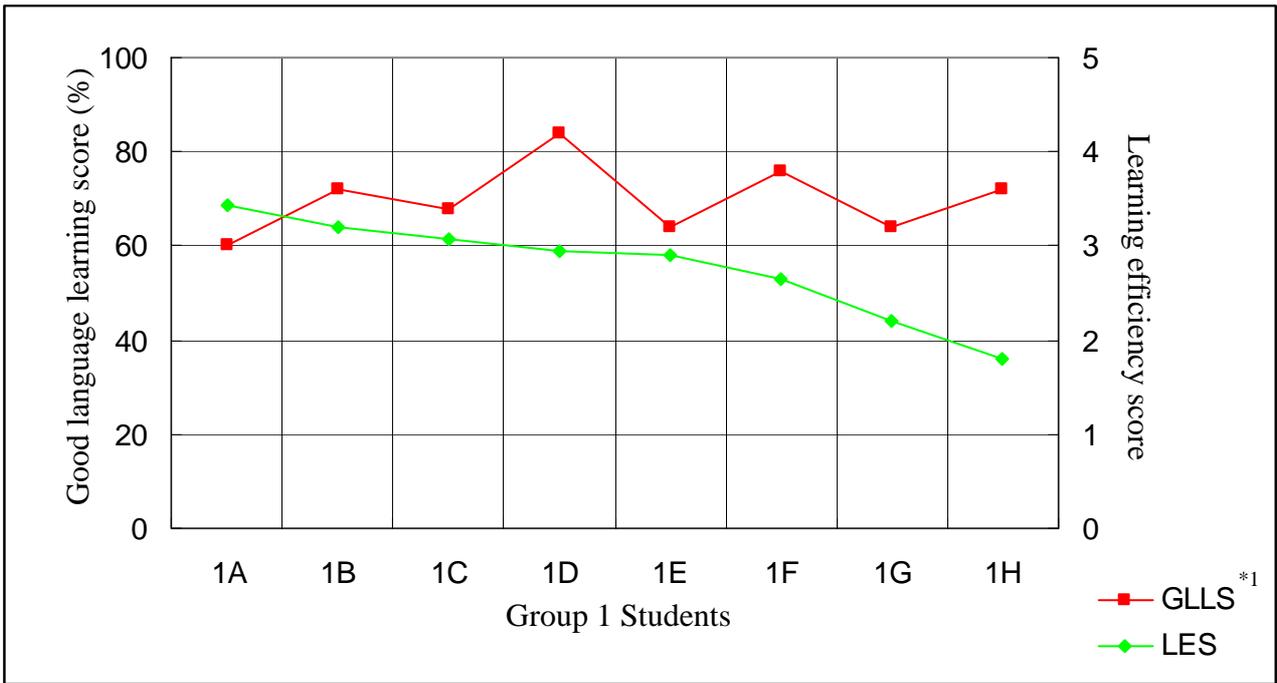


Figure 1. Learning efficiency score and good language learning score for individual students in Group 1 (fourth grade elementary school students)

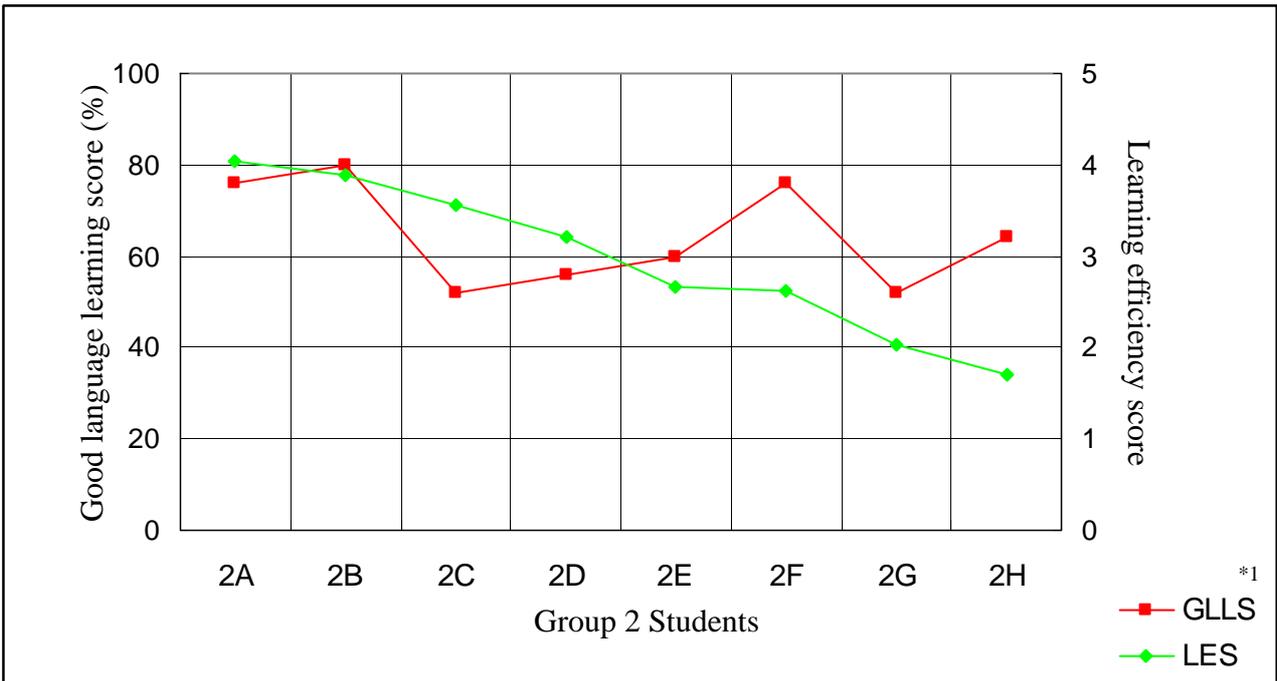


Figure 2. Learning efficiency score and good language learning score for individual students in Group 2 (first grade elementary school students)

*1: GLLS = good language learning score, LES = learning efficiency score

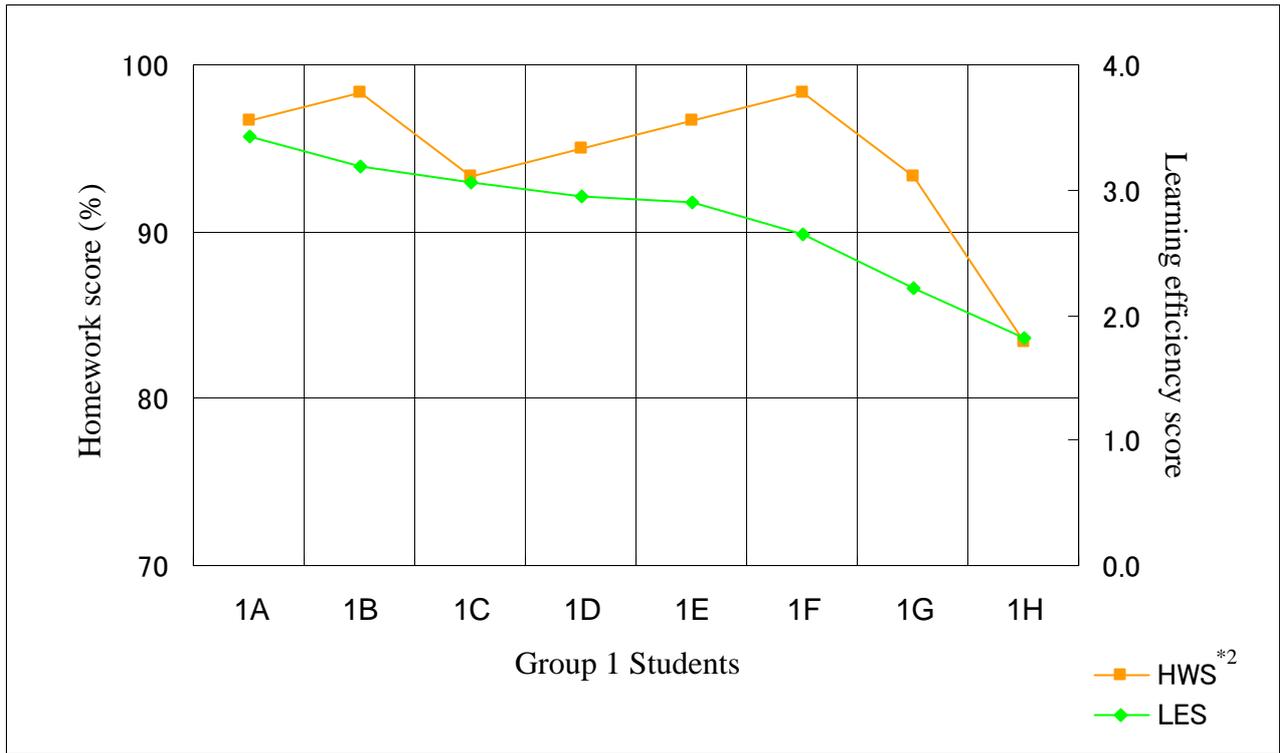


Figure 3. Learning efficiency score and homework score for individual students in Group 1 (fourth grade elementary school students)

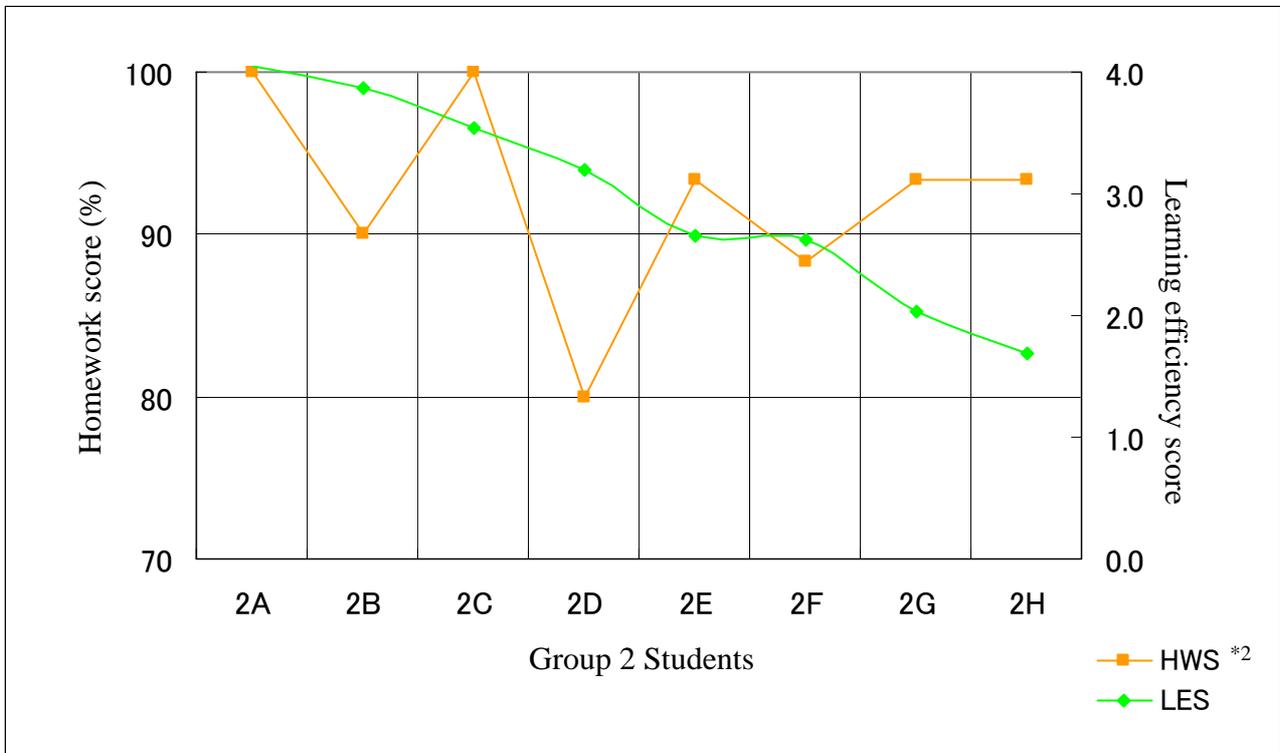


Figure 4. Learning efficiency score and homework score for individual students in Group 2 (first grade elementary school students)

*2: HWS = homework score, LES = learning efficiency score

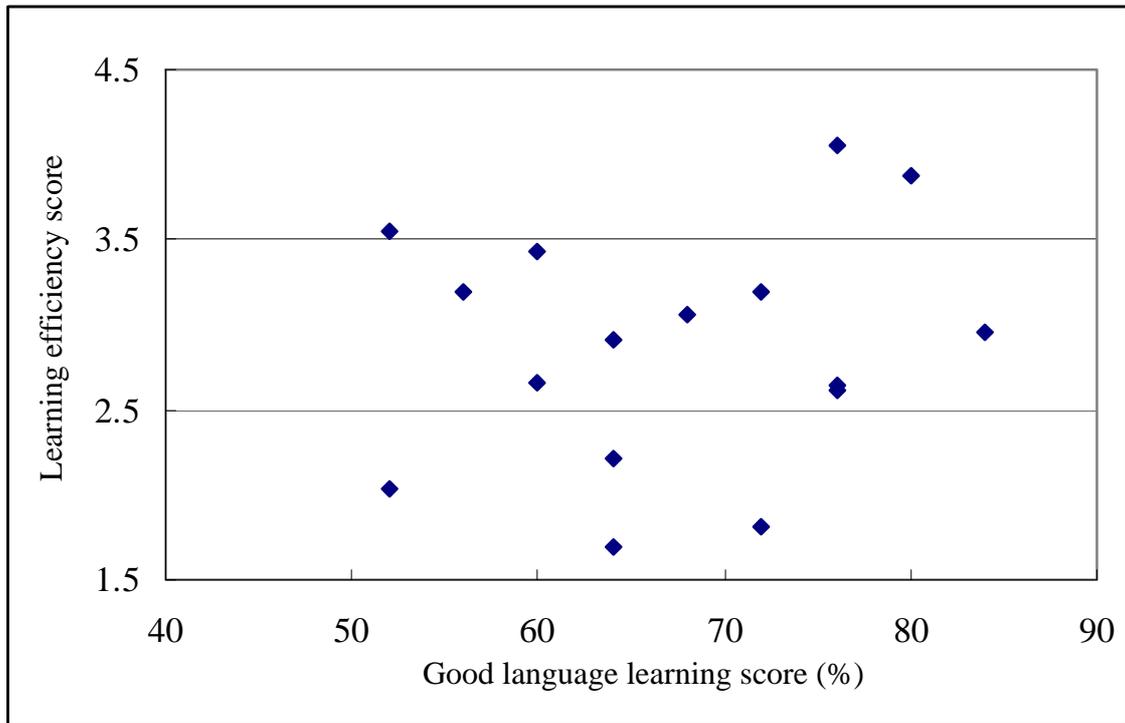


Figure 4. A scatter plot of good language learning score (%) and learning efficiency score
(Data from both groups was combined)

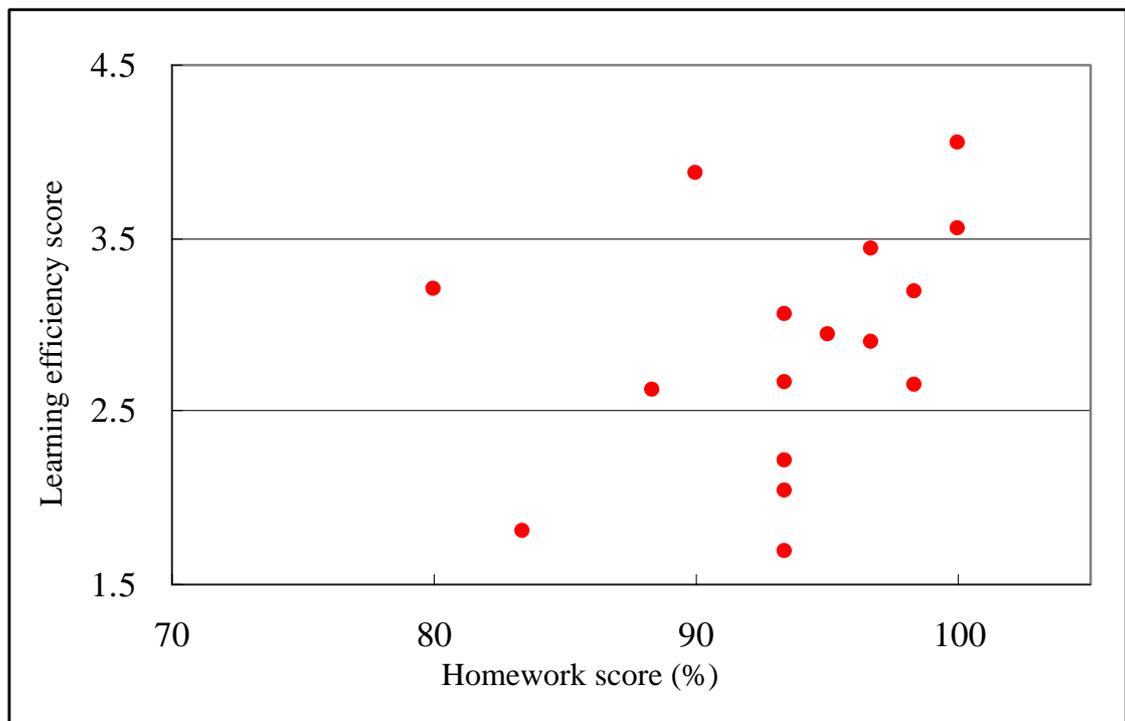


Figure 5. A scatter plot of homework score (%) and learning efficiency score
(Data from both groups was combined)

The examination of the home environment survey revealed no clear effect of parents' attitudes towards English learning and/or the home L2 learning environment on a student's performance in the learning efficiency quiz (see Appendix 8).

3.4. Discussions

a) Good language learner attributes

The results detected no specific trends or inclinations which support Brown's suggested ten attributes of good language learners. The first hypothesis in this case study, therefore, should be rejected. However, the analysis of the results and feedback from the parents (written and spoken) about the survey highlighted several methodological issues in the current study.

Since children can be quite flexible and adaptable to the environments in which they learn L2, it is probable that the children do not even have 'usual' learning styles that they consistently use (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 75). Hence, in the language learning survey we conducted, the students' preferences of particular learning styles or strategies could have easily changed depending on the specific situations they visualised for each question.

Furthermore, as the survey was administered by the children's parents in their homes, the interviewing process would not have been standardised. For example, since most children required extra explanations from their parents in order for them to fully understand the questions, their chosen answers could have been significantly affected by the parents' (interviewers') interpretations of the questions. Besides, some children might have answered the questions based on what they thought 'good' answers would be, instead of on their true preferences (Brown, 2007: 180). The data obtained through the type of questionnaire I used in this study, in this regard, cannot be treated as entirely credible.

b) The learning progress test and the validity of the assumption in my study

In the process of hypotheses testing, it was assumed that the 'progress' or 'success' of children's L2 acquisition could accurately be measured through specific L2 tests which were developed based on the

classroom syllabus. However, this assumption is likely to be inadequate for young learners due to the following findings in various studies:

- (1) Children's brains have a certain 'plasticity' which enables them to effectively tolerate the ambiguities and contradictions of any language (Brown, 2007: 67). Some children may not have been particularly concerned with clarifying the meaning of the questions or providing correct answers.
- (2) Young children do not have sufficient schematic and pragmatic knowledge of their first language to make reasonable linguistic assumptions about the new target language. As they mature, they naturally acquire such knowledge. However, the time of this acquisition varies significantly among children (Skehan, 2001: 86-87; Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 31). The result of the L2 progress test in the current study (namely the learning efficiency score) may have reflected the extent to which the children had gained such knowledge.
- (3) Children predominantly assimilate information through meaningful experiences and are thought to process the majority of the target language at a subconscious level (Brown, 2007: 121). In the test, the children could have perceived the questions and tasks to be unrealistic or meaningless. Their answers may have differed in authentic contexts.
- (4) Children generally do not learn or perform effectively in teacher-fronted classroom situations (Lightbown and Spada, 2006: 190). Some children may not have responded well to the one-on-one-interview-format test employed in the study.

In the above analysis, it become apparent that I cannot determine whether a particular student is a 'good' or 'bad' language learner based on a test. In fact, student 1H who got the lowest score in the learning efficiency test and homework record often shows strong communicative abilities in a L2 environment. She asks many questions in the class and tries to clarify information in different circumstances. Her parents have commented that on a number of occasions, she proactively talked to foreign tourists in English without hesitation. Also, her dream in the future is to become an English teacher. Here, neither could I claim that she is not a 'good' language learner because she did not perform well in the test, nor suggest any particular attributes she should be adapting to change her learning style.

To be a better language learner – proposal

4.1. The role of teachers

The general attributes of a 'good language learner' proposed in various studies, *e.g.* Brown's 'maxim' for good language learning (2007: 145), have become foundations for developing various teaching approaches and/or learning strategies for ESL/EFL students (Brown, 2007: 146-147). Several researchers have also suggested that a salient role of a teacher is to know optimal strategies which would help an individual learner to become a 'better' language learner (Brown, 2007; Lightbown and Spada, 2006).

However, as examined above, it is not realistically possible to accurately determine whether a particular learning strategy or style is beneficial or not for a particular student. I argue that in a true student-centred communicative approach, the teacher's main role should be to provide a learner with a smorgasbord of strategies for dealing with different linguistic challenges, and trust his/her ability to select which ones are best for himself/herself (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991: 206-15). Having developed such trust, a learner's unique learning styles would be accepted and hence, the teacher could not categorise the student's learning progress or aptitude as 'good' or 'bad'. In my classroom, if the children encounter an unfamiliar L2 word, the teacher should introduce the children to different strategies that are appropriate for their levels, and encourage them to practice each of these strategies. Such strategies may include using a dictionary, asking for help using L1, L2, or gestures, searching for the word in their textbook or on cue cards, guessing the meaning of the word based on their current interlanguage, or just ignoring the unfamiliar word and proceeding with the next task. It is then up to the children to decide which strategies to use the next time they come across another unfamiliar word. Each time this happens, the teacher should respect the children's individual choices and encourage them to trust their ability to select a suitable strategy for themselves. It is of paramount importance for teachers not to assume that the teacher can determine, on behalf of their learners, which strategies are best suited or most effective for particular students.

4.2. The role of parents (home environment)

If the teacher imbibed an approach of non-categorising learners, such an approach should also be realised in the children's home environment. Brown (2007: 71) argued that the children's attitudes towards L2 learning 'are "taught", consciously or unconsciously, by parents, other adults and peers'.

Some authors have claimed that in general, parents should not assist their children with learning L2 at home, other than making sure that they complete their homework, as the parents may have an undesirable influence on the children's L2 acquisition process (*e.g.* Paul, 2003). However, according to Brown's claim above, the parents' attitudes towards L2 learning would be intentionally or unintentionally transmitted to their children, regardless of whether or not the parents actively assisted their children in L2 study at home. If that may be the case, attitudinal training for parents can be essential for the parents to effectively assist (if they wish) or beneficially influence their children. For this reason, I propose that the teacher should continuously consult with the parents (*e.g.* through letters and meetings) and always emphasise the importance of parents' involvement in their children's L2 learning. Here, it is fundamental that the parents understand that children's language learning progress or aptitude are not to be categorised as 'good' or 'bad'. I would strongly encourage the parents not to judge the L2 learning progress of their children based on their children's ability to answer specific questions or to perform certain linguistic tasks. The parents should trust that their children have unique learning styles and innate intuitive abilities which can guide their long term L2 acquisition progress.

The parents should also be aware of the strategies the children have learnt or are learning in the classroom. This can help the parents understand the strategic value in particular learning strategies. To raise the parents' awareness about their roles and the different learning strategies that their children are learning, I would organise regular open-classes in which the parents can observe their children experimenting with various learning strategies. I would also provide individual monthly reports to which the parents can respond with their comments and questions about their children's language learning.

In summary, I believe that when the teacher and parents can assist or support the children in a manner that empowers them, they will naturally be motivated and inspired, and as a result, excel in their L2 learning. It is irrelevant as to what extent the students become better language learners. Even if we attempt to ‘measure’ the extent to which they improve in certain aspects of L2 acquisition through particular strategies or measures, the results of such an investigation are likely to be highly questionable due to the weak assumption and methodological issues discussed above.

5. Conclusion

As demonstrated in the preceding sections, it is vital to recognise the problems in untested anecdotal evidence and invalid assumptions in the previous research of ‘successful’ L2 learners. Even if a pattern of a ‘seemingly’ good language learner was discovered, we would not actually know (at least at this stage) whether the identified pattern reflected general ‘successful’ language learning styles and/or the learner’s true personal preferences of L2 learning, as has been assumed by many researchers. The specific attributes or strategies that can universally benefit the L2 acquisition process have been difficult to document. Perhaps, this may be because such attributes or strategies do not really exist. It is also unlikely that a study can provide a confident conclusion on what ‘success’ means in language learning.

Nevertheless, the current study has raised a number of challenges for future studies. There is considerable need for additional studies on the attitudinal and mental influences of parents on their children’s L2 learning. This type of research can be developed into a formal training program or guidelines for parents whose child is learning English from a young age.

Moreover, the subject of investigation should be the notion that ‘success’ in L2 learning is a learner- and context-specific concept, which every L2 language learner uniquely experiences when acquiring a target language. In many of previous studies of language learning strategies, L2 learners were treated virtually as homogeneous (Brown, 2007: 180). As a consequence, the effectiveness of particular learning strategies and/or the result of specific progress tests have received much greater emphasis than the individual’s unique learning preferences and potential aptitudes.

Specifically, I believe that all of my students, who study English, regardless of their personal learning styles, are good language learners and they shall never be categorised into any types of groups based on their performance in particular contexts (*e.g.* classroom or testing situations). Indeed, the categorisation of the language learner can be one of the most influential factors which negatively affect the students' performance and learning progress. It is possible that only when we, as their language teachers (and/or the parents for child students), view the students as 'successful' or 'unsuccessful', do they start to behave as if such categories exist and perform according to the group they have been categorised into. It is critical that we are aware of this psychological influence on our students (Toohey, 2000, in Lightbown and Spada 2006: 66). To effectively assist them to be a better L2 learners, we first may need to make the change in the way we view our students. What a language learner really needs may not be an adviser who gives their opinion of which strategies will make the learner better, but rather, a genuine supporter who truly trusts the learner's unique aptitude and respects the individual differences in their language acquisition process.

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Appendix 1. Fourteen characteristics of good language learners

Rubin and Thompson (1982 in Brown 2007: 132-33)

Good language learners:

- 1) Find their own way, taking charge of their learning
- 2) Organise information about language
- 3) Are creative, developing a “feel” for the language by experimenting with its grammar and words
- 4) Make their own opportunities for practice in using the language inside and outside the classroom
- 5) Learn to live with uncertainty by not getting flustered and by continuing to talk or listen without understanding every word
- 6) Use mnemonics and other memory strategies to recall what has been learned
- 7) Make errors work for them and not against them
- 8) Use linguistic knowledge, including knowledge of their first language, in learning a second language
- 9) Use contextual cues to help them in comprehension
- 10) Learn to make intelligent guesses
- 11) Learn chunks of language as whole and formalised routines to help them perform “beyond their competence
- 12) Learn certain tricks that help to keep conversations going
- 13) Learn certain production strategies to fill in gaps in their own competence
- 14) Learn different styles of speech and writing and learn to vary their language according to the formality of the situation

Appendix 2. Ten characteristics of good language learners

Adapted from Brown (2007: 144 and 145)

Good language learners:

- 1) Do not mind if people laugh at them when they speak (low inhibitions)
- 2) Like to try out new words and structures that they are not completely sure of (risk taking ability)
- 3) Feel very confident in their ability to succeed in learning L2 (high self-confidence)
- 4) Want to learn L2 because of what they can personally gain from it (intrinsic motivation)
- 5) Really enjoy working with other people in groups (cooperative learning skills)
- 6) Like to “absorb” language and get the general “gist” of what is said or written (right-brain processes)
- 7) Just try to take things one step at a time, if there is an abundance of language to master (high ambiguity tolerance)
- 8) Are not overly conscious of themselves when they speak (intuition)
- 9) Try to use mistakes to learn something about the language (error feedback processing skills)
- 10) Find ways to continue learning language outside of the classroom (personal goals)

Appendix 3a. Assessment of learning efficiency (progress)

Quiz for Group 1 (eight fourth grade elementary school students - age: 9-10 years old)

Task 1: Name the cue card picture (vocabulary and pronunciation)

Number of correct answers	/40
Number of incorrect answers	/40
Number of no response in English	/40

Task 2: Read aloud the following (reading phonemes and pronunciation)

3 letters	sit	zuf	tes	lob	det
Correct with good pronunciation					
Correct with poor pronunciation					
Incorrect					
Did not attempt to read					

4 letters	tent	musk	flax	zone	hing
Correct with good pronunciation					
Correct with poor pronunciation					
Incorrect					
Did not attempt to read					

5 letters	vomit	stand	gruck	melon	tonic
Correct with good pronunciation					
Correct with poor pronunciation					
Incorrect					
Did not attempt to read					

6 letters	kindom	habbit	condux	praboz	eggcup
Correct with good pronunciation					
Correct with poor pronunciation					
Incorrect					
Did not attempt to read					

Task 3: In two minutes, name as many objects as you can in this office using the pattern "I can see..."
(vocabulary and speaking)

Number of correct answers	
Number of incorrect answers	

Task 4: Answer the following questions (listening comprehension and expression in L2)

	Gave an appropriate answer in the given situation	Gave an inappropriate answer in the given situation	No response
What is your name?			
What is your favorite sport?			
Where do you live?			
Are you cold?			
What grade are you?			
Can you play the violin?			
Do you want a strawberry?			
How's the weather today?			
Do you like cats?			
How many buttons are there on this plate?			
What color are the buttons?			
How old are you?			

Task 5: Ask me as many questions as you can in two minutes (vocabulary and speaking)

Number of correct questions	
Number of incorrect questions	

Task 6: Dictation (listening writing)

3 letters	mop	raf	vix	yun
4 letters	desk	frop	bast	holt
5 letters	lemoz	mupet	fovad	tunus

Correct answers (2 points), Constants with incorrect vowels (1 point), Number of blanks (0 point)

Appendix 3b. Assessment of learning efficiency (progress)

Quiz for Group 2 (eight first grade elementary school students - age: 6-7 years old)

Task 1: Name the cue card picture (vocabulary and pronunciation)

Number of correct answers	/40
Number of incorrect answers	/40
Number of no response in English	/40

Task 2: Read aloud the following (reading phonemes and pronunciation)

1 letter	Correct with good pronunciation	Correct with poor pronunciation	Incorrect	Did not attempt to read
A				
B				
C				
D				
E				
F				
G				
H				
I				
J				
K				
L				
M				
N				
O				
P				
Q				
R				
S				
T				
U				
V				
W				
X				
Y				
Z				

Task 3: In two minutes, name as many objects as you can in this office using the pattern "I can see..."
(vocabulary and speaking)

Number of correct answers	
Number of incorrect answers	

Task 4: Answer the following questions (listening comprehension and expression in L2)

	Gave an appropriate answer in the given situation	Gave an inappropriate answer in the given situation	No response
What is your name?			
What is your favorite sport?			
Where do you live?			
Are you cold?			
What grade are you?			
Can you play the violin?			
Do you want a strawberry?			
How's the weather today?			
Do you like cats?			
How many buttons are there on this plate?			
What color are the buttons?			
How old are you?			

Task 5: Ask me as many questions as you can in two minutes (vocabulary and speaking)

Number of correct questions	
Number of incorrect questions	

Task 6: Dictation (listening writing)

T	H	C	M	I
L	B	S	U	P
A	K	F	V	J
R	Y	N	D	Q
X	G	O	W	E
Z				

Correct letters (2 points), Incorrect letters (1 point), Number of blanks (0 point)

Appendix 4a. Assessment of personal learning style and strategy use (in English)

Personal Learning Style Survey

Please ask the following questions to your child and check their response. If they do not understand a question, please reword it to simpler Japanese (adopted from Brown 2006: 144).

- 1) I get embarrassed if people laugh at me when I speak English yes no
- 2) I don't mind if people laugh at me when I speak English yes no
- 3) I can say a new English word or sentence in front of others even if I'm not completely sure if it is correct yes no
- 4) I think I should only say a new English word or sentence in front of others if I'm completely sure it is correct yes no
- 5) I think "I will be able to speak English very well in the future" yes no
- 6) I think "I will not be able to speak English very well in the future" yes no
- 7) I want to learn English to express my own feelings and thoughts yes no
- 8) I am learning English because I will be / am required to study English at school yes no
- 9) I am learning English because my parents asked me to study yes no
- 10) I enjoy learning / studying with other people in groups yes no
- 11) I enjoy learning / studying by myself rather than with other people yes no
- 12) I like to understand the exact meaning of words and sentences, and the reasons for everything yes no
- 13) I think it is OK even I do not understand everything, as long as I get the general meaning of words and sentences yes no
- 14) If there are many new things to learn or understand, I try to take things one step at a time yes no
- 15) If there are many new things to learn or understand, I become lost yes no
- 16) When I do the homework, I think very carefully and do it very slowly yes no
- 17) When I do the homework and can not quickly figure out how to do it, I think to myself "I don't want to do this any more" yes no
- 18) When we play a new game and I don't understand the rules, I will ask my friends and my teacher for help yes no
- 19) When we play a new game and I don't understand the rules, I think to myself "I don't want to do this any more" yes no
- 20) When I say something in English, I think very carefully what to say yes no
- 21) When I say something in English, I don't think too much and just say what I think at the time yes no
- 22) When my teacher asks me a question, I think to myself "I should not make any mistakes" yes no
- 23) When I make a mistake, I think "I am not good at English" yes no
- 24) When I make a mistake, I think "I want to know the proper answer and learn more English" yes no
- 25) I want to study English more outside of the classroom to improve (e.g. do more than the set homework) yes no

Appendix 4b. Assessment of personal learning style and strategy use (in Japanese)

お子様への英語学習アンケート

以下の質問は、保護者様がお子様にご質問しながらご回答ください。お子様が質問の意味を理解しにくい場合は、簡単な文章に変えて説明を交えてご質問いただけますと喜びます。

- 1) 私が英語で何か言うとき、他のお友達に笑われたら、はずかしい。 はい いいえ
- 2) 私が英語で何か言うとき、他のお友達に笑われても、あまり気にせず自分の思ったことが言える。 はい いいえ
- 3) 私は、答えがはっきりわからなくても、クラスの前で発表できる。 はい いいえ
- 4) 私は、答えがはっきりわかっている英語しか言わない方がいいと思う。 はい いいえ
- 5) 私は、いつか上手に英語が話せるようになると思う。 はい いいえ
- 6) 私は、大きくなってたぶん英語は上手にならないと思う。 はい いいえ
- 7) 私は、自分の気持ちや考えを伝えることができるように、英語を勉強したいと思う。 はい いいえ
- 8) 私は、学校で英語をしなくてはならないから、英語を習っている。 はい いいえ
- 9) 私は、お母さんとお父さんが言うから、英語を習っている。 はい いいえ
- 10) 私は、クラスみんなで協力しながら勉強するのが好き。 はい いいえ
- 11) 私は、グループより一人で勉強するのが好き。 はい いいえ
- 12) 私は、ことばの意味や、どうしてこなるのか理由をすべてきちんと理解したい。 はい いいえ
- 13) 私は、大体のことが理解できれば細かいことはあまり理解できなくても大丈夫だと思う。 はい いいえ
- 14) 私は、新しいことが一度にたくさん出てきたとき、ゆっくりひとつひとつ進んでいく。 はい いいえ
- 15) 私は、新しいことが一度にたくさん出てくるとどうしていいかわからなくなってしまう。 はい いいえ
- 16) 私は、宿題をするとき、やり方をゆっくり考えてみる。 はい いいえ
- 17) 私は、宿題をするとき、やり方がはっきりわからなかったら、この宿題はもうやりたくないと思う。 はい いいえ
- 18) 私は、新しいゲームをするとき、ルールややり方がはっきりわからなかったら、お友達に聞いたり、マッシュに質問する。 はい いいえ
- 19) 私は、新しいゲームをするとき、ルールややり方がはっきりわからなかったら、このゲームはもうやりたくないと思う。 はい いいえ
- 20) 私は、英語で何か言うとき、何を言おうかゆっくりよく考えてから話す。 はい いいえ
- 21) 私は、英語で何か言うとき、あまり考えないで頭に浮かんだことを何でも言う。 はい いいえ
- 22) 私は、質問されたら、できれば答えを間違えないようにした方がいいと思う。 はい いいえ
- 23) 私は、答えを間違えると、自分は英語が苦手なんだと思う。 はい いいえ
- 24) 私は、答えを間違えたとき、それはどうして間違ったのか知って、正しい答えを勉強したいと思う。 はい いいえ
- 25) 私は、英語が上手になるために、小学校やエクセレント英会話教室の授業や宿題以外にも英語を勉強したいと思う。 はい いいえ

Appendix 5a. Assessment of socio-cultural factors (home environment) (in English)

English Study Survey

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey.

There are no “preferred” answers or “better” answers to any of the questions on this survey, so please be honest with what you write. This survey consists of five pages of questions. It takes approximately 25 to 30 minutes to complete.

*For ease of reading, students are referred to as ‘her’. In the Japanese survey, the students were referred to as ‘you child’.

The following questions are to be answered by the parents:

1) **Are you interested in your child learning English? Please choose one.**

strongly moderately slightly not much

2) **Is there anyone in your family (aside from your child who is studying at our School) who is interested in English?**

yes no

3) **If yes, who?**

mother father brothers or sisters grandparents other relatives

4) **Who initially decided to start studying at our English school?**

child herself mother father brothers or sisters grandparents

5) **Do you listen to English CDs in the car or at home together with your child?**

almost everyday often sometimes never

6) **Do you or other siblings sing English songs together with your child?**

almost everyday often sometimes never

7) **Do you or other siblings play English games together with your child?**

almost everyday often sometimes never

8) **Do you or other siblings read English books together with your child, or do you read English books to your child?**

almost everyday often sometimes never

9) **Do you show English TV programs for your child or does your child watch English TV programs by herself?**

almost everyday often sometimes never

10) **Do you display any English word posters, alphabet posters and/or vocabulary cards at home?**

yes no

11) **Do you point out English letters or words on posters, labels and/or signboards?**

almost everyday often sometimes never

12) **Do you teach English vocabulary (including feelings and actions) to your child?**

almost everyday often sometimes never

13) If yes, when do you do it? Please choose up to two situations that most commonly occur.

- when my child asks
- whenever I know the word for something in English
- when words come up on TV or in books
- when we review English school lessons at home
- other _____

14) Do you talk to your child in English at home?

- almost everyday
- often
- sometimes
- never

15) If yes, what do you say? Please choose up to two types of utterances that you would most likely to say to your child.

- discrete words, *e.g.* "Apple", "Dog", "Red", "Two"
- short phrases, *e.g.* "OK", "Sorry", "Great"
- commands and instructions, *e.g.* "Stand up", "Sit down"
- questions, *e.g.* "Do you want an apple?", "Do you like singing?", "What's this?"
- general statements, *e.g.* "I'm happy", "It's hot", "It's a cat"
- other _____

16) How do you answer if your child asks you a question about English? Please choose up to two ways that you would most likely to respond.

- I explain what I know
- I find the answer together with my child (using a dictionary and/or a textbook)
- I suggest to my child that she should ask the teacher at the English school
- I encourage my child to find the answer by herself
- I say "I do not know"
- other _____

17) What do you do if you find that your child has made a mistake related to English? Please choose up to two that you would most likely to do.

- I point out the mistake and tell the correct answer
- I point out the mistake and suggest she ask the teacher at the English school
- I point out the mistake and encourage my child to find the correct answer by herself
- I do not point out the mistake, instead I ask questions to help my child find her own mistakes
- I ignore the mistake
- other _____

18) Do you ask your child what she is learning at the English school?

- every week
- twice a month or more
- sometimes
- never

19) If yes, how does your child answer your question? Please choose your child's most likely response.

- She would explain the contents in detail
- She would briefly explain the contents
- She would say "I don't know"
- She would say "I don't want to say"
- other _____

20) Does your child review what they have been studying at the English school?

- every week twice a month or more sometimes never

21) If yes, how does your child review the class work?

Please choose up to two that she would most likely to do.

- A parent acts as a teacher and explains any points the child does not properly understand
- Your child acts as a teacher and teaches the parents and / or other siblings the contents of the lesson
- She reviews the textbook and/or homework together with the parents or other siblings
- She reviews the textbook and/or homework by herself
- other _____

22) Do you check if your child has finished her homework?

- every week twice a month or more sometimes never

23) Do you ask your child about the contents of her homework?

- every week twice a month or more sometimes never

24) If yes, how does your child answer your question? Please choose your child's most likely response.

- She would explain the contents in detail
- She would show us the homework
- She would briefly explain the contents
- She would say "I don't know"
- She would say "I don't want to say"
- other _____

25) Do you encourage your child to do the homework by herself?

- every week twice a month or more sometimes never

26) How much do you help your child with her homework? Please choose one.

- I complete all of the homework together with my child and if she does not know an answer, I will tell her the answer
- I complete all of the homework together with my child and if she does not know an answer, I will encourage her to find the answer by herself
- I complete all of the homework together with my child and if she does not know an answer, I will tell her to leave it blank
- I only do a little of the homework together with my child and if she does not know an answer, I will tell her the answer
- I only do a little of the homework together with my child and if she does not know an answer, I will encourage her to find the answer by herself
- I only do a little of the homework together with my child and if she does not know an answer, I will tell her to leave it blank
- I usually do not help my child with her homework and if she asks for help, I will tell her the answer
- I usually do not help my child with her homework and if she asks for help, I will encourage her to find the answer by herself
- I usually do not help my child with her homework and if she asks for help, I will tell her to that part blank
- I never help my child with her homework (she does not ask for help either)

27) Do you have English-Japanese dictionary at home?

yes no

28) If yes, how often do you use it?

almost everyday often sometimes never

29) If yes, how often does your child use it?

almost everyday often sometimes never

30) If yes, how often do you use it together with your child?

almost everyday often sometimes never

31) Initially, why did you want your child to learn English?

Please choose up to four reasons that best describe why you wanted your child to learn English.

because my child showed an interest in English

because my child's siblings and / or friends were learning English

because someone recommended that my child should learn English

because I heard and understood the importance of English for children from TV, posters, seminars etc.

because I like English

because I do not like English or I am not good at English

because I thought it would be great if we could talk, sing and play games in English with my child

because I wanted my child to live overseas or because we were planning to live overseas in the future

because I wanted to go on an overseas trip with my child in the future

because I wanted my child to make friends with people from different countries in the future

because I thought English would be useful my child's future career

because I thought understanding English would be useful at my child's elementary school

because I wanted my child to get good grades in English at junior high school, senior high school and/or university

because I wanted my child to be an outgoing and international person

because I wanted my child to like English

because I wanted my child to interact with foreigners and experience foreign culture

other _____

32) Do you tell your child the benefits of studying English?

almost everyday often sometimes never

33) If yes, what do you tell your child? Please choose up to two that you say.

It will be easy for you to travel overseas in the future

We can go to an overseas trip together as a family

You can make many friends from different countries

You can talk to foreign teachers and friends in English

You will be good at English at junior high school and senior high school

You can get a great job or your dream job

other _____

34) When your child is practicing English or studying English, what do you usually say to her? Please choose up to two that you would say.

- compliment *e.g.* "Very good"
- encourage *e.g.* "Keep it up", "You can do it"
- support *e.g.* "Do you have any questions?"
- give an advice *e.g.* "You should do this"
- ask questions *e.g.* "What are you doing?", "What's this?"
- do not say anything
- other _____

35) What comments do you often make about English in general? Please choose up to two that you would say most frequently.

- English is fun English is easy English is difficult English is important
- You would be cool if you could speak English English is not interesting or not fun
- other _____

36) In your opinion, which of the following characteristics does a child need to be a 'good English learner'? Please choose up to four characteristics.

- ability to study proactively / independently big dreams or goals social outgoing personality
- conscientiousness courage to make mistakes or take risk
- ability to learn from others (from careful observation)
- strong desire to learn optimistic personality
- ability to infer / guess from limited information
- perseverance to continue studying ability to apply what they learn
- creativity ability to adapt / adjust to new environments concentration
- logical thinking ability to memorise relaxed personality (not easily influenced by others)
- other _____

37) Please write your comments on your child's English study at home (anything that you have noticed or wondered about your child's English study at home). We also welcome any questions or suggestions for our English school.

Appendix 5b. Assessment of socio-cultural factors (home environment) (in Japanese)

英語学習に関するアンケート

この度は、英語学習アンケートにご協力いただき、誠にありがとうございます。以下の各項目の当てはまるものにチェックを入れてお答えください。

- 今回のアンケートには「よりよい回答」や「好ましい回答」などは存在しませんので、率直なご意見をお聞かせください。
- アンケートは全部で5ページあり、全質問にご回答いただくために約25分から30分かかります。

以下の質問は、保護者様にご回答ください。

- 1) お子様の英語学習について興味・関心はありますか。最も当てはまると思うものを一つ選んでください。
非常にある 結構ある 少しはある あまりない
- 2) ご家族の中でお子様以外に英語に興味のある方はいらっしゃいますか。
いる いない
- 3) 質問2で「いる」と答えた方は、どなたが一番興味を持っておられると思いますか。
お母さん お父さん 兄弟姉妹 おじいさん、または、おばあさん 親戚の方
- 4) エクセレント英会話教室でお子様が英語を習うことを始めに言い出したのはどなたですか。
お子様ご本人 お母さん お父さん 兄弟姉妹 おじいさん、または、おばあさん
- 5) ご家庭や車の中で英語のCDを親子また兄弟と一緒に聞くことはありますか。
ほぼ毎日 よくある たまにある 全くない
- 6) 英語の歌を親子また兄弟と一緒に歌うことはありますか。
ほぼ毎日 よくある たまにある 全くない
- 7) 英語を使ったゲームを親子また兄弟と一緒にすることはありますか。
ほぼ毎日 よくある たまにある 全くない
- 8) 英語の本を親子また兄弟と一緒に読むこと、または、読んであげることはありますか。
ほぼ毎日 よくある たまにある 全くない
- 9) お子様に英語学習のテレビ番組やDVDを見せますか（お子様自身で勝手に見ている場合も含む）。
ほぼ毎日見せている / 見ている よく見せている / 見ている
たまに見せている / 見ている 全く見せない / 見ていない
- 10) ご家庭に英単語のポスター、単語カード、アルファベットポスターなどが貼ってありますか。
貼ってある 貼っていない
- 11) ポスター、ラベル、看板などの英語の文字、または、英単語があればお子様に指差して示しますか。
毎日のようにしている よくしている たまにしている 全くしない
- 12) お子様に物の名前、気持ち、動作などの英単語を教えることはありますか。
毎日のようにしている よくしている たまにしている 全くしない
- 13) 質問12でたまにでも「している」と答えた方は、以下のどの状況で教えてあげますか。最も当てはまるものを二つまで選んでください（一つでも可）。
こどもの方から質問してきたときに教えてあげる
日頃の生活の中で自分が知っている単語はできる限り英語で言うようにしている
テレビや本などで英単語が出てきたときに教えてあげる
教室で習ったことを復習しているときに教えてあげる
その他 _____

- 14) ご家庭でお子様に英語で話しかけることはありますか。
 毎日一回はある よくある たまにある 全くない
- 15) 質問14でたまにでも「ある」と答えた方は、どんなことを話しますか。最も頻繁に話すことを二つまで選んでください(一つでも可)。
 「Apple」「Dog」「Red」「Two」などの単語
 「OK」「Sorry」「Great!」「Here you are」などの呼びかけ、言い返し
 「Stand up」「Sit down」などの指示
 「Do you want an apple?」「Do you like singing?」「What's this?」などの質問
 「I am happy」「It's hot」「It's a cat」などの肯定文
 その他 _____
- 16) お子様から英語に関する質問があった場合、通常どのように答えますか。最も頻繁にすることを二つまで選んでください(一つでも可)。
 自分の知っている範囲で説明・回答する 辞書を調べたり、テキストを見て一緒に答えを探し出す
 エクセレント英会話教室で先生に質問しようと提案する 自分の力で答えを探し出すよう励ます
 「わからない」と答える その他 _____
- 17) お子様の英語が間違っていると分かったとき、通常どのように対応しますか。最も頻繁にすることを二つまで選んでください(一つでも可)。
 間違っているところを指摘して、正しい答えを教える
 間違っているところを指摘して、正しい答えをエクセレント英会話教室で確認するよう提案する
 間違っているところを指摘して、自分自身で修正するようこどもを励ます
 間違えは指摘しないで、本当にそれで正しいか何気なく問いかける(こども自身に間違えを発見させる)
 間違えを無視する・知らない振りをする
 その他 _____
- 18) お子様にエクセレント英会話教室で今、何を習っているか聞くことはありますか。
 毎週聞いている 月に2回以上は聞いている たまに聞いている ほとんど聞かない
- 19) 質問18でたまにでも「聞いている」と答えた方、お子様は質問に通常どのように答えることが多いですか。最も当てはまると思うものを一つ選んでください。
 習っていることを具体的に詳しく説明してくれる 習っていることを簡単に話してくれる
 「よくわからない」と答える 「言いたくない」と答える
 その他 _____
- 20) お子様はエクセレント英会話教室で習ったことの復習をすることはありますか。
 毎週している 月に2回以上はしている たまにしている ほとんどしない
- 21) 質問20で、たまにでも「している」と答えた方、通常どのように復習していますか。最も頻繁にすることを二つまで選んでください(一つでも可)。
 お父さん、またはお母さんが先生になって、お子様に習った内容、または分からなかった内容を教える
 お子様が生徒になって、お父さん、お母さん、または兄弟に自分で理解した内容を教える
 親子または兄弟と一緒にテキストブックや宿題をみたりして習った内容を確認する
 自分ひとりでテキストブックや宿題をみたりして習った内容を確認する
 その他 _____
- 22) お子様に宿題を終了したか確認しますか。
 毎週確認する 月に2回以上は確認している たまに確認している ほとんど確認しない
- 23) お子様に宿題の内容は何か聞くことはありますか。
 いつも聞いている 月に2回以上聞くことがある たまに聞いている ほとんど聞かない

- 24) 質問23で、たまにでも「聞く」と答えた方、お子様は質問にどのように答えますか。
 最も当てはまると思う選択肢を一つ選んでください。
- 内容を具体的に詳しく説明してくれる 宿題をそのまま見せてくれる
内容を簡単に話してくれる 「よくわからない」と答える 「言いたくない」と答える
その他_____
- 25) お子様に自分ひとりで宿題をするように励ましますか。
- 毎週励ましている 月に2回以上は励ましている たまに励ます ほとんど励まさない
- 26) お子様の宿題をどの程度、手伝いますか。最も当てはまると思うものを一つ選んでください。
- 初めから終わりまで一緒に完了し、分からないところは答えを教えてあげる
初めから終わりまで一緒に完了し、分からないところは答えを自分で調べる・考えるように励ます
初めから終わりまで一緒に完了し、分からないところは空欄にしておくように言う
宿題の一部と一緒に完了し、分からないところは答えを教えてあげる
宿題の一部と一緒に完了し、分からないところは答えを自分で調べる・考えるように励ます
宿題の一部と一緒に完了し、分からないところは空欄にしておくように言う
宿題はほとんど手伝わず、こどもから質問があれば答えを教える
宿題はほとんど手伝わず、こどもから質問があれば答えを自分で調べる・考えるように励ます
宿題はほとんど手伝わず、こどもから質問があれば、分からないところは空欄にしておくように言う
宿題は全く手伝わない（こどもから質問されることも、助けを求められることもない）
- 27) ご家庭に和英辞書がありますか。
- ある ない
- 28) 質問27で「ある」と答えた方、保護者様自身は、その和英辞書をどの程度使いますか。
- ほぼ毎日使う よく使う たまに使う 全く使わない
- 29) 質問27で「ある」と答えた方、お子様自身は、その和英辞書をどの程度使いますか。
- ほぼ毎日使う よく使う たまに使う 全く使わない
- 30) 質問27で「ある」と答えた方、お子様と一緒に和英辞書で単語を調べることはありますか。
- ほぼ毎日調べる よく調べる たまに調べる 全く調べない
- 31) お子様に英語を習わせようと思ったのはなぜですか。
 最も当てはまるものを四つまで選んでください（四つ以下でも可）。
- 本人が習いたいと言ったから お友達、または兄弟姉妹が習っているから
友人、知人に習った方がいいと勧められたから
テレビ、広告、講座などで英語の大切さを聞いたことがあるから
自分が英語が好きだから 自分が英語が苦手、または嫌いだから
家族で英語で話したり、遊んだり、歌ったりできたらいいと思うから
将来、外国に住んでほしい、または住む予定があるから
将来、外国旅行に一緒に行きたいから 将来、外国人の友達を作って欲しいから
将来、英語を使う仕事に就くことがあれば、役に立つから
小学校の英語活動に役立つから
中学・高校の英語科目でよい成績が取れる、または、いい大学に行けるから
こどもに積極的、または国際的な性格になって欲しいから
こどもに英語を好きになって欲しいから 国際交流の一貫として
その他_____

- 32) お子様に英語を習っている有益な点（例えば、将来外国に行って不自由しない、中学校で英語が得意になる、将来、外国に行けるなど）を話すことはありますか。
- ほぼ毎日話す よく話す たまに話す 全く話さない
- 33) 質問 31 でたまにでも「話す」と答えた方は、どんなことを話しますか。最も頻繁に話すことを二つまで選んでください（一つでも可）。
- 将来、外国に行ったとき不自由しない 将来、家族で外国旅行に行ける
- 外国の友達を作ることができる 外国の友達や先生と話ができる
- 中学校・高校で英語が得意になる・苦労しない いい仕事、または、夢の仕事に就ける
- その他_____
- 34) お子様が英語を勉強している時や、英語を話そうとしている時、どんな声かけをすることが多いですか。最も頻繁に言うことを二つまで選んでください（一つでも可）。
- 「すごいね」とほめる 「がんばって」とはげます
- 「何か聞きたいことはある？」と支援する 「これはこうしたらいい」とアドバイスする
- 「どんなことをしているの？」「これは何？」などと質問する 何も言わない
- その他_____
- 35) 英語についてどのようにコメントすることが多いですか。最も頻繁に言うことを二つまで選んでください（一つでも可）。
- 英語は楽しい 英語は簡単 英語は難しい 英語は重要 英語が話せたらカッコいい
- 英語は面白くない その他_____
- 36) 以下のうち、英語の「よい学習者」（英語を上手に習う人）にはどんな要素があると思いますか。最も大切と思う要素を四つまで選んでください（四つ以下でも可）。
- 自発的な学習能力 大きな夢・目標 外交的・社交的な性格
- 正確さを重視する几帳面さ 失敗・間違いを恐れない度胸
- 他人から学べる観察力 上達したいと思う強い向上心
- 細かいことを気にしない楽天的な性格 限られた情報の中で解答を見つけ出す推測力・洞察力
- 練習・勉強を続ける持久力 習ったことを発展できる応用力
- 新しいことを作り出す創造力 新しい環境に慣れるための適応能力
- 集中力 物事を理論的に考えられる思考能力 記憶力
- 他人に影響されないマイペースな性格 その他_____
- 37) お子様のご家庭での英語学習に対して普段感じておられることをどんなことでも結構ですので、ご記入ください。エクセレント英会話教室へのご要望、ご質問等でも結構です。

Appendix 6. The results of the assessment quiz (L2 learning efficiency scores)

Skills tested	No.	Task	Group 1									Group 2								
			Max. points	1A	1B	1C	1D	1E	1F	1G	1H	Max. points	2A	2B	2C	2D	2E	2F	2G	2H
Vocabulary	1	Name the cue card picture	40	40	38	37	34	32	37	31	32	40	29	30	32	22	13	21	23	25
Reading	2	Read aloud the following (1LW)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	52	33	48	42	46	34	29	42	32
	3	Read aloud the following (3LW)	10	8	6	8	4	4	8	9	7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	4	Read aloud the following (4LW)	10	10	9	2	8	4	7	4	6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	5	Read aloud the following (5LW)	10	10	6	3	8	3	4	4	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	6	Read aloud the following (6LW)	10	6	6	4	6	2	5	3	6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vocabulary and speaking	6	In two minutes, name as many objects as you can in this office using the pattern "I can see..."	20	18	12	11	11	7	10	11	11	20	12	10	6	6	5	5	9	5
	7	What is your name?	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
	8	What is your favorite sport?	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
	9	Where do you live?	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	10	Are you cold?	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
	11	What grade are you?	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	12	Can you play the violin?	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
	13	Do you want a strawberry?	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	14	How's the weather today?	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
	15	Do you like cats?	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
	16	How many buttons are there on this plate?	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
	17	What color are the buttons?	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
	18	How old are you?	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1
Speaking	19	Ask me as many questions as you can in two minutes	10	7	3	2	2	2	4	3	3	10	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1
Listening and writing	20	Dictation (1LW)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	52	45	41	46	39	33	43	49	35
	21	Dictation (3LW)	24	20	16	20	16	22	16	11	14	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	22	Dictation (4LW)	32	26	26	27	25	20	26	21	28	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	23	Dictation (5LW)	40	30	28	22	13	14	28	2	26	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total score			218	187	160	147	135	114	156	106	146	186	128	137	132	119	89	107	129	104
Total score (%)			100	86	73	67	62	52	72	49	67	100	69	74	71	64	48	58	69	56
Total number of months studied in my English school			-	25	23	22	21	18	27	22	37	-	17	19	20	20	18	22	34	33
Learning efficiency score (score%/month)			-	3.4	3.2	3.1	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.2	1.8	-	4.0	3.9	3.5	3.2	2.7	2.6	2.0	1.7

Appendix 7. The results of the ‘Personal Learning Style Survey’ (good language learner (GLL) strategy score)

Suggested GLL characteristics the questions are designed to highlight	No.	Questions adopted from Brown's questionnaire (2007: 144)	Suggested GLL response	Group 1								Group 2								
				1A	1B	1C	1D	1E	1F	1G	1H	2A	2B	2C	2D	2E	2F	2G	2H	
Lower inhibitions	1	I get embarrassed if people laugh at me when I speak English	No	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0
Lower inhibitions	2	I don't mind if people laugh at me when I speak English	Yes	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
Encourage Risk taking	3	I can say a new English word or sentence in front of others even if I'm not completely sure if it is correct	Yes	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	
Encourage Risk taking	4	I think I should only say a new English word or sentence in front of others if I'm completely sure it is correct	No	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	
Build self-confidence	5	I think "I will be able to speak English very well in the future"	Yes	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	
Build self-confidence	6	I think "I will not be able to speak English very well in the future"	No	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Develop intrinsic motivation	7	I want to learn English to express my own feelings and thoughts	Yes	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Develop intrinsic motivation	8	I am learning English because I will be / am required to study English at school	No	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0
Develop intrinsic motivation	9	I am learning English because my parents asked me to study	No	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	
Engage in cooperative learning	10	I enjoy learning / studying with other people in groups	Yes	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
Engage in cooperative learning	11	I enjoy learning / studying by myself rather than with other people	No	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
Use right-brain processes	12	I like to understand the exact meaning of words and sentences, and the reasons for everything	No	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Use right-brain processes	13	I think it is OK even I do not understand everything, as long as I get the general meaning of words and sentences	Yes	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	
Promote ambiguity tolerance	14	If there are many new things to learn or understand, I try to take things one step at a time	Yes	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	
Promote ambiguity tolerance	15	If there are many new things to learn or understand, I become lost	No	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	

Suggested GLL characteristics the questions are designed to highlight	No.	Questions adopted from Brown's questionnaire (2007: 144)	Suggested GLL response	Group 1								Group 2							
				1A	1B	1C	1D	1E	1F	1G	1H	2A	2B	2C	2D	2E	2F	2G	2H
Promote ambiguity tolerance	16	When I do the homework, I think very carefully and do it very slowly	Yes	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
Promote ambiguity tolerance	17	When I do the homework and can not quickly figure out how to do it, I think to myself "I don't want to do this any more"	No	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
Promote ambiguity tolerance	18	When we play a new game and I don't understand the rules, I will ask my friends and my teacher for help	Yes	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
Promote ambiguity tolerance	19	When we play a new game and I don't understand the rules, I think to myself "I don't want to do this any more"	No	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
Practice intuition	20	When I say something in English, I think very carefully what to say	No	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Practice intuition	21	When I say something in English, I don't think too much and just say what I think at the time	Yes	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
Process error feedback	22	When my teacher asks me a question, I think to myself "I should not make any mistakes"	No	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Process error feedback	23	When I make a mistake, I think "I am not good at English"	No	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
Process error feedback	24	When I make a mistake, I think "I want to know the proper answer and learn more English"	Yes	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
Set personal goals	25	I want to study English more outside of the classroom to improve (e.g. do more than the set homework)	Yes	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1
Total score				15	18	17	21	16	19	16	18	19	20	13	14	15	19	13	16
Total score (%)				60	72	68	84	64	76	64	72	76	80	52	56	60	76	52	64

Appendix 8. The results of the ‘English Study Survey’ (the assessment of socio-cultural factors - home environment)

No.	Questions	Group 1							Group 2								
		1A	1B	1C	1D	1E	1F	1G	1H	2A	2B	2C	2D	2E	2F	2G	2H
1	Are you interested in your child learning English? Please choose one.	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	0	1	2	2	1	1	2	1
2	Is there anyone in your family (aside from your child who is studying at our School) who is interested in English?	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
3	If yes, who?		A	C	AC	A	A	C			A	C	AC	A	C	C	C
4	Who initially decided to start studying at our English school?	B	B	D	B	B	A	B	B	B	A	B	B	B	D	B	E
5	Do you listen to English CDs in the car or at home together with your child?	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
6	Do you or other siblings sing English songs together with your child?	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
7	Do you or other siblings play English games together with your child?	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
8	Do you or other siblings read English books together with your child, or do you read English books to your child?	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
9	Do you show English TV programs for your child or does your child watch English TV programs by herself?	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	3	0
10	Do you display any English word posters, alphabet posters and/or vocabulary cards at home?	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
11	Do you point out English letters or words on posters, labels and/or signboards?	1	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	0
12	Do you teach English vocabulary (including feelings and actions) to your child?	2	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
13	If yes, when do you do it? Please choose up to two situations that most commonly occur.	AC	A	AC	E		AC			C		C	E		AC	C	D
14	Do you talk to your child in English at home?	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
15	If yes, what do you say? Please choose up to two types of utterances that you would most likely to say to your child.			A	AC		AB	ADF		AC	A	BC	AC		A	BD	A
16	How do you answer if your child asks you a question about English?	AC	AC	AB	AC	AB	AB	AE	AC	B	B	AB	AC	AB	AB	AB	A
17	What do you do if you find that your child has made a mistake related to English?	BD	AB	AC	C	A	D	AF	A	A	A	A	C	A	AC	BD	A
18	Do you ask your child what she is learning at the English school?	2	0	1	3	2	1	0	2	1	3	1	3	2	1	3	1

No.	Questions	Group 1								Group 2							
		1A	1B	1C	1D	1E	1F	1G	1H	2A	2B	2C	2D	2E	2F	2G	2H
19	If yes, how does your child answer your question? Please choose your child's most likely response.	B		B	B	BC	B		B	B	B	B	B	BC	B	B	C
20	Does your child review what they have been studying at the English school?	0	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	1	1	1	0
21	If yes, how does your child review the class work? Please choose up to two that she would most likely to do.			BC	D	A				A			D	A	BC	D	
22	Do you check if your child has finished her homework?	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3
23	Do you ask your child about the contents of her homework?	2	0	3	0	3	3	0	3	3	1	1	0	3	3	3	3
24	If yes, how does your child answer your question? Please choose your child's most likely response.	B		B		B	B		B	B	C	C		B	B	B	B
25	Do you encourage your child to do the homework by herself?	1	0	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	1	2	3	3	3	3	3
26	How much do you help your child with her homework? Please choose one.	H	E	E	J	B	G	J	G	D	A	D	J	B	E	H	I
27	Do you have English-Japanese dictionary at home?	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
28	If yes, how often do you use it?	0	1	2	1	1	0	0		0	2		1	1	2	1	0
29	If yes, how often does your child use it?	0	1	1	1	1	0	0		1	0		1	1	1	1	0
30	If yes, how often do you use it together with your child?	0	1	1	1	1	0	0		1	2		1	1	1	1	0
31	Initially, why did you want your child to learn English?	DJKN	GIJ	AFOQ	AFNO	E	AFNO	DFP	FKMO	DFNO	A	DFNO	AFNO	E	AFOQ	IKNO	ACFN
32	Do you tell your child the benefits of studying English?	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	0
33	If yes, what do you tell your child?	AC	BCD	EF	AF	AB	G	AD	DE	AD	G	AD	AF	AB	EF	AD	
34	When your child is practicing English or studying English, what do you usually say to her?	AE	A	A	B	A	A	A	AE	E	AE	AE	B	A	A	B	E
35	What comments do you often make about English in general?	AE	AE	DE	E	AE	AE	DG	E	A	A	E	E	AE	DE	A	A
36	In your opinion, which of the following characteristics does a child need to be a 'good English learner'?	AEFK	AH	B	BCG	BEG	BEGN	C	ACEM	DJ	ABGJ	CE	BCG	BEG	B	ACGK	ACEM

English Study Survey - score sheet

1) Are you interested in your child learning English? Please choose one.

3 strongly 2 moderately 1 slightly 0 not much

2) Is there anyone in your family (aside from your child who is studying at our School) who is interested in English?

1 yes 0 no

3) If yes, who?

A mother B father C brothers or sisters D grandparents E other relatives

4) Who initially decided to start studying at our English school?

A child herself B mother C father D brothers or sisters E grandparents

5) Do you listen to English CDs in the car or at home together with your child?

3 almost everyday 2 often 1 sometimes 0 never

6) Do you or other siblings sing English songs together with your child?

3 almost everyday 2 often 1 sometimes 0 never

7) Do you or other siblings play English games together with your child?

3 almost everyday 2 often 1 sometimes 0 never

8) Do you or other siblings read English books together with your child, or do you read English books to your child?

3 almost everyday 2 often 1 sometimes 0 never

9) Do you show English TV programs for your child or does your child watch English TV programs by herself?

3 almost everyday 2 often 1 sometimes 0 never

10) Do you display any English word posters, alphabet posters and/or vocabulary cards at home?

1 yes 0 no

11) Do you point out English letters or words on posters, labels and/or signboards?

3 almost everyday 2 often 1 sometimes 0 never

12) Do you teach English vocabulary (including feelings and actions) to your child?

3 almost everyday 2 often 1 sometimes 0 never

13) If yes, when do you do it? Please choose up to two situations that most commonly occur.

A when my child asks

B whenever I know the word for something in English

C when words come up on TV or in books

D when we review English school lessons at home

E other _____

14) Do you talk to your child in English at home?

3 almost everyday 2 often 1 sometimes 0 never

15) If yes, what do you say? Please choose up to two types of utterances that you would most likely to say to your child.

- A discrete words, e.g. "Apple", "Dog", "Red", "Two"
- B short phrases, e.g. "OK", "Sorry", "Great"
- C commands and instructions, e.g. "Stand up", "Sit down"
- D questions, e.g. "Do you want an apple?", "Do you like singing?", "What's this?"
- E general statements, e.g. "I'm happy", "It's hot", "It's a cat"
- F other _____

16) How do you answer if your child asks you a question about English? Please choose up to two ways that you would most likely to respond.

- A I explain what I know
- B I find the answer together with my child (using a dictionary and/or a textbook)
- C I suggest to my child that she should ask the teacher at the English school
- D I encourage my child to find the answer by herself
- E I say "I do not know"
- F other _____

17) What do you do if you find that your child has made a mistake related to English? Please choose up to two that you would most likely to do.

- A I point out the mistake and tell the correct answer
- B I point out the mistake and suggest she ask the teacher at the English school
- C I point out the mistake and encourage my child to find the correct answer by herself
- D I do not point out the mistake, instead I ask questions to help my child find her own mistakes
- E I ignore the mistake
- F other _____

18) Do you ask your child what she is learning at the English school?

- 3 every week 2 twice a month or more 1 sometimes 0 never

19) If yes, how does your child answer your question? Please choose your child's most likely response.

- A She would explain the contents in detail
- B She would briefly explain the contents
- C She would say "I don't know"
- D She would say "I don't want to say"
- E other _____

20) Does your child review what they have been studying at the English school?

- 3 every week 2 twice a month or more 1 sometimes 0 never

21) If yes, how does your child review the class work?

Please choose up to two that she would most likely to do.

- A A parent acts as a teacher and explains any points the child does not properly understand
- B Your child acts as a teacher and teaches the parents and / or other siblings the contents of the lesson
- C She reviews the textbook and/or homework together with the parents or other siblings
- D She reviews the textbook and/or homework by herself
- E other _____

22) Do you check if your child has finished her homework?

3 every week 2 twice a month or more 1 sometimes 0 never

23) Do you ask your child about the contents of her homework?

3 every week 2 twice a month or more 1 sometimes 0 never

24) If yes, how does your child answer your question? Please choose your child's most likely response.

A She would explain the contents in detail

B She would show us the homework

C She would briefly explain the contents

D She would say "I don't know"

E She would say "I don't want to say"

F other _____

25) Do you encourage your child to do the homework by herself?

3 every week 2 twice a month or more 1 sometimes 0 never

26) How much do you help your child with her homework? Please choose one.

A I complete all of the homework together with my child and if she does not know an answer, I will tell her the answer

B I complete all of the homework together with my child and if she does not know an answer, I will encourage her to find the answer by herself

C I complete all of the homework together with my child and if she does not know an answer, I will tell her to leave it blank

D I only do a little of the homework together with my child and if she does not know an answer, I will tell her the answer

E I only do a little of the homework together with my child and if she does not know an answer, I will encourage her to find the answer by herself

F I only do a little of the homework together with my child and if she does not know an answer, I will tell her to leave it blank

G I usually do not help my child with her homework and if she asks for help, I will tell her the answer

H I usually do not help my child with her homework and if she asks for help, I will encourage her to find the answer by herself

I I usually do not help my child with her homework and if she asks for help, I will tell her to that part blank

J I never help my child with her homework (she does not ask for help either)

27) Do you have English-Japanese dictionary at home?

1 yes 0 no

28) If yes, how often do you use it?

3 almost everyday 2 often 1 sometimes 0 never

29) If yes, how often does your child use it?

3 almost everyday 2 often 1 sometimes 0 never

30) If yes, how often do you use it together with your child?

3 almost everyday 2 often 1 sometimes 0 never

31) Initially, why did you want your child to learn English?

Please choose up to four reasons that best describe why you wanted your child to learn English.

- A because my child showed an interest in English
- B because my child's siblings and / or friends were learning English
- C because someone recommended that my child should learn English
- D because I heard and understood the importance of English for children from TV, posters, seminars etc.
- E because I like English
- F because I do not like English or I am not good at English
- G because I thought it would be great if we could talk, sing and play games in English with my child
- H because I wanted my child to live overseas or because we were planning to live overseas in the future
- I because I wanted to go on an overseas trip with my child in the future
- J because I wanted my child to make friends with people from different countries in the future
- K because I thought English would be useful my child's future career
- L because I thought understanding English would be useful at my child's elementary school
- M because I wanted my child to get good grades in English at junior high school, senior high school and/or university
- N because I wanted my child to be an outgoing and international person
- O because I wanted my child to like English
- P because I wanted my child to interact with foreigners and experience foreign culture
- Q other _____

32) Do you tell your child the benefits of studying English?

- 3 almost everyday 2 often 1 sometimes 0 never

33) If yes, what do you tell your child? Please choose up to two that you say.

- A It will be easy for you to travel overseas in the future
- B We can go to an overseas trip together as a family
- C You can make many friends from different countries
- D You can talk to foreign teachers and friends in English
- E You will be good at English at junior high school and senior high school
- F You can get a great job or your dream job
- G other _____

34) When your child is practicing English or studying English, what do you usually say to her?

Please choose up to two that you would say.

- A compliment *e.g.* "Very good"
- B encourage *e.g.* "Keep it up", "You can do it"
- C support *e.g.* "Do you have any questions?"
- D give an advice *e.g.* "You should do this"
- E ask questions *e.g.* "What are you doing?", "What's this?"
- F do not say anything
- G other _____

35) What comments do you often make about English in general?

Please choose up to two that you would say most frequently.

- A English is fun B English is easy C English is difficult D English is important
 E You would be cool if you could speak English F English is not interesting or not fun
 G other _____

36) In your opinion, which of the following characteristics does a child need to be a 'good English learner'?

Please choose up to four characteristics.

- A ability to study proactively / independently B big dreams or goals
 C social outgoing personality
 D conscientiousness E courage to make mistakes or take risk
 F ability to learn from others (from careful observation)
 G strong desire to learn H optimistic personality
 I ability to infer / guess from limited information
 J perseverance to continue studying K ability to apply what they learn
 L creativity M ability to adapt / adjust to new environments N concentration
 O logical thinking P ability to memorise Q relaxed personality (not easily influenced by others)
 R other _____

37) Please write your comments on your child's English study at home (anything that you have noticed or wondered about your child's English study at home). We also welcome any questions or suggestions for our English school.

Appendix 9. The homework submission record (homework score)

	Group 1								Group 2							
Student	1A	1B	1C	1D	1E	1F	1G	1H	2A	2B	2C	2D	2E	2F	2G	2H
Homework <u>not</u> completed over a 60 week period	2	1	4	3	2	1	4	10	0	6	0	12	4	7	4	4
% (over 60 weeks)	3.3	1.7	6.7	5.0	3.3	1.7	6.7	16.7	0.0	10.0	0.0	20.0	6.7	11.7	6.7	6.7
Homework completion % over a 60 week period	96.7	98.3	93.3	95.0	96.7	98.3	93.3	83.3	100.0	9.0	100.0	80.0	93.3	88.3	93.3	93.3