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A Comparative Study of English Language Education, Part 1: Ukraine

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<Abstract>

Critics of Japan's English education system like to cite comparisons of TOEIC and TOEFL test grades, or the reluctance of students to engage in communication in the language, despite having studied it for many years. They allude to the successes that other countries appear to enjoy, particularly in a European context where bilingual speakers seem to abound. But just what part do such areas as culture, politics, ideology, and educational styles play in the development of successful English language education programmes? This two-part study examines English language education in two very different contexts in an attempt to identify what some of the weaknesses in our current programme could be. Firstly, this paper looks at Ukraine, a country that has experienced huge changes in recent decades, thus providing a broad range of findings. The next paper in this series will look at the Japanese system in a comparative sense. Is the Japanese system really deficient, or just simply different? If there are deficiencies, how might we address them through what we know from different contexts?

Key words: comparative study, Ukraine, Japan, English language education

Introduction

Purpose of the study

To date, our approaches to English language education have been largely prescriptive. Our knowledge of linguistics is considerable, as is our understanding of the psychology of language learning, and the methodologies of classroom teaching we employ have been developed to a fine science. However, these foundations of our profession have been based upon experience of a narrow set of conditions within a limited context. Methodologies for teaching, for educating teachers, for designing curricula, and for designing and carrying out curriculum projects continue to be refined, but without sufficient attention to, or knowledge of, the people who will be involved (Holliday, 2001)

Wierzbicka (1999) claims that representatives of different cultures are different people, not only because they speak different languages, but also because they think differently, feel differently, and relate differently to other people. In much the same way, the cultures of English language classrooms also differ. Although the participants are bound by a common goal—to master the English language—their approaches vary because of the cultures they have evolved from.

Much has been learnt about how people learn or acquire second languages. Second language acquisition research generally tells us how learning can or might take place at the individual level, but we do not know enough about how learning might be affected by the attitudes and expectations that people bring to the learning situation. These are influenced by social forces

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and cultural constraints within both the institution and the wider community outside the classroom, and which in turn influence the ways in which people deal with each other in the classroom, and how they approach the process of learning.

On the one hand, there are curriculum developers or educators trying to effect appropriate English language teaching with students who are foreign to them, either at home or abroad, while trying to understand their attitudes and ways of doing things, which, to the outsider, are often obscure and opaque. On the other hand, there are institutions, curriculum developers, or educators who are native to the countries where they work and are the same nationality as the students they teach, but who are trying to make sense of methodologies developed in Britain, North America, or Australasia for “ideal” teaching-learning situations which are very different from their own.

Holliday (2001) argues that the main problem of this methodological transfer is that English-language teaching methodologies developed specifically in English-speaking countries are implemented almost everywhere else. The majority of internationally established literature on English language education (and materials for their implementation) is published in these countries, which, at present, seem to have a virtual monopoly on received methodology. Even within English-language teaching communities operating in other countries, native speakers who, in all likelihood, were born, raised, and educated in different cultures handle much of the research, materials development, and implementation.

With this disparity in mind, this paper, and the one to follow, will explore the current state of English language education in two very different countries, Ukraine and Japan. Following a description of the English language educational systems in both countries, and an explanation of their cultural context, we will discuss the effects different methodologies have on the way students learn the language. Through this comparison, we hope to objectively appraise each country’s

systems and the effects the different learning cultures have on the outcomes of the students involved.

Comparison criteria

As a basis for this study, it is necessary that we focus on specific criteria for comparison. All of these will be explored within the context of the culture and norms of the two countries.

1. *Host institutions:* These can be anything from state schools to private language institutes or universities. This area would also include the whole educational environment, through to the governmental ministries or institutions charged with managing language education in each country.
2. *Peer and cultural reference groups:* These would include other students, colleagues, and family members, as well as previous training. Also, attitudes and expectations brought to the classroom, socio-economic status, preferred learning styles, learner independence and motivation, teacher-learner roles and models, and desired outcomes.
3. *Materials, content, and methodologies:* Looking directly into the classroom environment, what is taught, what materials are used, and how teaching is carried out will be discussed and compared.

Education in Ukraine

Socio-economic and cultural traits

“Ukraine is not Russia.” This is a frequent phrase Ukrainians use to remind foreigners of the uniqueness of their country. To emphasise this, Russian and Ukrainian, though similar, are actually different Slavic languages. Most people outside Ukraine erroneously believe that Ukraine is a part of Russia. The history of the two nations is inextricably interwoven as both trace their roots back to the great state of Kyivan Rus that emerged in the 9th century. An understanding of Ukraine’s history of colonization by Russia, Austria-

Hungary, Poland, the Soviets, and the deliberate famine engineered by Stalin to destroy the nation (Conquest, 1987), may help in comprehending the national peculiarities of Ukrainians.

Ukraine today is the biggest country in Europe, with a population of 47.6 million (that is now declining due to a low birth-rate and massive work emigration to Italy, Spain, Portugal, the U.S., and Russia). To the east and northeast of Ukraine is Russia. To the west are Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania. Ukraine's strategic geographical position in ancient periods and now has made it a crossroads between the east and west of Europe.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine proclaimed its independence in 1991. Like other members of the former Soviet Union, Ukraine is in a period of painful and staggering transition. Recently, a theory has been developed that the radical changes from communism (communist/socialist values) to capitalism (western values) has caused a collective cultural shock within Ukrainian society. This is similar to individual culture shock, but lasts for much longer (Fink 2000, p.2). The complicated process of Ukraine's integration into European and world institutions strongly supports the above hypothesis (Bordyuk, 2003).

Motivation

English, both as a foreign language and as an area of study, owes its popularity in Ukraine to various reasons – economic, political, social, cultural, and psychological. For one thing, there is the emergence of a new class of businessmen and entrepreneurs who are striving to establish stable contacts with foreign partners for whom acquisition of English as an international language for business is absolutely necessary. (Tarnopolsky, 1999) For another thing, political reasons are of some importance, such as the popular wish of having the same opportunities for travelling freely from country to country as people from other countries enjoy. Socio-cultural reasons are embodied in many people's desires

to travel or stay in developed Western countries with the aim of getting to know their cultures, their ways of life, learning as much as possible about the most advanced technologies, studying at schools and universities, or looking for new career opportunities for themselves. Also, for some people, English-speaking countries symbolize democracy, stability, prosperity, and well-being. Thus, learning English for them is a way of gaining access to those values.

The combination of all the factors outlined above underlies the popularity and need for learning English felt by a part of the population in Ukraine—popularity and need that were never so pervasive before in the former Soviet Union. (Tarnopolsky, 1999)

Foreign language education in the Soviet era was generally marked by a lack of practical application of acquired knowledge. In order to support the idea of the importance of learning English, teachers used to say, "Imagine how wonderful it would be if a foreigner came to your hometown and you could speak English to them." To which the students' immediate reply was, "If someone comes to my country, why don't they learn my language?" This response can certainly be explained by the students' attempts to justify an unwillingness to study. However, this reaction is also illustrative from another perspective. In Soviet times, there was absolutely no chance to hear the phrase, "It'd be great to go abroad and speak English to foreigners." The idea of the average person going to another country was probably as unrealistic as them going to the moon. Thus, the general motivation of an average English learner was limited to either waiting for a miracle to happen (such as a foreigner appearing in the streets of their town), or getting a job related to technical or literary translations, not to mention the minor motivation to pass English tests and exams and get good grades at school. In other words, there were few or no real conditions to create any motivation for improving communicative skills.

After the collapse of the communist regime,

for the young people of the post-Soviet countries, their involvement in the international educational community underwent a dramatic change. It was mainly through exchange programmes that they could increase their sensitivity to cultural differences and similarities and enhance their academic competence. The U.S.A., Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, and Switzerland are still leaders among countries offering both short-term (1-3 months) and long-term (6-12 months) exchange programs. Needless to say, any participation in an exchange programme is free for all Ukrainian students, thus entry into international programs is highly competitive.

The effects of student exchange programmes on Ukraine cannot be overestimated. On their return home, professionally trained, cross-culturally minded, and inspired exchange students are really able to make a change in society. University graduates with international professional experience and intercultural competence are highly valued by western employers and investors in Ukraine (Bordyuk, 2003). Excellent job opportunities and competitive salaries are offered to young people with western experience in joint ventures, companies, or NGOs. When, only 10 years ago, proficiency in English was a major advantage on any résumé, for those seeking a better job nowadays, language competence is taken for granted. It is only one item on a list of required skills, along with such necessities as computer skills or a driver's license.

System of education

Following its independence in 1991, the country went through years of severe structural and institutional crisis. The crisis was accompanied by a severe decline in social services, and deteriorating levels of funding, salaries, and infrastructure which jeopardized the quality of education (European Commission, 1998).

School education: All children 7- to 15-years old attend the nine-year compulsory school. If parents so wish, children may start from the age of six.

Options after the comprehensive school are upper secondary school or vocational education. Upper secondary school is a 2-year general school leading to the *Matriculation Examination*, giving successful students access to university and other higher education schools.

Higher education: Higher education in Ukraine is administered by the Ministry of Education, which coordinates the activities of higher schools and supervises those higher schools which are under other ministries. According to the "Law on Education," higher education includes the following levels and categories of establishment:

- Level I - vocational schools and other higher education institutes (HEIs) of a corresponding level.
- Level II - colleges and other HEIs of a corresponding level that teach Bachelor's and junior specialist courses.
- Level III - institutes, conservatories, academies and universities that teach Bachelor's and Specialist, as well as junior specialist courses.
- Level IV - institutes, conservatories, academies and universities which teach Bachelor's, Master's, and Specialist courses.

University level studies: The academic and professional diploma of Bachelor's Degree (BA, BEd., BMed.) is generally awarded after four years of successful study (six years for Medicine). The Bachelor's programme comprises basic higher education and professional training in a given professional field. It is an intermediate degree. The degree of Specialist is awarded after five or six years of study, depending on the type of institution. The Master's Degree is awarded on the basis of a Bachelor's Degree or Specialist's qualification generally one to two years after the first degree. Students must pass final examinations and defend a thesis. Ukraine keeps a two-degree system at the doctoral level: Candidate of Sciences (comparable to a Ph.D.), and Doctor of Sciences. The first qualification is obtained

after three or four years of study by submitting and publicly defending a thesis and passing any required examinations. The candidate's thesis can be prepared while following various forms of post-graduate studies. The "Doctor of Sciences" is the highest scientific degree in Ukraine that is only awarded to candidates already holding a "Candidate of Sciences" on the successful presentation and defence of their dissertation, which should represent a major contribution to the development of a given field or branch of learning.

Management: Requirements to the contents, scope, and level of educational and professional training in Ukraine are determined by the State Standards of Education. The state standards of education means the aggregate norms that specify requirements to the educational and educational-qualification level. The state standard of education is developed for each area of training (profession) for various educational-qualification levels.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine is the central body of the government executive power performing management in the area of education. The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine:

- participates in the determination of the state policy in the areas of education, science, and professional training of specialists;
- develops programs for the development of education, state standards;
- ensures a connection between educational institutions and government authorities of other countries with respect to issues falling within its competence;
- makes accreditation of higher and vocational educational institutions, issues licenses and certificates to them;
- organizes certification of pedagogical and scientific-pedagogical personnel in order to provide them with qualification degrees, or pedagogical and scientific ranks.

Admission and costs: Even though the secondary

school record is taken into consideration, top scores on the entrance examination are weighted heavily in the admission process. Higher education in Ukraine for citizens of Ukrainian origin was free until 1991. Since 1991, many institutions have changed this rule and now students must pay for their education. Almost all students get financial aid from their institutions (a stipend) but it does not cover all living expenses. It is a common practice that university candidates are not required to pass an entrance examination if they are willing to pay for their education.

During the last year, the costs of higher education have increased by 20-30 % and range from 5,000 to 20,000 UAH per year (equivalent to ¥108,000 – ¥433,000) (Students' Underground Portal).

Students who study at the state's expense receive a standard scholarship if their average marks for the end-of-term exams and differentiated test are at least 4; this rule may be somewhat changed in some universities. In the case of achieving grades of at least 5, their scholarship is increased by 25%. Most universities provide subsidized housing for out-of-city students. Also, it is common for libraries to supply required books to all registered students.

It is no secret that bribery, nepotism, and protectionism are flourishing in Ukraine now (Osipian, 2007). Nevertheless, respect for education is profound and is reflected in citizens' aspirations, students' efforts to achieve, and parents' willingness to send their children to school and pay for out-of-pocket expenses despite severe economic difficulties.

Bologna Process': In 2005, Ukraine signed the Bologna Declaration and has been introducing more changes into the system of education. Since the mid-90s, many universities have introduced educational programmes allowing students to graduate with a Bachelor's degree (4 years) and then earn a Master's degree (another 1-2 years) while preserving the old 5-year scheme and the generic Soviet degree of a Specialist eligible

for post-graduate courses, as well as Master's. The Specialist degree is now, however, being discontinued in universities that take part in the Bologna process, so new students don't have this option.

Curriculum planning

Other than establishing a national context for education (i.e. with respect to language and culture), Ukraine has little altered the pedagogical nature of the schooling system since Soviet times. First curriculum changes have mainly focused on removing ideological material and "Ukrainization" of the humanities and social sciences (European Commission, 1998).

Changes that have occurred in Ukraine's educational system over the last decade have led to the overloading of educational curricula and textbooks with factual materials, which is a reflection of the encyclopaedic approach to education content development that prevailed during Soviet times.

However, the elimination of the Iron Curtain, and the opportunity to communicate with the whole world, made foreign language study not only popular, but in actual fact, necessary. A network of specialized schools with emphasis on early foreign language study began to grow as a result of this. This process can be seen as a positive phenomenon in education, bringing as it has the development and introduction of new curricula, teaching materials, and new teaching methods (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2003). In primary schools, foreign language teaching is obligatory from the second grade, with many specialized schools starting first foreign language teaching from the first grade and introducing second foreign language from the fifth grade.

New education legislation adopted in 1991 granted higher education institutions a considerable degree of autonomy. However, the Ministry of Education and Science is still responsible for the planning of curricula and—sometimes troubled—financing of higher

education. Universities have to acquire more than 30% of their budgets from tuition fees and sponsorships (European Commission, 1998).

There have been many changes in curriculum at the university level, but in the area of foreign language study, communicative competency has always been a priority. For example, the curriculum of an English philology department consists of 54 subjects over 5 years, or 4818 academic hours in total; about 1/4 of which (1476) belongs to the Extensive Language Study of the First Foreign Language, and 15 other subjects (or 648 academic hours) are other related disciplines (phonetics, history of the language, theory and practice of translation, etc.) delivered and evaluated in English. That means that for a little less than half of their time, students attend lectures in English, take notes in English, study in English, and pass exams in English.

With each passing year, there are more and more new courses appearing, with changes introduced by both the Ministry of Education and universities themselves. According to estimates of the Delegation of the European Commission in Ukraine, it will take upwards of 10-15 years to reform curriculum and teaching technology in order to secure learning experiences relevant for society's needs (European Commission, 1998).

Approaches and methodology

Teaching standards for English as a foreign language courses are rather high in Ukraine and other post-Soviet countries. In many state-owned educational establishments, such high standards are the result of the generally high level of English teaching methodology development reached in the former USSR. A purely formal and non-communicative methodology based on the grammar-translation method existed in the USSR, but only in the 50s, and as early as the 60s, it was rejected (Tarnopolsky, 1999).

The communicative approach began to be most intensively developed in the West in the late 70s and early 80s by Brumfit, Johnson, Munby, and Stevens. In the very same period,

similar propositions could be found in the works of Kitaygorodskaya, Leontiev, Skalkin, and numerous other researchers from the Soviet Union (Tarnopolsky, 1999). Tarnopolsky states that most of the principles and methods of teaching language (learner-centred approaches, computer-assisted language learning, pair or small group work, applying role-playing, simulations, drama techniques, etc.) set down in books by Western authors had parallels in the works of Soviet writers. There is not a single promising trend in modern Western language teaching and learning that is not in some manner reflected in the research and practical work of professionals in the foreign language field in the former Soviet countries (Tarnopolsky, 1999).

The fact that the communicative approach is actually being implemented in the majority of state-owned institutions is due to its being followed in centrally developed curricula. However, the approaches used in this preplanned curriculum did successfully develop students' passive knowledge of the foreign language system. Their comprehension, reading, and speaking skills within certain limited themes were very good. For example, students found it easier to discuss art than to use everyday language or solve real-world tasks in English. Students were rarely asked for their opinion on foreign language education. They had very little choice, but followed the teacher, the provider of knowledge. Students could speak their minds but seldom did so, since argument presupposes an independence of thought that was not necessary to succeed. To be considered a good student, it was enough to reproduce accurately the contents of a lecture or textbook unit on the exam.

In a typical English classroom in Ukraine, teaching is organized by topics, such as education, art, sports, etc. Students read adapted texts on these topics in the first year, and authentic ones in Years 2-5. Drills and communicative tasks follow each text. The classroom techniques used in Ukraine vary from static grammar and vocabulary drills, to pseudo-communicative

tasks (e.g., dramatization of take-home dialogs and text interpretation), to communicative activities (group work, role playing, panel discussions). The materials used are for the most part authentic; the tasks assigned engage students in vocabulary drills and textual interpretation, in using the text as a source of information, and in target language communication. However, the "communicative" situations are preset, student roles are preordained, the vocabulary is obligatory, and the information provided by the textbook is sometimes not sufficient to perform some of the tasks required. This approach is not effective in developing communicative skills, as the emphasis is placed on pedagogical tasks. There is no need for communicative use of the target language because no problems are posed and no real information is exchanged.

Many pedagogues speak about the necessity to abandon the traditional teacher-centered approach and advocate the humanization and individualization of the educational process (Kulchytska, 2000). Nevertheless, things did not change overnight. Although today almost all teachers use role-playing, panel discussion, or similar techniques in the classroom, the old traditions are still very strong. Students have also had to make adjustments to new ways of teaching. Sometimes they say they would rather "be taught" than "play games," indicating their feeling that the new approaches do not seem like work, so they must not really be learning (Kulchytska, 2000).

Testing and grading

Independent Testing: A standardized computer-graded test is being introduced gradually to reform college admissions. The head of the Ukraine Department of Higher Education considers independent external testing as a good and effective tool to fight corruption in admissions. He confirms that the test is intended to provide independent estimates of high school graduates' knowledge and that test scores should be the major criterion in admissions decisions

in colleges. The head of the Ukraine Center of External Evaluation thinks that by 2008 it will be possible to run admissions to higher education institutions based on the test results. The test may need several years to prove successful (Osipian, 2007).

Grades: Ukrainian universities use a traditional 5-point scale:

- “5” = “excellent”
- “4” = “good”
- “3” = “satisfactory”
- “2” = “unsatisfactory”, or “fail”.

Students who get a failing grade of “2” have two more chances to pass an examination.

Since 2006 (and even earlier in some universities), university students have been graded on a rating scale of 0 to 100. These grades can be transformed to the 5-point scale as follows:

- from 90 to 100 means “5”
- from 75 to 89 means “4”
- from 60 to 74 means “3”
- from 0 to 59 means “2”

Both the rating scale and the 5-point scale are used in university registers.

Since joining the Bologna Process in 2005, Ukraine has started using the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), according to which credits are assigned to all academic work (lectures, laboratory work, seminars, examinations, private study, and theses) that comprises an integral part of the program of study. Working hard during the semester and collecting credits may automatically give the students their semester grade, leaving an exam simply an option to improve their grade.

Professional teachers' training

In Ukraine, universities and postgraduate schools have always played a big role in professional development. Since the 19th century, universities were considered not only as a centre of science, but also an important source for training specialists and reliable pedagogic

personnel. Nowadays, most university faculties confer a double qualification on their graduates, e.g., a graduate of mathematical faculty receives a qualification as a mathematician and that of a teacher of mathematics; and an English language graduate becomes respectively a translator and a teacher of the English language.

Preschool and primary school teachers are trained in teacher-training institutions at Levels I, II, and III of accreditation (vocational schools and colleges). Practical training at kindergarten and primary schools is part of the teacher-training programme.

Training of secondary school teachers is provided by higher education institutions of Levels III and IV of accreditation (institutes and universities), in different faculties (Education, Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Physical Education, etc.). The programme for teachers includes standard topics of education, pedagogy, and psychology. Teachers of practical or vocational courses are trained in the technical education institutes.

There are no special forms of training for higher education teachers. Teachers of higher education are usually recruited from among university graduates holding a Master's Degree who have followed special education courses through various types of assistance.

Any university student with a future teacher's qualification is required to go through a compulsory course of pedagogical practice during their years of study. With that purpose, students are assigned to attend elementary schools of the city or region for two weeks in their 3rd year, six weeks in the 4th year, and three weeks in the 5th year. Students' ability to observe and analyse lessons, make lesson plans, and eventually give a series of lessons is assessed by a schoolteacher and university supervisor and graded as a separate subject.

There are a variety of courses held at the universities for elementary school teachers to raise their qualification, especially recommended for young teachers. Many contests for teachers

(e.g., *Teacher of the Year*) take place, and awards and small incentives for the best teachers are given.

Although the system may seem ideal on paper, there are actually many problems in real life. The general tendency that is typical in Ukraine and other post-Soviet states is that there has never been a systematic study of culture in the framework of language courses. The teachers' own experiences of western cultures have been rather limited. Like other professional groups of Soviet people, they used to live and work in an isolated society, separated from the rest of the world by an Iron Curtain. Thus, cultural instructions covered some sporadic facts on monuments, cities, festivals, traditions, literary characters, and national heroes, but any focus on patterns of western values, beliefs, and attitudes was few and far between (Bordyuk, 2003).

For the same reason, the pronunciation of a majority of English teachers, being softly spoken, left much to be desired. Soviet speakers of English recorded most audio materials available, and the small amount of native audio and visual materials were thoroughly censored. This resulted in the appearance of the easily recognizable "Russian" or "East European" accent.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, a great number of university joint projects, internships, and exchange programmes became available, not only for students, but also for teachers. Young teachers were provided with the opportunity to experience new academic and cultural environment, to become professionally competitive, to shape, deepen and diversify their teaching skills, and, of course, to improve their proficiency in English.

Unfortunately, teaching jobs are one of the lowest-paid professions in Ukraine today. As teachers' salaries have lost their value, the profession cannot attract or retain well-trained young teachers. Teaching and learning resources are lacking, suggesting an inadequate quality of input.

Conclusion

Interest in the social context of English language education has been considerable and varied. Furthermore, we need to understand how factors from outside the classroom are different in different countries in order to determine what can be appropriate in terms of classroom methodology. The purpose of this work, thus, is not only to describe systems of English language education in Ukraine and Japan, but also to compare two social contexts, and finally to show how each country's system and different learning cultures affect the process of English language acquisition.

Both Ukraine and Japan are countries where English is not a mother tongue, and both realize that in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century, education should emphasize international aspects and competence in English as a global language.

Interestingly enough, both have another common feature in their history. Lo Castro (1997) argues that educational systems all over the world exist for the purpose of maintaining the status quo and for teaching obedience to and acceptance of the power structures present in a particular society. The educational systems of the two countries, though at different times, have imparted ideologies characterized by strict submission to the existing socio-political order; ideologies implying that too much access and exposure to other forms of thought were viewed by those in power as dangerous—during the communist regime in Ukraine, and *Japaneseness* during Japan's period of isolation. Although ideological preconditions of the two countries under consideration do share certain similarities, the two countries are integrating into the global community in different ways, and at different paces. Ukraine is persistently trying to prove its new status as an independent country; its borders and minds are open to all new trends in Western ways of life—education in particular. Japan, while encouraging all international relations, remains

more traditional and conservative in its attitude. As Lo Castro states, a part of the Japanese 'Spirit' is the belief that the Japanese cannot learn foreign languages and understand texts in their original versions.

The effectiveness of the educational systems is also naturally influenced by the economic situation of the country. Ukrainian economy is still in a period of painful transition, which has resulted in a constant lack of stability, poor financing of state educational institutions, and overloading of changes and reforms in the system of education. Japan, arguably still the world's second largest economy, has made one of its priorities the improvement of the teaching abilities of English teachers and upgrading the teaching system, and is implementing a variety of policies aimed at an improvement in the quality of English education, while providing all necessary support to educational establishments.

Motivation for English learning is another peculiar difference resulting from the socio-political and economic situation. Today, English in Ukraine enjoys immense popularity due to the fact that competence in English language for the majority of people is a means of access to a Western way of life—to stability, prosperity, and well-being. Moreover, among young people it is considered a necessity, another job requirement, rather than an extraordinary ability. Most Japanese students, despite their amazing diligence, finish their English courses without acquiring enough knowledge or competence to communicate. Possibly a major reason for their unwillingness to get involved in any kind of self-study of English is that they have neither integrative nor instrumental motivation.² So long as they stay within the Japanese society, there will rarely arise, after all, any occasion for them to use English once their courses come to an end.

Differences in need engender differences in teaching/learning goals and in the process, organization, style, and structuring of teaching and learning. University graduation is considered in Japan as an absolute requirement for desirable

employment, consequently students' main motivation is determined by their will to pass entrance examinations. From such an attitude presumably comes an unconscious view on their part to regard the language presented in a textbook as a dead language. Such attitudes are only supported by the principles of grammar-translation and linguistic competence practiced as the main methodological technique. The communicative approaches to English language acquisition being adopted in Ukraine, and broadly used in practice due to the impact of a centrally developed curriculum, are one of the favourable prerequisites for successful language teaching and learning. Therefore, it may seem that such teaching and learning in state educational institutions could be deemed successful because public needs have coincided with favourable governmental language policies. But due to the reasons examined above, in practice, the learning outcomes for many students are still quite low.

Nevertheless, in the last few decades, both in Ukraine and Japan, more and more alternative forms of teaching and learning English (such as commercial programs, language schools, private tutoring, etc.) have appeared, which are more flexible in adjusting to students' needs and adopting new methods of teaching. Thus, the students have better choices, and opportunities to compare and find learning environments that suit them best.

Comparing English language education in the two countries—Ukraine and Japan—will demonstrate that despite some slight similarities in preconditions, the two educational systems are essentially different in attitudes, theoretical foundations, and the approaches they are based on. Each has its unique complex network of influences and interests within the educational environment, and understanding their social contexts is the key to helping us understand what really happens between the people in the classroom.

Notes

- 1 The purpose of the Bologna Process (or Bologna Accords) is to create a European higher education area by making academic degree standards and quality assurance standards more comparable and compatible throughout Europe. It is named after the place in which it was proposed, the University of Bologna, with the signing in 1999 of the Bologna Declaration by ministers of education from 29 European countries in the Italian city of Bologna. This was opened up to other countries, and further governmental meetings have been held in Prague (2001), Berlin (2003), Bergen (2005), and London (2007).
- 2 Gardner and Lambert (1972) draw a basic distinction between an integrative and instrumental orientation to second language learning. The former occurs when the learner wishes to identify with the culture of the second language group. Instrumental motivation occurs when the learner's goals for learning a foreign language are functional. For instance, learning directed at passing examinations, furthering career opportunities, or facilitating study of other subjects through the medium of a foreign language are all examples of instrumentally motivated learning.

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英語教育の比較研究（1）：ウクライナ

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<抄 録>

日本の英語教育制度を論じる評論家は、TOEICやTOEFLの成績の比較や、長期にわたる英語学習にもかかわらず学習者は言語コミュニケーションにおいて消極的であるといったことを引き合いに出す傾向が強いようである。そして、特にバイリンガルの話者が多いヨーロッパ諸国などにおける成功例を引用することを好んでいる。文化、政治、イデオロギー、教育制度などが、優れた英語の使い手を育てるのにどのような点において役に立つのであろうか。二つのパートからなる本研究において、我々の最近のプログラムの問題点を明らかにするために二つの全く異なる状況における英語教育の検討を試みる。

まず最初に、本論ではウクライナの状況について報告する。同国では、20世紀の終わりに大きな変化を経験したために、幅広くさまざまな事象を見ることができる。次に続く論文では、日本の制度について比較検討を行う。はたして、日本の制度は本当に欠陥があるのであろうか、それともただ単に異なっているだけなのであろうか。もし欠点があるとなれば、他の国の事例を活かしてどのような対策が可能であろうか。