

## *“Costs and benefits of learning Japanese as a third language”*

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**Introduction:** Many foreign students that live and study in Japan for few or several years don't have socially acceptable skills for communication in Japanese language. Although living in target language country is great condition for accepting foreign language, and its necessity, they avoid using Japanese and rather use English, in spite of fact that use of English showed as insufficient for private and professional purposes.

**Purpose of research:** Enlighten factors that reinforcing preference of using English rather than Japanese.

**Participants:** 20 international students who live in Japan minimum 1 year and who are fluent in English but not native speakers and use English in they professional and private purposes.

**Materials:** cost-benefit table that requires participants to raise positive and negative aspects for using both, Japanese and English language

### **Results:**

**1. Using English – Positive** – “Easy”; “Convenient”; “feeling of competence”; “feeling of safety”; “personal requirements”; “you can get anything you need”; “no waste time trying to express oneself in Japanese”; “saving time and energy”; “easier focus on theses”; “having control over situation”; “professional necessity”; “making friends with other foreigners”; “improving English”...

**2. Using English – Negative** – “You will never learn Japanese”; “You cannot make many Japanese friends”; “if I'm not fluent in English I would learn Japanese easier”; “you are

prevented to be accepted from native population”; “people may think you behave disrespectful toward country you live in”; “people don't understand me”; “makes me lazy to use Japanese”; “may contribute for Japanese to exclude you”...

**3. Using Japanese – Positive** – “Practicing Japanese”; “making friends”; “better professional opportunities”; “feeling of independence”; “social approval”; “easier integration with Japanese people”; “easier understanding of Japan and Japanese culture”; “I feel better about my self”; “great treasure”...

**4. Using Japanese – Negative** – “Too difficult”; “requires a lot of hard work”; “waste of time”- “I need 20 minutes to make a decent sentence in Japanese, until I guess the correct tenses”; “Feeling of incompetence”; “shame”; “unpleasantness”; “stress”; “no control over situation”; “the others will expect you to be involved in their culture”; “may effect the way you behave”...

### **Discussion:**

Contingency analysis of answers showed that most of those from 1<sup>st</sup> category work as a reinforcement by the presentation of a reinforcer contingency, and from 4<sup>th</sup> as a punishment by the presentation of an aversive condition, both of them direct-acting and with outcomes that are immediate and strong enough to maintain behavior of using English and not using Japanese. On the other hand, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> categories answers are mostly indirect-acting contingencies, whose outcome might not be immediate enough to reinforce desirable behavior of using Japanese.