

Title	Investigating Similarities between English Education in Morocco and Japan: A comparative study
Author(s)	アイサ, アハメッド; 片桐, 徳昭
Citation	北海道教育大学紀要. 人文科学・社会科学編, 69(2): 51-60
Issue Date	2019-2
URL	http://s-ir.sap.hokkyodai.ac.jp/dspace/handle/123456789/10349
Rights	

Investigating Similarities between English Education in Morocco and Japan

A comparative study

AISSA Ahmed and KATAGIRI Noriaki

Department of English, Asahikawa Campus, Hokkaido University of Education, English Communication Studies

モロッコと日本の英語教育の類似点に関する調査-比較研究

アイサ アハメッド・片桐 徳昭

北海道教育大学旭川校英語コミュニケーション学研究室

ABSTRACT

This study investigates whether similarities exist between English language education in Morocco and Japan. Low scores on the TOEFL iBT test among high school graduates from both Morocco and Japan reveal a similar inability among these students to communicate using English. This study examines the possible reasons for this communicative incompetence, and determines whether certain prescribed pedagogical measures may help improve communicative competence in students of both countries. Accordingly, this survey compared the high school English curricula and teaching practices in Morocco with the system in Japan. It adopted a thematic analysis method to analyze the data and code the similar characteristics and factors shared by the two systems. The data included official documents, which contain guidelines for English curricula, and information from a set of previous studies that examined the different challenges in English education in Morocco and Japan. The results showed that both systems share common characteristics and factors that hinder their students' English language improvement.

1. Introduction

Teaching English should aim to facilitate intercultural and global communication (Erling, 2005). Improving students' communicative

competence, then, is the core interest of English language curricula in non-native English-speaking countries, like Morocco and Japan. The British Council refers to communicative competence as "a learner's ability to use language

to communicate successfully” (2008). However, high school students in both Morocco and Japan experience difficulty using their knowledge of the English language to communicate, which, theoretically, suggests that these countries share similar backgrounds and language teaching environments.

1. 1 Background

1. 1. 1 English proficiency low score

According to the 2018 data summary report by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), the results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) showed that English communicative proficiency in Morocco and Japan is still below expectations. Furthermore, the English Proficiency Index (EPI) by the Education First (EF) institution, which ranks countries according to the average level of English proficiency, supports the TOEFL results. In Morocco, expectations regarding the ability of students to communicate in English are so high that the Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Training declared in an address to high school graduates: “[a] student who does not speak English [well] should go and dig up his grave and bury himself” (Daoudi, 2016). In Japan, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) expects all high school graduates to achieve a STEP Pre2 level equivalent to B1 level on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) scale by 2020 (Tsuboya, 2017). However, as Table 1 shows, English language proficiency scores fall short of these aspirations.

1. 1. 2 Desire to learn English

Since English is the global language for scientific research, Moroccan doctoral candidates, irrespective of their field of study, must defend

Table 1

English Language Test Scores by Country

Country	TOEFL iBT	EPI (2017)
Morocco	81	47.91 ^a
Japan	71	52.3 ^b

Note. EPI=English Proficiency Index (internet based test); EPI world average score is 53,18. TOEFL iBT total scale score is 120.

^aCategorized as (very low) by EPI. ^bCategorized as (low) by EPI.

part of their theses in English. This move was precipitated by a report from the Rabat Center for Political and Strategic Studies, Morocco’s think tank, which called for English to replace French as the medium of instruction in Moroccan schools and universities (El Ofir, 2015). This desire to adopt the English language in the education system can be explained by Morocco’s increasing urge to compete in today’s world, which, in turn, is based on the need to create new international markets and commercial partnerships (Oxford Business Group, 2018). The country effort in this respect has also been galvanized by the hosting of international conferences such as the 22nd Conference of the Parties (COP 22) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which was held in Marrakesh in 2016, as well as major sporting events such as the 2030 FIFA World Cup (Koundouno, 2018).

Japan professes almost exactly the same economic objectives as Morocco. However, doing business with the West requires mastery of English. Learning English, therefore, is not just a means for Japanese students “to assimilate themselves to the Anglo-American norms of behavior, but to acquire a working command of the language of wider communication and whereby to express their personal opinions and conduct business beyond the national boundary”

(Honna, 2009, p. 3). However, it is also important to note that Japan seeks to “nurture international (and/or intercultural) awareness on the part of our students” (Honna, 2009, p. 1). Now, with Japan scheduled to host the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, the nation hopes to quickly overcome language and cultural barriers.

1. 1. 3 English as a foreign language

In both Moroccan and Japanese secondary schools, English is taught as a foreign language. English is not used outside the school setting, which means that the classroom is the only environment where students can practice their English skills. Such an environment hinders improvement in the use of English in these two countries and discourages students from learning and excelling in the target language.

1. 2 English language learning and teaching environment

1. 2. 1 Test-targeted learning

High school English learning in both Morocco and Japan focuses on reading and writing skills rather than speaking skills, because the only aim is for students to pass the Entrance Exam (in Japan) or the Baccalaureate National Exam (BNE) (in Morocco). The written forms of these examinations tend to shift students’ attention away from learning to speak fluently toward obtaining a good score by mechanically applying what they have learned in the classroom. In Japan, “tests are not only understood to be indicators of educational achievement but also learning materials that force students to study [exclusively] for entrance examinations” (Kuramoto & Koizumi, 2016, p. 4). The same can be said of the situation in Morocco, where high school students are forced to study mainly for the BNE as their only measurement of English

proficiency when applying for higher education schools. These tests assess high school students’ academic language skills rather than their communicative competence. This factor is likely one explanation for high school graduates’ low scores on the TOEFL iBT test, which measures English proficiency or “provides better information about test takers’ ability to communicate” (ETS TOEFL, 2018, p. 3). As high school students, these test-takers focused on reading comprehension and learning grammar instead of speaking fluently and writing coherently. Hence, “teachers have no choice but to focus more on reading and grammar for the sake of their students” (Yoshida, 2017).

1. 2. 2 Non-native instructors

Non-native instructors’ (NNI) speech is another feature shared by the English education environments of both Morocco and Japan. Most English input in the classroom comes from NNIs and is often characterized by inarticulacy and unnatural use (Medgyes, 2001). NNIs are well aware of this fact, and therefore, tend to focus more on accuracy and formal registers than fluency and colloquial English (Medgyes, 2001). Thus, the teaching style of most NNIs is less communicative. This is not only due to the nature of their speech, but also due to their methodology and choice of textbooks. The latter aspects will be discussed in the Results section.

1. 3 Purpose of the study

As seen in the recent TOEFL scores displayed in Table 1, both Moroccan and Japanese high school graduates demonstrate communicative incompetence in English. Along with other background factors, the nature of the English educational system (EES) likely plays a significant role in this communicative

incompetence. However, whether this claim is similar for both countries is a valid question. This paper, therefore, investigates whether there are any similarities between the EES in Morocco and Japan that may influence communicative competence. Accordingly, this paper poses the following research questions:

- (1) Do the EESs in Morocco and Japan share similar characteristics?
- (2) If yes, then do these two systems contain factors in common that affect the communicative competence of their students?

2. Materials and Methods

2. 1 Comparison framework

This survey focused on four elements of EES as follows:

- (1) National policy: official English language guidelines in both Morocco and Japan, including English textbooks. Also, initiatives taken by both countries in recent years to rectify the situation regarding language incompetency.
- (2) Classroom context: including the use of the native language (L1), level of interaction realized by students in English, and sufficiency of communicative activities found in English textbooks.
- (3) Teaching style: methods used by instructors.
- (4) Students' attitudes: motivation to speak English in the classroom context.

2. 2 Materials and Data Collection

The data in this study included official documents issued by the Moroccan and Japanese governments. The rest of the data collected were obtained from previous studies that had already been conducted in both countries to investigate the obstacles hindering improvement in learners' communicative

competence.

Once these studies were in hand, we described, analyzed, and drew conclusions regarding the different elements of the EESs in both countries.

2. 3 Methodology

This survey adopted the thematic analysis (TA) method. TA is a flexible form of analysis that extracts, organizes, and describes information in a data set by identifying, analyzing, and labeling important ideas or patterns (themes) (Boyatzis, 1998). Braun and Clarke (2006) proposed a 6-phase process to carry out the TA as follows:

Phase 1: familiarize yourself with your data.

Phase 2: generate initial codes.

Phase 3: search for themes.

Phase 4: review themes.

Phase 5: define and name themes.

Phase 6: produce the report.

This survey adapted this 6-phase procedure in order to perform the comparison as follows:

- (1) Scan the documents: familiarize with the data.
- (2) Code: generate succinct labels (codes) for all data to help determine the core aspects required to make a successful comparison.
- (3) Identify the themes: combine correlated codes under one theme, then assign informative names to these themes.
- (4) Reconsider the themes: determine the reliability and relevance of these themes to both the dataset and the research questions and finalize theme names.
- (5) Display the results: sort the results into tables and describe the findings.
- (6) Interpret the data: identify similarities in the EESs and determine common factors that have led to the communicative deficiency

reported in the two countries.

3. Results

3. 1 National policy

Table 2 shows the methodologies, objectives, and mediums of instruction each guideline adopted. The Moroccan guidelines embraced the Standard-Based Approach (SBA) (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL], 1996). SBA teaches according to a variety of standards that target students' knowledge and use of English (content standards), how they perform (performance standards), and how proficient they are supposed to be (proficiency standards) (Ministry of National Education, 2007). On the other hand, the Japanese course of study did not explicitly state which approach had been adopted. However, they mentioned "communication" more than a dozen times, which indicates that they opted for the communicative language teaching (CLT). The Japanese guidelines set communicative competence and cross-cultural understanding as the main objectives all students should attain, while the Moroccan guidelines targeted the five Cs (communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities). All students should be able to communicate in English, gain knowledge, make connections and comparisons between different cultures, as well as participate in the international community. The Japanese course of study prescribes English as the medium of instruction. However, the Moroccan guidelines did not mandate the use of English as a medium of instruction explicitly; the guidelines took for granted that instructors should address the students only in English.

Table 3 displays the initiatives taken by the

Table 2

The English Language Guidelines in Morocco and Japan

Country	Objectives	Methodology	Medium
Morocco	Communication Cultures Connections Comparisons Communities	Standard-based approach	English (implied)
Japan	Communication Culture	Communicative language teaching (implied)	English

Japanese and Moroccan governments to improve students' speaking skills. Both countries displayed a tendency to increase the implementation of information and communication technology (ICT) in English language instruction.

Table 3

Initiatives in Language Improvement and ICT Use

Country	Language	ICT
Morocco	English clubs in SHSs. PSC for SHS students. English since 4 th grade before 2025. IBS (option: English)	Strengthen the use of ICT applied to languages. Multimedia tools for all schools
Japan	English as a subject in elementary schools by 2020 ALTs for all elementary schools by 2019. Improve teaching skills. Promote the role of ALTs.	Develop and prepare ICT teaching materials.

Note. SHSs=senior high schools, ALTs= assistant language teachers, PSC= public speaking contest, IBS= international baccalaureate stream, ICT= information and communication technology.

The following sections present the results of previous studies from both Morocco and Japan regarding classroom context, teaching style, and learners' attitude towards English usage in the

classroom.

3. 2 Classroom context

Table 4 illustrates reasons why classroom interactions in English among high school in both Morocco and Japan were weak.

Table 4
Communication in the Moroccan and Japanese High School English Classrooms.

Country	Interaction	Reasons	Study
Morocco	Weak ^a	Boring topics and methodology Lack of sufficient Vocabulary	El Hannaoui (2017)
Japan	Weak	Grammar and translation method	Mitchell (2017)

Note. ^aThe original description of interaction was coded: “students [are] away from participating in oral activities” (El Hannaoui, 2017, p. 391).

Table 5 shows how use of L1 in English classes in Morocco and Japan was not totally absent.

Table 5
L1 Use inside Moroccan and Japanese High School English Classrooms

Country	L1 Use	Reasons	Study
Morocco	Limited and judicious	Translation Help shy students Save time	Laghmam (2016)
Japan	Not discarded	Mitigate students’ anxiety Check learners’ comprehension	Izumitani (2016)

Table 6 indicates the insufficiency of activities targeting communication in the coursebooks.

Table 6

Communicative Activities in the Moroccan and Japanese High School English Coursebooks.

Country	Activities	Reasons	Study
Morocco	Insufficient	Promotion of IM Prioritization of reading skills.	Ait Bouzid (2017)
Japan	Insufficient ^a	Prioritization of reading skills ^b	Michaud (2015)

Note. IM= interpretive mode. ^aThe original description was “no communication will take place through using them [coursebooks] alone” (Michaud, 2015, p. 252). ^bThe original statement was coded: “They can primarily be used as English reading textbooks” (Michaud, 2015, p. 251).

3. 3 Teaching style

Table 7 shows that the instructor style in Japan is teacher-centered, while in Morocco, it is less teacher-centered.

Table 7
Teaching Style in Morocco and Japan

Country	Instructor	Reasons	Study
Morocco	Less teacher-centered ^a	SE Oversized classes	Ghaicha and Mezouari (2018)
Japan	Teacher-centered	EEs Large classes	Hosoki (2011)

Note. ^aThe original teaching style was coded: “Lie somewhere between LCT [learner-centered teaching] and TCT [teacher-centered teaching]” (Ghaicha & Mezouari, 2018, p. 47). EEs= entrance examinations. SE= standard examination.

3. 4 Students’ attitude

Table 8 shows the reasons for Moroccan and Japanese high school students’ demotivation towards English study inside current classrooms.

Table 8

Students' Demotivating Reasons to Interact in the Moroccan and Japanese High School Classrooms.

Country	Students	Reasons	Study
Morocco	demotivated	Teaching style RSC ISF	Baba Khouya (2018)
Japan	demotivated	Textbooks NCM Teaching style	Kikuchi & Sakai (2009)

Note. RSC=reduced self-confidence, ISF=inadequate school facilities (mainly ICT, p. 156), NCM= non-communicative method.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated the similarities between the EESs of Morocco and Japan in order to determine whether these systems share factors which have led to the communicative incompetence demonstrated by high school graduates in both countries.

4. 1 Answers to research questions

4. 1. 1 RQ1: Do the EESs in Morocco and Japan share similar characteristics?

The results showed that there are four significant similarities between the EES in Morocco and Japan. The EESs in these two countries adhere to the same objectives of targeting cultural understanding and communicative competence. Both EESs also opt for the communicative instruction method incorporating SBA (Morocco) and CLT (JAPAN). Furthermore, both EESs adopt the monolingual approach, i.e., English as the medium of instruction (Table 2). Similarly, they both foster the use of ICT applied to language teaching (Table 3).

Four shared characteristics can be derived from these similarities. The first is the cross-cultural characteristic: both EESs seek to raise

awareness of cultural differences and encourage understanding of other cultures. The second is the communicative characteristic: both EESs have chosen the communicative teaching method and focus on enhancing fluency among students through ALTs and PSC (Table 3) in order to provide students with enough language knowledge and communicative skills to communicate successfully in international society. The third characteristic is the technological feature: both EESs support the application of technology to language teaching in order to facilitate learning and communication in the classroom setting. Finally, both ESSs share the monolingual-medium characteristic, i.e., the belief that English is the only language instructors should use to teach and facilitate communication inside the classroom.

4. 1. 2 RQ2: Do the two systems possess common factors that affect students' communicative competence?

The analyses revealed that, in both Morocco and Japan, the EESs' guidelines do not match the English teaching and learning practices that occur inside real classrooms. In fact, classroom practices contradict the communicative instructions delineated by the guidelines. Three factors (Fs) govern these practices: (1) the instructor factor, (2) the content factor, and (3) the demotivation factor.

F1: Instructors' teaching styles in Morocco and Japan centered on the teacher (less so in Morocco), leaving little or no time for students to practice their language knowledge by communicating directly in the classroom. This stemmed from the large class sizes and global exams (BNE and EE). Together, these two factors constituted the leading reasons for adopting a more teacher-centered style at the

expense of a student-centered style, which is regarded as more efficient in “improving [students’] communicative competence” (Jambor, 2007, p. 61).

F2: In the same way, the prioritization of reading skills in English language coursebooks in Morocco and Japan disregarded oral communication and interactions in the classroom (described as “weak” in the two countries). Other reasons for this weak interaction included the nature of topics intended for communication (Morocco) and the continuing emphasis on grammar and translation (Japan). The use of L1 in both countries (Table 5) also contributed to the minimization of students’ interactions in the target language, English.

F3: Learners’ motivation is crucial for enhancing communicative skills. It is “the most important single factor influencing continuing development in oral proficiency” (Lennon, 1993, p. 41). However, students in both Moroccan and Japanese high schools were demotivated when it comes to interacting in their English language classrooms. Japanese students generally attributed their demotivation to the non-communicative methods of their instructors and coursebooks (Tables 8 and 6). The Moroccan students’ demotivation was both external and internal, and external factors included the instructors’ methods and ISF, as summarized in RSF (Table 8).

Therefore, it can be inferred that the lack of interactions in current English language classrooms in Morocco and Japan explains the communicative incompetence of high school students in these countries.

4. 2 Pedagogical implications

Since Japan and Morocco share similar backgrounds, environments, characteristics, and

factors, the possible implications of these findings may offer remedies to help promote the communicative competence of high school students in both countries. The results suggest that instructors should employ more student-centered teaching styles and design communicative activities in addition to those in the course books, there by relying more on ICT integration. For the sake of motivation, activities and tasks should match the students’ interests and needs. Moreover, instructors should also assign these extra activities outside class periods, when students are relaxed and have more time to communicate amongst themselves. After adequate preparation, which secures students’ confidence, instructors should grant students additional opportunities inside the classroom to interact. This crucial point is inevitable, not only because interaction develops communicative use of language and acquisition (Verga & Kotz, 2013), but also because millennial students require more interaction using the target language in their classroom environment (Allred & Swenson, 2006). In light of these findings, it is possible for high school graduates to score higher on an English language test that examines communicative competence, such as the TOEFL iBT®.

4. 3 Limitations

This paper claims that the lack of interactions inside today’s English language classrooms in Moroccan and Japanese high schools is the primary cause of the communicative incompetence of the students in these two countries. However, these findings are subject to at least two limitations. First, this paper only describes previous conclusions reached by other researchers and then builds on their findings to make a comparison. Second, factors related to

students' interactions in the classroom have not been examined.

4. 4 Further research work

A natural progression of this work suggests investigation into the feasibility of a communication instrument capable of facilitating English language interactions among students outside class periods, such as a smartphone app. Such interactions can serve as preparation for communicative activities in the classroom and increase students' talking time, which, in turn, ensures increased usage of their language knowledge. With this result, it is possible to say that Moroccan and Japanese high school students may eventually develop communicative competence.

References

- Ait Bouzid, H. (2017). An evaluation of selected Moroccan ELT textbooks: A standards-based approach perspective. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 7(1), 229-238.
- Allred, C. R., & Swenson, M. J. (2006). Using technology to increase student preparation for and participation in marketing courses: The random selector model. *Marketing Education Review*, 16(1), 1521.
- Baba Khouya, Y. (2018). Students demotivating factors in the EFL classroom: The case of Morocco. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 9(2), 150-159. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.9n.2p.150>.
- Boyatzis, R. E. (1998). Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>
- British Council. (2008). Communicative competence. Retrieved from <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/communicative-competence>.
- Daoudi, L. in El Kaidi, Y. (2016, May 20). A student who doesn't speak English should dig up his grave: minister. *Morocco World News*. Retrieved from <https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2016/05/187064/a-student-who-doesnt-speak-english-should-dig-up-his-grave-minister/>
- Education First. English Proficiency Index (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.ef.com/epi/Educational-Testing-service-ETS> (2018). Test and Score Data Summary for TOEFL iBT® Tests: 2017 Test Data. Retrieved from https://www.ets.org/s/toefl/pdf/94227_unlweb.pdf
- Educational Testing Service, ETS (2018). Test and Score Data Summary for TOEFL iBT® Tests: 2017 Test Data, p. 3. Retrieved from https://www.ets.org/s/toefl/pdf/94227_unlweb.pdf
- El Hannaoui, A. (2017). Mending students' speaking deficiencies in Moroccan EFL classes. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)*, 8(1), 386-401.
- El Ofir, M. (2015). Report Urges Morocco to Replace French with English in Schools. *Morocco World News*, July 5, 2015. Retrieved from <https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2015/07/162541/report-urges-orocco-to-replace-french-with-english-in-schools/>
- Erling, E.J. (2005). The many names of English: A discussion of the variety of labels given to the language in its worldwide role. *English Today* 81, 21(1), 40-44.
- Ghaicha, A., & Mezouari, K. (2018). Moroccan EFL secondary school teachers' perceptions and practices of learner-centered teaching in Taroudant Directorate of Education, Morocco. *Higher Education of Social Science*, 14(1), 38-48. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/10160>
- Honna, N. (2009). Challenging issues in English language teaching in Japan. *Country Note on Topics for Breakout Session 1 Japan*. Retrieved from <http://docplayer.net/43936385-Country-note-on-topics-for-breakout-session-1-japan-challenging-issues-in-english-language-teaching-in-japan.html>.
- Hosoki, Y. (2011). English language education in Japan: Transitions and challenges. In K. Kato, K. Ota, & Y. Usanami (Eds.), *International Speakers Series at Eastern Washington University* (pp. 199-214). Kitakyushu City, Fukuoka, Japan: Seiun.
- Izumitani, T. (2016). *Examining Japanese teachers' use of L1 in English classes: Frequency, function and reasons behind them* (Unpublished master's thesis). Nara University of Education, Nara.
- Jambor, Z. P. (2007). *Learner attitudes toward learner centered education and English as a foreign language*

- in the Korean university classroom* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Birmingham, Birmingham, United Kingdom.
- Kikuchi, K., & Sakai, H. (2009). Japanese learners' demotivation to study English: A survey study. *JALT Journal*, 31(2), 183-204.
- Koundouno, T. F. (2018, June 14). Morocco will bid again to host 2030 world cup. *Morocco World News*. Retrieved from <https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2018/06/248587/morocco-bid-host-2030-world-cup/>
- Kuramoto, N., & Koizumi, R. (2016, August): Current issues in large-scale educational assessment in Japan: focus on national assessment of academic ability and university entrance examinations, *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*. doi: 10.1080/0969594X.2016.1225667
- Lagham, Z. M. (2016). The use of mother tongue in Moroccan classes of English. *Linguistics and Literature Studies* 4(6), 383-391. doi: 10.13189/lls.2016.040601
- Lennon, P. (1993). The advanced learner: Affective, social and motivational factors. *Language Learning Journal*, 8(1), 39-43. doi: 10.1080/09571739385200351
- Medgyes, P. (2001). When the teacher is a non-native speaker. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language, Third edition* (pp. 415-428). Boston: Heinle & Heinle. Retrieved from <http://teaches.pbworks.com/f/When%2Bthe%2Bteacher%2Bis%2Ba%2Bnon-native%2Bspeaker.PDF>
- Michaud, M. (2015). Oral communication in the Japanese senior high school: Communicative competence and comparisons of textbooks used for EFL instruction. *The Journal of Linguistics and Language Teaching* 6 (2), 31-257. Retrieved from <https://sites.google.com/site/linguisticsandlanguageteaching/home-1/volume-6-2015-issue-2/volume-6-2015-issue-2---article-michaud>
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science & Technology in Japan. (2011). *The course of study for foreign languages*. Retrieved from <http://www.mext.go.jp/en/policy/education/elsec/title02/detail02/1373859.htm>
- Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science & Technology in Japan. (2013). *English Education Reform Plan corresponding to Globalization*. Retrieved from <http://www.mext.go.jp/en/news/topics/detail/1372656.htm>
- Ministry of National Education in Morocco. (2007). *English language guidelines for secondary schools: Common core, first year, and second year baccalaureate*. Rabat: Author.
- Ministry of National Education in Morocco. (2015). The Strategic vision of the reform 2015-2030. Retrieved from https://www.men.gov.ma/Fr/Documents/Vision_strateg_CSEF16004fr.pdf
- Mitchell, C. (2017). Language education pressures in Japanese high schools. *Shiken*, 21(1), 1-11. Retrieved from http://teval.jalt.org/sites/teval.jalt.org/files/21_01_1_Mitchell_Teaching_Pressure.pdf
- Oxford Business Group. (2018). *Moroccan authorities target diversification to secure long-term economic growth*. The report: Morocco2018. Retrieved from <https://oxfordbusinessgroup.com/overview/transition-phase-authorities-target-diversification-secure-long-term-growth-0>
- Tsuboya, I. (2017, October 29). Why do Japanese have trouble learning English?. *The Japan Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2017/10/29/commentary/japan-commentary/japanese-trouble-learning-english/#.W2g4ZVUzbIU>.
- Verga, L., & Kotz, S. A. (2013). How relevant is social interaction in second language learning?. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 7, 550. doi: 10.3389/fnhum.2013.00550
- Yoshida, K. in Aoki, M. (2017, April 6). Japan's latest English-proficiency scores disappoint. *The Japan Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/04/06/national/japans-latest-english-proficiency-scores-disappoint/#.W2bkaFUzbIX>.

(アイサ アハメッド 旭川校海外研修生)

(片桐 徳昭 旭川校准教授)