Survey on Staff Motivation and Perspectives toward Professional Language Acquisition

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This paper summarizes findings from a survey conducted on administrative staff at Kyoto Sangyo University, Japan. The purpose of this survey was three-fold: (i) to assess levels of English ability in staff, (ii) to gauge the perceived need for English language skills within the current working climate of the university, and (iii) to ascertain staff opinion on what methods of English language development would be the most effective to employ for creating a staff base adequately equipped to perform within a globalizing world of education. Proposals for improving current staff development programs and for setting up new initiatives are made based on results of the survey and motivation and inter-cultural communication models. The objective of these proposals is to demonstrate how the university might develop stronger global human resources who will be fundamental in the further internationalization of the university.

KEYWORDS : Motivation, English ability, Internationalization at Home

1. Introduction

In 2013, Kyoto Sangyo University received a type B grant through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) Project for Promotion of Global Human Resource Development aimed at promoting the globalization of specified faculties within the university, as well as to contribute to the internationalization of the university as a whole (MEXT (n.d.2)). This grant was divided among 4 projects, one being the Global Human Resource Promotion Project. This project administers a Globalization Promotion Project which in turn is made up of 6 sub-project teams, one of which is the Administrative Globalization Project Team. This team was given the task of developing initiatives to ensure that by the end of the term of the grant a percentage of administrative staff would have a level of English proficiency considered sufficient for serving the needs of international students and international teaching staff.

This report presents findings from a survey conducted by the Administrative Globalization Project Team on administrative employees at Kyoto Sangyo University between July 16 and August 9, 2013. The purpose of the survey was to; (i) assess levels of English ability in staff, (ii) gauge the perceived need for English language skills within the current working climate of the university, and (iii) ascertain staff opinion on what methods of English language development would be the most effective to employ for creating a staff base adequately equipped to perform within a globalizing world of education.

In this article we will present results from the survey before proposing ways in which staff English language skills might be further developed and how those skills could be put to optimum use within the administrative system to the benefit of students, staff and the internationalization of the university as whole.

2. Methods

The survey was conducted on-line utilizing REAS: A real time assessment support system at http://reas2. code.ouj.ac.jp/ cgi-bin/WebObjects/top. Employees were notified of the survey via an on-line notice board and each department head was additionally requested through Head of Department meetings to encourage all staff under their supervision to complete the survey within the specified period¹.

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3. Results

3.1. English ability

The survey was completed by 281 staff, a response rate of 64.15%. This included 174 out of a total of 198 permanent staff, 69 out of 132 contract staff, 35 out of 102 specialist contract staff and 3 out of 6 temporary staff. Permanent staff represented 61.9% of the total number of respondents.

Respondents were asked to indicate an English proficiency test score that they had from one of 4 frequently used English proficiency tests; TOEIC, Eiken, TOEFL and IELTS. Scores for these tests were divided into a 1 to 5 ranking (see Table 1), and the percentages of staff with respective English language proficiency scores were calculated for each rank and employment contract type (see Table 2). Permanent staff fell largely into rank 5 while a comparatively larger percentage of contract staff fell into ranks 1 and 2.

Results indicated that younger staff tended to have higher levels of English proficiency (Figure 1).

In regards to the amount of time staff have spent overseas, 2% of all administrative staff (no permanent staff) had spent more than 5 years overseas, 6% had

Rank	TOEIC	Eiken Grades	TOEFL iBT	IELTS
1	$700\sim$	1– Pre–grade 1	$80\sim$	$5.0 \sim$
2	\sim 700	Grade 2	~ 80	~ 5.0
3	~ 500	2 – Pre–grade 3	~ 50	~4.0
4	~ 300	Grade 4	~ 20	~ 2.5
5	No Englis	h Testing experienc	ce	

 Table 1: English Language Score Rankings

Table 2: Percentages of Staff and Their Respective English Language Score Rankings

Rank	Permanent Staff	Contract Staff	Specialist Contract Staff	Total Staff ²
1	3%	6%	20%	6%
2	14%	30%	17%	18%
3	28%	23%	14%	25%
4	2%	2%	0%	2%
5	53%	39%	49%	49%
Total number	174	69	135	281

been for more than 1 year, 18% had been for 1 month to 1 year, 22% had been for less than a month. 52% had had no overseas experience (Figure 2).

When asked their opinion on the necessity for them to improve their own English language skills, 79% of permanent staff indicated that they felt, or tended to feel, that it was necessary. In comparison, 91% of contract staff and 88% of specialist contract staff indicated the same (Figure 3).

Another tendency was for staff with already higher levels of English ability to feel more strongly about the necessity for them to further improve their own English skills (Figure 4). Whereas over 70% of those with high English language skills (rank 1) said that they thought improvements were necessary, only slightly more than 22% of those with a rank 4 level of English ability responded in the same way. When looking at permanent staff only, nearly 30% in rank 5 felt that improvements were necessary.

3.2. Perceived necessity for English at work by Permanent Staff

There was a positive correlation between longer overseas experience and a perceived necessity to improve one's English skills for work. Sixty percent of staff with at least one month overseas experience said that they felt a need, while less than 40% of staff with less than one month overseas experience felt the same way (Figure 5).

Staff who thought that a higher level of English was necessary in general felt that the following situations were where higher English skills would be most useful (Figure 6).

- reading and writing e-mails in English,
- dealing with foreign teachers at reception,
- reading English materials, and
- collecting information from websites in English.

On the other hand, those who did not feel the necessity to improve their English skills also felt no necessity for English skills in these situations.

Those situations where the need to improve one's English skills was felt the least were;

- taking phone calls in English,
- preparing written materials in English and
- preparing for overseas business trips.

Forty respondents additionally offered written explanations for their responses. Of those comments received, 70% indicated that either English was not

high

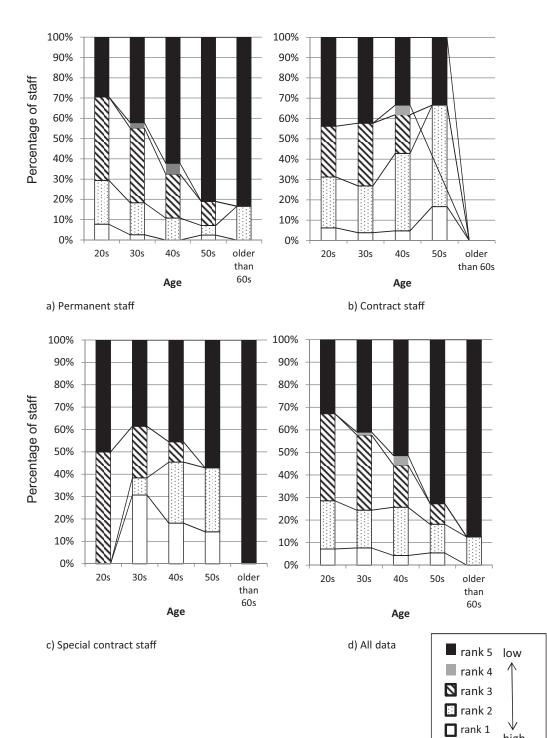


Figure 1: Levels of English Proficiency and Ages

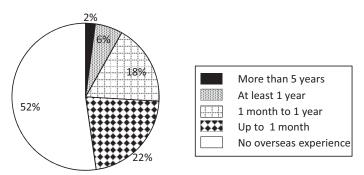


Figure 2: Degree of Overseas Experience

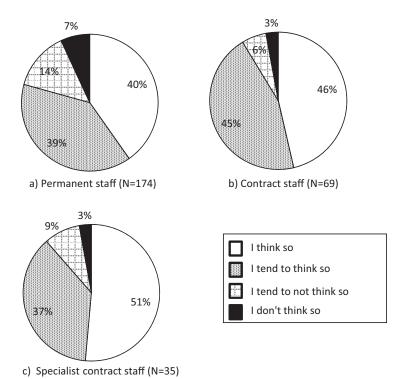


Figure 3: Do you feel that you require a high level of English ability?

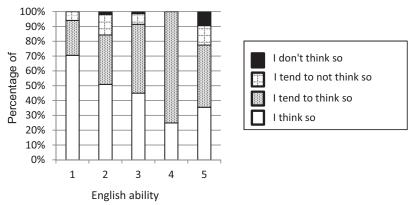


Figure 4: Current English ability and perceived necessity for improvement

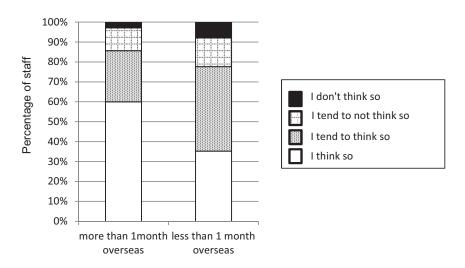
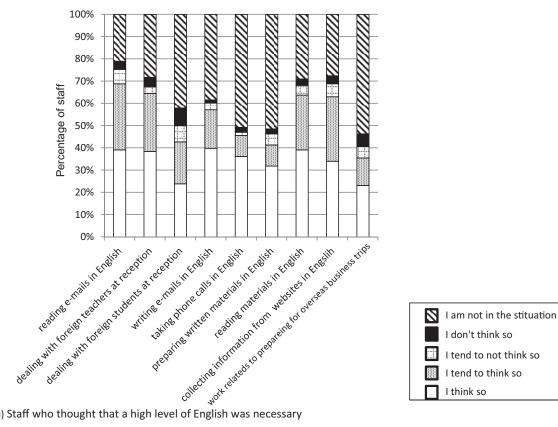
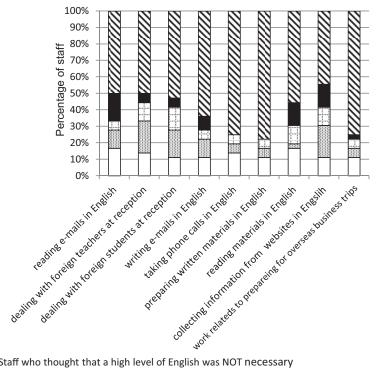
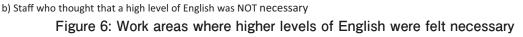


Figure 5: Overseas experience and perceived necessity for English



a) Staff who thought that a high level of English was necessary





necessary in their current work or that a level higher than what they already had was not necessary. The following are examples of those comments translated into English. Original comments in Japanese are shown in appendix 2. Comments were received from staff irrespective of their English language proficiency or

length of overseas experience.

- 1. There are no opportunities to use (English) in my work.
- 2. I am not involved in any work in which English is required. Also, I don't think that it is necessary for everyone to learn English. I would like to focus

my efforts on extending my knowledge in other specific areas.

- 3. Even if I cannot live day-to-day in English, I can read texts and materials as required and I don't have any problems with gathering information.
- 4. I don't think that it is necessary to have an English ability higher than that which requires you to look at a dictionary while having a conversation.
- 5. If necessary I will learn it, but right now there is no necessity.

3.3. Future English language training for permanent staff

Question 12 of the survey asked respondents to indicate which methods they would choose for improving their own English ability should they be available. Fourteen methods were given as options, including training on- and off-campus and in and outside of work hours (Figure 7). Results demonstrated that training offered outside of work hours was preferable to that within work hours and the affirmatively larger percentage of respondents was in favor of individualized training. A majority of respondents indicated an interest in learning methods that provide opportunities for direct communication such as exchange with international students and foreign teaching staff, attending English conversation schools, studying overseas and living overseas.

Respondents with higher levels of English ability showed a more positive reaction to further language training, particularly in regards to attending English language schools and studying or living overseas. These respondents were also more positive toward undertaking English language training outside of work hours, suggesting strong self-motivation. Those methods of English language training that attracted the least interest were; formalized training either in or out of work hours, extensive reading, financial support for taking English proficiency examinations and webbased study systems.

Respondents were next asked how staff and the university would benefit through staff improving their English ability (Figure 8). Cited as the most likely benefits were being able to provide support for international students and foreign staff. Providing selfconfidence and being able to go on study abroad were seen as the least likely of benefits. Those who felt the necessity for English skills felt the strongest that increasing one's English ability would lead to more work related benefits. Responses by this cohort toward perceived benefits were more positive than those by staff who did not feel a necessity for English skills.

Staff appear generally aware of, and acknowledge, the benefits that may come from increasing their English ability. However the general perception was that there was currently insufficient incentive to do so. Of the three choices that were offered in the questionnaire, transferring to the Center for International Programs Office was regarded as the strongest incentive, followed by financial incentives (Figure 9). Being able to attend international conferences was considered the least motivating incentive.

In summary, results from this survey suggest that staff at Kyoto Sangyo University can more or less be divided into two cohorts.

The first, referred to as cohort A, makes up about 80% of staff (Figure 3 –a; staff who thought that a high level of English was necessary). These staff ;

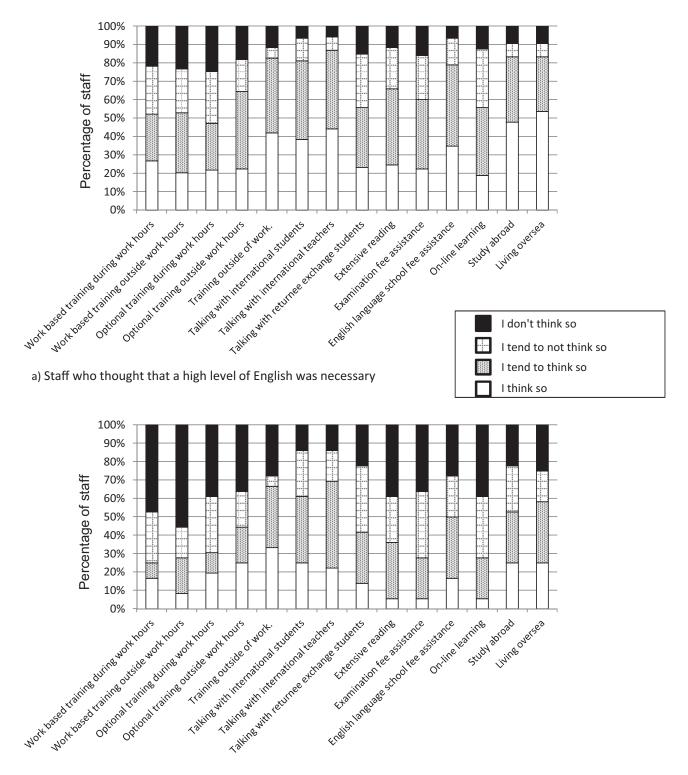
- are positive about utilizing English at work,
- tend to have had more than one month overseas experience
- are positive about further improving their English ability,
- were more likely to have a higher English ability.

The remaining 20% of staff fall into cohort B (Figure 3 –a; staff who thought that a high level of English was NOT necessary) who ;

- currently only rarely come into contact with English at work,
- generally hold the opinion that improving their English ability is not necessary,
- tend to be less positive about using English at work and
- are more likely to have little or no overseas experience.

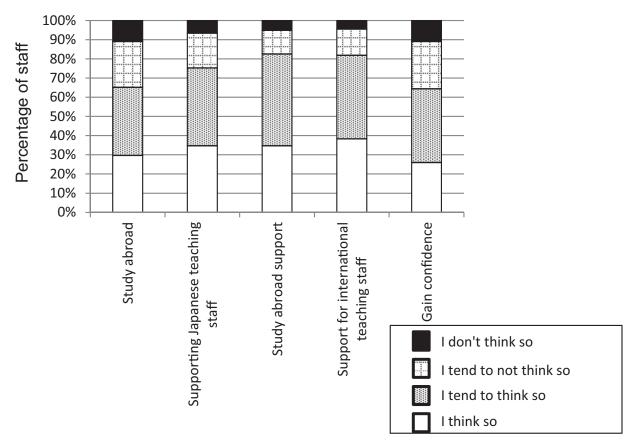
Those in cohort B tend to be permanent staff with relatively longer histories of employment at the University.

After confirming the levels of English ability represented in staff and having gauged attitudes toward further language development, the next stage is to consider how the university might create and maintain initiatives for increasing English language skills among its administrative staff.

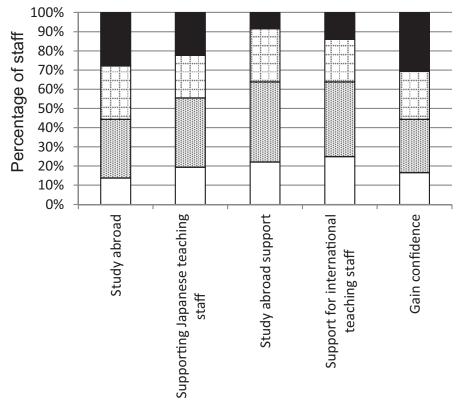


b) Staff who thought that a high level of English was NOT necessary

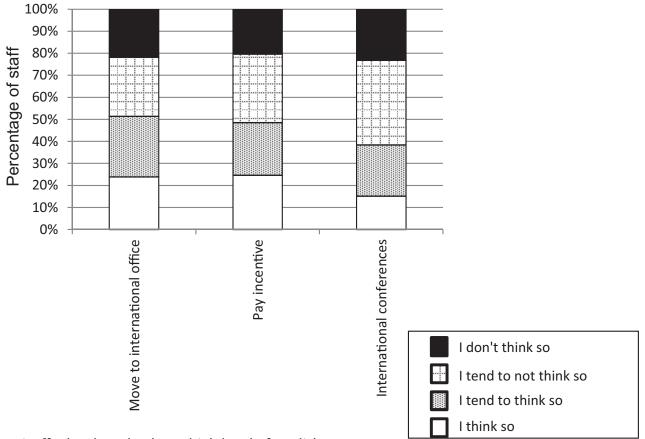
Figure 7: Preferred conditions for English language study



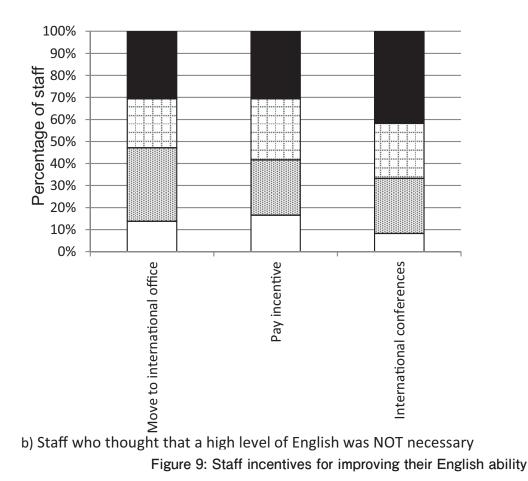
a) Staff who thought that a high level of English was necessary



b) Staff who thought that a high level of English was NOT necessary
 Figure 8: Benefits to staff and university through improved English ability



a) Staff who thought that a high level of English was necessary



4. Discussion

4.1. Motivation and English acquisition

According to Gardner and Lambert (1972) motivation alone will not determine the success of second language learning. Baker (2001) suggests that motivation should however be considered as the "primary impetus" (p. 123) to initiate learning in a second language and that it later acts as the "...driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process..." (p. 123). The importance of motivation is further highlighted by Dörnyei (2005) who asserts that "...motivation factors can override the aptitude effect" (p. 65) and cites Gardner and Lambert who found that so long as the social settings are suitable, many people can master a second language, regardless of their level of aptitude. Yule (1996) further points out that success in learning can act as further motivation, meaning that it can be as much a cause as a result of learning.

These points are relevant for staff in both cohorts A and B. For cohort A, it will be important that they receive motivation for continuing to maintain and improve their English ability and that by continually receiving motivation they will be more likely to sustain their learning. For cohort B the right motivation will provide the impetus, or seed necessary for them to show a greater interest in learning English, or at least recognize the importance of English for a modern day institute of higher education in our now undeniably internationalized world.

The larger percentage of respondents, irrespective of their cohort profile, were of the opinion that be able to put their skills to use in their day-to-day, such as working in the Center for International Programs, would provide strong motivation for studying English. This suggests that skills will be regarded with greater value by staff if they can be used and recognized within the work environment. Survey responses also indicated that favored forms of training would include study abroad, arbitrary out-of-work-hours training sessions, and communicative exchange with international students and teachers.

It is not feasible to place all staff wanting to work in the Center for International Programs office into the one office. However, through the delegation of tasks currently undertaken by the international office to other offices, or by providing more exposure to tasks which require working with English and international students and teachers, then staff can be given the opportunities they are seeking and operations throughout the university in general may become more internationally focused. For example, housing and scholarship related tasks for international students could be handled by the Student Affairs Office similarly to how that office currently manages Japanese student scholarships and dormitory accommodation. Course registration for exchange students could be handled by the Academic Affairs Office and Admission Applications could be processed by the Admissions Office rather than through the Center for International Programs Office. Transferring these tasks to the appropriate offices now while international student numbers are still relatively low will help those offices become familiar with the respective tasks and in dealing with international students in preparation for an anticipated increase in the number of international students in the future.

4.2. Acculturation

Staff with longer overseas experience tended to feel a necessity for improving their English ability. Through becoming a part of an English speaking environment there is a tendency for a change in attitude toward English acquisition and maintaining motivation becomes easier.

Opportunities for KSU staff to study abroad have been offered for several years. In the early years, staff accompanied students on 3 to 4 week programs to New Zealand in the dual capacity of chaperon and student. In more recent years, a small number of staff members have taken the opportunity to individually study abroad in language programs during the summer or spring vacation period. Those staff who took part, had had previous overseas language study experience and would fit a cohort A profile.

From 2014, a new initiative was started through which staff traveled to a partner institution, Chiang Mai University, Thailand, for an intensive 2 week program that included English language study, local cultural experiences and visits to local industries. Participation in this program has spurred previously uninspired younger staff into wanting to improve their own foreign language skills and to become more involved with internationalization of the university. The positive motivation reaped from this short study abroad experience indicates the value of this staff training option.

Another reason to consider study abroad options for staff is to promote the likelihood of them developing a

degree of acculturation toward a people in the target language country. Acculturation occurs when a learner of a language becomes socially integrated with a target language group and through those contacts is able to acquire the target language. (Krashen, 2009)

4.3. Internationalization at Home (IaH)

As discussed earlier, more than 80% of respondents indicated that they felt it was necessary for them to improve their English language skills. The question for the university will be how to harness this positive attitude and provide ways for staff to achieve or improve their language skills. Financially, it would not be feasible for this percentage of staff to be provided with overseas study opportunities. An alternative is to employ methods of domestic based training such as found in Internationalization at Home (IaH) (Nilsson, 2003), a principle that could be applied as part of arbitrary staff training initiatives.

In a survey conducted by Beelen (2011), it was found that, at an institutional level, the three most important rationales for universities to implement IaH based programs were to; improve student preparedness for a globalized / internationalized world, internationalize the curriculum and improve academic quality, and enhance the international profile and reputation of the university. IaH involves embracing international activities, but without the aspect of mobilization. (Longoni and Van Heule, 2013) The value of an IaH program does not end with the reduction of financial burdens of overseas travel or providing staff with the opportunity to learn English language skills. What IaH can also provide, through learning about other cultures, is an appreciation of the challenges faced by international students studying in a foreign country. It will provide an opportunity for staff to gain insights into the cultures represented by international students and teachers and go some way to providing staff with a sense of acculturation.

IaH could also provide a role model for Japanese students as they will see staff within the university, within the students' own community, effectively operating at an international level, even from within Japan. This should encourage students in their own studies and efforts toward attaining IaH.

KSU is a middle-ranked university, and student mobility is not high compared to high-ranked universities in Japan. With a total number of 13,000 students, international incoming students currently only number around 200, and outgoing students are approximately 150 annually. Considering the small number of students taking advantage of study abroad, it is important that the university considers ways to provide an international experience from within the university. Through IaH initiatives all students could receive benefits through gaining international and intercultural knowledge and competence without the need to necessarily travel overseas. Internationalization is an essential factor in professional education, and IaH can lead students to be successful in the modern globalized world.

4.4. Intercultural competence

If the university's aim is to prepare students for an internationalized working environment it will be essential to also foster intercultural competent staff who can assist and lead students in this quest. The presence of such staff will increase the areas in which the university can internationally participate and in so doing raise the university's international profile.

Intercultural competence acknowledges the role of language in understanding others' perspectives, but also demands "effective and appropriate behavior and communication in intercultural situations". (Deardoff, 2010, p. 87)

The importance of intercultural competence for staff at a university, is that any situation in which they are dealing with an international student or teacher, for example, is effectively an intercultural situation. The Process Model of Intercultural Competence devised by Deardoff (2010) demonstrates that it is important that staff who deal with international students, particularly those who are new to Japan, possess and show respect toward other cultures and be open and curious to the attitudes and actions of international students and staff. Ideally, staff will possess a degree of foreign cultural and sociolinguistic awareness; and be flexible and empathetic toward international student and staff needs.

4.5. Proposal

It is important within a training program that staff be able to recognize that what they are undertaking is part of a university wide strategy for internationalization and that the staff themselves feel part of that strategy. Growther (2000) asserts that central to the process of internationalization are the ideas and efforts of education managers, academics and administrative staff. With the understanding and support of staff, at least a majority of staff, any plans for internationalization of the university, including English language study initiatives, should prove easier to realize.

The development program itself should address issues raised in the survey that include current English language skills, motivation, incentives, support and opportunities for practical application of skills within the work place. The following model visualizes this approach (Figure 10). The primary objective of this approach is for as many staff as possible to progress toward the top right corner of the model where they would be considered as an advanced global human resource.

Within each sector of this model (Motivation, Development Support / Practical Application), staff are able to participate in tasks appropriate to their skill level and interest.

For staff in Cohort A, motivation factors could include basic language training, the opportunity to undertake short-term study abroad and avenues within their day-to-day work to apply their basic language skills by, for example, assisting international students or advising Japanese students on study abroad or study skill training.

Staff in Cohort B may be asked to study English, or other languages with the objective of attending professional development seminars, assisting faculty, meeting overseas guests or undertaking a work placement at a partner institution.

Opportunities are currently in place for staff to go on short-term study abroad and there has been a greater interest shown in this program in recent years, particularly by younger staff members. From 2014 an intensive program to Thailand was introduced through which participants studied English and were given the opportunity to experience Thai culture. Unfortunately these study abroad experiences are not part of a broader training program and the skills attained are not utilized effectively at work upon the staff returning to Japan.

Rather than offering stand-along pockets of opportunity, these programs need to be woven into a strategic and managed cycle of motivation, development and application that operates under policies of the university toward internationalization.

5. Conclusion

This paper has outlined findings from a staff survey which indicates that a majority of staff are positive about improving their English language skills. This is an important finding for the university as staff with English language skills will be fundamental in any attempts at internationalization by the University. Several issues that surround foreign language skill development and internationalization of a university

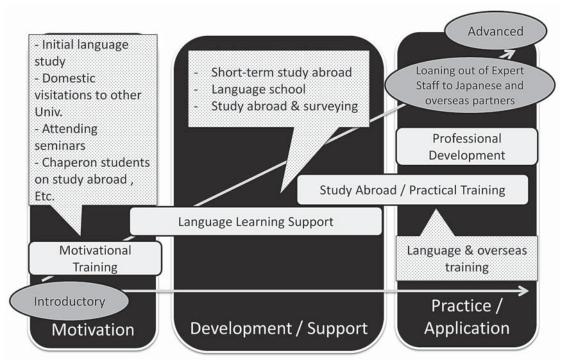


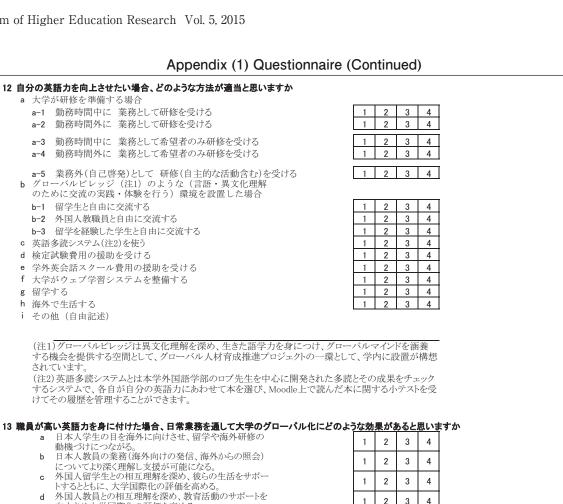
Figure 10: University Staff Global Human Resource Development Model

were raised from the survey and proposals were made to help tackle them.

These include; providing staff with primary and continued motivation and incentive, offering staff the opportunity for overseas study, providing access to staff training based on internationalization at home principles, and helping staff to develop not only their language skills, but also their intercultural competence. The biggest incentive for staff will be for them to be able to apply their language and intercultural skill within their work environment, which will require the development and inputting of a decisive internationalization plan by the university.

Appendix (1) Questionnaire

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い」「4.そ 9 自分にに 10 (自由記 ない理明 11 間9で1- 「1.そう現 A 業務 a b c d e f f-1 g h i	う思わない」の中から、もっともあてはまる数字を選択してください はっと高い英語力が必要だと感じることがありますか 述)間9で「3.どちらかというとそう思わない」「4.そう思わない」と回答された方 唐花書書をださい 	。 1 2 3 にお聞きします。必要 合、どのような状況で か」「99.その状況にない 1 2 3 1 2 3	4 要だと思わ そう感じますか い」 4 99 4 99 4 99 4 99 4 99 4 99 4 99 4 99 4 99	
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い」「4.そ 9 自分にに 10 (自由記 11 問9で1- A 業 b c d e f f-1 g h i j 「1.そう 現 約 k	う思わない」の中から、もっともあてはまる数字を選択してください はっと高い英語力が必要だと感じることがありますか 強)問9で「3.どちらかというとそう思わない」「4.そう思わない」と回答された方 唐をお書さください ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~	。 1 2 3 にお聞きします。必要 たう」「99.その状況にない 1 2 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 1 3 1	4 長だと思わ そう感じますか い」 4 99 4 99 9 9 9	
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Appendix (2)

向上させ大学国際化の評価を高める。

国際交流関係の部署へ異動できる。

b 英語能力に応じた昇給を行ってもらえる。

その他(自由記述)

国際学会へ出席できる。

その他(自由記述)

自信がつき、業務対応などに余裕がでる。

14 職員が高い英語力を身に付けようとするモチベーションは、どのような方法で形成・維持・向上できると思いますか

е

f

а

d

Examples of comments in Japanese from staff to O.10.

- 1. 実務で利用する機会がないため。
- 2. 英語を必要とする勤務についていない。また、 全員が英語を学ぶ必要はない。英語は他の人に 任せ、自分は他の得意分野をより伸ばすことで 貢献したい。
- 3. 英語で生活はできなくても、必要な文献・資料 は読めるので、情報収集という観点から支障が 無い。
- 4. 辞書を見つつ会話ができる程度の英語力をこえ た(高い)英語力は必要であると思わない。
- 5. 必要になれば、覚えますが、現在は必要性がな

いので。

1 2 3

1 2 3 4

1 2 3 4

2 3 4

> 3 4

1 2

Note

¹ The survey was divided into two parts. Part 1 assessed current levels of English ability, gauged staff perceptions on the necessity of English skills in current roles at the university and considered issues pertaining to the enhancement of English proficiency by staff. Part 2 enquired into perceptions held by permanent staff on the characteristics of global human resources and how those characteristics relate to work and social environments. This report focuses on results from Part 1 of the survey.

4

² Temporary staff is included.

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Survey on Staff Motivation and Perspectives toward Professional Language Acquisition

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本稿は京都産業大学における、事務職員に対す るアンケートの結果を報告するものである。アン ケートの目的は、1)職員の英語能力の把握、2) 現在の大学業務における英語力向上の必要性の意 識について知ること、3)もっとも効果的な英語力 向上の方法を探ることであった。分析結果と異文 化コミュニケーションモデルに基づき、大学業務 における英語力向上の指針について提案した。こ の提案は、さらなる大学の国際化に寄与する、グ ローバル人材としての大学職員を要請することを 目的としている。

キーワード:モチベーション、英語力、学内にお ける国際化

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