First-year students’ profiles: implicit beliefs revealed in metaphors and visual narratives

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Although Japanese students study English for six years in secondary schools, they demonstrate little success with it when they enter higher education. This might be associated with beliefs students have developed before they come to university. Those learners’ beliefs can predict the future behavior of students, thus, it may be effective to investigate how beliefs limit their motivation and what are sources of negative beliefs.

While many researchers still depend on a questionnaire called BALLI (Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory) to reveal explicit beliefs, alternative approaches, especially those designed to reveal implicit beliefs and emotions can be helpful for promoting learning.

To this end, this study aims to investigate what first-year students reveal their thoughts or beliefs, emotions and learning experiences in metaphors and drawings. The study was conducted at a private university in Japan where most students are males majoring in technology and sciences. The participants of the study were 133 first year students. Metaphors and drawings about learning English were elicited via the questionnaire.

To analyze data, Furth’s picture interpretation (2002) for drawings and content analysis by coding for metaphors were applied. Findings include characteristics of negative beliefs revealed in metaphors and drawings, learning experiences depicted in drawings and how does the macro context of Japan shapes the experiences of learners in learning and of teachers in teaching English. Finally, strengths and limitations of using metaphors and drawings to investigate learners’ belief will be discussed.

Reference

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