


スピーキングテストが英語学習者の学習目標の形成に与える影響

The Role of Speaking Assessment in Shaping EFL Learners' Subsequent Learning Goals

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ABSTRACT

英語の資格・検定試験は大学入試、採用や留学の選抜などに利用されることが一般的であるが、試験結果や試験結果についてのフィードバックが教育現場において学習効果を上げるために役立つ可能性もある (Jang & Wagner, 2014; Kissling & O'Donnell, 2015)。本研究では22人の英語学習者を対象に学習目標についての調査を行った。学習者は6ヶ月間で合計2回に渡ってACTFLのスピーキングテスト (インターネット形式) (OPIc) を受験し、受験直後と結果を受け取った後に、自らのスピーキング力を向上させるために何が必要か及び次のテストに向けての学習目標について記述した。学習者の解答のうち、「スピーキングの練習の機会を増やす」、「語彙を増やす」、「言いたいことを英語で表現できるようにする」、「話す内容についての知識を身につける」の4つのカテゴリーに関連したものが多く見られた。また、時間の経過に伴って学習者のメタ認知が発達し、より具体的な学習目標の記述が見られるようになった。

In addition to functions such as gate-keeping, course placement, and evaluation, large-scale assessment of second language speaking proficiency may also benefit second language learners, particularly through the feedback that is provided in the form of test results and proficiency level descriptors (Jang & Wagner, 2014; Kissling & O'Donnell, 2015). The current paper reports on a descriptive and qualitative study of the self-reports of 22 low intermediate and intermediate EFL learners regarding their speaking proficiency. The learners completed the computer-based ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPIc) twice over the course of six months. Learners were asked to describe what they needed to improve and how they thought they should

prepare for subsequent administrations of the OPIc. Four main categories of responses were identified, suggesting that speaking assessment had an impact on learners' goals in specific ways. Learners' comments reflected their concerns about opportunities for practice, ability to articulate their thoughts, knowledge of vocabulary, and knowledge of content. Furthermore, analysis of learners' reports across time indicated that learners' metacognitive awareness increased and led to articulation of more focused and specific goals. It is proposed that participation in the OPIc and engagement with test feedback served to enhance learners' abilities to set goals. Further research is needed to investigate how these goals may be transformed into motivated learning behaviors and proficiency gains.

1. Introduction

The past decades have seen an increase in the use of large-scale language assessment worldwide (Fox, 2014; Mathew & Poehner, 2014). Within Japan, tests such as the TOEFL, IELTS or TOEIC, have for many years influenced learners' opportunities to study abroad, and have affected their chances in the job market. In addition to their role in gate-keeping, large-scale assessment can have an enormous impact on language education curriculum, teaching methods, and learners. Furthermore, specific to the Japanese context is the university admissions test known as the National Center Test for University Admissions ("Center Test"), taken by more than 500,000 high school students each year (Watanabe, 2013). Although the exact extent of the washback effect of the exam has not been empirically proven, the vast number of schools for test-coaching and enormous volume of published test-coaching materials reflect the magnitude of the impact of this high-stakes test.

Proposed changes to the English language component of the university admissions system call for the use of commercially available tests that assess the 4 skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing). The proposed changes have stimulated opposition and debate across the country (Mizumoto, 2016), precisely because experts believe that such a major change to university entrance exams will have a huge impact on students and teachers within the school system. One of the

main differences between the current Center Test and the new approach is the inclusion of assessment of speaking proficiency. This contrasts with the current Center Test, which tests mainly receptive skills, reading and listening.

From the perspective of language testing research, an interesting empirical question is how the change in testing, particularly with respect to the assessment of speaking proficiency, will affect language education in Japan, at the levels of curriculum, teaching materials and methods, classroom practices, and learners' learning strategies and beliefs. The current study focuses on the impact that a speaking test may have on learners, particularly on the impact that a speaking test may have on second language learning goals. The study begins with a brief review of relevant theoretical concepts such as test washback, test feedback, and goal-setting. The study then reports on a descriptive qualitative empirical study of learners' reports about their learning goals.

2. Background

2.1 Test Washback

The effect that tests have on subsequent learning experiences has long been the focus of several related areas of research, such as test washback (Cheng & Watanabe, 2004), learning-oriented assessment (Carless, 2015; Jones & Saville, 2016), and diagnostic testing (Alderson, 2005).

Test washback refers to the impact or influence

that tests have on teachers, classrooms, and students (Alderson & Wall, 1993; Cheng & Curtis, 2004). When tests are used to monitor educational standards, or when teachers are responsible for the success of their students on high-stakes tests, teachers may intentionally adjust teaching content and methods in order to prepare their students for the test. This type of test washback is commonly referred to as “teaching to the test” and may sometimes be associated with a negative evaluation of the teaching involved (Alderson, 2004; Cheng & Curtis, 2004). From the perspective of the policy makers, however, test washback may sometimes be intentional when tests are used to try to “engineer innovation, to steer and guide the curriculum” (Alderson, 2004, p. xi). This type of test washback may be viewed as positive or negative depending on the position of the stakeholder (Cheng & Curtis, 2004; Green, 2013). In terms of the Japanese context, researchers have outlined some potential benefits of introducing 4 skills tests into the university entrance exams, such as a shift from a knowledge-based to a performance-centered approach to English language teaching (Mizumoto, 2016). However, Mizumoto (2016) also cautions that washback is a complex phenomenon. Allen’s (2016) recent empirical study of washback effects on test preparation for the IELTS confirmed basic positive effects of test preparation on learners’ English proficiency but also highlighted a variety of mediating factors that also affect learners’ test preparation strategies.

Also included in the conception of test impact is a focus on the role of testing as supportive of learning (Carless, 2015). For instance, large-scale examinations can contribute to teaching and learning by serving as a diagnostic or learning tool (Fox, 2017). In addition, researchers such as Carless (2015) and Jones & Saville (2017) have outlined a model of language assessment, known as learning-oriented assessment, that emphasizes the relationship

between assessment, development of learners’ self-evaluation, and learners’ engagement with feedback. Similarly, the current study focuses on the impact of large-scale speaking assessment on the language learner, and potential positive effects that a test may have on second language learning processes. The following section discusses the relationship between feedback and the positive impact that tests may have on second language learners and second language learning processes.

2.2 Test feedback

One aspect of tests that can have a beneficial effect on learners is the information tests can provide in the form of feedback (Jang & Wagner, 2014). Jang & Wagner explain that diagnostic assessment which is useful for learning does not simply identify learners’ proficiency level but also provides learners with feedback on their strengths, weaknesses, cognitive processes, and learning progress. Such feedback may help learners to recognize “the gap between the learners’ current level of performance and a desired level of performance or goal” (Jang & Wagner, 2014, p. 698), thus motivating learners to make further efforts, and facilitating goal-setting. Feedback that is descriptive is argued to be more effective than feedback which is evaluative or summative. Hattie & Timperley (2007) propose that effective feedback should answer the questions: “Where am I going? (What are the goals?), How am I doing? (What progress is being made toward the goals?), and Where to next? (What activities need to be undertaken to make better progress?)” (p. 86). In other words, this information helps to clarify the difference between current performance and learners’ target goals.

Language proficiency scales that include performance-level descriptors for each level can be useful as descriptive feedback. For example, the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview levels describes

intermediate level speaking competence in the following way:

Speakers at the Intermediate level are distinguished primarily by their ability to create with the language when talking about familiar topics related to their daily life. They are able to recombine learned material in order to express personal meaning. Intermediate-level speakers can ask simple questions and can handle a straightforward survival situation. They produce sentence-level language, ranging from discrete sentences to strings of sentences, typically in present time. Intermediate-level speakers are understood by interlocutors who are accustomed to dealing with non-native learners of the language. (ACTFL, 2012)

As can be seen from the example, the performance-level descriptors specify in detail learners' language skills and knowledge at each level. Such information can help learners to understand their own learning and make decisions about subsequent learning goals (Jang & Wagner, 2014). In fact, Kissling & O'Donnell (2015) report on an empirical study where the ACTFL proficiency guidelines were used to guide learners' self-assessment. Their study showed that the guidelines were effective in increasing learners' language awareness about various aspects of oral proficiency as well as what they themselves could and could not do. The oral proficiency test used in the current study also provides learners with proficiency level information in the form of performance-level descriptors.

2.3 Goal-setting

The idea of goal-setting, which was highlighted as one of the potential benefits of test feedback, is also a central concept in current conceptualizations of motivation, such as Dörnyei's (2009) conceptualization of the L2 Motivational System. The L2 Motivational System provides an empirically supported model of L2 motivation where the components, (1) Ideal L2

self, (2) the Ought-to self, and (3) L2 learning experiences shape learning motivation. According to this model, the Ideal L2 self, which is a concrete image of what the learner hopes to become in the future, can only effectively serve as a guide for progress if certain conditions are met. For example, learners need to have established an "elaborate and vivid" (p.19) self-image of themselves as an L2 user. Also, the learner must know what needs to be done, or what the "procedural strategies" (p.20) are to achieve their desired outcomes. This crucial component of the model, also described as an "action plan" (p.37) will include specific goals and individually tailored study plans. Dörnyei states that "even the most galvanizing vision might fall flat without any concrete pathways into which to channel the individual's energy" (Dörnyei, 2009, p.37). This aspect of learning is also supported by empirical studies such as Hock, Deshler & Shumaker's (2006) report of their Possible Selves project to enhance student motivation and Magid & Chan's (2012) study which aimed to strengthen learners' visions of their Ideal L2 selves. Within this framework, goal-setting is an important part of an effort to motivate learners and improve the quality of their learning.

The current study focuses on the potential role of large-scale assessment within an EFL classroom context in providing students with feedback on their language proficiency and as one strategy for helping learners to set concrete learning goals. The current study focuses on the impact that a large-scale speaking assessment may have on EFL learners' reports about their learning goals. The current study explores learners' reports about their reactions to a speaking test, the ACTFL OPIc' and learners' practice goals in preparation for the subsequent test. The aim of the study was to explore the potential pedagogical benefits of speaking assessment at the level of the individual learner and their engagement with the second language learning process.

3. Method

The current study was conducted as part of a larger study (Fujii & Inagaki, 2017; Inagaki & Fujii, 2017) that investigated the relationship between speaking tests, learners' self-assessment, motivation, and learning behavior over the course of 6 months. All participants gave informed consent to participate in the study.

3.1 Participants

A total of 22 learners participated in the current study. They were all university students majoring in English at two private women's universities in Tokyo, Japan. Eight of the learners were first year students, five were second year students, and nine were third year students. The majority of the learners had no experience staying in an English-speaking country for more than one month. However, five learners had stayed in an English-speaking country for one to three months, two learners for 11 months, and one learner for three years. Their length of experience did not correlate with their English proficiency level.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Speaking Assessment

All 22 learners took the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Exam – Computer (OPIc) twice, once towards the beginning of the academic year in June, and once more six months later towards the end of the academic year in December. The OPIc is a computer delivered oral proficiency interview that is designed to be similar to the face-to-face oral proficiency interview. Questions are computer selected and asked by an avatar. In the current study, the test was administered in a computer room. Learners took the test simultaneously during class time using a headset and microphone, each on their own computer, but in the same room.

At the beginning of the interview, learners were

asked to check off topics or areas of interest. Many of the subsequent questions asked learners to expand on topics included in their list of interests. Some learners progressed to more abstract questions and some were requested to ask questions about a topic. The interviews ranged from 30-45 minutes.

The rating scale for the OPIc assigns five general proficiency levels, Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Distinguished, and Superior. Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced, are further divided into Low, Mid, and High. The ratings for the learners in the current study ranged from Novice High to Advanced Low. The majority of learners were assigned to one of the Intermediate Levels, low, mid1, mid2, or high. Learners received official reports of their rating approximately two weeks after administration of the oral proficiency test. The official report was supplemented by explanation of the relevant proficiency levels in the learners' native language, Japanese, prepared by the researcher.

The distribution of ratings for the first administration in June and second administration in December are shown in Table 1. In the first administration, there were nine learners assigned to intermediate low, making it the most commonly assigned level. In the second administration, there were six learners assigned to both intermediate low and intermediate mid 1.

In terms of individual improvement between the first and second administration of the OPIc, eight learners improved at least one level, nine learners maintained the same level, and five learners were assigned a lower level than their previous rating (see Table 1).

3.2.2 Questionnaires

The data for the current study consists of learners' responses to two questionnaires. Learners completed each questionnaire twice, after the first administration of the oral proficiency test, and six

Table 1 Number of Learners Assigned to Each Level

	Novice High	Intermediate Low	Intermediate Mid1	Intermediate Mid2	Intermediate High	Advanced
June	2	9	5	2	3	1
December	3	6	6	2	4	1

months later after the second administration of the oral proficiency test. Learners responded in their native language, Japanese.

1. Immediate post-test questionnaire. This questionnaire asked learners to record their reactions to the oral proficiency test immediately after taking the test. Learners were asked to describe, (a) how they should study in order to improve their performance on the next test, and (b) concrete goals for improving their performance on the next test.

2. Post-feedback questionnaire. This questionnaire asked learners to record (a) what they needed to improve (b) what they needed to do to achieve their goal, and (c) how they should prepare for the next test.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis followed an iterative qualitative approach. Coding categories were established by examining learners' responses to the first set of questionnaires collected immediately after the first oral proficiency test in June. First learners' responses were examined for common keywords and issues. Responses to all questions on one questionnaire were treated as a coherent whole. That is, responses were not analyzed separately by question. Recurring and salient key words were grouped together where possible to form categories.

Four main categories of responses were identified. Each category represents what learners felt they needed to improve or what they felt they should do to prepare for the next test. The four categories were: (1) opportunities for speaking practice, (2) ability to articulate intended meaning in English,

(3) knowledge of vocabulary, and (4) knowledge of content

The category labelled "opportunities for speaking practice" includes responses generally related to the need to increase opportunities or time for speaking practice as well as comments describing the need to practice speaking in specific ways such as by "shadowing," or "reading aloud." Comments related to oral output were also included in this category.

The category labelled "ability to articulate intended meaning in English" includes learners' responses generally related to the need to learn to express their thoughts in English as well as to more specific comments about what kinds of meanings they need to learn to articulate. Examples of responses in this category are comments such as "I want to be able to say specifically what I want to say" (Learner #5), "I want to express myself clearly and logically" (Learner #13) and "I want to learn how to introduce examples" (Learner #12).

The category labelled "knowledge of vocabulary" includes learners' responses related to the general need to learn more vocabulary items or to comments about how to study vocabulary or what kind of words they needed to learn. Examples of responses in this category are comments such as "I need to increase vocabulary" (Learner #16), "I need to look up unknown words and phrases" (Learner #19), "I need to learn adjectives so that I can explain things more concretely" (Learner #9), and "I need to increase my vocabulary by using new words when speaking" (Learner #8).

Finally, the category "knowledge of content" refers to learners' knowledge of content relevant

for responding to the interview questions. This category includes responses that refer to a need to gain knowledge and information that will enable learners to formulate responses to the interview questions. Examples of responses in this category include comments such as “I need to read more and check the news to increase topics I can talk about” (Learner #18).

These four categories formed the basis for examining learners’ responses to the four sets of questionnaires: (1) immediately after the first oral proficiency test in June, (2) after feedback on the first oral proficiency test in June, (3) immediately after the second oral proficiency test in December, and (4) after feedback on the second oral proficiency test in December.

Data for all sets of questionnaires was coded manually. Responses were assigned to one of the categories if the response included any words or phrases related to that category in form or meaning. Most responses included the key word(s) related to the category and thus category membership was generally unambiguous. When tallying the results,

each learner was associated with each category a maximum of one time for each set of questionnaires. In other words, results were counted in terms of *how many learners* mentioned a category at least once on that particular questionnaire.

Data was examined for any noticeable changes in learners’ response patterns over time. Findings will be described and discussed below in chronological order. Learners responses were translated into English by the researcher.

4. Findings

An overview of the findings related to the four main categories are shown in Figure 1. Figure 1 displays the number of learners with responses in each category.

4.1 Learners’ Immediate Responses (June)

Coding of learners’ responses immediately after administration of the first oral proficiency test (June) according to the four salient categories described above showed that the most popular

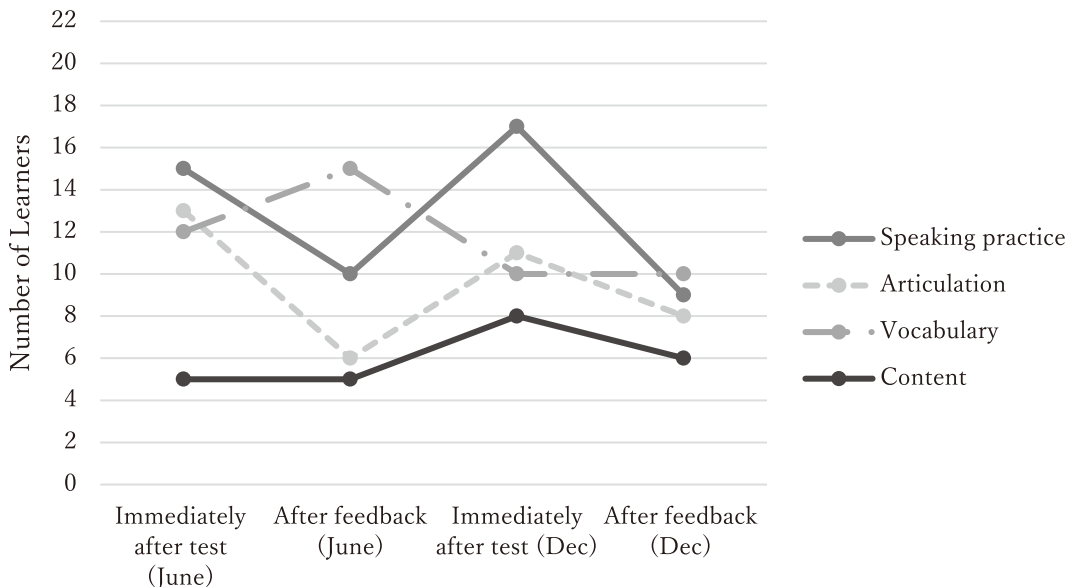


Figure 1 Learners Responses in Each Category

category was “opportunities for speaking practice.” A total of 15 out of the 22 learners mentioned the need to increase or find opportunities to practice speaking immediately after the first oral proficiency test in June. Many learners responded simply with “increase opportunities to speak in English.” A number of learners also responded that their study goals were to speak with native speaker teachers, make foreign friends, and participate more in class.

In this questionnaire set, the next most popular response category was “ability to articulate intended meaning in English.” A total of 13 learners wrote that they needed to improve their ability to articulate or express exactly what they wanted to say. A number of learners mentioned the need to “improve the ability to explain” (Learner #9) and to express their thoughts “concretely” or “specifically” (Learners #5, #6, #11, #15). Next, 12 learners mentioned the need to increase their vocabulary. A number of learners simply responded “increase vocabulary” (Learners #5, #7, and #16) and some learners responded in more detail. For example, “I want to use different verbs” (Learner #17) or “I want to pay more attention to the dictionary and learn words to express subtle differences in meaning (ex. furious, angry, mad)” (Learner #10). Finally, five learners wrote about the need to increase their repertoire of content. For example, one learner wrote “I want to find content to express” (Learner #16).

These responses seem to show that through the proficiency test, learners were able to notice “the gap” in their proficiency, in other words, what they needed to improve in order to perform better on a subsequent test. Other responses that were mentioned by one learner include the need to practice listening and the need to be able to organize their thoughts before speaking. Learners mainly responded about what they needed to improve rather than what they needed to do or how they would improve these points. Still, some

learners did answer that they would read aloud, pay more attention to the dictionary, or write a daily journal in English.

4.2 Learners’ Responses After Test Feedback (June)

Coding of learners’ responses to the questionnaire after receiving test feedback showed slightly different trends from the previous questionnaire set. This time, the responses most saliently showed a common focus on the need to increase vocabulary. A total of 15 out of 21 respondents mentioned the need to study vocabulary. Furthermore, several learners mentioned the need to learn “set phrases” or “expressions” for specific purposes. Responses regarding how to improve or prepare for the next test, such as “learn new words through speaking” (Learner #8), “try out new words” (Learner #14), and “use a notebook to increase vocabulary” (Learner #7) articulate more concretely how learners would undertake their learning compared with simple descriptions such as “increase vocabulary” seen commonly in the previous questionnaire. Responses also included descriptions such as “I need to increase vocabulary such as adjectives and adverbs” (Learner #9), “I need to learn phrases for conversation” (Learner #11), and “I need to learn vocabulary so that I don’t repeat myself ... different phrases” (Learner #10). Such comments also reflect a clearer vision of what learners need to acquire.

In contrast, only 10 learners described a need to increase their opportunities for speaking. This is fewer than the number of learners who mentioned the need to increase opportunities for speaking practice immediately after the test. However, this time, learners seemed to refer to specific types of oral output. Some examples of how to prepare for the next test include “I need to practice explaining something on the spot” (Learner #9), “I need to do shadowing. I need to read English aloud” (Learner

#13), and “I need to practice speaking to myself,” (Learner #12). In other words, learners seemed to be more aware of the concrete practice methods they could employ in practicing speaking. Although, it should be noted that one learner answered honestly “I don’t know what I should do” (Learner #22).

Compared to the previous questionnaire, again fewer learners, only six learners, referred generally to the need to improve their ability to articulate what they wanted say. And, with regard to “knowledge of content,” five learners’ responses fell into this category. This was the same number as for the previous questionnaire.

Interestingly, other salient themes emerged from comments that did not fall into any of the four main categories described above. For example, seven learners mentioned the need to improve their English grammar. Learners mentioned the need to “learn to use longer sentences” (Learner #8), “be careful of tense” (Learner #18), and the need to “review grammar” (Learner #14). Six learners referred to fluency. For example, this is reflected in comments such as “I want to stop hesitating and speak smoothly” (Learner #9). Six learners referred to the need to practice listening or listening comprehension. One learner specifically explained that she had not been able to understand the interview questions well (Learner #20).

In addition, many of the learners’ comments after receiving test feedback reflected metalinguistic reflection and awareness of the “how” or “why” of language learning. For example, learners’ responses such as “I want to learn to use longer sentences so that I can express myself in more detail” (Learner #8), “I want try reading aloud... the same text many times so that my English will come out more smoothly” (Learner #6), and “I want to increase vocabulary so that I can express myself clearly and logically” (Learner #13).

To summarize, the learners’ responses on this questionnaire differed from responses immediately

following the speaking test. The responses after receiving feedback seemed to be characterized by more concrete descriptions of study goals, a wider range of study goals, and more metalinguistic awareness of how learners might achieve their goals, suggesting that test feedback may have helped to raise learners’ metalinguistic awareness of speaking proficiency and development of speaking proficiency.

4.3 Learners’ Immediate Responses (December)

In December, six months since the first administration of the oral proficiency test, the learners took the oral proficiency test for the second time. Immediately after the test, they responded to the same posttest questionnaire as in June. Responses were collected from a total of 21 learners. These responses were also coded for the four main categories (opportunities for speaking practice, ability to articulate intended meaning in English, knowledge of vocabulary, and knowledge of content) that emerged from the analysis of learners’ responses in June.

In terms of the category, “opportunities for speaking practice,” a total of 17 out of 21 learners mentioned the need to find opportunities for speaking practice or mentioned the need for some sort of oral practice like shadowing. Similar to the responses immediately after the first oral proficiency test in June, this category was the most common category of responses, and similar to June, many learners mentioned the need to speak to native speakers or foreigners.

Learners’ responses also reflected a variety of comments related to “ability to articulate intended meaning in English.” A total of 11 learners in particular referred to their ability to articulate intended meaning. Noteworthy was the tendency for learners to concretely described what they needed to be able to do such as “I am not good at explaining things so I need to practice explaining” (Learner #5), “I need the skill to respond to and ask questions” (Learner #8), “I need to learn how to introduce examples” (Learner #12),

“I need to learn how to fill pauses” (Learner #9), “I need to be able to speak logically” (Learner #14), “I need to be able to describe reasons” (Learner #17), “I need to be able to make sentences with the words that I know” (Learner #17), and “I need to avoid repeating the same sentences” (Learner #18). These comments continue to show a high level of metalinguistic awareness of speaking proficiency.

With respect to knowledge of vocabulary, only 10 learners mentioned the need to increase or study vocabulary. This is less than the 14 or 15 learners who referred to vocabulary in June. However, there were more specific descriptions of how or what kind of lexical items they needed to study. For example, learners’ responses included comments such as “look up unknown words and phrases,” (Learner #19), “learn the words on the day they are encountered” (Learner #20), “learn lots of collocations and phrases,” (Learner #16), and “learn useful words” (Learner #10).

In terms of the fourth category, knowledge of content, eight learners referred to the need to acquire information or knowledge that would enable them to speak about a variety of topics or that would allow them to speak more extensively on specific topics.

In general, the responses at this point in time seem to suggest that, compared to June, learners have developed an even clearer understanding and awareness of the characteristics of the discourse they are required to produce in the oral proficiency test, and of where their own weaknesses are. The comments show more metacognitive awareness of “noticing the gap” of what they need to be able to do in communicating in English.

4.4 Learners’ Responses after Test Feedback (December)

After learners’ received their ratings for the second administration of the oral proficiency, they answered questions again about what they should

do in preparation for a subsequent test. Although this time, there was no specific date set for a future test. Learners’ responses generally resembled the trend found in the questionnaires after receiving posttest feedback in June.

First, as in the questionnaire after receiving test feedback in June, “knowledge of vocabulary” was the most common category. A total of 10 learners’ responses were included in this category.

Next, only nine learners’ responses were included in the category “opportunities for speaking practice.” Again, this is a similar number to learners’ responses after test feedback in June. As for “ability to articulate intended meaning in English,” a total of eight learners’ responses were included in the category. For both “opportunities for speaking practice” and “ability to articulate intended meaning in English,” a common pattern can be seen in June and December. More learners’ responses relate to these categories immediately after the oral proficiency test, and fewer learners’ responses relate to these categories after receiving feedback.

Finally, with regard to “knowledge of content,” five learners’ responses fell into this category. This was the same number as for the previous questionnaire.

Perhaps most striking about the responses to this questionnaire is that for the first time, several learners referred to the need to develop confidence. At least five out of 21 learners wrote that they need to “speak with more confidence” (Learner #10). Also interesting is the comment by Learner #6, “I shouldn’t give up until my message has been conveyed.” In sum, learners seem to have come to some realization at this point that factors such as motivation or self-confidence also affect success in second language learning.

5. Discussion

The goal of the current study was to explore the

impact that speaking assessment might have on second language learning goals. This section discusses the major trends that were revealed through the description of the findings.

5.1 Test Washback

First, the findings suggest some directions for test washback with regard to learners' goal-setting. The four salient categories that emerged from the learners' responses reflect recurring themes over the course of the study and show some relationship between the oral proficiency test and certain learning goals. In the current study, learners seemed to believe that in order to improve their performance on the speaking assessment, they needed to engage in speaking practice. Although this may seem like an obvious connection, it confirms results from previous studies within the Japanese context such as Allen (2016) and the potential impact that speaking assessment on a large scale may have on the English language learning community. More speaking assessment will mostly likely lead to a desire for more speaking practice. The other three categories represent learners' views of the "gap" in their proficiency. In general terms, it is the "ability to articulate" intentions. And in terms of specific tools, it is the lack of vocabulary that is most problematic for learners. Finally, learners also felt they did not have enough to say, realizing that without content, language skills are of limited use.

5.2 Test Feedback and Metalinguistic Awareness

Next, the findings, when viewed across time, suggested some interesting trends. First, the data seemed to indicate a tendency for learners' responses to become more focused and concrete after test feedback and as time passed. It could be that, as proposed in the literature on diagnostic feedback (Jang & Wagner, 2014; Hattie & Timberley, 2007) and learning-oriented assessment (Carless, 2015), test feedback was useful in informing learners of

what aspects of speaking affected performance. Test feedback and also reflection may have helped learners to develop a clearer idea of what aspects of their proficiency they needed to improve and how they might go about this.

The heightened awareness of speaking proficiency connects to motivation theories that emphasize the importance of creating a vivid vision of the Ideal L2 self (Dörnyei, 2009). From the perspective of developing the ideal self, experience with speaking assessment, followed by accessible and detailed feedback may be highly beneficial in helping learners to develop a clear ideal self-image.

6. Conclusion & Limitations

In conclusion, the data for the current study revealed four major categories of learning goals that learners reported after participating in speaking assessment: finding more opportunities for speaking practice, developing the ability to articulate their intended meanings, increasing vocabulary, and increasing content knowledge. Furthermore, the findings of the study suggest that learners' metalinguistic awareness of their own speaking proficiency is enriched through the experience of taking the oral proficiency test and then engaging with test feedback. The current study was limited in scope, describing the data from a small number of participants in a particular context. It was not designed as an experimental study and thus it is not possible to draw conclusions about relationships between specific variables. Also, the current study did not investigate which learners actually followed through on their improvement or practice goals and actually engaged in learning behavior that would support their learning. Therefore, although the findings do shed light on some of the potential benefits of speaking assessment and feedback, how these benefits then translate into actually proficiency development is a complicated

trajectory and a worthwhile topic for further research.

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