

HIROSHIMA UNIVERSITY広島大学

Reflection Sheet: Class 2

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND COMMUNICATION II

外国語習得とコミュニケーション II

**Submission Information**

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1. Introduction

The second session of the second term explored individual differences in language learning, that is by quantifying/categorizing the learners’ capabilities in terms of intelligence, aptitude, motivation and learning style. The session mainly revolved around group work; the instructor divided the students into groups, prompting them with questions from the session's material. Through their answers, it became evident that even simple discussions can highlight individual differences, as the varied responses provided the insights needed to communicate the lecture’s topic.

# Factors of Language Learning

## Intelligence

Intelligence, often measured through IQ tests, significantly impacts certain areas of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). It is especially influential in understanding grammar rules and analyzing language structures, where logical thinking is required. However, intelligence is less critical for developing communication skills, such as speaking and listening. For example, a learner with high IQ may excel in grammar exercises but struggle with conversations.

## Aptitude

Aptitude, or the natural ability to learn a language quickly, also plays a crucial role. It involves several cognitive abilities, such as recognizing new sounds, understanding word functions in sentences, discovering grammatical rules through observation, and memorizing vocabulary. Learners with high aptitude often progress faster, particularly in structured learning environments. For example, a student who quickly grasps pronunciation and sentence patterns in French lessons demonstrates strong aptitude.

## Learning Style

Perceptual learning styles highlight the diversity among learners. Visual learners process information better through charts, diagrams, and written notes, while aural learners thrive on listening exercises, such as audio lessons or conversations. Suiting teaching methods for these styles ensures that each learner engages with the material in a way that suits their preferences and strengths.

Cognitive styles also shape how learners approach tasks. Field-independent learners prefer to work alone, focusing on details and excelling in tasks like grammar exercises or rule analysis. In contrast, field-dependent learners prefer group activities and focus on the bigger picture, often performing better in conversational practice. This allows educators to create a balanced learning environment that caters to both independent and collaborative learners.

## Motivation

Motivation is another critical factor in SLA. It shows how much effort learners put into studying a language. It can be:

* **Intrinsic:** Driven by personal enjoyment, like learning about a new culture.
* **Extrinsic:** Motivated by rewards, such as passing an exam or receiving praise.
* **Integrative:** A desire to connect with a culture or people, like learning Japanese to watch anime without subtitles.
* **Instrumental:** Focused on practical goals, like improving career opportunities.  
  Good teaching addresses all these motivations, helping students stay focused and enthusiastic about learning.

More factors are yet to be discussed in the next upcoming session.

# Conclusion

In conclusion, understanding each learner's differences is crucial for effective and inclusive teaching. Every student has unique abilities, preferences, and motivations, which impact how they learn. By recognizing these differences, teachers can adjust their methods to meet individual needs, making lessons more engaging and accessible for all students.