

Student and Teacher Views on English Language Speech Contests in Japan

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Abstract

English language speech contests are popular in Japanese junior and senior high schools, bringing prestige to winning students' schools and aiding winners to gain admission to university (Nishikawa-Van Eester, 2009). As a result, students and teachers devote a great deal of effort practicing for these high-stakes contests. However, there has been very little research examining what motivates students, especially pre-university ones, to join speech contests or how students feel about their experience of participating. In this study, 25 high school and 73 junior high school speech contest participants completed anonymous surveys (including both Likert-type quantitative questions and qualitative open response questions) examining two areas. The first is the reasons students join speech contests (e.g., to win a prize), and the second is students' overall experience of the contest itself (e.g., was it stressful?). In addition, 36 teachers of speech contest participants were asked why they felt their students joined the contests and their impressions of their students' experiences in order to look for any differences between teacher impressions and the reported experiences of the students. The two surveys showed that both students and teachers felt the most important reason for students joining speech contests, in order of ranking, was a desire for personal growth, followed by self-expression, improving English communication skills, making social connections, and winning a prize. The fact that winning a prize was considered the least important reason to participate indicates that these students were primarily intrinsically rather than extrinsically motivated to compete. Regarding the second question, the overall experience of participating in a speech contest was positive for students, with the majority enjoying the contest and wishing to repeat the experience. In addition, students reported feeling more confident in their public speaking as a result of participation, as well as having made improvements in their English

communication abilities. The most surprising result is that students do not consider the experience to be stressful, although outside observers such as teachers may perceive that it was the opposite. Overall, we can conclude that speech contests are a generally positive experience with many benefits for students who participate, thus justifying the heavy time commitment involved for both students and teachers.

English language speech contests have long been popular in Japan, particularly at the junior high and high school level. Contests are held multiple times a year at the school, prefectural, or national level. Speeches are commonly performed by individual students, but depending on the particular contest, speeches can also be done by pairs or small groups.

Speech contests are typically categorized as recitations or original speech contests. Recitations involve students memorizing and presenting a passage from a pre-written source (sometimes slightly modified), often from a class textbook. As a result, recitations often feature multiple presentations of the same passage by different students, and in fact, some contests (such as the Zensho Trophy for commercial high school students) provide a pre-selected set of written passages from which students must choose. In contrast, original speeches are (in principle) written by the students and reflect their own ideas and experiences. These speeches require extra commitment from students due to the additional writing stage and are often perceived as more prestigious than recitations. This can be inferred by the fact that the H.I.H. Prince Takamado Trophy (a nation-wide contest for junior high school students), allows three original speech contestants from each prefecture to proceed to the national competition, but recitation contestants are limited to the prefectural level (JNSA, 2017).

Regardless of the type of speech, it must be memorized by the students. Speeches often have a strict time limit (5 minutes in the case of H.I.H. Prince Takamado Trophy) and students can be penalized for exceeding the limit (JNSA, 2017). Speeches are typically evaluated by multiple judges, including both native and non-native English speakers, who will confer before announcing the final results. The judges may award points for specific aspects of a speech (such as content, English, and delivery in the case of H.I.H. Prince Takamado Trophy), often using rating scales to

ensure consistency between judges, although this is not always possible (see Venema, 2013), or they may rank contestants based on their general impression of the speech.

Speech contests can provide many tangible benefits to winning students, from attending award ceremonies at their school, aiding in applications for admission to schools (Nishikawa-Van Eester, 2009), to lucrative prizes and media attention. For example, the top three winners of the H.I.H. Prince Takamado Trophy in 2017 were invited to a two-week summer school program in the United Kingdom by The Mitsubishi Corp. (JNSA, 2017). The benefits for the school of a speech contest winner include prestige and potentially an increase in enrolment demand.

Motivation for this Study

Despite the ubiquity and history of English speech contests in Japan, there is little available research regarding student and teacher motivations for joining or experiences of participation, particularly in non-university contexts. In order to address this lack of information, this study sought to gather basic data about speech contests, involving three aspects: 1) motivation for entering a speech contest, 2) the experience of participating in a contest, and 3) how the speech was prepared (which is not discussed here due to space constraints).

This study replicates and expands upon a previous pilot study (Head, 2015) which featured surveys of 77 junior high school speech contest participants and eight teachers. That study focused on three areas: motivation of students to participate in speech contests, perceived benefits of participating, and nature of the experience. In terms of motivations, students generally reported intrinsic motivational factors such as a desire to improve their English abilities to be more important than extrinsic factors such as winning prizes. In addition, both teachers and students reported student improvements in pronunciation, intonation, and public speaking skills as a result of speech contest participation. Students also reported that speech contests are not stressful. However, teacher survey results found that teachers perceived the experience to be more stressful and winning prizes to be more important for students than the students themselves did, indicating that there is a difference in how participants and observers view the speech contest experience.

Methods

A two-part student survey (Appendix 1) was written in English and then translated into Japanese by a native speaker. The survey contained both quantitative Likert-scale type sections, as well as spaces for students to write qualitative responses to questions. This mixed-method approach was used in order to ensure specific questions were answered in a way that could easily be compared numerically using the Likert-scales, while allowing for unanticipated and unrestricted responses to be collected through the written qualitative question responses. If a particular question was not answered on a survey or was unclear, that particular response was disregarded and the total response number for that question adjusted. A bilingual survey was used so that participants could answer regardless of their ability in either language. The second part of the survey concerned original speeches (not included in this paper), so students who had performed recitations of texts were asked not to complete the second page. Written comments were transcribed and Japanese comments translated into English prior to analysis. The student surveys were given out at two different prefecture-wide speech contests in Kochi City in the fall of 2015. These contests contained sections for both recitations of English texts, as well as original speeches. The first contest was for students at public commercial high schools and the other was for both junior high and senior high school students from both public and private schools. The surveys were anonymous, the organizers gave permission for the surveys to be distributed at the events, the surveys were given out after the contest had finished, the purpose of the research and its voluntary nature was explained to participants, and only surveys that included written participant consent were included in the results. In total 98 student surveys were included in the results.

The teacher surveys (Appendix 2) were similar to the student surveys (mixed-method, bilingual, and anonymous) and asked many almost identical questions (with “I” being replaced by “students”). They were distributed at the previously mentioned speech contests, as well as the annual Skills Development Conference (SDC) which gathers all JET Programme ALTs (assistant language teachers), along with one Japanese teacher of English (JTE) from each public school in Kochi prefecture. Again, only the 36 surveys containing explicit consent were included in the analysis.

Results and Discussion

Participant Profile

Of the 98 student survey respondents (see Table 1), 25 were in high school and 73 were in junior high school. There were 10 male and 87 female respondents (plus one of unindicated gender). This gender ratio is small, but similar to percentages at other English speech contests as speech contests are often more popular among female than male students (Head, et al., 2018).

Table 1
Student Participant Profiles

Gender		School Level		Type of Speech	
Male	10	High school	25	Original speech	29
Female	87	Junior high school	73	Recitation	57
Unknown	1	Unknown	0	Unknown	12

On the teacher surveys, of the 36 respondents, 24 identified themselves as native-English speakers, seven as non-native English speakers, and 5 did not respond. Teachers had experienced between one and 20 past speech contests (mean 6.03, standard deviation 6.60).

Speech Contest Preparation Time

As shown in Table 2, there is a wide range in the amount of time students spent practicing their speech. The differences probably reflect variations such as the type of speech (original speeches also require writing time), as well as the amount of free time teachers and students have to devote to practice. Practice typically involves students memorizing their speech by themselves at home (often while shadowing a recording provided by an ALT to aid in modeling native-English pronunciation and intonation) and then practicing at school with a JTE and/or ALT. The teachers can correct and model the necessary pronunciation, intonation, and gestures as well as provide prompts when the student forgets the next line of their speech. Some teachers may explicitly teach

phonology, while others may simply have the students repeat individual words until they get the pronunciation right.

It is unclear at this stage what the optimum practice time is since the individual student placements in the contests were not compared with time spent practicing. However, while more practice likely has a positive effect on performance, there is likely a law of diminishing returns at some point. Hopefully there are benefits that students receive in terms of improvements in motivation and English ability that justify this time investment. However, considering that junior high and high school students will have only 262.5 and 612.5 hours respectively of English instruction over the course of three years of study (Hosoki, 2011) it is debateable whether the time spent on speech contest practice is a beneficial supplement to (or a distraction and waste of resources from) regular English class study.

Table 2

Estimated Time Spent Preparing for a Speech Contest

Hours of Practice	Students (Self-Estimate)	Students (Teacher Estimate)	Teachers (Self-Estimate)
Mean (SD)	20.32 (20.67)	29.60 (30.81)	16.51 (15.79)
MIN/MAX	2/100	8/120	1/40

Motivation for Joining a Speech Contest

To determine the relative importance of different aspects of the speech contest experience, and to compare how teachers and students perceive them quantitatively (Figure 1), teachers and students were asked to rate nine statements (Table 3) on a four-point Likert-scale (*1=Very important; 2=Important; 3=Somewhat important; 4=Not important*). Students and teachers were also asked to write the main reason for students to join a speech contest and these qualitative responses were grouped for comparison into categories that emerged (Table 4). If more than one reason was given, the reasons were calculated separately. For example, the response “My teacher recommended I participate. But also, having people listen to my speech. Improving pronunciation.” would be listed in the following three different categories: Students were asked to participate by a teacher; To have people listen to their speech or to communicate their feelings and thoughts; and Students want to improve their English or communication ability.

Table 3

Summary of Student and Teacher Survey Likert Statements Regarding Speech Contest Motivations

Statement Number	Students	Teachers
1	Improving English pronunciation	Improving students' English pronunciation
2	Improving English intonation	Improving students' English intonation
3	Improving public speaking confidence	Improving students' public speaking confidence
4	Improving writing ability	Improving students' writing ability
5	Winning a prize	Students' winning a prize
6	Challenging yourself to do your best	Challenging students to do their best
7	Sending a message / expressing yourself	Allowing students to send a message / expressing themselves
8	Spending time with friends	Allowing students to spend time with friends
9	Spending time with teachers/ALTs	Allowing students to spend time with teachers/ALTs

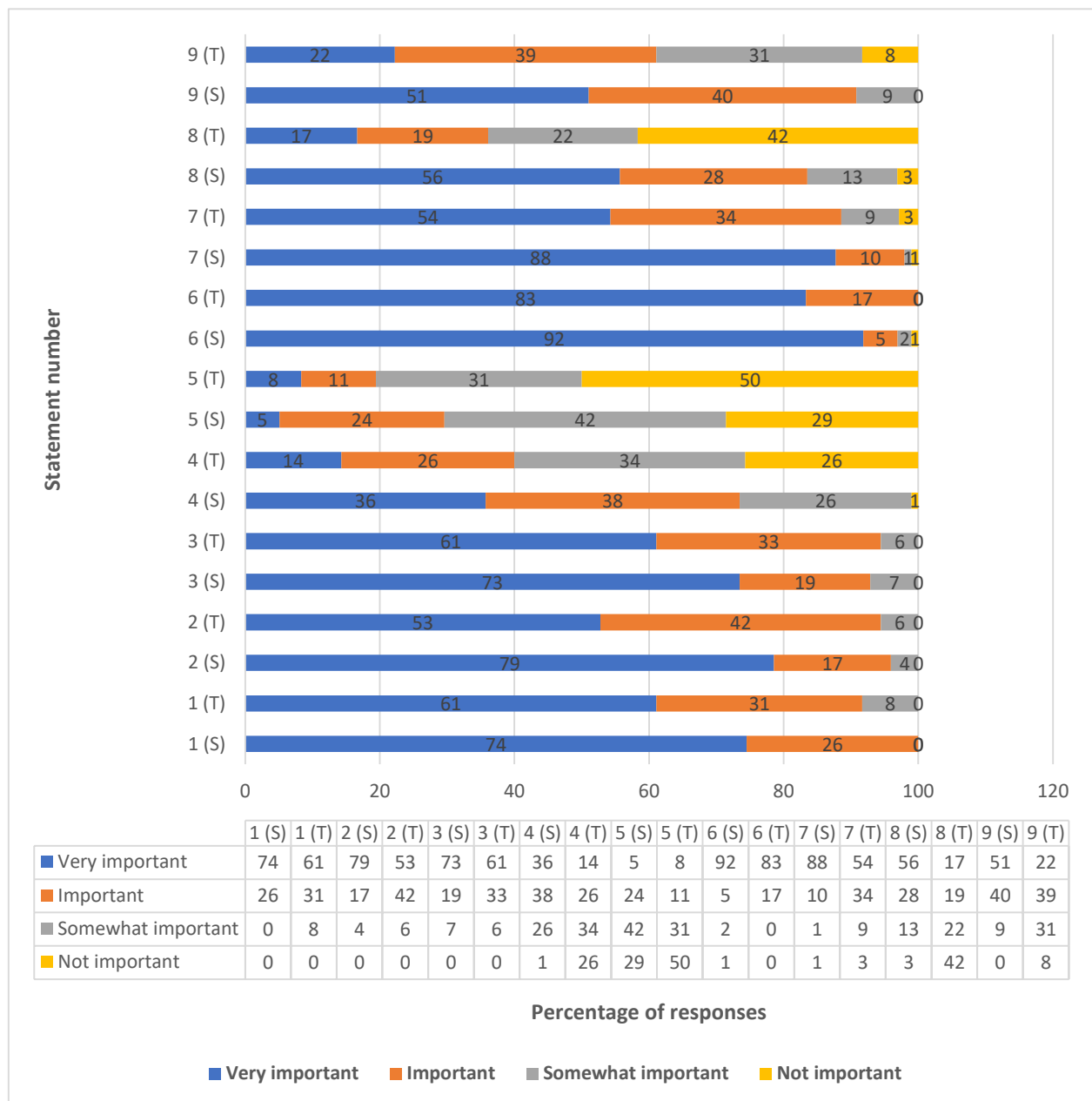


Figure 1. Student and teacher perceptions of various aspects of speech contests.

Personal Growth

The aspect of speech contest participation that was reported as *very important* for the highest percentage of students (92%) and teachers (83%) was challenging themselves to do their best (Figure 1). This is reflected in the 12 mentions of students wanting to challenge themselves, the fourth most common reason listed in the qualitative responses (Table 4). Therefore, personal growth is a key motivator for participating.

Self Expression

The aspect reported as *very important* (Figure 1) for the second highest percentage of students was sending a message (88%). This is also shown in Table 4, with seven mentions of students wanting to have people listen to their speech or communicate their thoughts and feelings, and four mentions of students wanting to express themselves. Interestingly, the percentage of teachers who felt it was *very important* (54%) was less than for technical aspects of speech, such as pronunciation, discussed below. This disparity indicates that the content of the speech is more important for students than teachers may think, suggesting that students should be able to help craft their own speeches or freely choose recitation texts that they feel a connection with.

Improving English Speaking

Next, we look at the more technical aspects of the speech contest. As shown in Figure 1, over 90% of both students and teachers felt that improving pronunciation, intonation, and speaking confidence were *very important* or *important* aspects of speech contests, although the percentage of students who felt it was *very important* was higher than that of the teachers 74% vs 61%, 79% vs 53%, and 73% vs 61% for improving pronunciation, intonation, and speaking confidence respectively). This disparity in values may simply be due to the maturity of the teachers leading them to choose less extremely positive or negative responses on the survey, while still sharing overall similar attitudes to the students as indicated by the near identical scores when the *important* and *very important* responses are pooled. However, in terms of improving writing ability, the percentage who feel it is *very important* or *important* drops to around 75% for students (regardless of whether they participated in a recitation or an original speech, data not shown) and 40% for teachers. In fact, in the written comments none of the students mentioned improving writing skills as a reason for joining a speech contest, whereas there were 12 mentions of students wanting to improve their English abilities and five mentions of wanting to improve their speaking confidence (see Table 2). This is likely because recitation contests do not require any original student writing, and even original speeches are primarily judged on presentation ability rather than speech content, so writing is not a strong consideration. Thus, we can conclude that improving speaking skills is an important aspect of speech contests for students, but writing skills are of secondary importance.

Winning Prizes

By far the least important speech contest factor in this survey was winning a prize. Only 29% of students and 19% of teachers list this as *important* or *very important* (Figure 1), and only two students mentioned winning a prize in their reasons for joining a speech contest (Table 4). On the other hand, rather than winning a prize, nine students mentioned demonstrating their English ability as a reason for joining a contest (Table 4). This could indicate that students are less concerned with an external ranking by judges comparing them to other students as they are with showing themselves what they are capable of.

Social Connections

Another area that shows a gap between teachers and students are the social aspects of speech contests. Eighty-four percent of students reported as *very important* or *important* spending time with friends, and 91% for spending time with teachers, compared with teacher responses of 36% and 61% respectively (Figure 1). As shown in Table 4, seven students mentioned that they joined a contest because it was part of their club activities, and 5 did so because they were asked by a friend. Thus, for many students, doing speech practice with friends or as part of a club likely serves as a motivational factor.

This result differs from that of the previous pilot study (Head, 2015), which found that on average students disagreed that they do speech contests because their friends are participating. However, the teacher responses are similar to the previous study, as on average teachers felt that students are motivated by their friends.

Enjoyment

Finally, looking at the responses in Table 4, the most common reason for participating in a speech contest was that students had previously participated in one (20 responses). This could be interpreted as indicating that students find the speech contest experience to be positive, as students would be unlikely to willingly repeat the process otherwise. This is further supported by the 11 responses indicating that speech contests either were or appeared to be fun. Therefore, while many students indicate that they participate to gain self-confidence or skills, many may choose to do so

out of simple enjoyment. This, and the fact that the majority of students felt that they had accomplished the goals that they had set themselves by joining (Table 5), indicates that the experience of doing a speech contest is positive and hopefully justifies the long hours of preparation involved (a theme that is further examined in the next section).

Table 4

Student Reasons for Joining a Speech Contest

Reasons for Joining a Speech Contest	Number of Mentions	Rank
Students have previously participated in a speech contest	20	1
Students like English	14	2
Students were asked to participate by a teacher	13	3
Students wanted to challenge themselves	12	4
Students want to improve their English or communication ability	12	4
Participating sounded like fun or was fun in the past	11	6
Students wish to demonstrate or test their English ability	9	7
Participating in a speech contest is a useful experience	8	8
To have people listen to their speech or to communicate their feelings and thoughts	7	9
Because speech contests are a part of English club activities	7	9
To experience speaking in front of others	7	9
Students were invited by a friend or wished to spend time with friends	5	12
To improve their confidence	5	12
To express themselves	4	14
They were inspired by watching other participate	3	15
To listen to other people's speeches	2	16
It is their last chance to try participating	2	16
Students wish to broaden their views	2	16
To get a prize	2	16

Table 5

Do Students Feel They Accomplished Their Goals?

Do Students Feel They Accomplished Their Goals?	Number of Responses
Yes	74
No	14
Not sure or somewhat	9

The Experience of Participating in a Speech Contest

In order to gauge the experience of doing a speech contest, students and teachers were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with different statements (Table 6) on a six-point Likert-scale (1=*Strongly agree*, 2=*Agree*, 3=*Slightly agree*, 4=*Slightly disagree*, 5=*Disagree*, 6=*Strongly disagree*) and their quantitative responses were compared (Figure 2). Students and teachers were also asked to write down what they most like and dislike about speech contests. These qualitative statements were then grouped according to common themes and summarized in tables 7 through 10 (What do students most like about English speech contests? What do students most dislike about English speech contests? What do teachers most like about English speech contests? and What do teachers most dislike about English speech contests?).

Table 6

Summary of Student and Teacher Survey Likert Statements Regarding Speech Contest Experiences

Statement number	Students	Teachers
1	I enjoy doing English speech contests	Students enjoy doing English speech contests
2	Speech contests are stressful	Speech contests are stressful for students
3	I feel confident expressing myself in Japanese	Students feel confident expressing themselves in Japanese
4	I feel confident expressing myself in English	Students feel confident expressing themselves in English
5	Public speaking is difficult for me	Public speaking is difficult for students
6	Speech contests participation is useful for my future	Speech contests participation is useful for students' future
7	Speech contests are good preparation for communicating with others	Speech contests are good preparation for communicating with others
8	I want to do speech contests again	Students want to do speech contests again

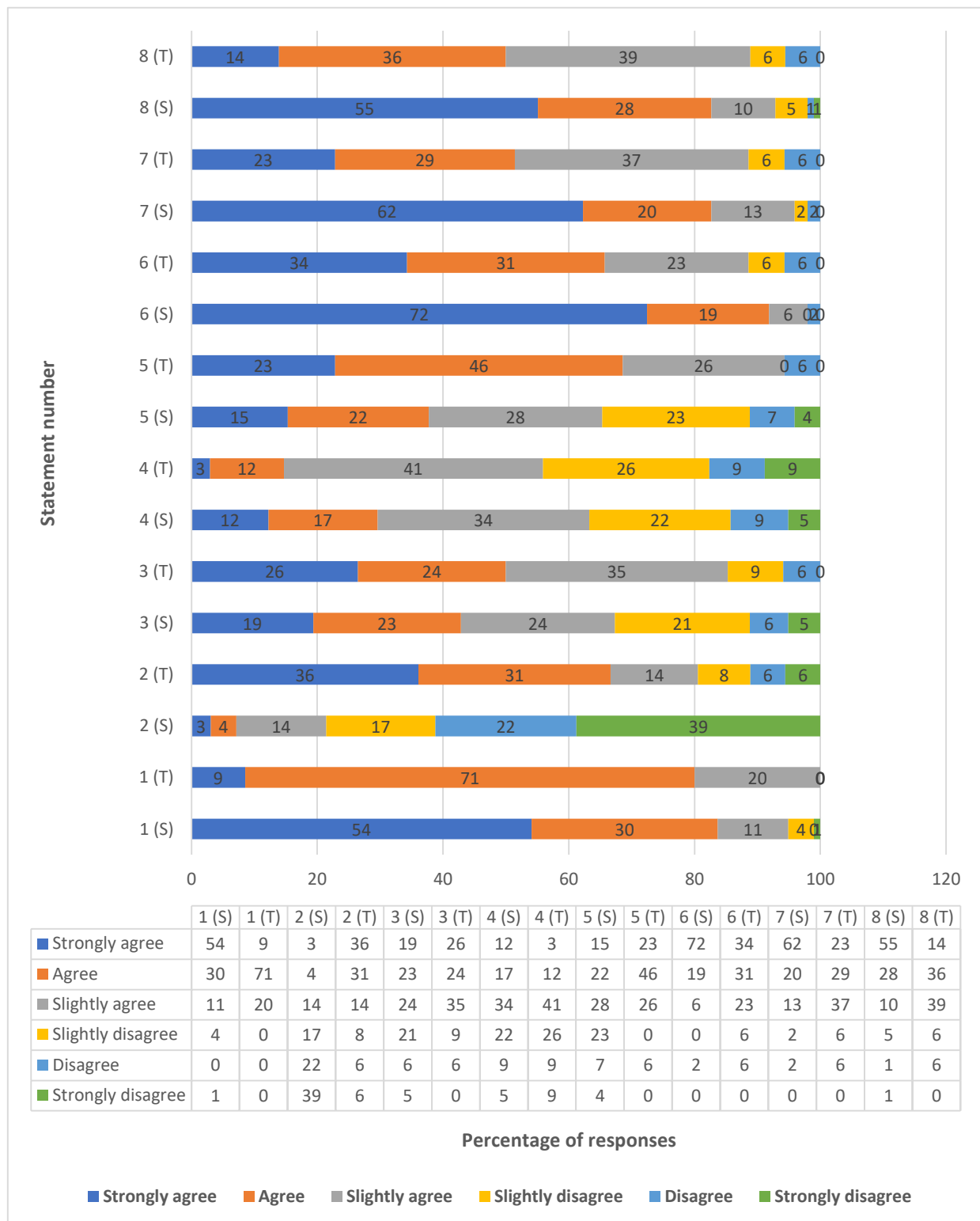


Figure 2. Student and teacher perceptions of participating in speech contests.

Enjoyment of Speech Contests

First, looking at student enjoyment of speech contests (Figure 2), 95% of students and 100% of teachers at least slightly agree that students enjoy doing speech contests (with 54% of students and

9% of teachers strongly agreeing), indicating that the experience is largely positive. This is supported by the fact that the most common student response to what they dislike about speech contests was “nothing” (Table 8).

Student Stress

Next, we look at the issue of stress. At first glance, speech contests appear to have the potential to be very stressful. Not only is there limited time to get ready for a contest, but on the day itself students only have one chance to impress the judges while speaking in a foreign language in public. Surprisingly, the pilot study found that the majority of students and (to a lesser extent) teachers disagreed that speech contests were stressful (Head, 2015).

Interestingly, the results of this survey show almost an inverse between the student and teacher responses, with 3% of students strongly agreeing that speech contests are stressful for students and 39% strongly disagreeing, whereas 36% of teachers strongly agree and 6% strongly disagree. This appears to indicate a large difference between how observers and participants interpret the experience. For example, while two teachers mentioned student stress as something that they dislike about speech contests (Table 8), no students specifically mentioned stress in their responses (Table 7). On the other hand, the second most common thing that students dislike about speech contests is being nervous (Table 7). However, it is possible that the feeling of being nervous is temporary (for example, just before a student is about to go on stage) and the rest of the contest is enjoyable rather than stressful. For example, the third most common thing that students like about speech contests is listening to other people’s speeches, indicating that even if they are nervous they can enjoy the contest at the same time.

Student Confidence

In terms of confidence, students and teachers both felt that students are less confident expressing themselves in English than Japanese, although it should be noted that the difference between students’ confidence in expressing themselves in Japanese (66% at least slightly agreeing) and in English (63% at least slightly agreeing) is not large. Also, 65% at least slightly agree that public speaking is difficult for them, so it may be reasonable to assume that confidence in publicly

expressing themselves at an English speech contest is less due to issues with English ability and more to do with general shyness. However, when looking at the qualitative data concerning what students most like about speech contests (Table 7), we see that improving speaking ability and/or being able to speak publicly is the most common response, and that an increase in confidence is the second most common response. Gains in student confidence is also the most common thing that teachers like about speech contests (Table 9). Thus, while students may lack confidence in public speaking, regardless of the language, participating in a speech contest may serve to increase their confidence. On the other hand, losing confidence and/or failing to perform well was the third most mentioned dislike of students (Table 8), so gains in confidence are not universally guaranteed. It should also be noted that a certain amount of self-confidence is likely necessary to consider entering a public speech contest in the first place, so if all students were required to participate in a speech contest the results may be very different.

Practical Benefits

Next, exploring the practical benefits of doing a speech contest, a large majority of students felt that speech contest participation is useful for their future (with 72% strongly agreeing and only 2% disagreeing (Figure 2)). Similarly, most students felt that speech contests were good preparation for communicating with other people (62% strongly agreeing and only 4% disagreeing or slightly disagreeing (Figure 2)). In both these cases, the percentage of teachers agreeing with those statements was less than for the students while still being generally positive, with only 12% disagreeing or slightly disagreeing. Looking at the written comments in Table 7, the seventh most common comment was that speech contests are a useful experience for the future, and many other comments mentioned practical English communication benefits such as improving pronunciation and/or intonation (fourth ranked), improving English vocabulary and/or understanding (fifth ranked), and improving writing ability (tenth ranked). Teachers also commented on students' practical skill improvement among the things that they most like about speech contests (Table 9), with mentions of improvements in intonation (second ranked), learning skills (fourth ranked), and improving public speaking (also fourth ranked). Thus, we can conclude that students felt that they received practical benefits from participation that will continue into their future.

Overall Experience

Finally, one of the greatest indicators of how speech contests can be a positive experience is the fact that 93% of students at least slightly agree that they want to do speech contests again (with 55% strongly agreeing). This is supported by the fact that the most common reason for joining a speech contest was that students had joined one in the past (Table 4). If students did not feel the experience was worthwhile and fun, or if they felt it was unduly stressful, it is unlikely that they would continue to participate in future contests. This does not mean that all the aspects of the speech contest experience were considered positive, however.

Table 7

What do Students Most Like About English Speech Contests?

What do Students Most Like About English Speech Contests?	Number of Mentions	Rank
Improving speaking ability and/or being able to speak in front of others	23	1
Gaining confidence and/or a feeling of accomplishment	22	2
Listening to other people's speeches	15	3
Improving pronunciation and/or intonation	13	4
Improving vocabulary and/or English understanding	9	5
Making friends and/or connecting with others	7	6
Expressing yourself and/or writing your own speech	5	7
It will be a useful experience for the future	5	7
Having people listen to your speech	3	9
Improving writing ability	2	10
Doing the speech well	2	10
Others	5	

Table 8

What do Students Most Dislike About English Speech Contests?

What do Students Most Dislike About English Speech Contests?	Number of Mentions	Rank
Nothing	24	1
Being nervous	19	2
Losing confidence and/or failing to perform well	7	3
Memorizing the speech	6	4
The time commitment and/or difficulty of practice	5	5
The length of the contest and/or judging is too long	2	6
Being shy and/or embarrassed	2	6
Others	5	

Table 9

What do Teachers Most Like About English Speech Contests?

What do Teachers Most Like About English Speech Contests?	Number of Mentions	Rank
Students can gain confidence	6	1
Students can improve their intonation	5	2
Students become more motivated and/or challenge themselves	5	2
Spending time practicing with students	4	4
Students can use English outside the classroom	4	4
Students learn skills	4	4
Students can express themselves	4	4
Students improve their public speaking	2	8
Others	2	

Table 10

What do Teachers Most Dislike About English Speech Contests?

What do Teachers Most Dislike About English Speech Contests?	Number of Mentions	Rank
The speech preparation schedule	3	1
Adjusting speech content in order to impress judges	2	2
Emphasis by judges on technical aspects of speeches rather than on fluency or self-expression	2	2
Student memorize but don't understand the content of their speeches	2	2
The need to memorize speeches	2	2
Students learn unnatural gestures and speaking styles	2	2
It is stressful for students	2	2
Others	6	

Areas for Improvement

In terms of negative aspects of speech contests, both students (Table 8) and teachers (Table 10) mention speech memorization. On a related note, some teachers mention that while students memorize their speech, they may not actually understand the meaning of the words they are presenting. This calls into question some of the claimed benefits regarding improvements in English understanding that result from doing English speeches. Perhaps allowing students to bring notes on stage would be a way of reducing the time needed to prepare for a speech contest (the fifth most common complaint among students (Table 8)) and allow time to be spent on ensuring that students are learning English. Considering that people delivering public speeches outside of a contest setting almost always rely on notes (or teleprompters), the rationale for denying students

access to these aids is questionable as it prioritizes rote memorization ability over all else. Another way to ensure student comprehension of the speech content is to have impromptu speeches where students are told the speech topic and are only given a few minutes to prepare before presenting their speech. However, the level of English ability required for this type of speech is likely beyond the grasp of most students at this stage in their education. Perhaps another way to focus on student understanding of the speech content would be for judges to ask a few questions related to the speech content (in Japanese).

Another aspect of contests that causes concern is the judging. While students were mostly concerned with the time taken by judges to reach a decision (Table 8), the teachers were concerned about the negative results on student learning of trying to impress the judges. For instance, there are two mentions of adjusting the content to impress judges. Often contests will have the same judges each year, often from universities so as to avoid the appearance of bias (Sawa, 2010). Also, judge panels often consist of two Japanese and one native English speakers (often an ALT). As many have observed, the native and non-native judges may emphasize different aspects of speech contest evaluation, with some (native English speaking) observers feeling that technical proficiency is more prized by non-natives and “natural” delivery more prized by native speakers (Carrigan, 2017; Markewicz, 2014; Sawa, 2010). The researcher has observed this leading to teachers tailoring the student’s speech content (and accompanying gestures) to suit the known tastes of the Japanese judges in order to win, as they outnumber the native English judges (whose turnover rate is also higher). One way to combat this may be to attempt to recruit more judges (both native and non-native English speakers) so that there can be a greater variety of judges to draw on and thus less predictability concerning who will be present and what will appeal to the judging panel. In addition, some sort of formal training to ensure that judges apply evaluation rubrics consistently could help reduce variation in results between judges, especially since judges may be judging a contest for the first time (Venema, 2013).

Limitations of the Study

These were samples of convenience, however, due to the prefecture-wide gathering of teachers and students at these events, the researcher feels that these form a representative sample of the

prefecture. It should also be noted that not all speech contests are identical in terms of level of competition, so students entering other contests may have had different experiences. In addition, the student comments were translated into English before being analysed, so some nuances may have been lost in translation. Also, the categorization of responses into different categories can be subjective.

Conclusion

This study examined two main questions from the perspectives of both students and teachers: 1) what motivates students to join a speech contest? and 2) what is the experience of participation?

Looking at the first research question, the results of this survey showed that there are many overlapping factors involved in students joining speech contests. However, the most important factors (in descending order) appear to be personal growth, followed by self-expression, improving English communication skills, social connections, and winning a prize. The fact that winning a prize was considered the least important factor by students and teachers indicates that participants are primarily intrinsically rather than extrinsically motivated (or it could mean that only intrinsically motivated students are able to and willing to go through the extensive commitment required in the first place). This is encouraging as extrinsic motivation such as winning a prize is considered less valuable for learning than intrinsic motivation, such as a desire to challenge yourself (Brown, 2007). Finally, many students appear to join speech contests out of past enjoyment, indicating that the experience is positive, which is further supported by the responses to the second research question.

In answer to the second research question, the experience of doing an English speech contest is very positive. The majority of students reported enjoying the contest and wishing to repeat the experience. In addition, students reported feeling more confident in their public speaking as a result of participation, as well as having made improvements in their English communication abilities. The most surprising result is that students do not consider the experience to be stressful, although outside observers such as teachers may think the opposite.

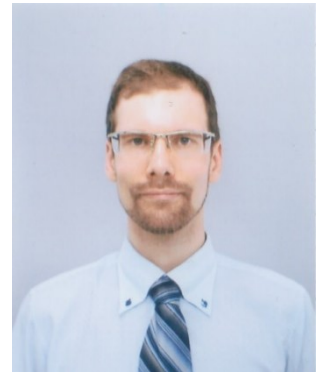
Overall, we can conclude that speech contests are a generally positive experience with many benefits for students who participate, thus justifying the sometimes heavy time commitment

involved for both students and teachers. However, there are areas that could be improved, particularly in terms of the judging of contests, that can make the experience even more beneficial for student development and self-improvement.

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Philip Head is a Lecturer at Hiroshima Shudo University, but was previously an Assistant Language Teacher with the JET Programme in Kochi City, where he helped numerous junior and senior high school students prepare for English speech contests. He is actively involved in academic publishing with *The Language Teacher*. His research interests include EFL student motivation, journal writing, and speech contests.



Appendix 1

Bilingual Student Survey

★Grade 学年（ ）

★Male / female 男 / 女

★Original speech / recitation オリジナルスピーチ / レシテーション（暗唱）

★I practiced my speech for approximately _____ hours in total.（私は、合計で約_____時間スピーチの練習をした）

★Please rate the following aspects of speech contests（スピーチコンテストに関する下記の質問に番号で答えてください。）

1=Very important（とても重要）2=Important（重要） 3=Somewhat important（やや重要）4=Not important（重要でない）	
Improving English pronunciation.（英語の発音）	
Improving English intonation.（英語のイントネーション・抑揚）	
Improving public speaking confidence.（人前で話す自信）	
Improving writing ability.（英語を書く力）	
Winning a prize.（受賞すること）	
Challenging yourself to do your best.（ベストを尽くすこと）	
Sending a message / expressing yourself.（思いを伝えること・自分を表現すること）	
Spending time with friends.（仲間と時間を過ごすこと）	
Spending time with teachers/ALTs.（先生や、ALTと時間を過ごすこと）	

★Please state your agreement/disagreement with the following statements:

（下記の文に、賛成（そう思う） / 不賛成（そう思わない）で答えてください。）

1=Strongly agree（まったくそう思う）、2=Agree（そう思う）、3=Slightly agree（まあまあそう思う）、 4=Slightly disagree（あまり思わない）、5=Disagree（思わない）、6=Strongly disagree（まったくそう思わない）	
I enjoy doing English speech contests.（私はスピーチコンテストを楽しんでいる）	
Speech contests are stressful.（スピーチコンテストはストレスを感じる）	
I feel confident expressing myself in Japanese.（私は日本語で自分を表現することに自信がある）	
I feel confident expressing myself in English.（私は英語で自分を表現することに自信がある）	
Public speaking is difficult for me.（スピーチは私にとって難しい）	
Speech contests participation is useful for my future.（コンテストに参加することは将来役立つ）	
Speech contests are good preparation for communicating with others. （スピーチコンテストは他人とのコミュニケーションの良い準備になる）	
I want to do speech contests again.（私はまたスピーチコンテストに出場したい）	

★What was your main reason(s) for entering this speech contest?

（あなたが、スピーチコンテストに出場した主な理由は何ですか？）

★Do you feel you achieved your goal(s)?（あなたは、目標を達成したと感じますか？）

★What do you most like and dislike about English speech contests?

（あなたにとって、英語スピーチコンテストに関して最も良いこと（楽しいこと）と悪いこと（嫌なこと）は何ですか？）

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★What best describes how your speech was written?

(あなたがスピーチを書いた方法を下記から選び、記号で答えてください。)

- 1) I wrote my speech in English. (私は、英語でスピーチを書いた。)
- 2) I wrote my speech in Japanese and then I translated it into English (私は、日本語でスピーチを書き、それから英語に訳した。)
- 3) A teacher interviewed me about my ideas and then wrote the speech in English. (先生が私の考えを聞きだして、先生が英語で書いた。)
- 4) Someone wrote the speech for me. (ほかの人が書いてくれた。)
- 5) Other (please specify) (その他・詳しく書いてください)

★Who helped you prepare the speech? (more than one answer is ok).

(誰が、スピーチの準備を手伝ってくれましたか? いくつでも OK)

- 1) Family members (家族)
- 2) A Japanese teacher (日本人の先生)
- 3) A native English teacher (外国人の先生)
- 4) No one (誰も手伝っていない)
- 5) Other (please specify) (その他・詳しく書いてください)

★What best describes your speech preparation? (スピーチの準備について下記から選び、番号で答えてください。)

- 1) I re-wrote my speech after getting advice. (私はアドバイスをもらった後スピーチを書き直した)
- 2) A teacher re-wrote my speech. (先生がスピーチを書き直した)
- 3) Several people re-wrote my speech. (何人かの人が私のスピーチを書き直した)
- 4) A teacher re-wrote my speech and explained why they made changes. (先生が書き直して、なぜ変更したかを説明してくれた)
- 5) My speech wasn't re-written. (書き直さなかった)

★Please state your agreement/disagreement with the following statements:

(下記の質問に、賛成(そう思う) / 不賛成(そう思わない) で答えてください)

1=Strongly agree (まったくそう思う), 2=Agree (そう思う), 3=Slightly agree (まあまあそう思う),
4=Slightly disagree (あまり思わない), 5=Disagree (思わない), 6=Strongly disagree (まったくそう思わない)

★The final version of the speech reflects my personal views. (スピーチの完成版は私の意見が反映されている)

★It was easy to think of a topic. (トピックを考えるのは簡単だった)

★I learned how to present my ideas clearly. (私は、考えを明白に表現する方法を学んだ)

Do you consent to the use of this survey for Philip Head's research purposes? No identifying information will be published.

(ここで得た個人情報は公表されません。この結果をフィリップヘッドの研究目的に使用することに同意しますか?)

- ☐ Yes, you can use my responses. (同意します)
- ☐ No, don't use my responses. (同意しません)

Appendix 2

Bilingual Teacher Survey

★Number of speech contests you have prepared students for () 回

(これまで、何回コンテストの指導を行ってきましたか?)

★Native English speaker / Non-native English speaker

★I helped my students practice their speech for approximately _____ hours in total.

(私は、合計で約 _____ 時間スピーチの指導をした)

★My students practiced their speech for approximately _____ hours in total.

(生徒は、合計で約 _____ 時間スピーチの練習をした)

★Please rate the following aspects of speech contest

(スピーチコンテストに関する下記の質問に番号で答えてください。)

1=Very important (とても重要) 2=Important (重要) 3=Somewhat important (やや重要) 4=Not important (重要でない)	
Improving students' English pronunciation. (英語の発音)	
Improving students' English intonation. (英語のイントネーション・抑揚)	
Improving students' public speaking confidence. (人前で話す自信)	
Improving students' writing ability. (英語を書く力)	
Students winning a prize. (受賞すること)	
Challenging students' to do their best. (ベストを尽くすこと)	
Allowing students to send a message / express themselves. (思いを伝えること・自分を表現すること)	
Allowing students to spend time with friends. (仲間と時間を過ごすこと)	
Allowing students to spend time with teachers/ALTs. (先生や、ALTと時間を過ごすこと)	

★Please state your agreement/disagreement with the following statements:

(下記の文に、賛成 (そう思う) / 不賛成 (そう思わない) で答えてください。)

1=Strongly agree (まったくそう思う), 2=Agree (そう思う), 3=Slightly agree (まあまあそう思う), 4=Slightly disagree (あまり思わない), 5=Disagree (思わない), 6=Strongly disagree (まったくそう思わない)	
Students enjoy doing English speech contests. (生徒はスピーチコンテストを楽しんでいる)	
Speech contests are stressful for students. (スピーチコンテストは生徒にとってストレスである)	
Students feel confident expressing themselves in Japanese. (生徒は日本語で自分を表現することに自信がある)	
Students feel confident expressing themselves in English. (生徒は英語で自分を表現することに自信がある)	
Public speaking is difficult for students. (スピーチは生徒にとって難しい)	
Speech contests participation is useful for students' future. (コンテストに参加することは生徒の将来役立つ)	
Speech contests are good preparation for communicating with others. (スピーチコンテストは他人とのコミュニケーションの良い準備になる)	
Students want to do speech contests again. (生徒はまたスピーチコンテストに出場したい)	

★What do you most like and dislike about English speech contests?

(あなたにとって、英語スピーチコンテストに関して最も良いこと (楽しいこと) と悪いこと (嫌なこと) は何ですか?)

Head: Student and Teacher Views on English Language Speech Contests in Japan

★What best describes how your student's speech was written?

(あなたの生徒がスピーチを書いた方法を下記から選び、記号で答えてください。)

- 6) The student wrote their speech in English. (生徒が、英語でスピーチを書いた。)
- 7) The student wrote their speech in Japanese and then they translated it into English. (生徒が、日本語でスピーチを書き、それから英語に訳した。)
- 8) I interviewed the student about their ideas and then wrote the speech in English. (先生が生徒の考えを聞きだして、先生が英語で書いた。)
- 9) Someone else wrote the speech for the student. (ほかの人が書いてくれた。)
- 10) Other (please specify) (その他・詳しく書いてください)

★Who helped the student prepare the speech? (more than one answer is ok).

(誰が、スピーチの準備を手伝いましたか?いくつかでも OK)

- 1) Family members (家族)
- 2) A Japanese teacher (日本人の先生)
- 3) A native English teacher (外国人の先生)
- 4) No one (誰も手伝っていない)
- 5) Other (please specify) (その他・詳しく書いてください)

★What best describes the speech preparation? (スピーチの準備について下記から選び、番号で答えてください。)

- 6) The student re-wrote my speech after getting advice. (生徒が、私のアドバイスをもらった後、原稿を書き直した)
- 7) A teacher re-wrote the student's speech. (先生が原稿を書き直した)
- 8) Several people re-wrote the student's speech. (何人かの人が生徒の原稿を書き直した)
- 9) A teacher re-wrote the student's speech and explained why they made changes. (先生が書き直して、なぜ変更したかを説明した)
- 10) The student's speech wasn't re-written. (生徒の原稿は書き直さなかった)

★Please state your agreement/disagreement with the following statements:

(下記の質問に、賛成(そう思う) / 不賛成(そう思わない)で答えてください)

1=Strongly agree (まったくそう思う), 2=Agree (そう思う), 3=Slightly agree (まあまあそう思う), 4=Slightly disagree (あまり思わない), 5=Disagree (思わない), 6=Strongly disagree (まったくそう思わない)	
The final version of the speech reflects the student's personal views.	(スピーチの完成版は生徒の意見が反映されている)
It was easy for the student to think of a topic. (生徒がトピックを考えるのは簡単だった)	
The student learned how to present their ideas clearly. (生徒は、考えを明白に表現する方法を学んだ)	

Do you consent to the use of this survey for Philip Head's research purposes? No identifying information will be published.

(ここで得た個人情報は公表されません。この結果をフィリップヘッドの研究目的に使用することに同意しますか?)

- ☐ Yes, you can use my responses. (同意します)
- ☐ No, don't use my responses. (同意しません)

Can Philip contact you at a later date to ask questions about speech contest preparations?

(フィリップが、スピーチ準備について聞き取るために、後日連絡をしてもよろしいですか?)

- ☐ Yes, you can contact me at the following email/telephone: (はい。次のメールアドレスか電話番号に連絡してください)