

# The Relationship Between Cultural Knowledge and Motivation for Studying Foreign Language : A Comparative Study of Japanese and American University Students

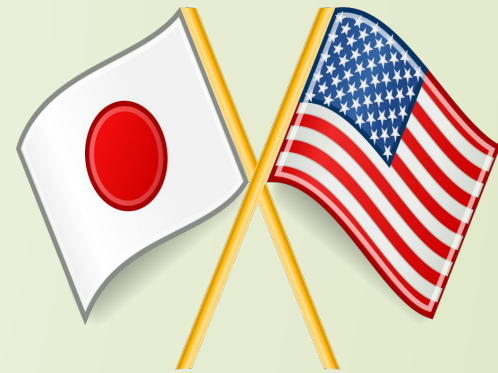
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# Outline

- Significance of the Study
- Research Questions
- Research Background
- Research Method
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- Limitation of the study and Future Study
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# Research Questions

1. How is culture incorporated in foreign language classrooms in Japan and America?
2. How does culture play a role as a source of motivation for Japanese and American students to learn a foreign language?

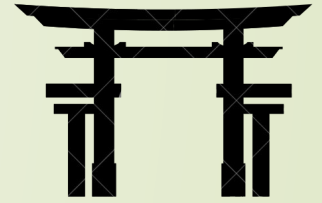


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# Significance of the Study



- From a young age, we became interested in Japanese music, anime and manga.
- Understanding how learning about the culture of the target language can motivate us to study the language further in order to achieve our goals.
- We wanted to research this topic to see how culture is taught in the classroom in America and Japan and how students are using culture as a potential source of motivation.





# Research Background

1. Trends in Foreign Language Education
  - a. USA
  - b. Japan
2. Japan's Plan for the Future of English Education
3. Motivation Theories and Foreign Language Learning
4. Culture as Motivation for Foreign Language Learning

# Trends of Foreign Language Education (USA) 1

## **Grammar Translation:**

- Focus on forms of language
- Culture is not focused on

## **Proficiency based (communication):**

- ACTFL Guidelines (1986)
- Being able to communicate in real world.

## **Audio Lingual (Drill & Practice):**

- Focus on grammar structures with substitution with predicted situations

## **World Readiness Standards:**

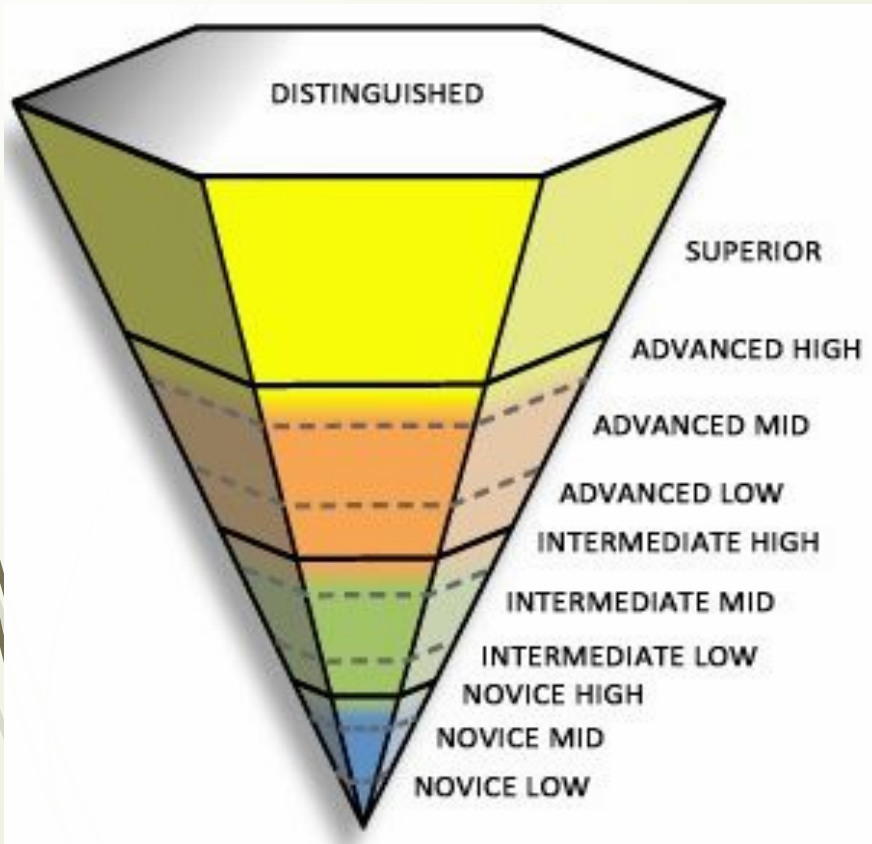
- Teaches language through culture and emphasis on real world context (2015)

# Trends of Foreign Language Education (USA)

## ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines

- Performance Standards has changed over the years(1986, 1999, 2001, & 2012)
- **Focuses on speaking, writing, reading, and listening**
- Communicate cultural appropriately
- It is divided up into beginning, intermediate, advanced and superior level classes

(ACTFL, 2012)



# Trends of Foreign Language Education (USA)

## The 5 C's

- **Communication:** Using another language other than English to communicate
- **Comparisons:** Develop insight into the nature of language and culture
- **Connections:** Connect with other disciplines and acquire information
- **Culture:** Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures
- **Communities:** Participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world



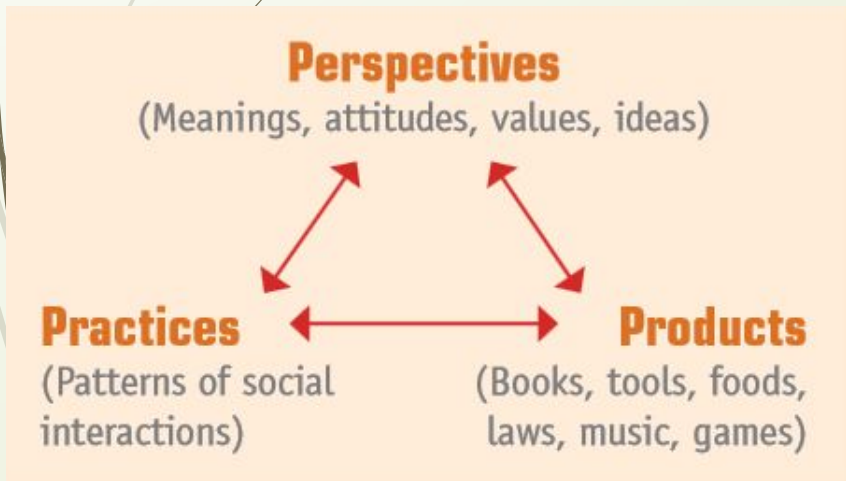
(National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2012)



# Trends of Foreign Language Education (USA)

## The 3 P's of Culture

According to the 5 C's, culture should be taught by these aspects:

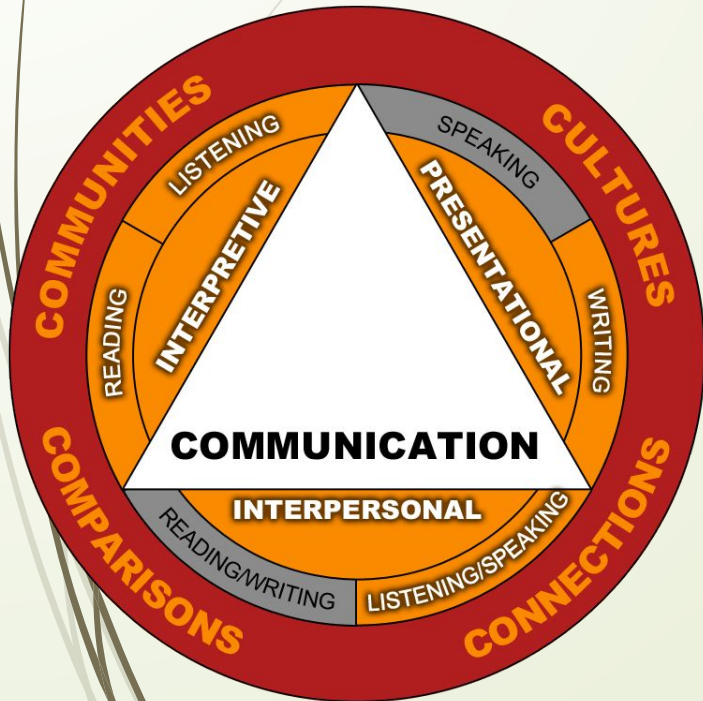


- **Product**
  - Tangible & Intangible
  - Items that support the beliefs and values of the culture
- **Practices**
  - “What to do When and Where”
  - Behavior and interactions that are appropriate in that society
- **Perspectives**
  - Representing that culture’s perspective of the world, meaning, values, attitudes, and ideas

(Cutshall, 2012)

# Trends of Foreign Language Education (USA) 2

## ACTFL: National Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century



### “3 modes of Communication:”

- **Interpersonal** (listening, reading, viewing)
  - Direct oral communication between people who are in personal contact
- **Interpretive** (speaking, writing, listening, reading)
  - Receptive communication: oral or written
  - Works with visuals and recordings whose creator is absent
- **Presentational** (speaking, writing, showing)
  - Oral or written communication for an audience

(National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 2012)

# Trends of Foreign Language Education (USA)

## World Readiness Standards

- Still implementing the “3Cs of Communication” & the “3Ps of Culture”
- Global competency and intercultural communication skills  
(Perugini, 2015)



# Trends of Foreign Language Education (USA)

## Core Practices

### Use Target Language for Learning

- Students and teachers speak, listen, read, write, view, and create in the target language (90% or more during class time)

### Design Communicative Activities

- Teacher design and carry out interpersonal communication task for pairs, small groups, and whole class instruction

### Teach Grammar as Concept and Use in Context

- Teach grammar as a concept and use it in context. Students focus on meaning before form

### Use Authentic Cultural Resources

- Present interactive reading and listening comprehension task using authentic cultural texts with appropriate scaffolding while promoting interpretation

### Plan with Backward Design Model

- Instructors identify desired results then determine acceptable evidence then plan learning experiences and instruction

### Provide Appropriate Feedback

- Oral corrective feedback in speech or writing elicits output beyond a simple yes and no response (Swanson, 2015)

# Trends of Foreign Language Education (Japan)

- **Elementary School (Grade 5)**
  - English classes once a week
- **Middle School & High School**
  - Four times a week

(Løfsgaard, 2015)

- **Issues**
  - Emphasis on memorization
  - Unqualified English teachers
  - 6 years of required classes = loss of motivation
  - Teaches textbook English
  - Having the basic reading and writing skills needed to pass entrance exams

(Clark, 2009)



# Japan's Plan for the Future of English Education

## 2020 reform

- **Third grade**
  - Activity-based course taught
  - Once or twice a week classes by homeroom teachers
- **Fifth/sixth grade**
  - Three times a week by qualified homeroom teachers
- **Junior High**
  - **Classes be taught in English**
  - Goals of being able to understand familiar topics and exchange simple information and simple thoughts.”

(ICEF Monitor, 2015)

(Masaaki, 2013)





# Japan's Plan for the Future of English Education

2020 reform



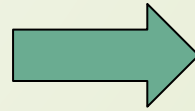
- University Entrance Exams
  - Changing from one exam to a series of rigorous standardized tests
  - Include other type of exams that focus more on thinking skills and personal strength
  - Bring in the TOEFL test for English proficiency as an University requirement
- Concern
  - Still focused on academics and not “flexible thinking for the global workplace”

(ICEF Monitor, 2015)

# Motivation Theories and Foreign Language Learning

- **Motivation** is the driving force of human nature
    - It is important for learning a foreign language consistently and efficiently
- (Liu,2013)

Types of  
Motivation



- **Instrumental**
- **Integrated**
- **Intrinsic**
- **Extrinsic**



# Motivation Theories and Foreign Language Learning

## Instrumental Motivation

- Goals
  - Practical reasons
    - Academic requirements
    - Get a better job/salary



## Integrated Motivation

- Goals
  - To understand the native speakers
- Interested in the target culture
- Better success at learning a language

(Mahadi, 2012)

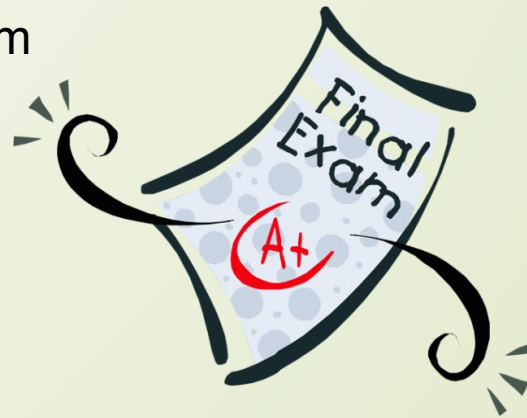
# Motivation Theories and Foreign Language Learning

## Extrinsic Motivation

- Doing an activity to achieve a goal or rewards
  - Passing an exam

## Intrinsic Motivation

- Doing an activity because it is enjoyable to them




(Mahadi, 2012)



# Culture as Motivation for Foreign Language Learning

- Being able to **communicate smoothly** means:
  - **Willing to talk to and understanding of people** who are of different countries and cultures
  - **Understand that person's ideas** and bring reasons and explanations to their own, etc. (Ogura, 2014)
  - “...culture is an inherent aspect of learning a foreign language.”
    - The meaning of vocabulary and expressions come from cultural influences

(Awad, 2014)

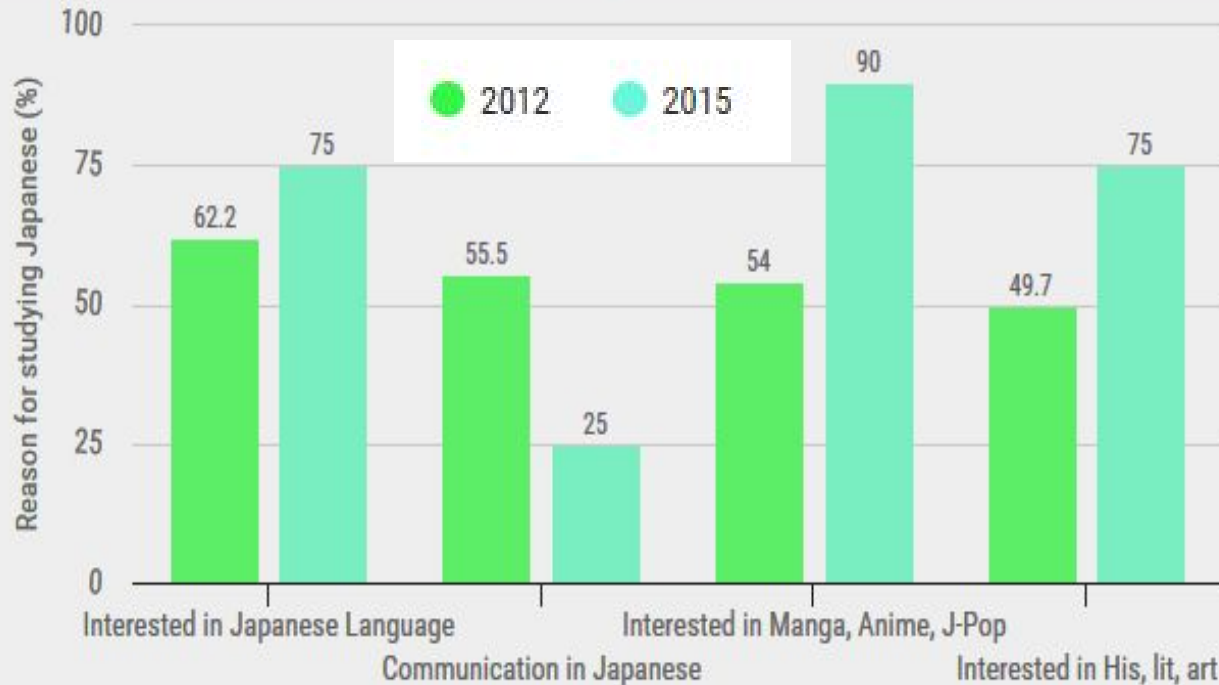


# Culture as Motivation for Foreign Language Learning

- An **American** survey found that **culture** was a great **motivational influence** for **students to continue their studies**
  - Reason for wanting to study the language
  - Fell in love with the culture through their studies (Awad, 2014)
- A **Japanese** survey found using **foreign dramas and films increased motivation** within the classroom
  - It was difficult, but a good challenge
  - Using such items to teach are necessary to keep students engaged and motivated (Tanaka, 2009)

# Culture as Motivation for Foreign Language Learning

## Japanese-Language Education Abroad Survey



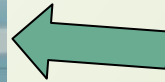
- Japanese culture related items increased greatly from 2012
  - Culture is now the **top 2** reasons why students want to learn Japanese

(Japan Foundation, 2012)

# Culture as Motivation for Foreign Language Learning

- **Fansubbing**, unofficial subtitles of anime or J-Dramas created by fans.
  - provide explanation notes of jokes, history, foods, context and more

(Lunning 2006)

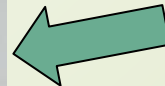


Explanation of a pun

"This is a pun.

*Mame chishiki* = bean Knowledge,  
ie, Trivial Knowledge

*Mame no chishiki* = Knowledge of beans"



The subtitles

# Culture as Motivation for Foreign Language Learning

- **Manga** can be used as a learning tool in classrooms as well
  - Teaches grammar, syntax and vocabulary

(Lunning, 2006)

## Vocabulary:

*Ocha* = tea

*Desu* = it is

## Sentence Structure:

*Ocha desu* = it is tea






# Research Method

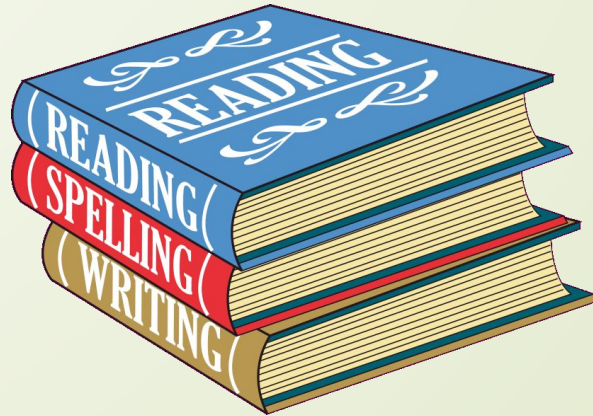
Participants of the Study: 60 Total University Students

- Demographics
  - 30 Japanese University Students
  - 29 American University Students
- Research Instruments
  - Online Survey
    - Google Forms
      - English
      - Japanese

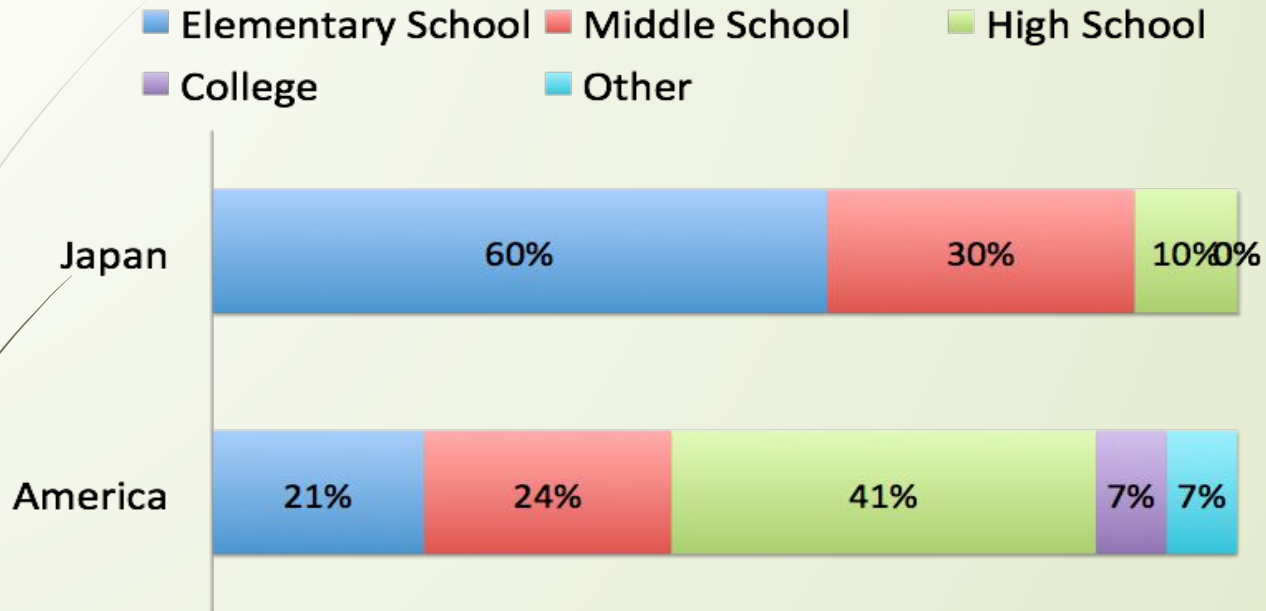




Results of Research Question 1:  
How is culture incorporated in foreign  
language classrooms in Japan and America?

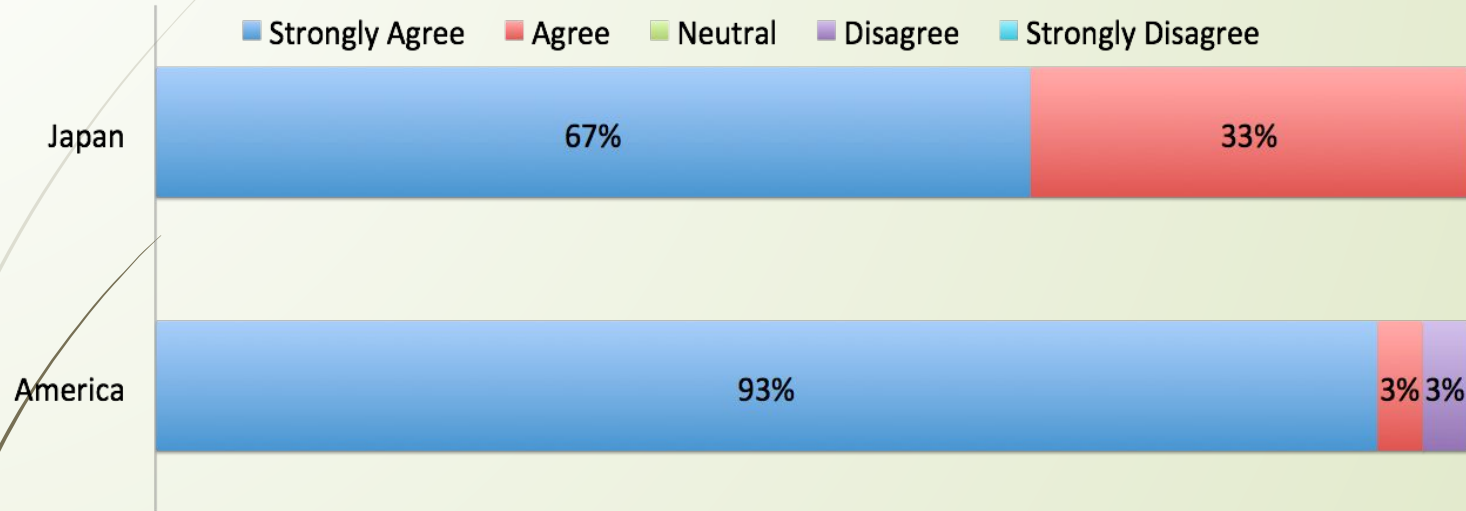


# In what grade level did you start to learn a foreign language?



60% of Japanese students had their first language class in elementary school while 41% of American students started in high school.

# In your opinion, is culture important to study when learning a foreign language?



Both Japanese and American students strongly believe that culture is an important part of learning a foreign language.

# How do you think foreign languages should be taught at school? "Students should be able to: \_\_\_\_\_."

■ communicate on topics such as my family, my town, food, shopping, etc.

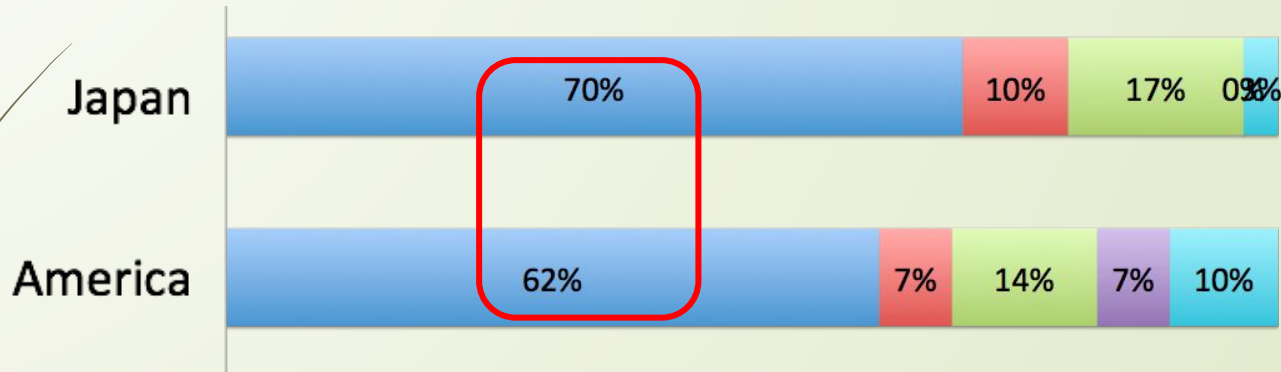
■ communicate on topics such as my family, my town, food, shopping, etc.

■ display knowledge about grammar and vocabulary

■ translate articles such as notes, essays, literature

■ display knowledge about target culture

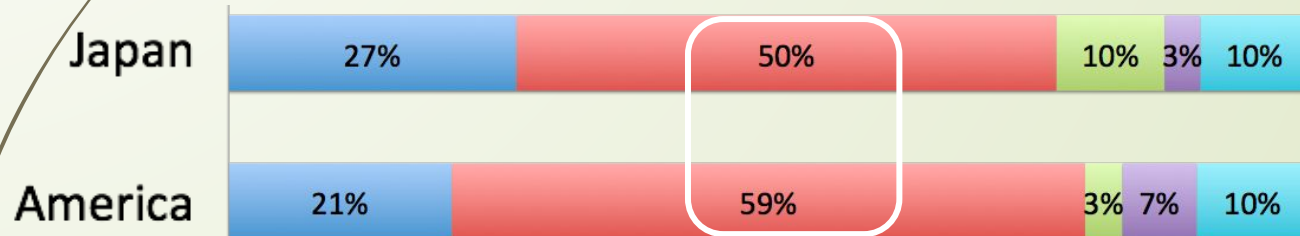
■ read and write notes, essay, short stories



American and Japanese believes that communicating on topics such as "my family," shopping, etc. should be outcome that students achieve.

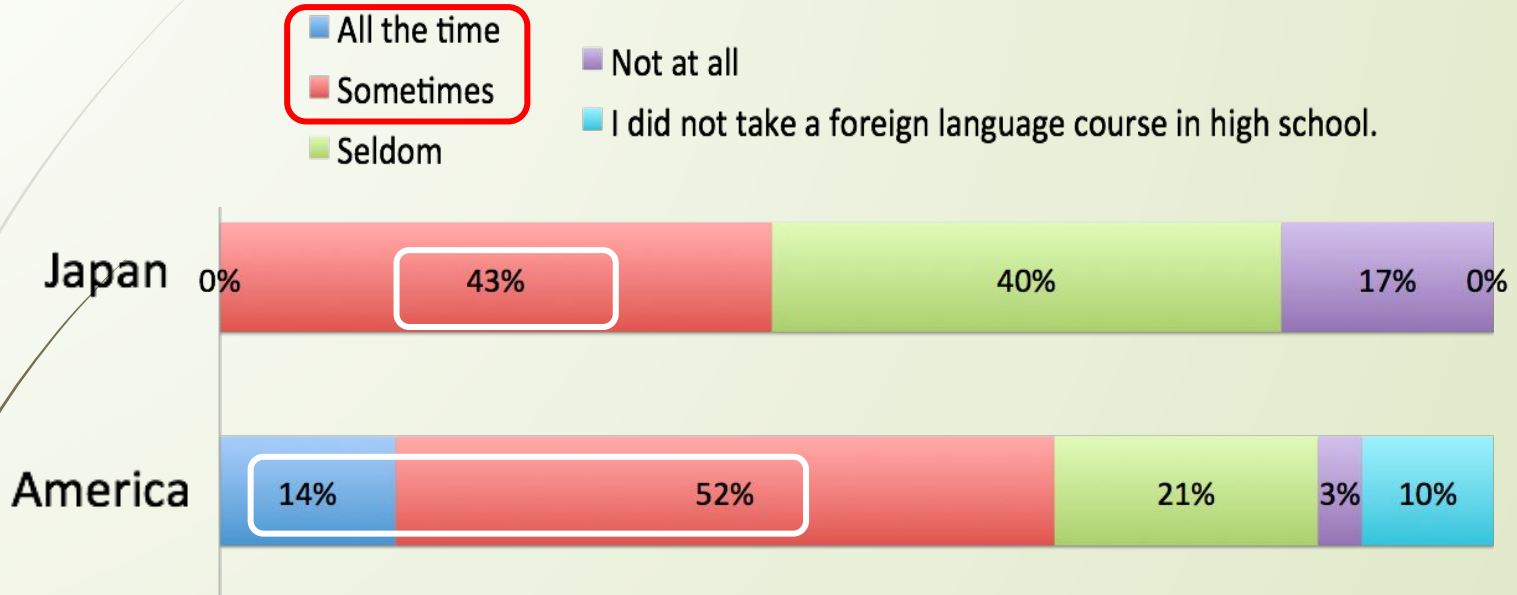
# How should culture be taught in foreign language classes? "Students should be able to: \_\_\_\_\_."

- recognize the differences between target language's cultures and their own
- understand and talk about target cultural products (e.g. genkan), practices (e.g. removing shoes), and perspectives (e.g. why people remove shoes)
- understand and talk about topics such as literature, film, and music
- become familiar with information in relation to the topic they are learning in the lesson (e.g. shrine/temple in the lesson of "my town")
- know about cultural information which does not necessarily related to the lesson topic they are learning (e.g. new year, origami, music)



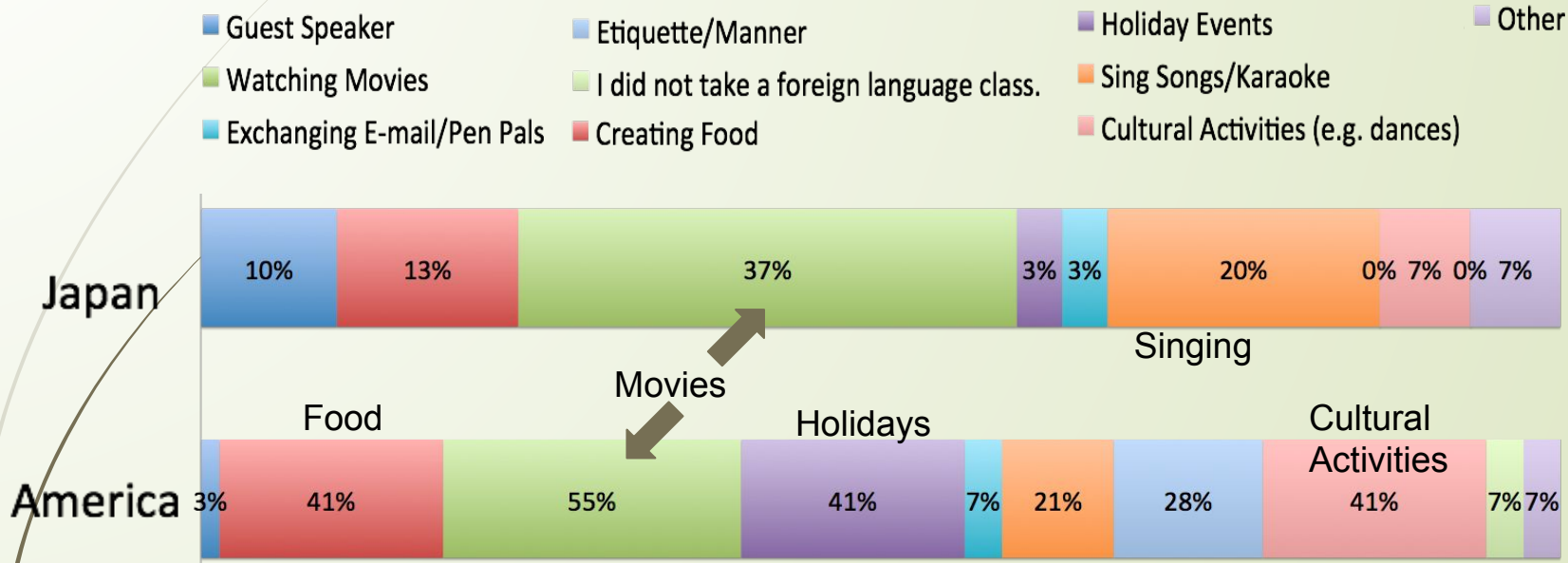
More than 50% of Japanese and American students believe being able to talk about cultural products, practices and perspectives (The 3 P's) should be the outcome for students

# How well were the target cultures incorporated into your high school foreign language class?



About 65% of American students said that their high school incorporated some or a lot of culture lessons. Whereas 43% of Japanese students said that has some lessons.

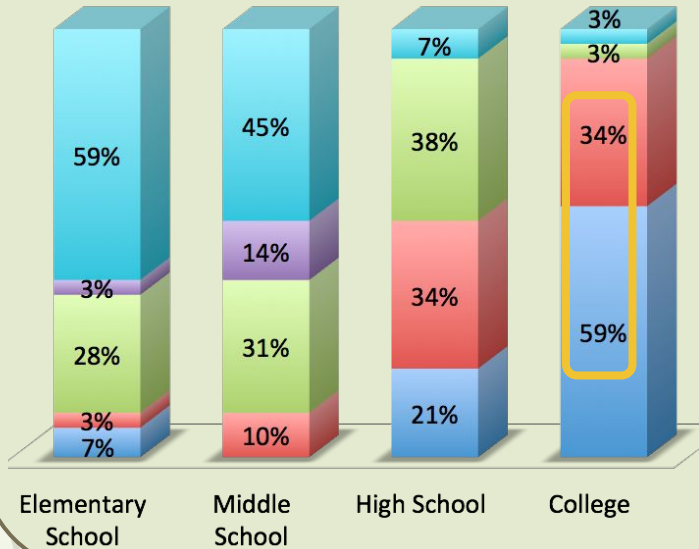
# In your high school foreign language classroom what cultural lessons was very memorable?



American students picked more of a variety of memorable lessons from high school compared to Japanese students.

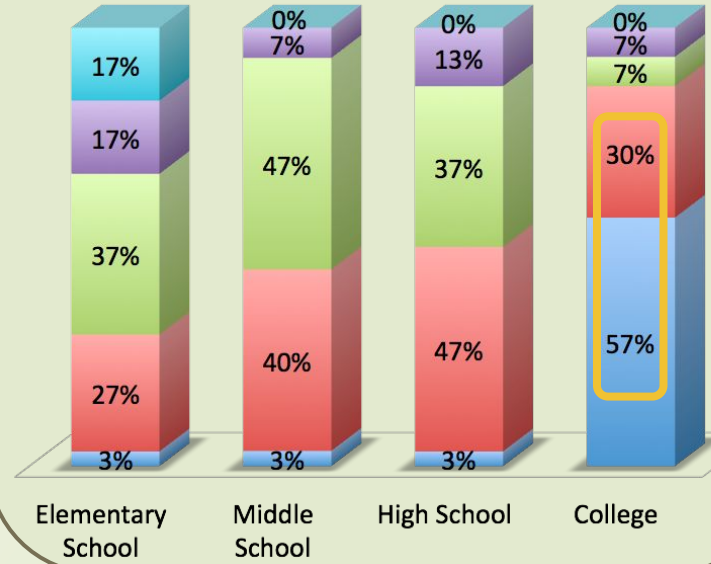
# How much was cultural content included in your foreign language learning experience?

## America



- Did not take classes at this level
- No cultural lessons
- Little cultural lessons
- Some cultural lessons
- In-depth cultural lessons

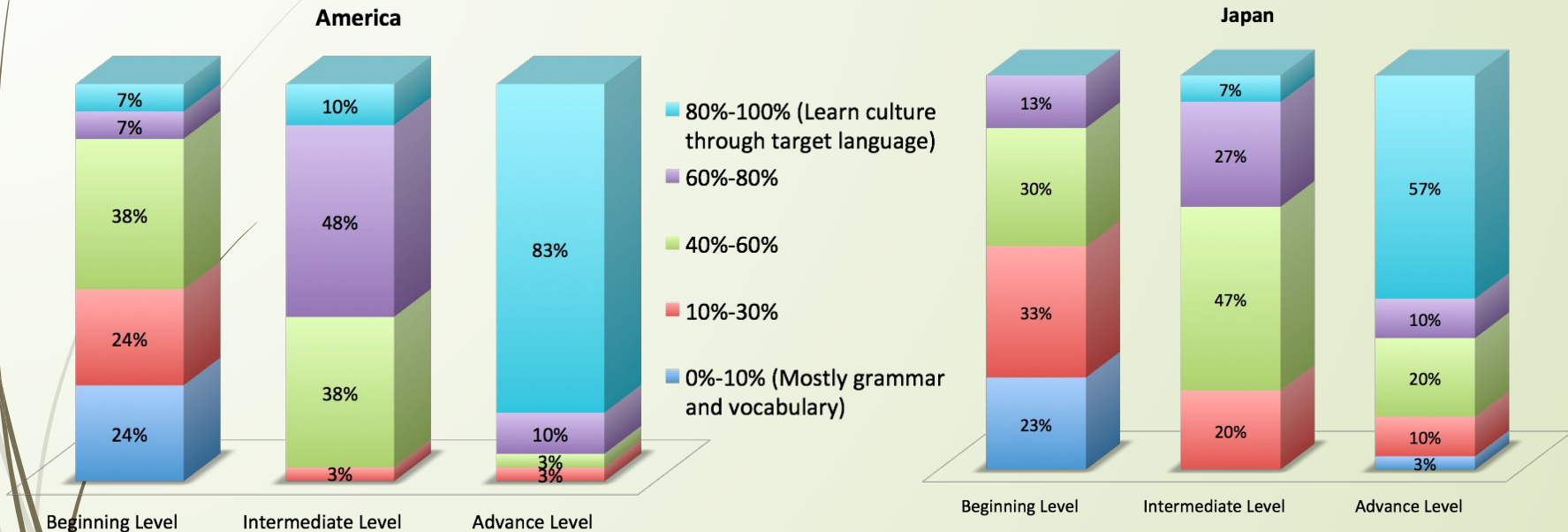
## Japan



Both Japanese and American students experience a **gradual increase** of cultural lessons throughout their K-12, but experience the most **in-depth lessons** in college.



# How much should cultural lessons be incorporated into the following level of foreign language classroom?



Both students **agree** that culture should be taught in **all levels** with the most in advanced level classes. 80% of Americans think that in **advanced** levels culture be **taught in target language**.

# Summary of the Results of Research Question 1

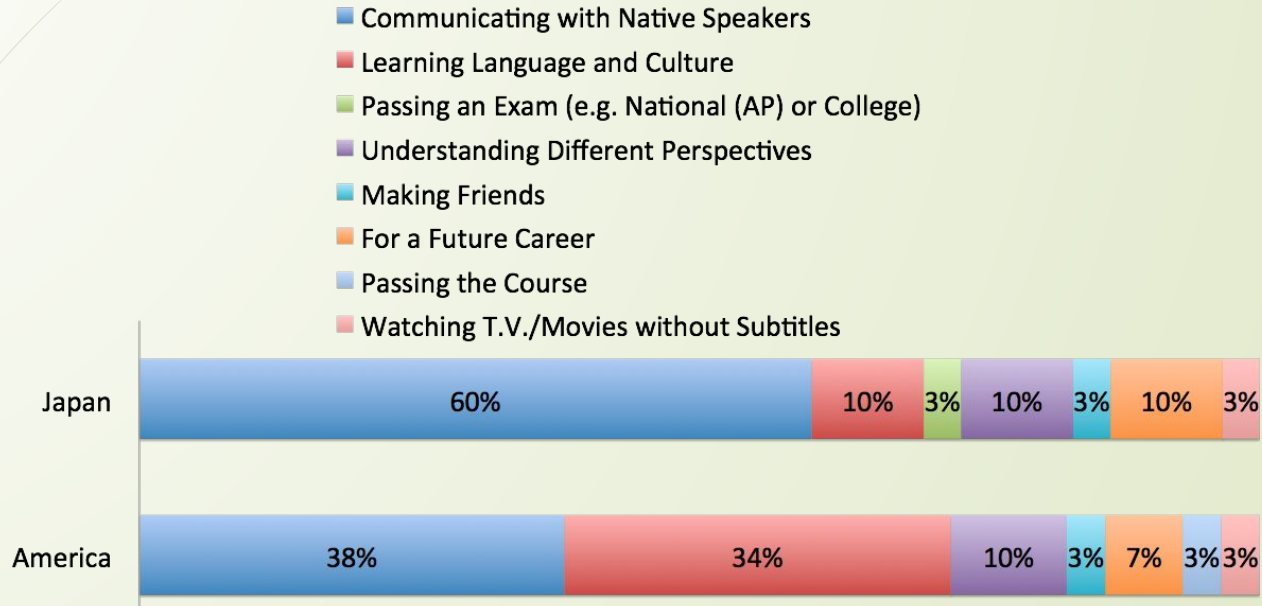
- Many Japanese students had their first foreign language class in **Elementary school**, but have **some to little** cultural lessons
- American 20% started in Elementary and 40% in **high school** where they had **some to a lot** of cultural lessons
- In Japan, there is a tendency to introduce culture using **movies**, but in the United States, culture is taught through **various activities**, such as cooking and festivals.
- Students in both countries strongly believe that culture should be taught as they progress from **beginner to advanced**.
  - 80% of American students think that culture should be taught in the target language in advanced levels



Research Question 2:  
How does culture play a role as a source of motivation for Japanese and American students to learn a foreign language?

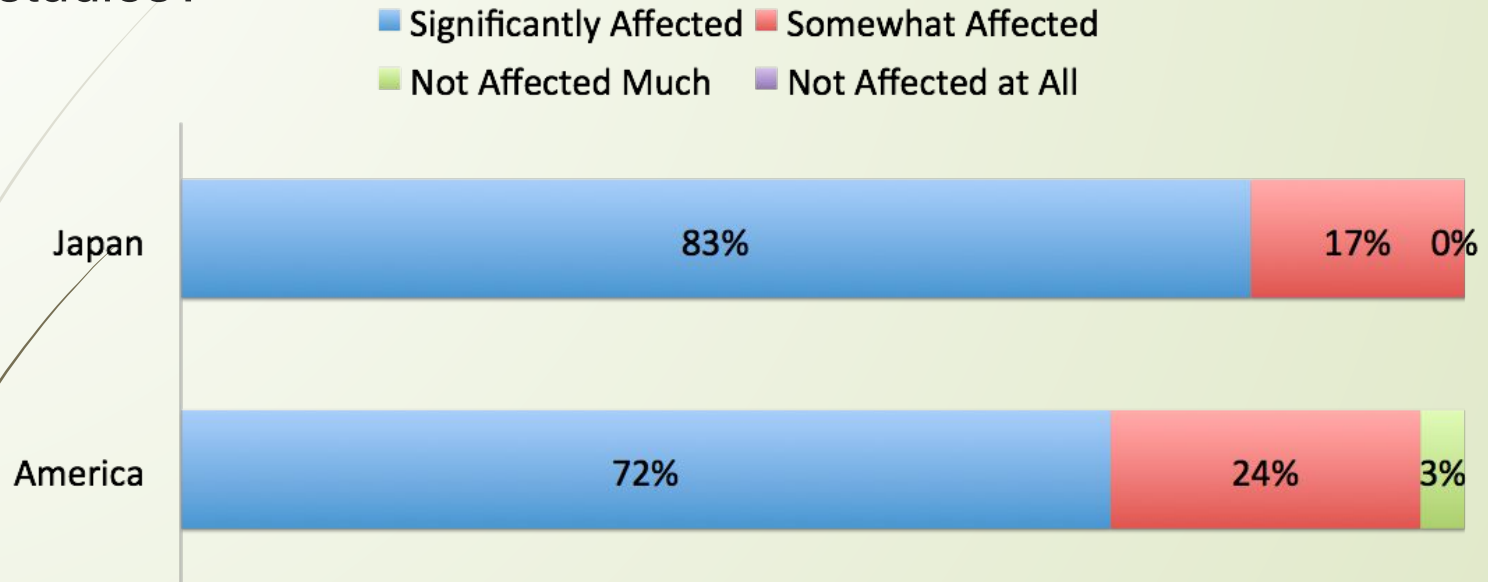


# What kind of motivation do you think you have in learning a foreign language?



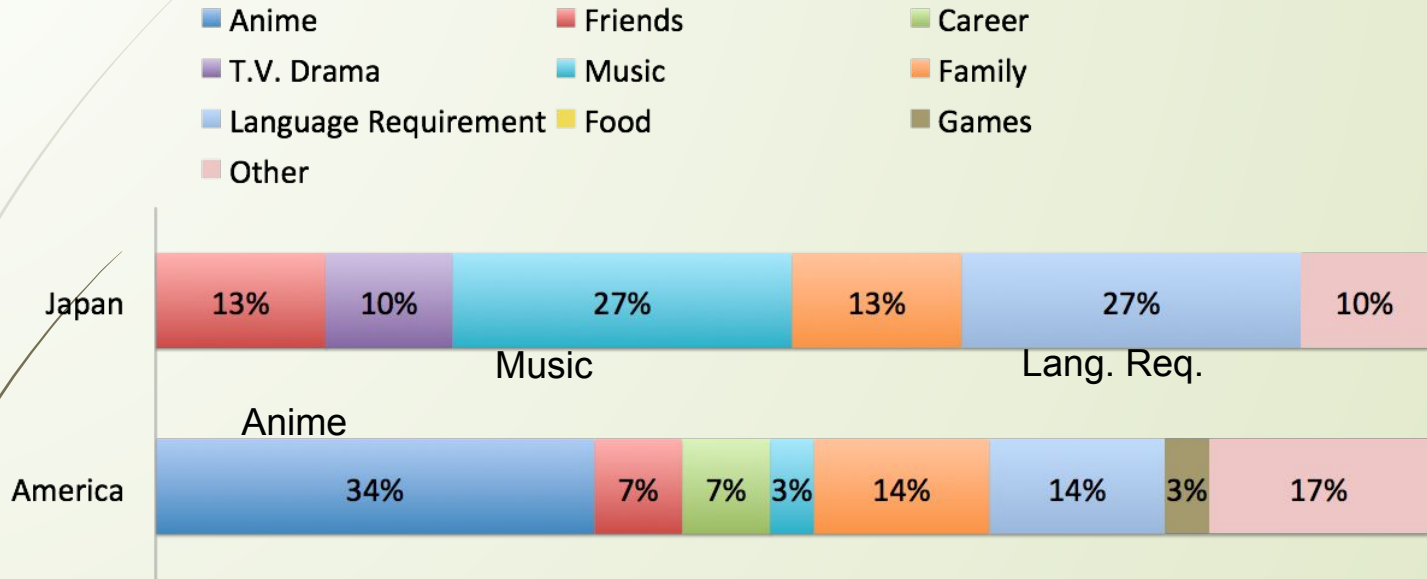
**American and Japanese** students responded with **speaking to native speakers** as motivation type. Furthermore, **American** students also responded with learning the **language and culture** for the joy of it.

How has learning about the culture of your target language positively affected your motivation in your foreign language studies?



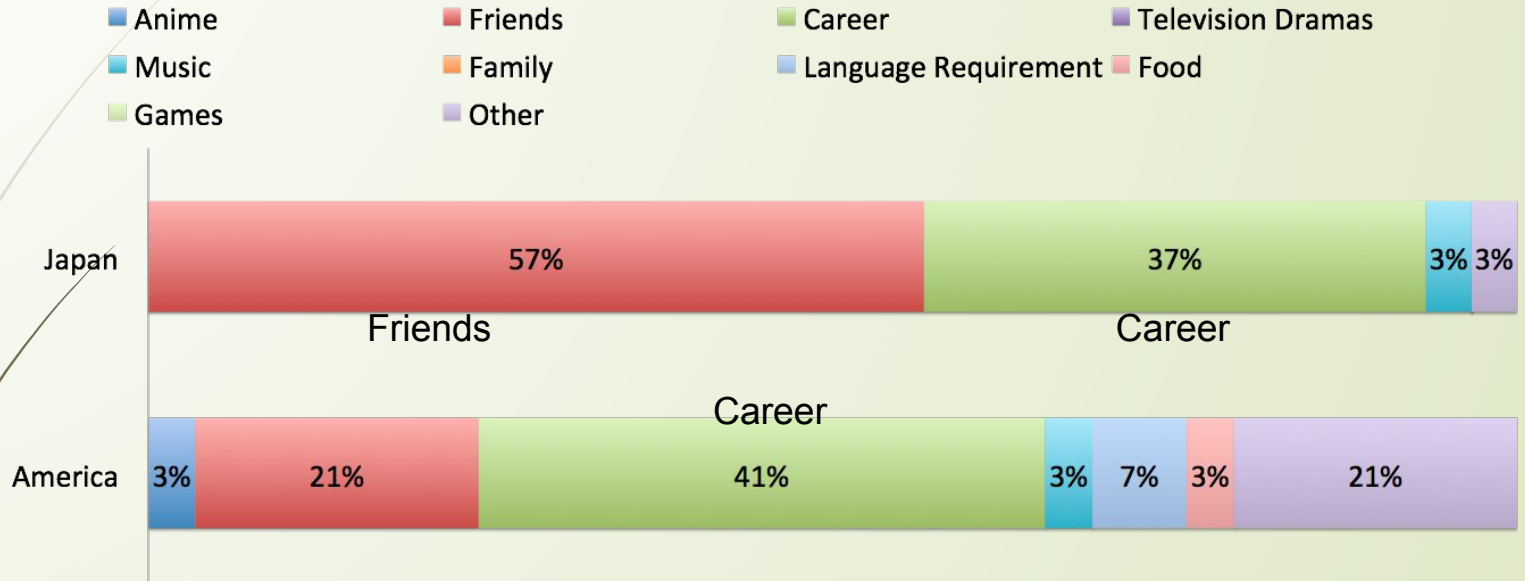
Learning the culture of their desired language has positively affect the study habits of the majority of University students.

# What was your source of motivation when you FIRST started to learn a foreign language?



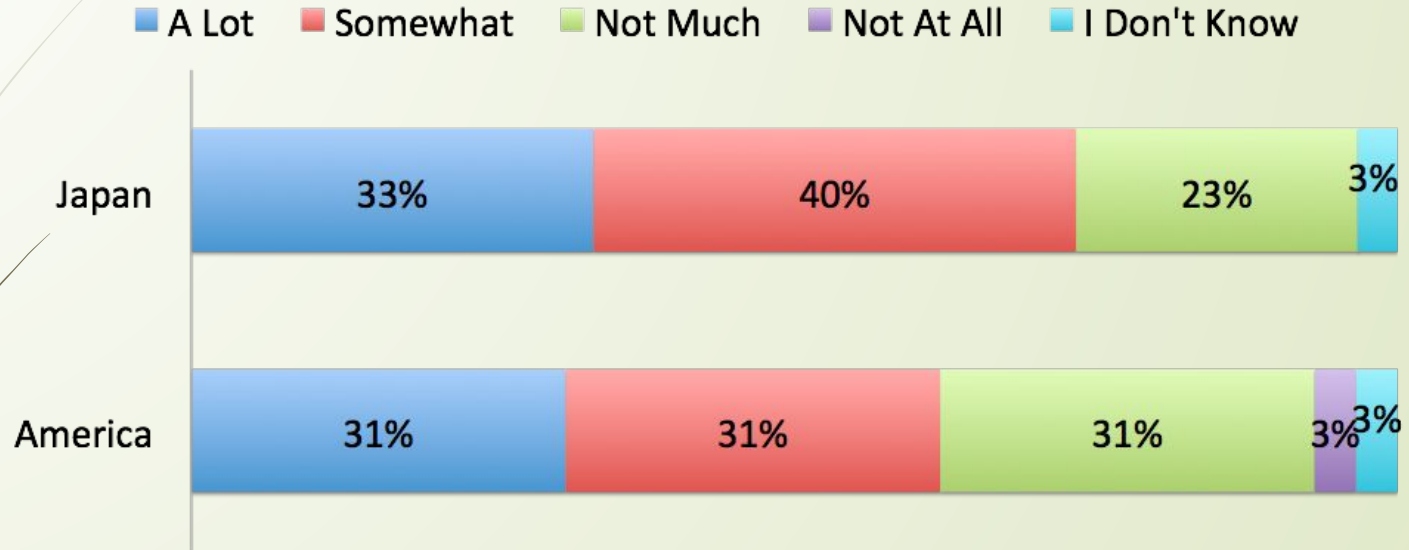
For many **American** university students, **anime** was their first source of motivation in learning a foreign language. For **Japanese** university students it was **music** and **language requirement**.

# What is your CURRENT strongest motivation to take foreign language?



Many **American** university students motivation changed to using their foreign language in in their “**career**”, while for **Japanese** university students “being able to speak with their **friends**” and “**job**” became their new **source of motivation**.

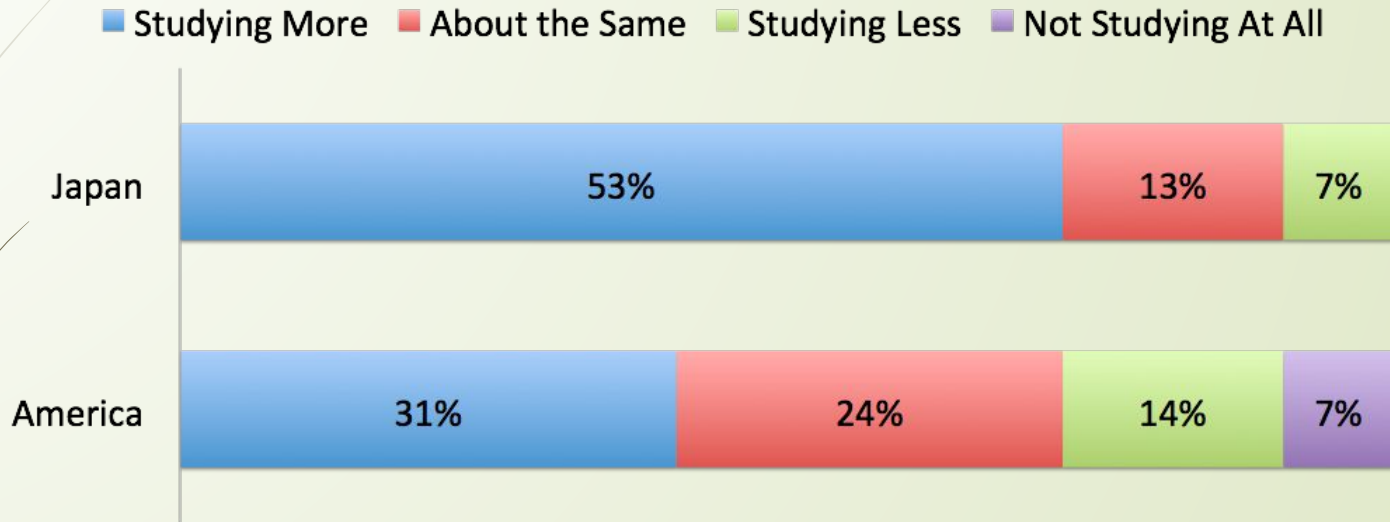
# Did your motivation in learning a foreign language change from the INITIAL motivation?



Both Japanese and American students stated that their source of motivation has at least somewhat changed.

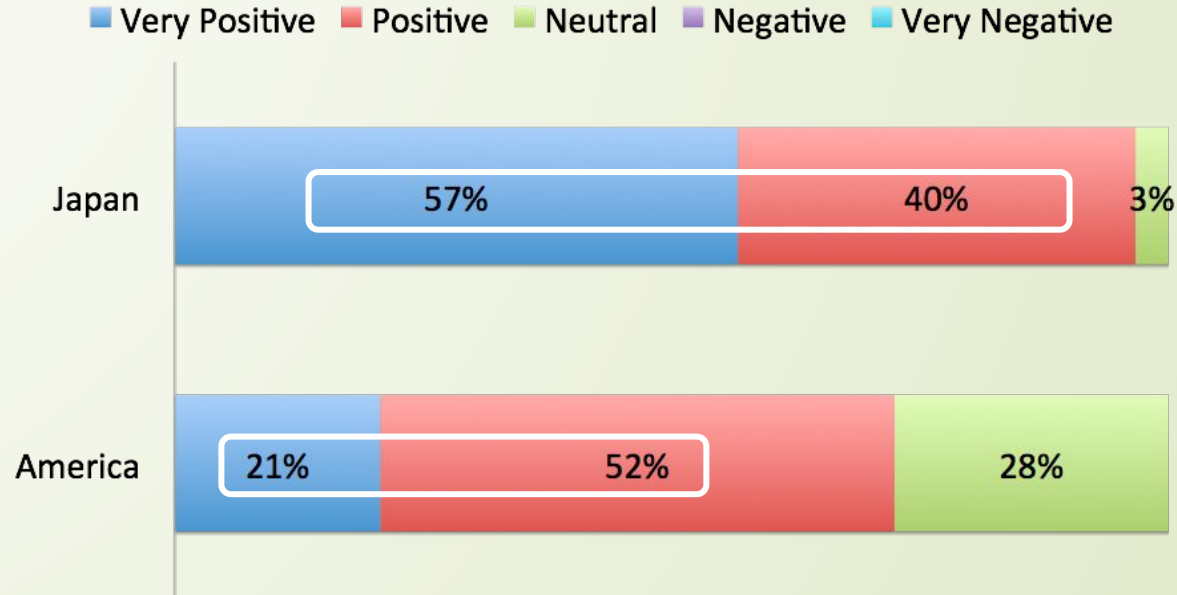


If you answered "A lot" or "Somewhat" then due to the change of your motivation, did your foreign language study habits change?



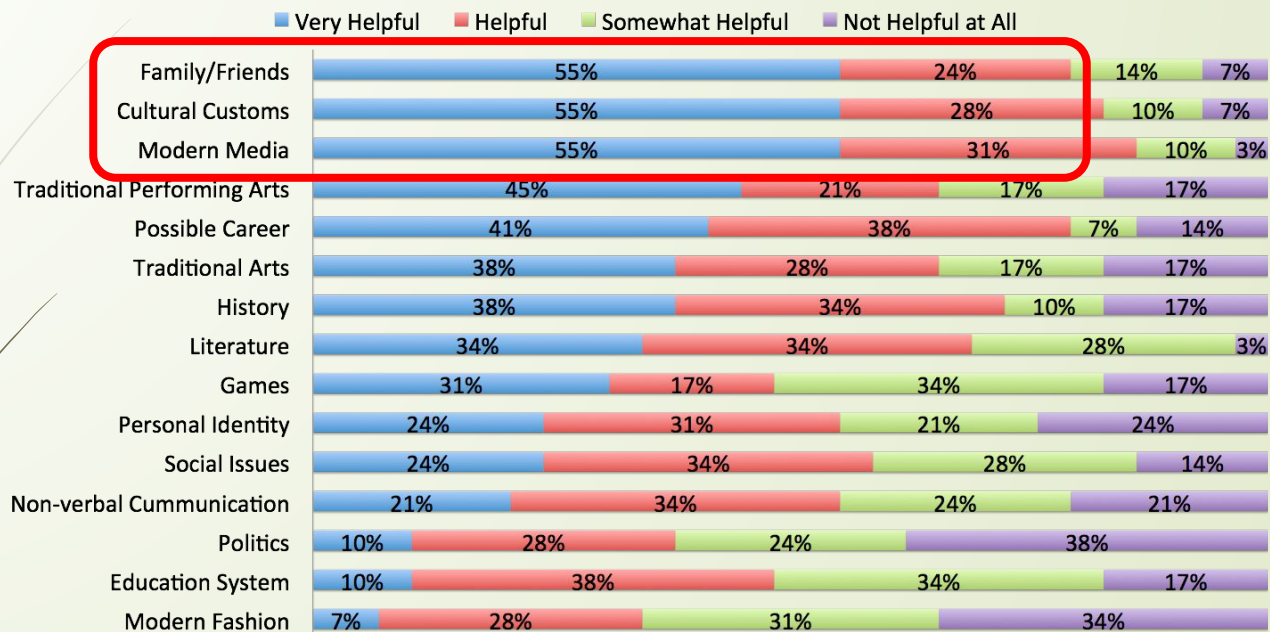
About 50% of Japanese students answered that they started studying more, while only 31% of American students started to study more.

# Looking back at your foreign language experience, how do you rate your experience?



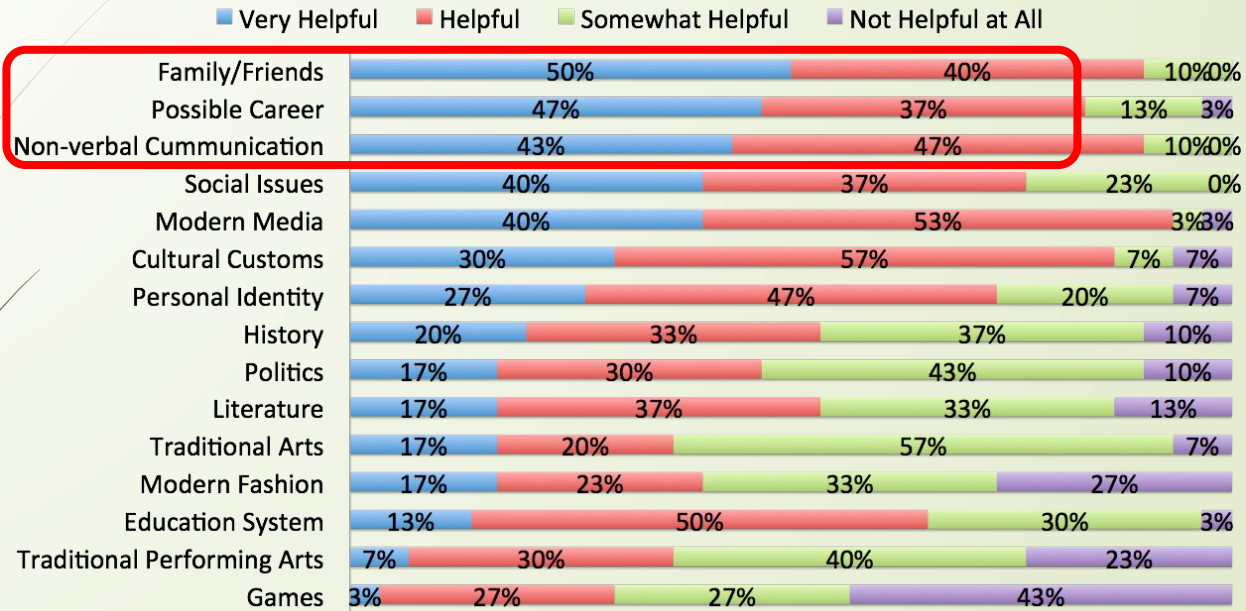
97% of Japanese students had a positive experience, compared to 73% to Americans.

# What classroom topics have helped you cultivate your motivation in language learning? (American)



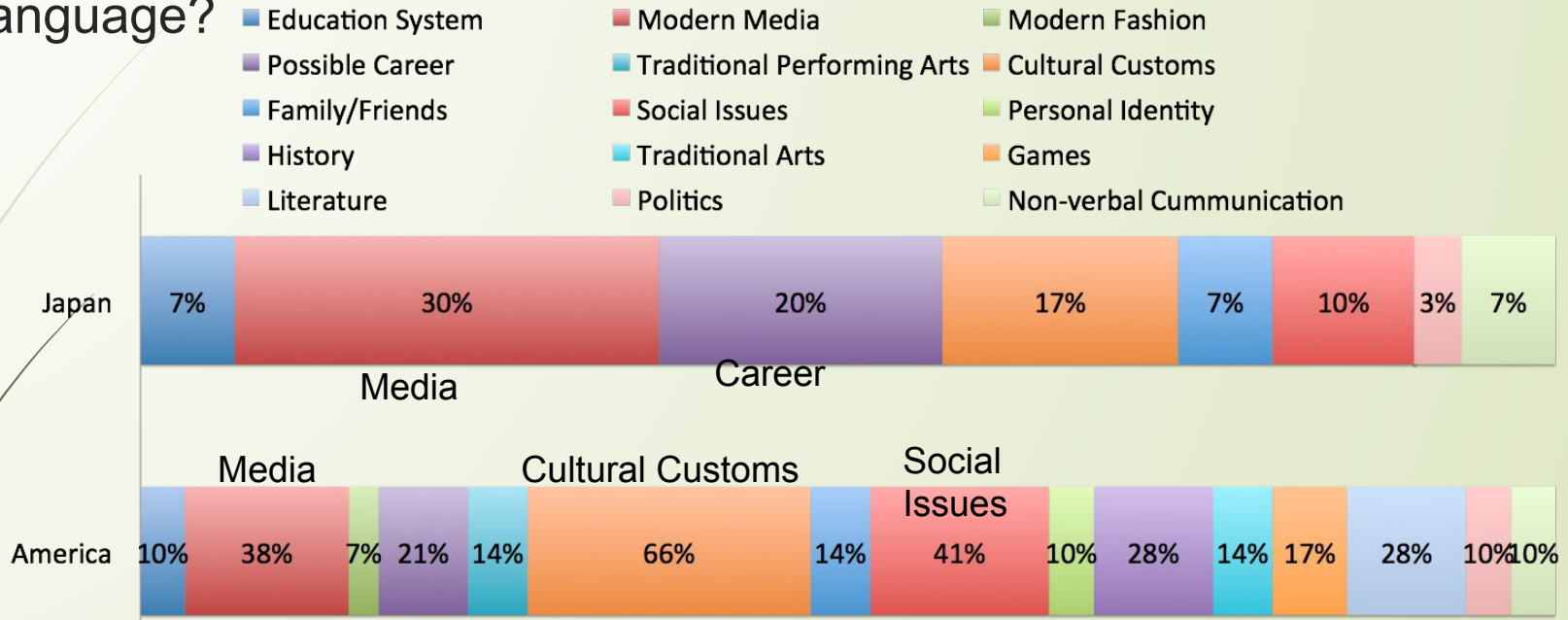
College students in the United States found that topics on "media" and "cultural habits" "family/friends" is very useful

# What classroom topics have helped you cultivate your motivation in language learning? (Japan)



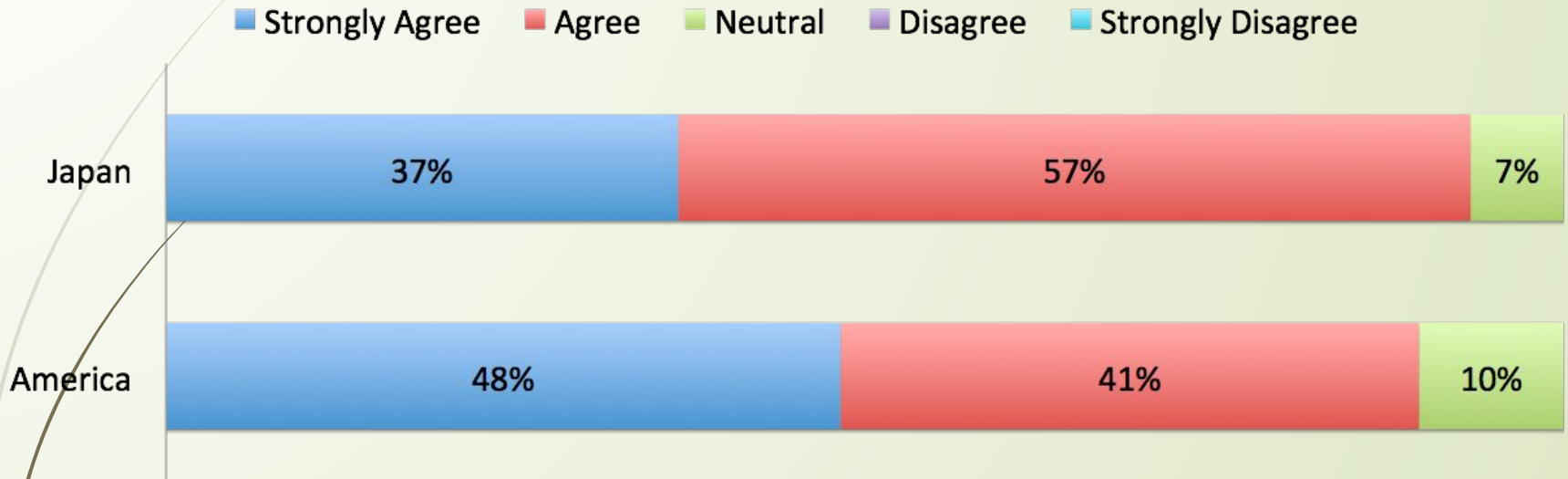
Whereas, Japanese students found "family/friends", "future jobs" and "nonverbal communication" are very useful.

# What culture-related topics would you recommend teachers to incorporate more in a foreign language classroom to better learn the language?



In the case of Japanese students, **media** and **future career** were the highest. For American students, **cultural customs**, followed by **social issues**, then **media** were the top three.

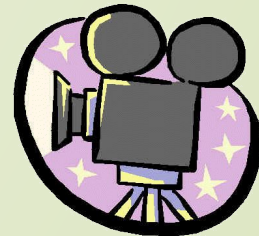
If foreign language class incorporated more cultural lessons, do you think more people would want to study another language?



About 90% of both **American** and **Japanese** university students “**Strongly Agree**” or “**agree**” that if more cultural lessons were incorporated students would want to study another language.

# Summary of the Results Research Question 2

- Both groups believe that learning about **culture** has **positively affected** their studies and would **attract more** people
- **American** students' motivation shifted **from anime to career**.
- **Japanese** students' motivation shifted **from school requirement and music to friends**.
- Americans found that cultural customs taught in class inspiring compared to Japanese students who said media and possible career topics.
  - Recommended culture lessons in the classroom:
    - **Japanese** students wants more **media and career topics**
    - **American** students want more **culture, social issues and media**





# Conclusion

- Both groups believe that **culture is important** to learn a foreign language.
  - **Motivation to study changes** throughout the student's school life
    - **Japanese** students want to study because it is a required subjects, but gradually they want to make **friends**
    - **American** students' motivation shifted **from anime to career.**
- Both groups are interested in learning linguistic abilities that can be used with **friends** and **work** and with **media**.
  - learning culture through **authentic cultural materials** is desired.



# Limitations of the Study and Future Study

## Limitations of the Study

- The number of respondents was small and many of them were foreign language majors or exchange students, which **does not represent the views** of all Japanese or American people.

## Future Study

- Survey people who are not language majors nor have studied abroad
- Would like to survey people after Japan's 2020 English education reform.



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**Thank You for Listening**

Do you have any questions?